A Case Study of One Teacher's Experience Using a Sociocultural View of Disability in the English Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' attitudes are shaped by the language, culture, and power constructs surrounding the disability in our society. This qualitative case study investigated how a sociocultural lens supported an English teacher's efforts to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically. The theories of Bakhtin (1981), Rosenblatt (2005), as well as literature that highlights the use of disability studies, social justice, and dialogic pedagogy guided the methods of the study. The sample included the teacher and one ninth grade English Language Arts class of approximately 25 students in a rural high school. Methods involved three semi-structured workshops which served to guide the teacher in an examination of the social discourses surrounding disability, encouragement of aesthetic responses to reading, and the facilitation of a dialogic pedagogy. Participant interviews, lesson plans, observation field notes, and reflective journals were transcribed and triangulated with researcher field notes. Attention was paid to the participant's learning as a social act which leads to a teacher's "ideological becoming" and development of the self as a "process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). Therefore, the lenses of Transactional Analysis (Stewart, 2011) and content analysis (Schreier, 2014) was used to examine the context and process of planning and implementation for an ELA teacher in order to uncover the meaning-making processes that the teacher undergoes when using literature to examine disability critically. Findings give insight into the development of a teacher as he learns how to apply a

sociocultural lens to literary study, as well as how he contextualized and situated his understanding of disability as connected to other forms of difference. While this study is not generalizable due to its qualitative nature, it can be transferable by providing insight into how a teacher guides students through texts that portray disability.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This study explored how one English Language Arts teacher used a sociocultural lens to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically. The sample included the teacher and one ninth grade English Language Arts class of approximately 25 students in a rural high school. Through a series of three semi-structured workshops, the teacher and researcher examined the social discourses surrounding disability, as well as how to encourage student aesthetic responses to reading and the facilitation of a dialogic pedagogy. Participant interviews, lesson plans, observation field notes, and reflective journals were analyzed. Findings give insight into the development of a teacher as he learns how to apply a sociocultural lens to literary study, as well as how he used this new understanding of disability as connected to other forms of difference. This study provides insight into how a teacher guided students through texts focused on disability as a way of critically analyzing disability in general.

Dedication

For Hannah, Lydia, and Augustine, who gave me a reason to work harder and love more than I ever thought possible.

For Angelo for always supporting and believing in me, even as it meant great sacrifices to get here.

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Chapter 1

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This study was designed to introduce an English Language Arts (ELA) teacher to a sociocultural view of disability in order to better support his process of using literature to critically examine disability. ELA teachers are often not prepared to discuss and critique literature dealing with disability, nor to discuss social justice issues surrounding the marginalization and oppression that people with disabilities often experience. By examining how a teacher engages students in discussions about disability, I sought to understand how he might disrupt the stereotypes and myths surrounding individuals with disabilities. I used several lenses into literacy inquiry, including disability studies, language and sociocultural perspectives, and critical literacy and social justice. A teacher might use these lenses to lead students in the study of ELA content, while also developing the ability to critically interrogate disability stereotypes and prejudices within selected literature.

Personal Significance

My experiences growing up with an autistic sister impact how I view disability. As a child the term autism was a mystery to me, and likewise to our friends and family, as it was pre-*Rain Man*, pre-social awareness of the cognitive disorder increasingly diagnosed today. When a friend asked what it was like to have a sister that was different, I found it befuddling. I was unsure how to describe my sister. She was simply the sister who let me dress her in makeup and "punk rock" clothes and who repeatedly played my greatest gift to her—a tape recording of my discussion of her current obsessions—the train, our refrigerator, a new microwave, and the washing machine. Although Laura had limited verbal speech, we found our own ways of communicating and

sharing with one another. We were just kids growing up together, unaware of labels and diagnosis and the "tragedy" that was often the dominating narrative of autism.

It wasn't until her difference was reflected back to me in our world—the woman in the store who shook her head when Laura threw herself on the floor, overwhelmed by something we couldn't understand, or the teacher who refused to let her class walk through his room so that they could avoid trudging through the snow to their classroom, that I began to see her as outside mainstream society. She began to feel further and further separated from me and my friends, and more a part of those other kids. These were the kids who came into the lunchroom after the general education students left to eat lunch by themselves or were shuffled around the school into their own classrooms, separate from the rest of us.

As an avid reader, I turned to novels dealing with disability to understand the marginalization of my sister. I read Ken Kesey's (1962/2002) *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and it became an avenue for understanding why our society wanted to separate and lock away those who were perceived as different and the gratifying breaking free of these constraints. Multiple readings of, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (Greenberg, 2009) allowed me to imagine that my sister might have an inner world of ideas and thoughts which she could not communicate with us verbally, much like the character Deborah had in the novel. As those around Deborah begin to accept her condition and as she returns to general society, I felt hope that my sister would also one day be accepted and succeed in our world.

Yet, when I encountered disability in school, I was met with negative stereotypes such as the tragic case of Charlie in *Flowers for Algernon*, (Keyes, 1966/2007) or the frightening depiction of the character Lenny in *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck, 1978), which to me were frustratingly narrow and tragic depictions of disability, and not at all like the disability I saw in

my sister. In novels such as these, and in the separation of my sister from most mainstream classrooms, the conflict inherent in our society's unacceptance of those with disabilities was made clearer.

For the past 13 years as a public-school teacher, my experiences with my sister have influenced my perception of how students read and understand their worlds. As with my realization as a teen that those who are perceived as different are treated as outliers of society, so too have I realized that our field offers few opportunities to examine these aspects of disability with students. My personal experiences have led me to view disability as an advocate and ally. As such, I must note how my experiences and biases influence the data I help to generate, analyze, and interpret. Through the constant monitoring of these subjectivities, I noted how they impact my interactions with the teacher participant and my interpretation of findings (Peshkin, 1998). Because the choice of my study is heavily influenced by these and other life experiences, I discuss them further in my methodology section.

Rationale and Significance

In the past, research has medicalized and pathologized disability so that disability is viewed as a deficit and something in need of remediation (Connor, 2008; Ferri & Connor, 2006; Garrison, 1997; Ware, 2009). Unfortunately, this view can carry over into the classroom, as teachers and students witness negative, societal depictions in movies, media, or literature of disability, and begin to view disability unfavorably. Widely circulated social media videos, such as an inspirational video of a student overcoming physical disabilities to run on the track team or the school's most popular student asking a classmate with a disability to the prom often celebrate a person overcoming disability, illustrate the false ideology of able-bodiedness that surrounds teachers and students. Yet these videos also send the message that having a disability is

unbearable (Young, 2014). In the disability community these are termed "inspiration porn," (Young, 2014) which is defined on the popular sitcom *Speechless* (Silveri, Gernon, Kasda, & Mar, 2017) as "a portrayal of people with disabilities as one-dimensional saints who only exist to warm the hearts and open the minds of able-bodied people" (Wanshel, 2017). Inspiration porn ignores the complexity and challenges that people with disabilities face and instead uses their stories to make us feel relief for not being disabled ourselves or inspired by what one person can do to "overcome" the tragedy that life has handed them. Inspiration porn also devalues the lives of individuals with disabilities and ignores the real challenges facing those with physical or mental impairment in our society. As disability rights advocate, Stella Young (2014), stated, "No amount of smiling at a flight of stairs has made it into a ramp!"

In addition, negative and stereotypical portrayals of people with disabilities are frequently seen in canonical literature used in ELA classrooms. As Dolmage (2014) pointed out, disability has been used as a trope for centuries. He argued that it is the underlying fear of becoming disabled that leads to depictions in literature of the tragic disabled character. Other depictions of disability in the cannon reveal similar negative portrayals—the pitiful Tiny Tim (Dickens, 1843/2017) who evokes a feeling of guilt and sympathy in readers, or the menacing, raging character of wooden legged Captain Ahab (Melville & Tanner, 1998) who jeopardizes his crew members in his crazed chase. Each character portrays a varied depiction of disability as negative and threatening.

Our acceptance of these and other canonical texts without question, can perpetuate harmful stereotypes of disability in our classrooms. For example, the fear evoked in Jem and Scout by Boo Radley in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Lee, 1962), if not critiqued, might mislead students to believe that those who are disabled are scary and therefore justifiably hidden away

inside. Although the novel eventually turns to a more positive portrayal of Boo, as he behaves in a kind and caring manner towards Jem and Scout, we cannot ignore our country's past history of institutionalizing those with intellectual disabilities and how they shape our cultural understanding of disability.

In addition, Shapiro (1994) warns us that these depictions of disability can in turn become ones that disabled and nondisabled people internalize. As he states, these images "build social stereotypes, create artificial limitations, and contribute to the discrimination and minority status hated by most disabled people" (Shapiro, 1994, p. 30). Tools for critiquing stereotypes surrounding disability are of great relevance in the classroom, as they can allow teachers to expose the prejudices that surround disability and difference, especially when studying literature that portrays disability in a negative way.

Typically, there is little guidance given to ELA teachers for analyzing the treatment of disability in literature. Often, teacher preparation programs attempt to limit classes in exceptionality in order to speed students through teacher certification programs (Arter, DeMatteo, & Brown, 2015). The field of special education, which is intended to aid teachers in understanding and handling disability, often sends conflicting messages to teachers about disability (Valle & Connor, 2011; Wiebe Berry, 2006). Cochran-Smith and Dudley-Marling (2012) explained how the framing of disability in special education is often two-sided: one set of discourse in special education is centered around a medical model, which focuses on identifying and ameliorating disability in the classroom, compared with one that is in sharp contrast, the sociocultural model, which acknowledges a widespread distribution of human capacity, and considers the societal factors that determine a student's success rather than inherent deficits.

These conflicting views of disability, along with a teacher's own perceptions of disability, often create tensions when dealing with literature and social issues surrounding disability.

As I consider the importance of examining a teacher's practice introducing texts that deal with disability to a class, I am reminded of a conversation a former colleague and I had over disability and language while working on a grant together. While picking out novels for the project, I noticed that a book chosen by my colleague used the word "spastic" to describe the main character, whose nickname was also "Spaz." My negative reaction to the words was similar to the disability community who view spastic as an insult; however, she argued that because the character was the hero of the novel this word was acceptable. Initially I had assumed our task to pick out novels would be an easy one, yet I soon found our agreement on book choices would involve many debates over which novels contained positive or negative portrayals of disability. Conversations such as these caused me to realize that teachers need guidance on their selection and use of novels that incorporate disability, as well as how to discuss disability with students.

While this teacher and I worked out our differences in the project, these instances were not isolated. I often overheard teachers discuss how frustrated they were over having to make modifications for students with disabilities. Questions as to how a student might succeed in the "real-world" and comments such as "I don't know how he's supposed to make it in college" were commonplace. I began to realize the need for teachers to examine their understanding of disability in general. Despite the fact that the county I taught in was one of the first districts in the state of Virginia to implement full inclusion of special education students, I became concerned that while ELA teachers had been given training to support the inclusion of special education students in the class, they also needed an alternative, more accepting framework for considering

disability in general. Such a framework could impact both teachers' view of difference in the study of literature, and possibly in the classroom and larger society.

Examining and problematizing the depiction of disability and the language surrounding it is needed in schools. Similar words to spastic, such as moron, retarded, midget, challenged, handicapped, and abnormal are rejected by the disability community as they perpetuate the medical model of disability. Because language is so important to the understanding of disability, it is important that I discuss culturally accepted terms surrounding disability and the use of these terms in my study. Although the American Psychological Association, other common style books, and the field of special education follow the phrasing *people with a disability*, this terminology is often rejected by members of the disability community, as it suggests that the disability lies *within* the person rather than as a result of societal inequalities. Instead, *disabled people* is often used to stress the barriers placed in society that prevent disabled people from entering as full members of society, i.e. they are truly disabled by the limitations enforced upon them. The focus on disability with the terminology *disabled people* places the societal effects that limit and or prevent an individual from taking part in one's community in the forefront.

Although I, nor any institution, can speak for the disabled, I value and listen to the voices of the disability community. It is for this reason that I use the terms *disabled person* or *disabled student* in my study. Although I at times refer to people first terminology promoted by special education, by using the phrase *disabled student(s),* I choose to highlight the idea that it is not simply one's medical condition that limits the individual, but often the actions of an exclusionary society that is more disabling. In using phrases such as *students with disabilities* or *students labeled as disabled*, I am keeping with the Disability Right's movement that calls for us to expose marginalization and work to end such exclusions. However, I am also aware that I am making

these choices as a scholar and advocate, and I can in no way presume that every person with a disability or every disabled person would agree with my choice or characterization of the field. Therefore, in instances where I am not sure if the individual would see disability first language as offensive, particularly in relation to students and the many variations of personal nominations, I use people first language of students with disabilities.

In the course of this study, I hope to understand how a sociocultural theory advocated by those in the field of disability studies may influence a teacher. My initial questions leading to this study were, what challenges might a teacher encounter when teaching students how to a critically examine disability in literature? What wording and phrasing will he or she encourage students to use? How can he or she reframe literature discussions on works from the cannon to become critical interrogations into disability? Given that this topic is one that is often not considered within literary study approaches to literature, it is important to understand how a teacher considers such an approach to literature and how these ideas are accounted for when structuring learning for students.

Research Question

This study sought to explore the following research question:

In what ways might a sociocultural lens support an ELA teacher's efforts to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically?

Problem Statement

Now, more than ever, teachers must search for ways to bring awareness to the social issues facing the 56.7 million disabled individuals living in the United States today (United States Census Bureau, 2012). In 2014, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that violent victimization against disabled people was 2.5 times higher than the age-adjusted rate for persons without

disabilities (12.5 per 1,000). The rate of violent victimization against persons with disabilities was at least twice that for persons without disabilities for each year between 2009 and 2014, remaining constant for 2014. In addition, over 40% of America's homeless population are people with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development reported that approximately 38 percent of adults who used a shelter between January 1 and June 30, 2006 were disabled as compared to 30 percent of the poverty population and 17 percent of the total U.S. population. A general misunderstanding of disabled individuals ignores the real issues of violence and homelessness.

In addition to violence and homelessness, education for students with disabilities is often unequal. Despite an increase in the amount of inclusion of disabled students, largely due to the federal No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the current Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997; 2004) which requires that schools offer access to a general education curriculum for disabled students, many classrooms are not fully inclusive in their treatment of disability. While the passage of these acts brought disabled students into the classroom, it did not necessarily usher in accepting attitudes and an understanding of disability.

Typically, research has focused on how to create an inclusive classroom through policy and teaching methods. Little attention has been paid to school as a site of struggle for disabled individuals in society as well as disabled students as they are excluded and marginalized by schools (Zion & Blanchett, 2011). Attention to these areas surrounding disability in a broader sense to include attitudes, discourses, and realities of disabled students in the classroom is significant because it expands how ELA teachers consider their approach to discussing disability and how their assumptions and attitudes effect students.

Theoretical Framework

In this section I outline the theoretical frameworks that guide my study into leading teachers in a sociocultural lens to support a critical analysis of disability in literature. First, I am guided by the social and cultural models of disability as presented in the field of disability studies to understand the social construct of disability. In addition, my study is grounded on several theories related to critical analysis of literature in the classroom, including a) connections between culture and language use (Bakhtin 1981, 1986; Fecho, 2007, 2011; Gee, 2008; Stewart, 2010); b) critical literacy as a means of understanding disability and power structures in our society (Bishop, 2014; Carlson & Apple, 2014; Giroux, 2011, 2008; Greene, 1995; Parker, 2006); and c) pedagogy that allows for dialogic encounters for deeper understanding and transformations with reading (Freire, 1986; Rosenblatt, 2005). These combined theories offer a sociocultural lens for reading and understanding literature that portrays disability.

Disability studies as a curriculum framework. Both the social and cultural models integral to the field of disability studies (DS) informs my thinking about how disability is created by our society. First, the social model of disability is one in which difference is theorized as a social and political construct. It is "a way of thinking about bodies, rather than as something that is wrong with bodies" (Ware, 2009, p. 400). Whereas, the medical model considers disability from the viewpoint of medical abnormalities and deficit within the individual, the social model considers disability through a cultural construct, created by society, not difference. If focuses on valuing the lived experiences of people with disabilities, reclaiming subjugated knowledges of those with disabilities, and challenging the idea of normalcy by examining social conventions that enable some and disable other (Connor, 2008). For example, the social model theory would consider how movies and texts often present stereotypical views of disability as negative and

tragic, while dismissing the lived reality of disability as another way of being. While complex and oftentimes difficult, these experiences are seen as equally valid and worthy in our society. What harms disabled people more, according to this theory, are socially constructed representations of disability and the environmental barriers disabled individuals face, which are oftentimes more disabling than the disability itself.

A goal for disability studies under the social model is to expose the negative stereotypes surrounding disability that force disabled individuals into the position of other and outsider. As Collins (2013) stated, it is to "identify and disrupt the deficit ideologies and discourses that shape the process of otherizing people," those whose "behaviors, bodies, ethnicities, or linguistic repertoires are perceived as different from social expectations" (p. 284). Because our ontological views of disability typically value the normal, able body, those who are disabled are seen as abnormal, negative, or lacking. As a result, our society often justifies or ignores the social disadvantages those with disabilities face, leading to the unequal opportunity, oppression, and destruction of people with disabilities (Linton, 1998; Pfeiffer, 2002; Shapiro, 1994). When disability is viewed as variance, not a deficit, however, critiques of disability may lead to a reworking of disability. Teaching students about the social model theory of disability makes it possible to view disability as difference and, at times, a strength.

Similar to the social model, the cultural model of disability also considers the ideas in social theory regarding environmental barriers and discrimination, yet it also stresses the actual material challenges of disability, realizing that "impairment is both human variation encountering environmental obstacles and social mediated difference that lends group identity and phenomenological perspective" (Shakespeare 2013, p.49). In other words, disabled individuals will face obstacles in society that disable them more than their disability, but being disabled is a

true difference that can lead to empowering group identities with other disabled individuals and a differing perspective.

While the cultural model also helps us to understand the social construct of disability, one difference in the cultural model of disability studies to the social, is the belief that disability is the outcome of a complex meshing of factors, including “impairment, personality, individual attitudes, environment, policy, and culture” (Shakespeare, 2013, p. 77) and is not entirely socially constructed. In order to understand a political movement within disability studies, I turned to Shakespeare (2013) who argued that the social rendering of disability present in the social model and the material challenges present in the medical model of disability are not sufficient approaches to disability. Instead he states that a “relational” approach, one which balances medical and social models of disability, guided by empirical research and the voices of actual disabled people is needed.

Shakespeare’s (2013) view of the social model is that all entities need to be considered when theorizing disability, particularly if we are to create a more equal and accepting society. For example, a person might suffer a limiting and challenging impairment, leading to varying attitudes that person has on his or her disability (both positive and negative), which is further complicated by the obstacles faced in their environment, policies that affect or restrict them, and a culture that stigmatizes the disability. Yet, the disability is not simply the result of a social constructivist forming of disability in which disability in a post-structuralist sense is created through social constructs (as is often stressed in the social model), nor is it a solely a matter of material barriers in which the person is disabled by his or her environment and not by one’s own body. Disability itself is not a neutral concept, meaning it can create “predicaments” or at times even extreme suffering in individuals (Shakespeare, 2013, p. 91). For these reasons, Shakespeare

(2013) argued that members our society must listen to the voices of disabled individuals themselves and realize that disability can affect us all. We must take steps to ameliorate disability and to aid individuals who are disabled. As he states, "we must compensate for both the natural lottery and social caused injury. Creating a level playing field is not enough: redistribution is required to promote true social inclusion" (p. 91). In other words, we must compensate for inequalities created by actual physical disability and those created by social exclusion and harm.

Shakespeare's (2013) discussion of disability as a complex matter and his call to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities provides a model for studying disability in an ELA class. Disability studies, which largely asks us to consider ablest attitudes and structural barriers that those with disabilities may face (and which many of us who are not disabled fail to see) (Young & Mintz, 2008, parenthesis added to original), is not enough to improve the lives of the millions of people who are disabled in our society today. Instead, teachers must act on these understandings and work towards social equality for disabled individuals, *in addition to* acceptance.

These social and cultural models in disability studies illustrate the varying theories on disability that go outside of the medical model to center on societal, cultural, and political aspects of disability which teachers can introduce to students. In the classroom, these major tenets offer teachers a way to think about disability before critiquing it in texts. In the following section, I discuss how language and culture are interconnected and transact with one another to determine how teachers can lead students to question disability in literature.

Language and sociocultural perspectives. Language and culture are two intertwining forces in our society. Bakhtin's theory on discourse in the novel guides how I understand the social construct of disability in literature and the power of words to carry meaning that is

dependent on one's society. Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1986) argued that the orientation of discourse is always connected to what has been said, known, or thought of before, properties that are inherent in all discourse. Only the mythical Adam in a "virginal" and "unqualified world" could escape the "dialogic inter-orientation" that occurs under the structure of the word (1986, p. 279). This inner dialogism cannot be divorced from a word's ability to form a concept of its object. As he wrote,

> In any given historical moment of verbal-ideological life, each generation at each social level has its own language, moreover, every age group has as a matter of fact its own language, its own vocabulary, its own accentual system that, in turn vary depending on social level, academic institution...and other stratifying factors (p. 290).

Bakhtin (1981) used the term "heteroglossia" to mean the many varieties of language used at any given point. These languages intersect one another and are all "specific points of views on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings, and values" (p. 291-92). Because they all survive in our social "heteroglossia," where they are encountered and used by living people, they may be drawn from by the author of the novel for his own purposes, or as Bakhtin stated, for his "themes and for his refracted (indirect) expression of his intentions and values" (p. 292).

Bakhtin's (1981) theory of language provides a useful framework for understanding how teachers might approach the concept of disability in novels. He tells us that a novel is "a diversity of social speech types...and a diversity of individual voices, artistically arranged" (p. 262). The internal arrangement of these languages at a moment of history, for a specific sociopolitical purpose is an important point to consider when questioning and analyzing what one has read. If a teacher considers the social "heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 292) that an author draws from in

order to arrange a diversity of voices, he or she can examine disability in literature for clarification of the author's themes, intentions, and values.

However, standard practices in the ELA classroom can make it difficult to attend to such constructs. In many cases, novels are often pulled from the canon as works of art meant to be studied, interpreted, and analyzed, both structurally and stylistically (Fecho, 2011; Fecho & Amatucci, 2008; Stewart, 2010). This static nature of studying literature is often passed down from generation to generation, ignoring the generative nature of learning and reading as "meaning *making* and not meaning *inheriting*" (Fecho, 2011, p. 15). Meant to offer students a good base in Western heritage (Smagorinsky, P., Lakly, A., & Johnson, 2002), reading becomes increasingly standardized (Stewart, 2010) and so teachers rely on fixed readings of the novel, often ignoring the values and assumptions behind an author's writing of disability. As Bakhtin (1981) argued, those who focus on the stylistic aspects of the novel ignore the "social dialogue among languages" (p. 263). Making what Bakhtin called the "speech types" (p. 262) of the novel, with its past meanings, values, and history, the center of discussions on literature in the ELA classroom supports teachers' efforts to examine texts as artistic genres and living discourses, not a fixed truth or moral entity.

In the ELA classroom, this may look like the consideration of disability in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1962) to include the historical and cultural associations of pity and vulnerability in disability, as the character Tom Robinson's physical disability illustrates, or stigma and seclusion of mental disability, as the character Boo Radley illustrates. Our country's past actions to hide physical deformities and mental disabilities by either institutionalization, or in Boo Radley's case, hidden away at home could offer sociopolitical context for why Lee may have characterized Boo Radley as the mysterious, isolated character, locked away at home by his

father. As students seek to understand the author's choices for these disabled characters, it is important to remember that they are encountering the author's individual values, past experiences, and lived languages as they compare these "living discourse'" values with their own.

Heteroglossia and the study of literature. Bakhtin's (1981) concept of heteroglossia provides a framework for understanding the language one encounters when reading a novel and the transaction (Rosenblatt, 2005) that occurs for the discourse to make meaning. It suggests that teachers consider the ways in which students position and understand the words of the text. When readers encounter a piece of literature, they are confronting a stratification of a variety of languages and words that are "up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance" and yet this word is able to shape its own meaning in the listener or reader (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276). When reading texts together with students, the teacher could call upon and point out the multiple meanings of words and literature with students, and to connect their understanding of the words to their own past languages and experiences. For example, teachers could discuss the effects of words which were once considered socially acceptable, yet today have negative connotations associated with disability, such as "retard," "idiot," or "freak" in reference to disability have on us as readers and speakers.

The power of words to carry meaning—even when those meanings are not overtly intentional—is a crucial concept that teachers can help students understand. Bakhtin's (1986) theory of language provides a framework for work with ELA teachers that can help them teach in ways that index how speech is always connected to the contextual act of our previous experiences and the reactions of others. Communication involves utterances in a social context brought to fruition only through a response by the listener; therefore, it cannot be examined outside of this

transaction (as one might do in linguistic study) or in a structuralism examination of a novel. The context surrounding the speech is a central factor in communication; therefore, the transaction between speaker and listener (Rosenblatt, 2005) is required for language to have any meaning or evaluative merit (Bakhtin, 1986). The same came be said for the transaction that takes place when reading. The expressive act of speaking or writing, and the chain or link of utterances spoken previously, as well as the receiving and interpretation of this utterance by the listener or reader is needed for language to have any meaning. Language in and of itself is neutral until an interplay between the speaker and listener or author and reader occurs. This speaker is influenced by his worldviews, past experiences, and languages known as he constructs an utterance with the intent of receiving a response (Bakhtin, 1986). Bakhtin (1981) tells us that

> Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated--overpopulated--with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process. (p. 294)

Gee's (2008) theory of social linguistics is a useful counterpart to work that focuses on the cultural contexts of language in use. Like Bakhtin (1981), Gee's (2008) work is grounded in the notion that that the meanings of words are contextual and are tied to cultural models "stories and theories that are meant to simplify and help us deal with complexity" (p. 10). He further argued that meaning is "something we negotiate and contest over socially" (p. 13) in order to find common ground with others (p. 13). It involves not just the act of reading words on the page, but also the ways in which people talk, interact, think, value, and believe in a culture. From Gee and Bakhtin's social model of meaning making, it becomes clear that literacy is not located solely within the individual, but also in society and therefore relies on basic shared assumptions, as well

as our inherent systems of belief and power regarding language and culture. Gee (2008) called these "master myths" (p. 51) and argued that they become natural or normal to the culture. Yet, at times these myths conflict with students' home cultural models, as well as limit our perception of difference and new possibilities. An examination of the contextual interaction of language allows us to question our understanding of ideas, words, and phrases as we encounter them, beyond the surface level and cultural understandings of words.

Not only is language contextually and culturally constructed, but it can also be seen as a "generative" (Fecho, 2011, p. 13) tool for students to connect with texts. Fecho (2011) and Stewart (2010) illustrated this Bakhtinian approach to language and literature study with dialogic pedagogy. Fecho (2011) argued that classrooms should be spaces that use dialogue to make meaning of texts, calling upon students' past histories and experiences, to construct knowledge. Dialogue, he argued, "is our ability and need to respond to the word and the world, and all our responses are part of an individual and collective mesh of responses" (p. 24). In a "generative" (p. 13) classroom, the teacher must establish a dialogical stance that appreciates the backgrounds, lived experiences of students that enable them to "generate present and future understandings" (p. 13).

Stewart (2019) defined dialogic pedagogy as one that "values questioning, examines context, explores multiple perspectives, challenges hierarchical structures, and views learning as a generative act (p. 213). He also considered the generative aspect of language and the past experiences of students as he argued that both teachers and students should work to construct knowledge together through dialogue. He argued that authentic dialogue can lead to Bakhtin's "'active responsive understanding,'" allowing teachers and students to share and understand their

"unique worldviews that individuals bring with them to the classroom each day;" this in turn works towards shared inquiry to facilitate learning (2010, p. 71).

The theories of Bakhtin (1981, 1986), Gee (2008), Fecho (2011), and Stewart (2010) offer a lens through which a teacher can understand and discuss the social construct of disability with students. The cultural and personal process of making meaning in language that each propose offers teachers a starting point in examining how disability has been constructed socially and culturally with students through language. In the next section, I consider how critical literacy allows us to construct knowledge with students in a similar way, but in addition, offers students a way to refigure discourse through "alternative rhetoric and dissident projects" (Shor, 2009), particularly when examining the discourses surrounding disability.

Critical literacy. Because language is a cultural product, it is also serves as a way to determine value in our society. In addition to Bakhtin's (1998) social interplay of language, teachers must also consider how discourses shape and govern our society. Language and power are distributed throughout society; therefore, teachers must question which cultures are valued and which are not. The theory of critical literacy exemplifies how this process can allow teachers to search for alternative paths of social development and move towards more just and equitable realities (Gee, 2008; 2011; Giroux, 2008; Macedo, 2006; Shor, 2009). It requires that we ask, "How have we been shaped by the words we encounter?" (Shor, 2009, p. 293).

The first step in answering this question is to consider the ideologies present in discourses around us (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2003; Freire, 1986; Giroux, 2011; Graff, 1992; Shor, 2009). For example, Aronowitz and Giroux (2003) asked that teachers lead students through critical examinations of mass culture, so that like anthropologists, students study their culture in "all forms of human activity: human sexuality, ways of interactions among persons, ideologies,

attitudes and belief system" (p. 54). As they stated, "language itself is a model for culture" (p. 54). Because our literacies are socially constructed within political contexts where "access to economic, cultural, political, and institutional power is structured unequally" (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, p. IVIII), we must lead students to question which belief systems are given power and precedence in societal discourses. Our literacy practices reflect the social powers available that are used to secure our own interests and to shape us. Critical literacy pedagogy asks teachers and students to question these powers and to investigate whose culture and history are viewed in classrooms as "official" knowledge and what knowledges are subjugated as a result.

If the discourses that surround us give power to official knowledges, then one contested site is the textbooks and class readings that propagate privileged ideologies. Michael Apple (2014) provided insight into the official knowledges and discourses that a critical literacy stance might question. He argued that textbooks are a contested site for belief systems and are a result of "complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender, and religious groups" (p. 47). As such they are an "organized knowledge system of society," signifying particular constructions of reality and ways of organizing "legitimate" knowledge and culture (p. 49).

Dominant groups are able to take priority in textbooks through a limiting of the histories of less powerful groups. In addition, a push to return to a traditional form of knowledge, "the 'great books' and 'great ideas' of Western tradition" that once made our schools and nation great in order to preserve democracy, increasingly aims to restrict what is taught in classrooms (Apple, 2014, p. 49). For example, although disabled individuals were isolated from our society as early as the post-Revolutionary war period and experienced decades of torture and institutionalization in the attempts to cure or treat disability (Nielsen, 2012), their history is not mentioned in most

textbooks or classrooms. The intersection of race and disability is also of interest in understanding power systems in place, as the concept of disability was often used to justify slavery and racism in our history. The third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, once wrote, slaves were "in reason much inferior…in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anamoulous [sic]" (Jefferson qtd.in Nielsen, 2012, p. 57).While this view has been pervasive in the earliest history of the United States, it is frequently neglected in discussions of disability, race, and power.

Critical literacy educators advocate the critical teaching of history and texts, so that the "cultural politics" of what is taught in schools is questioned. The conflicts between cultural visions and differential power such as those mentioned above is exposed through critical literacy. As Apple (2014) stated, critical teachers have learned how to use even the most conservative material as a place for a "reflexive and challenging activity that clarifies with students the realities they (teachers and students) construct" (p. 61). These same teachers can also search out "material and experiences that show the very possibility of alternative and oppositional interpretations of the world" (p. 61).

The second step in in enacting a critical literacy pedagogy is what Freire (1968/1986) called the praxis of action or "problem-posing" in which men reflect upon their world and transform it. Freire's (1968/1986) explanation of this process is worth seeing in its entirety:

> students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged as interrelated to other problems within a total context...the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed. (58)

Freire's (1968/1986) perspective presents a path for critical educators to critique and transform our society. When confronted with problems in the world, such as the misrepresentation of disability and mistreatment of disabled people, students must act as "critical investigators," in order to solve the social problems surrounding this issue (p. 54). A Freirean pedagogy of praxis (Freire, 1968) allows students to critique these power structures through reading and writing in order to foster understanding and engagement in sociopolitical issues (Bishop, 2014; Luke, 2012), yet rather than simply examine these problems, students are engaged in critical thinking so that they may search for alternatives (Stewart & McClure, 2013).

Critical literacy and disability. As Bishop (2014) pointed out, critical literacy uses texts to "examine the politics of daily life within contemporary society with a view towards understanding what it means to locate and actively seek out contradictions within modes of life, theories, and substantive intellectual positions" (p. 52). While there has been a lack in considering disability as a marginalized, oppressed social group in the past (Ware, 2009), it is an area in which misrepresentation and power are routinely played out on the bodies of individuals. This power is reflected in the social discourses that are constructed around disability, most notable for our field, Western literature. Rosemarie Thomson (1997), along with many other disability studies scholars (Dolmage, 2014; Linton, 1998; Titchkosky, 2007) have critically examined the misrepresentation of disability in literature, which is often based on misinformed cultural beliefs and stereotypes, rather than on actual people's lives. As Thomson (1997) stated, the body is ascribed meanings through cultural representations that reveal our anxieties of what a body "should be or do" (p. 6), marking for us what is normal and abnormal. Social narratives surrounding physical disability support an "embodied version of the normative identity" and work to construct disability as an "inferior state and a personal misfortune." (Thomson, 1997, p. 6).

In the privileging of normative representations of the body, literature isolates and presents the disabled body as far removed from the social norm. Disability is a commonly used trope in literature meant to evoke pity and fear, rather than the lived actual reality of those with "extraordinary bodies" (Thomson, 1997, p. 15). These misrepresentations attempt to legitimize the suppression of marginalized disabled individuals and are ones that deserve to be interrogated by critical literacy. As students seek out the contradictions surrounding disability, they must consider the lived realities of people with disabilities and ways in which our discourses misrepresent and marginalize them, both in the past and the present.

Language, power, and literacy. In many ways, schools themselves are learning sites for the ideologies surrounding language and disability in our society (Gee, 2008; Macedo, 2006; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). Power structures exist not just in texts, but also in teaching methods that work against a democratizing education in English Language Arts. In this section, I address how language and power are impacted by the governing methods of teaching literature to students. Freire (1968/1986) remarked that instruction that focuses on functional literacy often follows a "banking concept" of education in which official knowledge is deposited in students as a "gift bestowed" from the teacher. Students are meant to "patiently receive, memorize, and repeat" (p. 72). Not only do teachers transmit their interpretations of literature to students, but they also reduce reading to an operative process. Because literacy and language are systems for transmitting power, a society that reduces reading to the requirements of functional literacy illustrates the capitalist striving to meet the demands of an industrialized society (Macedo, 2006).

Not only does the banking concept of knowledge instruction in reading and understanding texts separate students from their lived realities, it also justifies and values an absolute, greater ideological knowledge promoted in schools. Maxine Greene (1978) calls such ideologies in

schools a “mystification,” one that obscures and alienates people under a capitalist system and convinces them that their way of living is the natural, fulfilled way, that freedom and human rights have been acted upon in American history, and that democracy has been achieved. Literacy pedagogy is never neutral or non-political in schools, often it is structured on positivistic ideas of education (Kinchloe, 2008).

One way ELA classes continue to reproduce a culture of positivism is through the continual deadening practice of literature examination. Rosenblatt (2005) was one of the first to critique the traditional positivistic belief that there is a single, “correct” reading of a text. The method of reading a text and testing for objective facts, which is often the way many ELA teachers cover literature, is what Rosenblatt (2005) called the “efferent” aspect of reading (p. 73). With the efferent focus the reader’s attention is directed upon what is to be carried away from the text. Yet, she argued that the selective attention of the efferent stance in reading denies the “aesthetic” aspect of the reader (p. 73). Described by Rosenblatt (2005) as the reader’s feelings and intuitions, a fusing of the “cognitive and affective elements of consciousness—sensations, images, feelings, ideas—into a personally lived-through poem or story” (p. 98), “the aesthetic” allows the reader to live through the text and, as a result, form their own values and opinions about it.

In literature study that emphasizes the efferent, students are forced into a form of artificial reading, reading to achieve the correct answer the teacher asks for (the efferent), yet ignore the feelings, connections, and meanings that those readings stir within and which allow them to live through the story. Rosenblatt (2005) warned that the efferent attention paid to classical works, if read without discrimination, might “reinforce in the minds of our student’s ideas and attitudes which the person of average enlightenment today considers reactionary or fallacious” (p. 111).

When studying texts from an efferent stance, Rosenblatt asks if these habits are "contributing to the persistent hold of habits of thought and images of behavior no longer appropriate to our present-day knowledge and our aspirations for a more democratic way of life" (p. 111). I would answer yes to this question, particularly if these views are unexamined in a critical way. Teachers must lead students to examine and question the values laden in these classics, lest they assume them as their own.

Rather than reading for a positivistic, or what Rosenblatt (2005) would have labeled *efferent* understanding of the "classics," students must use reading as a means to better understand the self and his or her society. Rosenblatt's (2005) transactional approach to reading is one way of considering how students make meaning from texts. Rosenblatt argued that meaning comes not from the text itself, but through the interaction of the reader with the text, beginning with the stance or purpose the reader brings to variables in what she terms a reader's language or "linguistic-experiential reservoir;" in other words, the senses of words generated by the reader's "cultural, social, and political history," past experiences, and present situation and interests (p. 8). The transaction that occurs with reading is the process of organizing these elements of consciousness in both an efferent and "aesthetic continuum" in order to experience an evocation, or an "object of thought" (p. 14-15).

Much like Bakhtin (1981, 1996), Rosenblatt (2005) explained that "[f]rom a to-and-fro interplay between reader, text, and context emerges a synthesis or organization, more or less coherent and complete" (p. 9). The task of the teacher is help students enact this process in order to better understand their world and themselves and to grow. She calls for attention not on what the inherent meaning of a book is, but on what meaning the book has for students "to reflect on what one thought and felt while reading, in order to sort out the ideas and emotions relevant to the

work, and in order to relate them to other experiences in life and literature" (p. 71). This transaction allows students to sort out their ideas and emotions when reading texts dealing with disability and relate them to their own experiences.

This study is designed to develop insight into ways that teachers foster reflection in students that will allow them to critique the ideological views of disability and ability that are so often present in the history of canonical literature. In the next section, I consider how an educator might use these ideas of culture, language, power, and literacy to create a student-centered pedagogy that is aimed at reading critically and responding consciously to problems within our society surrounding disability.

Pedagogical practices for literary inquiry and dialogue. Significant inquiry in ELA involves dialogue which encourages an examination of students' personal reactions, what Rosenblatt (2005) would have called their aesthetic experiences, to literature and new ideas and calls to question damaging stereotypes surrounding disability. As Greene (1978) stated, inquiry must be a process in which students might "enter a conversation with one another, "the kind of conversation that allows a truly human way of speaking, a being together in a world susceptible to questioning." Such an inquiry is first brought forth by the teacher, then time is given for students to speak truthfully about "backgrounds and foregrounds, and what it means to be present, what it means to reach out and to question and to learn" (Greene, 1978, p. 69).

The effect of such dialogue on students is what Greene termed a "wide-awakeness," that of an awareness of what it is to be in the world in order to offer a possibility for growth and understanding of the self (1995, p. 35). In being "awake" in our world, in both a present and historical sense, students and teachers can examine both past and present social problems to consider how they might meet these challenges. They may use literature, then, as a window into

the social issues we face today, discussing how these events have shaped who we are as a society and as individual, as well as consider ways to act for change.

Similarly, Giroux (2011) suggested an inquiry that is made possible through classroom dialogue that seeks to disrupt the unquestioned personal beliefs and course of things with the intent of creating a more democratic and just society. Giroux (2011) argued for open dialogue in which students and teachers question what is taken for as ordinary and the natural order of things. As he stated, "such a pedagogy must be open to critique as both an ideological and political force and also as a site and technology that can be rewritten and understood in the interests of more democratic goals, shared values, and modes of engaged citizenship (p. 103). Like Greene's "wide-awakeness," the teacher's act of liberating students is to lead them to see the construction of false social realities and to act on democratic principles of "freedom, justice, and regard for others" (p. 71). This can be done, Giroux (2011) tells us, by challenging what is taken for granted by students, including "ideas of hierarchy, of deserved deficits, of delayed gratification, and of mechanical schemes in tension with inner time one" (p. 71).

Likewise, Parker (2006) posited that public discourse in schools is a necessary means for illumination and knowledge building for students, as well as a means of creating a more equitable society. Discourse allows teachers and students to share, reflect, and consider alternatives. He claimed that through seminar (the listening and learning about a topic by questioning a text), and through deliberation (the focus on finding the best course of action or alternative), we might cultivate a democratic political community.

The ideas of Greene (1995; 1978), Giroux (2011), and Parker (2006) offer a student-centered pedagogy focused on the desirable growth, or the "ordered richness" in students brought forth through dialogue and inquiry. Dialogue can lead teachers to examine the stereotypes and

misrepresentations of disability that is present in much of Western literature, as well as to create an awareness of the harm and injustices being done to disabled people with students. It also can lead to Freire's (1986) challenge "to intervene, to re-create, and to transform" our classroom to better society for those with disabilities (p. 66).

Summary

As Maxine Greene (1995) stated, "a public emerges when people come freely together in speech and action to take care of something that needs caring for, to repair some evidence of deficiency in their common world" (p. 90). It is important for educators to think about ways to foster an active, deliberate curriculum and an interaction with social issues or constructs that will allow the student to act consciously in the world. If educators consider the social and cultural context of language when examining literature, as well as the possibility of student-centered, aesthetic responses to readings, then literary inquiry may have the power to reshape students' understanding of disability in our society and lead them to act for change. This process for teachers could appear as a respectful dialogue and questioning. Drawing upon the past experiences and knowledge of students in the class, teachers may focus class dialogue on disability stereotypes that literature brings forth and then model how alliances with those who are different than us are made. It is important that students do more than critique the harmful social constructs surrounding disability, but also consider how they can work towards a more democratic society.

This study examines how a teacher might undergo this process in order to lead students through a reworking of the social structures surrounding disability. I explore ways that teachers can draw upon the social constructionist ideas of reading and disability studies in order to engage students in critical inquiry and complex discussion of texts. In the next chapter, I present a review

of literature addressing several critical issues in disability studies and English Education. While much of my discussion of the existing literature focuses on techniques for incorporating a critical literacy model into a secondary English Language Arts classroom, I also include an overview of problems facing disabled students in the classroom as a basis for critical inquiry for students and teachers.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The goal of this project is to explore how a sociocultural lens can support an English teacher's efforts to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically. As discussed in chapter 1, the frameworks of disability studies, and critical literacy can increase opportunities for students in the English classroom to explore difference. My perspective that literature can be a crucial tool for creating a culture of acceptance is grounded in the belief that critical literacy provides a mechanism for questioning and the exploring difference. This chapter considers how these ideas can be enacted in the ELA classroom. To do so, I draw upon empirical and theoretical literature to examine how the critical literacy ideas of language, culture, and power, connected with the sociocultural concept of disability, function as vital components of teaching for equity and acceptance.

In the first section, I provide an overview of the history and key ideas of the field of disability studies, including first its rejection of the deficit model of disability in schools, second, its critique of the labeling and positioning of students with disability as Other in schools, and third, its push against the segregation and classification of students of color in disability programs. Next, I discuss literature highlighting ways in which ELA teachers have worked to create a socially just classroom environment that can help students learn to critically evaluate disability in literature, as well as portrayals of disability in the texts they read. I also provide an overview of studies focused on social justice pedagogy in the classroom and consider how teachers might use these pedagogies within a socio-culturally framed discussion of disability in literature. In the next section, I outline the literature that examines the challenges teachers may

experience when teaching against the grain of the standard curriculum and ways in which an introduction to disability studies can offer guidance for teachers as they examine how disability is represented and misrepresented in texts. Finally, I discuss the literature related to student literary practices that might lead to greater awareness and responses to disability in literature, including dialogic teaching and critical literacy.

Disability studies as a lens for ELA teachers. The socially situated charge of disability studies (DS) theory to fight against inequality for those who are disabled makes it an appropriate lens through which to examine difference with students. DS emerged from the civil disability rights movement of the 1960s and 70s and began as an academic field in the 1980s (Gabel & Connor, 2009). DS considers the social and cultural oppression that people with disabilities face and fights against the concepts of normalcy and disability that are created by those in positions of power (Kliewer, 2008). For example, disability studies scholars, such as Ferri (2009) and Erevelles (2002) have argued that the commonly held view of disability as medical pathology has resulted in the segregation of disabled students into separated classrooms or for isolating practices of special education. As stated by Ferri (2009), by "turning differences into pathologies" special education does not just serve disabled students, it also acts to maintain an exclusive general education and a "false sense of homogeneity" in schools, resulting in a social injustice and exclusion of disabled people (p. 417). Erevelles (2002) explained that this is in large part due to the use of eugenicists in the early 19th century which created a pseudo-scientific, organizing logic by educational institutions and governments as a way to construct difference. Today, she argued, "identified impairment (e.g. mental retardation; autism) immediately interpellates the student into a whole subset of educational discourses that mark the student as outside the norm, and therefore, the student may experience segregation, subjection, and/or expulsion" (p. 372). The oftentimes

exclusionary practices of education enacted through testing and the separation of disabled students from the “norm,” contribute to disability studies’ fight against the marginalization of students with disability as a social justice issue (Connor, 2012; Connor & Valle, 2015).

Disability studies notes that, similar to race and segregation, the segregation of disabled students is common in public schools. Although the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975, which is now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), states that all students must “receive a free and appropriate education" in the "least restrictive environment" (LRE) alongside their non-disabled peers (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004, p. 118), many school districts still segregate disabled students into separate classrooms or schools. The school district I began teaching in was such a school. Students were taught in a small classroom that had once been a storage closet for books and rarely left this room for general subjects.

Many disability studies scholars challenge the idea of inclusion in schools, such as Graham and Slee (2008) as they asked educators to consider how our idealization of normalcy and limited notions and models of inclusion results in the exclusion of disabled students and the application of disciplinary power. They pointed out that inclusion functions as a result of discourses surrounding disability that are “normative and confer exteriority,” which in turn leads schools to more techniques of what Foucault claimed were “‘discipline-normalisation,’” those that frame some students as ideal and compartmentalize or objectify others (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 289). This results in schooling that is used as a rehabilitation of disabled students so that they might fit into the normalized culture of public schooling (Graham & Slee, 2008).

Similarly, Disability Studies in Education (DSE), a subfield of disability studies, rejects the deficit model often prevalent in education. DSE argues that the labeling and classification of

disabled students, typically done by a staff of trained clinicians, psychologists, and school officials, relies on the assumption that all children respond and develop in the same way and at the same time (Baglieri & Sapiro, 2012) and therefore, align more closely with the medical model of disability. A large contention of viewing disability under a medical model is that the reliance on the myth of the "normal" child who must conform to societal pressures of acceptance and validation by systems of power in public education, such as IQ tests, observations, segregated classrooms, and specialized psychologists (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderic, Connor, & Valle, 2011; Connor & Valle, 2015; Davis, 2002; Liadosou, 2001; Pfeiffer, 2002). Systems of classifying and labelling disabled students rely on false binaries of ability and disability. Baglieri et al. (2011) argue that the "normal" child is one that is essentially non-disabled and conforms to societal pressures of acceptance and validation by the systems of power. The forces surrounding this child "all conspire to reify human difference into one of disability that marks individuals from what is deemed normal" (p. 2140).

Ironically, as Davis (2002) argued, under such a system of normalcy, "no one is or can be normal;" instead, all have to work to conform and "the person with disabilities is singled out as the dramatic case of not belonging" (p. 105). DSE considers disability within historical, material, and social contexts and focuses on how society itself is disabling in its exclusions and interventions on students (Gabel & Connor, 2009) and asks us to push back against such harmful positivist understandings and practices by considering how schools act as oppressive systems towards disabled students, particularly those of color. For example, the 28th Annual Report to Congress (US Department of Education, 2009) reports African American students labelled with disabilities are 2.83 times more likely to be identified as emotionally disturbed than other racial groups combined and are also more likely to drop out of school with a rate of 38.3% as compared

to 27.5% of white students.

One way to push back against these stark realities is to consider how we have forced those with disabilities both in the classroom and in society into the position of "Other." As Graham and Slee (2008) pointed out, "although predicated as natural and true, the rule of the norm is statistically derived, negating the diversity to be found within nature and the naturalness of diversity" (p. 281). Teachers and students must unpack the social constructions of natural and norm and instead consider the strengths in diversity and difference.

Inclusion & teacher preparation. Outside of DS theory, teachers and school leaders are not likely to find similar considerations of disability as a social construct or social justice issue in educational literature. Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian (2006) examined 72 articles on leadership for social justice and found that "none of the recommendations for preparation specifically addressed anything related to educating students with disabilities" (p. 210). While articles referred to preparing leaders to be successful with student learning differences, they did not examine disability as an area of difference.

A review of popular multicultural textbooks reveals that many scholars neglect disability as well. For example, although Steinberg (2009) explains that critical multiculturalism focuses on issues of power and domination in a critical context, in a list of oppressions, only race, gender, and class are considered. Similarly, in a historical discussion of multiculturalism by Banks (2004), the discrimination that Eastern European immigrants and African Americans experienced in our country, as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that resulted in equal rights in African Americans is discussed in detail, yet he does not mention the discrimination and oppression people with disabilities have faced in the U.S. and how the Civil Rights Act impacted them at this same time in history.

Disability is also frequently overlooked in multiculturalism and social justice education as an important category of difference (Connor, 2012). Harris and Willis (2003) explained that multiculturalism has only recently moved from earlier focuses on ethnic study to now include "gender, class, sexual orientation, ableism, age, religion, and geographical location" (p. 826). While the social justice idea of fighting ableism has shown promise in recent years, as Connor (2012) demonstrated in his analysis of three multiculturalism and social justice texts—the *Diversity and Multiculturalism: A Reader*, edited by Steinberg (2009), the *Handbook of Social Justice in Education*, edited by Ayres, Quinn, and Stovall (2009), *and Social Justice Pedagogy Across the Curriculum*, edited by Chapman and Hobbel (2010)—the literature base is still quite small.

If included in texts such as Steinberg's (2009) and Banks (2004), disability studies would offer a broader definition of multiculturalism and social justice teaching and expose the inequalities and discriminations that deny those with disabilities from fulfilling their basic needs such as education, health care, housing, and the legal system. As Connor (2012) found in his analysis, disability can be treated as a marker of identity and minority model in the same way that race, ethnicity, or gender and calls for a proactive, social justice approach to teaching about disability. If teachers are to reject the deficit model and note an imbalance of power in groups, they need more options for understanding a sociocultural approach to disability, as well as a strength-based, inclusive classroom approach that allows students to learn in ways that will promote their quality of life and participation in society. ELA teachers, specifically, need such training not only to fully develop class discussions on disability in texts, particularly ones frequently taught in the cannon, but also to lead students in considering the injustices and misconceptions surrounding disability.

Teacher and Peer Acceptance of Disability

The absence of disability as a multicultural and social justice issue, along with the prevailing problem of placing disabled students in the position of "Other," influences the ways in which teachers and non-disabled peers view disability in students. This is reflected in the findings of Lalvani's (2015) examination of parents and teacher attitudes towards disabled students. In her study of 32 parents and 30 teachers, Lalvani (2015), showed a need for teachers to shift attitudes that followed the deficit model of disability towards a socio-cultural one that would allow them to explore options for disabled students and better collaborate with parents. Teachers and parents had conceptual differences in their perspectives of students with disability, both in what it means to be disabled and in their beliefs about families with a disabled child. For example, while parents understood that separating disabled students from others in the classroom could be a source of stigma and otherness, most teachers did not see stigma as a problem in society. While most parents resisted the classifications of their child and self-contained classrooms, many teachers felt students needed placement in "safe environments" and did not question the marginalization this may bring. In addition, teachers were more likely to see problems for disabled students as "within individual minds and bodies" and left "individual, cultural, and institutional practices unexamined" (Lalvani, 2015, p. 386). These unexamined attitudes towards disability perpetuate deficit attitudes in classrooms and in turn effect the ways in which teachers discuss texts dealing with disability, as well as treat their disabled students.

In addition to discrepancies between teachers and the lived realities of those with disabilities, many disabled students face challenges with social acceptance by their non-disabled peers in schools. Several studies have shown a correlation between poor attitudes of peers towards students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including higher rates of social

exclusion, and less reciprocal friendships (Chamberlain et al., 2007; Dean et al. 2014; Kasari et al., 2011; Rotheram-Fuller et al., 2010). Autistic students are reported to have fewer reciprocal friendships than their typically developing peers, less acceptance (towards girls who exhibited social issues) in class (de Boer, Pijl, Minnaert, & Post, 2014), and a greater chance of being bullied by their peers (Symes & Humphrey 2010). Kasari et al. (2011) found that children with ASD were less likely to have reciprocal friendships, were more on the periphery of their social networks, and reported poorer quality friendships. Similarly, children with Learning Disabilities (LD) also self-reported lower social acceptance (AlYagon & Mikulincer, 2004) and were seen by their peers as lower in social standing (Estell et al. 2008). Yet, while these studies showed that students were less accepted by their peers, Pijl and Frostad (2010) showed a relationship between self-concept of LD students and peer acceptance, suggesting that meaningful relationships with peers were important to self-concept and sense of acceptance.

While these studies show challenges in many categories of students with disabilities, some studies have focused on fostering peer acceptance for students with disabilities. In their study using the Friendship Survey, Azad, Locke, Kasari, and Mandell (2017) examined friendship nominations focusing on children with disabilities and race. They found that African American and Latino children have fewer friendship nominations than traditionally developing students and that "social network centrality is primarily affected by disability;" therefore, they suggested that "children with ASD may need targeted social skills instruction to increase peer engagement, especially at the beginning of the school year since children are just starting to form connections at this time" (p. 98). Bunch and Valeo (2004) suggested that the inclusion of students with disabilities in schools provides greater acceptance of peers with disabilities. Inclusive schools, as

compared to non-inclusive schools, showed more friendships and less abusive behavior towards disabled students than in a non-inclusive school.

The next step in promoting meaningful inclusion is to provide the social framework for teachers that is necessary to foster peer acceptance of their disabled peers. Rather than target students with disabilities for help in peer engagement as the Azad et al. (2016) study suggests, this study may also illustrate how dialogue focused on disability in literature can lead to a greater acceptance of students with disabilities by their non-disabled peers. In the following section, I review studies focused on social justice education and teacher education and discuss their implications on integrating the ideas of disability studies into the classroom as a way to forge this acceptance and enact social justice.

Creating Socially Just Classrooms

The overlapping goals of disability studies and multiculturalism or social justice, offer pedagogical means for teachers who wish to enact a social justice curriculum focused on disability with students. According to Banks (2004), the democratic goal of multicultural education is to reform schools so that students from diverse racial, ethnic and social-class groups may experience educational equity. This goal can be met, as Nieto (1994) suggested, by exposing students to the critical context of democracy (both the process of democracy and a critical exposure of its failings) and by reeducating and transforming teachers into ones who challenge attitudes, knowledge, and practices in order to become aware of unintentional biases. This is a similar goal to that of disability studies which seeks to restructure society so that disabled people have access to all that nondisabled people do by listening to and valuing people with disabilities (Gabel & Connor, 2009). As Gabel and Connor (2009) argued, “[w]hen incorporating the voices

and perspectives of disabled people in their teaching, educators use them as tools to critique widespread misunderstandings of disability prevalent throughout all aspects of society" (p. 383).

To address Nieto's (1994) goals to reeducate and transform teachers, I consider two significant bodies of research in social justice education on the transformative aspect of social justice education for teachers. These are 1) teachers' openness to change, self-awareness, and self-reflexivity, and 2) teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards diversity (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). Boylan and Woolsey (2015) explained that because social justice is "enacted through embodied relationships, attention must be given not only to the social and the macro issues such as school organization and societal outcomes, but also to the personal and the micro and the interplay between them" (p. 63). Therefore, a valid focus for teachers is on how their classrooms can be sites of socially just relationships and practices.

Two studies illustrate Boylan and Woolsey (2015) idea of the micro, personal view of diversity, first in self-reflexivity and second in teacher attitudes. In their study of predominately white, middle class teachers, Zion, Allen, and Jean, (2015) explored how participating in a project called critical civic inquiry allowed teachers to reflect on their thoughts and actions when implementing a critical pedagogy curriculum. Teachers were guided through trainings, readings, and peer discussions to reflect on their own relation to privilege or oppressed identity groups over a period of 18 months. They found that not only were teachers able to identify systems of privilege and an awareness of how this effects their relationship with students, but they also developed the skills and confidence to "engage in difficult conversations, "identify systems of power and privilege," and support "students in challenging oppressive systems" (923). The improvement of teachers' skills for critical inquiry demonstrates the potential for teachers to

understand and engage in critical pedagogy and to develop reflexive sociopolitical understandings.

Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, and Mitescu (2008) illustrated the study of teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards diversity in their study on the impact of educational training in social justice on pre-service teachers in the first year of the undergraduate program, the last year of the undergraduate program, and after one year of teaching. Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, and Mitescu (2008) noted measurable change in teacher beliefs and values about social justice. Of the approximately 125 respondents to each survey and more than 1,000 respondents in total, Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, and Mitescu (2008) found that teachers exiting the program had higher levels of endorsement of social justice-related beliefs than those entering, and furthermore, teachers of one year scored close to scores they had when leaving the program. This study revealed that a strong teacher-training program for social justice can impact teachers' understandings of social justice education and continuing beliefs about the value of social justice and diversity, ones that can continue as the teacher enters the field of teaching.

Challenges for integrating a social justice focused pedagogy. Although Zion, Allen, and Jean, C. (2015) and Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, and Mitescu (2008) have shown promise in educating teachers for a social justice and disability focused curriculum, Bender-Slack's (2010) study showed that many English language arts teachers struggle at the micro, personal level when teaching for social justice. Her study sought to examine how ELA teachers were committed to social justice in relation to texts by collecting data on 22 teachers in 15 different public and private schools. Using phenomenological interviewing focused on teachers' definition of social justice, how they felt it should be taught, and what texts they used, Bender-

Slacks considered how to better understand the enactment of social justice teaching as categorized by the Oakes and Lipton (2003) framework for social justice.

In her findings, Bender-Slack (2010) discovered that teachers needed a strong sense of agency to critique educational practices, including the use of the literary canon that is passed down from one generation to the next in classrooms. Many teachers felt that the canon did not need to be challenged and that teaching social justice was not dependent on the text. In addition, most teachers did not feel that they needed to change students' minds in regard to social justice issues but to simply introduce these ideas to students. This view may have been a result of fear, as she found that teachers revealed that fear of being reprimanded and safety concerns for students limited their teaching of social justice. While teachers were concerned with how schooling maintains inequalities in race, class, gender, language, and other categories, Bender-Slacks (2010) argued that when taught in isolation, these issues, can have the effect of isolating the issue as "individually based rather than institutionalized" (p. 195).

Bender-Slack's (2010) study illustrates the importance of preparing teachers to understand the concepts of social justice teaching as a fully embodied and multifaceted social justice pedagogy. By teaching students of the social injustices and misconceptions of disability in our classrooms and society, teachers can demonstrate social justice teaching that focuses on "ways in which practices, regulations, representations, and attitudes contribute toward limiting access to all spheres of society" (Gabel & Connor, 2009, p. 383), yet if the teacher does not feel fully prepared or supported, he or she may be hesitant to enact practices that focus on attitude changes and diversity.

Disability focused social justice education. Programs that focus on the transformative approach of greater teacher awareness and understandings of equity and oppression may have

greater success in integrating social justice teaching. Castaneda and Peters (2000) call to create a just and equitable society for marginalized groups is an example of a disability focused social justice pedagogy that also concentrates on the micro level at play with teacher's feelings and openness to diversity. They defined what they call "disability oppression theory" as a means of educating others on individual empowerment and societal liberation of people with disabilities, including the voices of people with disabilities themselves through testimonials (p. 320). Oppression theory focuses on two areas—the discrimination against people with disabilities, termed ableism, and the process of empowering and liberating people with disabilities by equal "access to and accommodation within society's systems" in which all people are all connected and depend on one another so that they can "perform equally important community roles" (p. 320). The encouragement of multiple perspectives and the acknowledgement of the contributions of marginalized groups is proposed for building appreciation for disability culture into the classroom. They argued that teachers can create a more accepting class through readings on ableism that can reeducate a teacher on disability history, culture, and challenges, and through readings and discussions on disability and ableism with students. The approach to disability with "disability oppression theory," offers an example of the bridging of teaching for social justice with an examination of our one's personal views on disability.

Similarly, Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson (2008) recommended creating a "Third Space" in which they challenged educators to engage with disability as part of their pedagogy. They argue against disability's assimilation to the norm and instead ask that students and teachers question their own ablest viewpoints to recognize how "nonableist points of view complicate and might transform social practice" (p. 303). Both authors, Castaneda and Peters (2000) and Wilson and Lewiecki-Wilson (2008) call for teachers to reeducate themselves in order to evoke an openness

to change, self-awareness, and reflexivity. As suggested by Boylan and Woolsey (2015) this is the first step towards giving attention to the personal beliefs at the micro level when enacting a social justice pedagogy connected to disability.

As teachers begin to feel more open to and confident in addressing issues surrounding disability, practitioner pieces offer examples of what teachers can do when enacting Boylan and Woolsey's (2015) macro level of social concerns surrounding disability such as school organization and societal outcomes. An example of such a strategy can be seen in Rauscher, McClintock, Adams, Bell, and Griffin's (1997) curriculum design that seeks to expose the failings of democracy, as Nieto (1994) suggested, by directly addressing ableism. In their discussion, they defined an overarching view of disability as a large range of individuals, including perceptual, illness-related, physical, developmental, psychiatric, mobility, and environmental and argued that the historic mistreatment of people with disabilities and other forms of ableism, which has led to unnecessary institutionalization, segregation, and isolation of people with disabilities, is a consequence of the fear of becoming disabled. They argue that this fear must first be dealt with for change to occur. The curriculum outlined four modules that promote a greater awareness of ableism, an understanding of the oppressions disabled people have faced throughout history, and a vision for a more accessible and inclusive society, each with step by step instructions for teaching and handouts for teacher use. This curriculum offers a way for teachers to challenge the idea of normalcy and the acceptance of difference with students and also feel supported when introducing controversial issues to students, parents, and administrators.

Critiquing literature for marginalization and oppressive ideologies. While the studies and suggestions on social justice education offer promising pedagogies for integrating a sociocultural perspective on disability, the critique of canonical literature and other texts used in

class can offer a more specific approach to for ELA teachers in a social justice approach focused on Boylan and Woolsey's (2015) macro or social level. As Lennard Davis (2002) posited, literature is "centrally concerned with the norm" (p. 103); one reason for not just language, but bodies and bodily practices that are "standardized, homogenized, and normalized" (p. 101) is a societal need to represent the ideological concept of norm, or average citizen, one who offers us the assurance that we are a class of average and equal citizens. ELA teachers need to critique these ideologies and examine how disability is played out in literature and the classroom. One example of this critique is shown through Rosemarie Thomson (1997), who advocates a disability studies curriculum in a Women and Literature course that focuses on the social construction of disability. She suggests that "by framing disability as a cultural reading of the body that has political and social consequences, and by invoking politics of positive, identity" we might "facilitate understand and identification across identity groups" (p. 296). Her article details how she structured a course that integrated disability as a category of analysis alongside other workings of culture, in this case beauty. Examining an oppressive cultural ideology in literature offered a means for teachers to lead students to question the categories of disabled and able-bodied and to look critically on "the cultural processes that produce such distinctions" (p.296).

In addition to a critique of the ideologies surrounding the body and beauty, ELA teachers can also ask students to analyze the social constructions of disability found in literature as character types. Mitchell and Snyder (2014) and Dolmage (2014) offer ways of critiquing disability in literature and rhetoric that may be useful for ELA teachers. Mitchell and Snyder's (2014) argument that disability is used as "a stock feature of characterization" and as "an opportunistic metaphoric device" in literature (p.15), allows teachers to examine literary dependences on disability, what Mitchell and Snyder's (2014) calls a "narrative prosthesis" (p.

20). This is the idea that "all narratives operate out of a desire to compensate for a limitation or to reign in excessiveness" (p. 20). The narrative story is brought forth "when something has gone amiss with the known world" and the tale is an attempt to "comprehend that which has stepped out of line" (p. 20). Literary narratives offer a new experience and use difference as the "lure" of a "socially stigmatized condition" (Mitchell & Snyder, 2014, p. 23). However, Mitchell and Snyder's (2014) argues that this use of disability does not provide identification to people with disabilities, but instead, the character is treated as Other, the "character stands out as a result of an attributed blemish" which "disqualifies the character from a shared social identity" (p. 23). Rather than reading the celebrated classics and accepting them as truth, teachers might ask students to respond to and critique how canonical literature contributes to a limiting of access by people with disabilities and shapes our understandings of disability. This calls on what Rosenblatt (2005) called the "aesthetic stance" (p. 11) for students as they examine the social stigmas and prejudices surrounding disability.

Dolmage (2014) also considered the social stigmas and prejudices surrounding disability and categorizes these cultural productions of disability as a taxonomy of myths and troupes found in literature. His list of disability myths looked at the many varying ways that disability is portrayed in literature, such as the following: *disability as pathology*, in which people are labeled and sorted according to standardized norms; *kill-or-cure*, in which the disabled character must be killed or cured in order to redeem the protagonist; *overcoming or compensation,* in which the person with a disability must overcome their impairment; *disability as object of pity/and or charity*, as seen in displays of characters such as Tiny Tim who invoke pity in readers; *physical deformity as sign of internal flaw*, in which disability is evidence of internal deviance or lack; and *disability as isolating and individuated* in which the disabled person must keep his or her

suffering and "personal tragedy" to themselves and that disability should be isolating. Dolmage's (2014) list continues as he illustrates varying ways of analyzing the rhetorical positioning of disability in literature and is extremely useful in leading teachers through an analysis of disability in literature that they can then share with students.

Other ELA teachers have discussed the examination of disability in literature with students, such as Darragh (2015) who argued that pairing young adult (YA) literature with classics can help students explore and experience the lives of people with disabilities. Her sociocultural approach to studying literature considered how students learn and respond and make meaning uses Rosenblatt's Reader Response Theory (1938). She paired texts such as the YA novel *mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine and the classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1962), the YA novel *A Small White Scar* by K.A. Nuzum (2008) and the classic *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (1978), and other canonical comparisons as a means of helping students understand critical thinking skills and to analyze issues of difference. In addition, a teacher's handbook by Patricia Dunn (2015) titled *Disabling characters: Representations of disability in young adult literature,* as well as her column "Disabling Assumptions "in the *English Journal* offer tangible ways to discuss disability within the English Language Arts classroom, specifically the social restrictions and stereotypes surrounding disability, as well as the depictions of disability in young adult literature.

In the *English Journal*, several other teacher practitioner pieces have offered examples of teachers enacting a pedagogy that focuses on the marginalization of disabled characters in literature. Kennedy and Menten's (2010) piece offered five lessons that help teachers to familiarize students with disability issues and discrimination, as well as critically analyze depictions of disability in the novel, *Of Mice and Men.* In another article, Preston (2010)

suggested using Disney movies such as *Finding Nemo* as a means for introducing the ideas of disability studies to students. These articles are promising examples of how a social justice curriculum focused on disability can be integrated into an ELA classroom.

In addition, a few empirical studies surrounding the use of texts dealing with disabilities and teacher-led discussions of these texts illustrate a possibility for introducing students to a socially just pedagogy that embraces difference. Although most have focused on younger children to examine how focused interventions to influence children's attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities can impact students (Favazza and Odom, 1997; Krahe´ and Altwasser, 2006; Swaim and Morgan, 2001) they do give us insight into how teachers have used texts dealing with disability and where researchers can improve and continue to study. The intervention study of Favazza and Odom (1997) focused on kindergarten students in classrooms that were in a high-contact group with students with disabilities, those with more contact with students with disabilities, and a low-contact group or those who had incidental contact with children with disabilities. The intervention was based on the "Special Friends" program, which involved reading and discussion of books related to disability and consisted of three parts: weekly story reading and discussion of books related to disability, structured play between disabled students and non-disabled students, and home reading assignments in which students read and discussed books with parents about disability for those in the high-contact group. Their findings showed that peer contact and discussion impacts students' acceptance level of disabled students, with those in the high-contact groups showing greater gains. Favazza and Odom's (1997) study suggests that a curriculum centered around readings and discussion of texts related to disability may have some impact on acceptance of disability by children.

A second study showed similar promise; however, over a much shorter span of time. Ison, McIntyre, Rothery, Smithers-Sheedy, Goldsmith, Parsonage, and Foy (2010) examined the effect of a disability studies curriculum on students, aged 9-11, to evaluate the effectiveness of a short disability awareness program. This curriculum consisted of two 90-minute sessions to raise awareness of disability and to promote the development of a supportive community. Results suggested that participation in a short program consisting of two sessions of 90 minutes each leads to significant improvement in students' knowledge, attitude, and acceptance.

However, when de Boer, Pijl, Minnaert, and Post (2014) performed a similar study in which they used storybooks as a means of informing students about physical and intellectual disabilities they found that their intervention only had short-term effects on students' attitudes towards disability and that their attitudes did not continue over time. They suggested their intervention program might need to include other components of the Favazza and Odom (1997) study, such as structured play and home reading, and that changes in attitudes towards disability may be more affective if begun with children at a young age. This study suggests that that attempts such as the Favazza and Odom (1997) intervention may need improvement and development to effect long-term shifts in attitude.

Along a similar vein, another study looked specifically at effects of reading novels dealing with disability on students in high school. Darragh's (2010) examined data from a total of 229 eighth grade Language Arts students when reading a young adult novel that portrayed disability. Novels used in the study were chosen under the qualifications of work of fiction, young adult literature, published in the last 10 years, and recipient of a major literary award. A pre and post reading survey was administered to students, as well as three journal prompts asking students to consider personal connections to the disabled characters in the novel and to rate the novel. Study

findings revealed that there was no statistical evidence for reading and reflecting on a novel that portrays a disabled character influences students' attitudes towards disability. In addition, students indicated little to no intention to interacting with other students with disabilities after reading the novels. Darragh (2010) suggested that a later study by Favazza, Phillipsen, and Kumar (2000) offered evidence for an integration of literature discussion at home as well as school and combined with authentic structured interactions with peers with disabilities. Furthermore, she argued, explicit instruction using a pedagogy of acceptance at the upper elementary and middle school periods and authentic interactions with people with disabilities, as well as zero tolerance policies against bullying and teasing of underrepresented groups may help further this cause. The findings of de Boer, Pijl, Minnaert, and Post (2014) and Darragh's (2010) studies reveal that simply reading a novel about disabilities, might not need to acceptance of disabled peers, yet an interrogation of other elements—discussions surrounding disability, interactions with disabled individuals, and discussions outside of class—show some promise for promoting acceptance.

The use of dialogic pedagogy to support exploration of difference. While each of the studies above consider various means of promoting acceptance of disability and difference, a common approach in each is the use of dialogue surrounding texts dealing with disability. An important first question to ask, then, is can dialogue truly have an impact on students' attitudes towards disability? In addition, how can teachers promote active inquiry and discussion with our students on disability? The latter question is explored by Lyle (2008) in her class focused on dialogic discourse which is presented as a critical, creative, and caring thinking community that she terms a "'community of enquiry'(COE)" (p. 234). In this community, collaborative talk is used as the "dialogic mechanism" (p. 234) and dialogic inquiry is based on Bakhtin's notion that truth is "'born between people collectively seeking the truth, in their process of dialogic

interaction'" (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 110). Teachers are not seen as sources of authority and knowledge, and instead, students are encouraged to "formulate and defend their own points of view," "give examples and counterexamples of their ideas, to make connections between each other's ideas, and consider the assumptions that lie behind them" (p. 235). Rather than searching for the correct answer, teachers' questions are meant to build knowledge with their students, to "enable the learners to share ideas and insights and support and challenge each other's ideas and thinking" (p. 235). In such discussions, teachers and students can disrupt patterns of othering and encourage students to embrace difference in order to work towards more socially just ways of viewing and treating those with disabilities.

This "community of enquiry" (Lyle, 2008) classroom focuses on dialogic teaching and offers a method of instruction that can encourage what Fecho, Graham, and Hudson-Ross (2005) called the "wobble" of teachers as they undergo the "unsettling state of vertigo" in the "authored space of uncertainty that lies between and among figured worlds" (p. 175). In their study of a teacher development program entitled PorTRAIT (Practitioner or Teacher Researchers As Inquiring Travelers), Fecho, Graham, and Hudson-Ross (2005) use the metaphor of the wobble to explain the interactions between teacher researchers who are encountering and exploring others figured worlds together. The purpose of this program was to allow teachers to come together and see themselves through the perspectives of other teachers. The teacher is wobbling as she or he encounters new "forces" and acts as juggler spinning plates atop dowels. She must begin to pay attention to the plates as they wobble, gathering data and a plan of action. The tension in the wobble allows her to consider her own practices and "improvise a new way of working" and "author a response that created a new text from out of the many figured worlds transacting there" (p. 179). The tension inherent in the wobble allows teachers to examine what doesn't seem right.

In this same way, a study on integrating a sociocultural approach to considering disability asks a teacher to consider disability as a new figured world. The tension it can create may be nerve-racking and unsettling to teachers, but it also can allow them to see their own perspectives on disabilities in others and then begin to interrogate harmful representations of characters with disabilities in literature and in turn explore difference with students.

Communities of inquiry (Lyle, 2008) that rely on the critical dialogue between teachers and students is urgently needed as many classrooms today are stifled by authoritarian school systems and disenfranchised teachers (Fecho, Coombs, & McAuley, 2012). Fecho, Coombs, and McAuley (2012) explained that for Bakhtin (1981) "understanding is merged with response, and that through response comes meaning --restless, transient, ephemeral meaning that is contingent on context and inclined toward its next response." (p. 477); therefore, conversation with students must be an ongoing reflective conversation. Bakhtin allows us to realize that through dialogue we make "personal understanding of our lives;" therefore, "all the texts, the ones we read and the we write, become our texts" (p. 478). It is important that ELA teachers allow free interaction and discussion of texts in their classrooms in order for students to come to their own understandings of class readings and of disability.

Fecho, Collier, Friese, and Wilson (2010) illustrate how this pedagogy can take place in their study of three students in a college course entitled "Culture, Literacy, and the Classroom" (p. 430). Students participated in an online forum and wrote three exploration papers that explored language, literacy, and culture. Although the study was limited—it examined only three students in the class—researchers looked at the three narratives, combined with an oral inquiry process discussing these, to gather an in-depth portrait of the personal and emotional response a dialogic classroom elicited from students. They concluded that dialogue "challenged the boundaries

between self and other, as dialogues with others may shape voices within ourselves, and vice versa" and that dialogue can become "an internal discussion and reflection on who we were and how we positioned ourselves" (p. 444). They argued that teachers must work within the tensions that these classrooms create, as they stated, "the goal is not to remove oneself from that tension but instead to enter into a dialogue that, like the cables on a suspension bridge, uses tension for support and equilibrium" (p. 446).

On the other hand, Adler, Rougley, Kaiser, and Caughlan (2003) found that teachers valued the dialogic framework for teaching and saw it as a way to help students achieve deeper understandings, yet they needed support and guidance in using the new techniques. In their study of 70 volunteer teachers and 1,400 students at 18 urban, suburban, and rural middle schools, Adler, Rougley, Kaiser, and Caughlan (2003) found that not every classroom discussion is conducive to student learning, and in many of the classrooms they observed, teachers were utilizing "monologic discourse," a limiting and controlling form of dialogue in which the teacher controls the pace and direction of discussion with students, often focused on test questions (p. 313). Instead, they proposed that "dialogic discourse" is a "true interaction among a variety of voices" (p. 313). In order to lead teachers in more dialogic teaching methods, researchers led a professional development as a summer institute for teachers, followed by biweekly group meetings at the individual sites and classroom visits and talks with participants. In classroom visits, teachers found the facilitators assistance in leading teachers towards more dialogic discourse patterns were helpful in using dialogic discourse. The findings of Adler, Rougley, Kaiser, and Caughlan (2003) suggest that while dialogic practices are valuable to teachers, they need guidance along the way when moving from a recitations based classroom to a discussion based one.

Summary

> Maxine Greene (1998) argued that teaching for social justice is to aim for the following: enhanced perception and imaginative explorations, for the recognition of social wrongs, or sufferings, of pestilences wherever and whenever they arise. It is to find models in literature and in history of the indignant ones, the ones forever ill at ease, and the loving ones who have taken the side of the victims of pestilences, whatever their names or places of origin. It is to teach so that the young may be awakened to the joy of working for transformation in the smallest places, so that they may become healers of their world. (p. xlv)

Not only must teachers equip students with the tools to think, speak, and write about their lived realities and society in critical ways, they must also find ways to fight against injustices and make social justice a concern for everyone. My focus on social justice and disability is in the recognition and respect for social and cultural difference and in the social empowerment of those with disabilities (Cochran-Smith & Dudley-Marling, 2012). Through a critical reading of texts dealing with disability and an open, dialogic discussion on such texts, teachers can effect fundamental reforms that can change the landscape of learning in classrooms (Stewart, 2010). As Comber (2015) pointed out "future critical literacy practices need to engage teachers and students in investigating relationships between changing phenomena, including money [or disability], rather than a static embracing of the old so- called basics and compliance with the status- quo" (p. 366). Such practices require more than simply reading texts dealing with disability and lecturing on the history and oppression people with disability have faced. It requires an awakening in students to consider different lived realities than their own and respond to them in just ways. As Greene (1998) stated, "It requires the realization of classroom-schoolyard communities in which

children and young men and women discover what it means to incarnate commitments to fairness, decency, and authentic concern---and to act on them in what they conceive to be their world" (p. xliv). This study is an attempt at the use of a social justice framework with dialogic pedagogy to better understand the differences in individuals who are disabled to lead to such acts of fairness, decency, and authentic concern.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methods I used to examine how a teacher plans and implements lessons that use a sociocultural perspective on disability to examine literature critically. The chapter is divided into the following sections: discussion of relevant theoretical frameworks, research design, selection of case participant, and protocols of collecting evidence for topic, my position as researcher, data analysis, and possible limitations of design.

Methodology

The grand theory that guided my study was social constructionism, specifically what Hruby (2001) explained is a third wave of social constructionism—new realism. The ideas of social constructionist's new realism follow the belief that our symbolic representations of reality do not "resemble their cause, or even the reality of experience" but they do reference the "real, greater-than-human world" (Hruby, 2001, p. 57). Therefore, our models and theories are not objectively valid, but instead are "determined by their pragmatic indexicality and the degree to which they allow us to make dependably accurate predictions" (p. 57). While the knowledge gained from my research cannot offer objective facts, it was useful in that it allowed me to better navigate my work involving the reading of disability in literature, including what directions I might look and what I could turn my attention towards in the context of a secondary classroom. As I begin my work as a researcher, this methodology was fitting as a starting point for how a teacher might guide students through texts that portray disability so that in the future I can better predict and examine other ways a teacher may successfully do so. As Hruby (2001) stated, the knowledge gained by a study can give us "a greater or lesser capacity to negotiate the real constraints and affordances of our world, including our social world, and allow us to pursue a

more fruitful and satisfying condition" (p. 57). Through my research I sought to describe and explain how social constructs that are created by and surround a teacher influence the planning and implementation of instruction, as well as how these understandings might allow me to "pursue a more fruitful and satisfying condition" (Hruby, 2001, p. 57) of integrating a social justice (Ayres, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009) approach to teaching texts portraying disability in ELA.

The theoretical framework I adopted for this study is based on Louise Rosenblatt's (2005) Theory of Transaction, which examines different ways readers "aesthetically" and "efferently" engage with and respond to texts (p. 73) and Bakhtin's (1981) social interplay of language, which considers the contexts that affect our understanding of language, and critical pedagogy, which can lead students through a critical examination of texts to understand systems of power and culture constructs. A critical discussion of disability in texts has the potential to open student awareness of difference; however, we need to know how this process can be realized. Utilizing the theories of Rosenblatt (2005) and Bakhtin (1981), as well as critical pedagogy theory such as Apple (2014), Freire (1968/1986) and Giroux (2008; 2011), I worked with a teacher to focus on the social and personal process of student learning in order to critique larger social structures surrounding disability. Therefore, the choice of a qualitative perspective allowed me to consider this process as a socially mediated one in which the teacher formed his approach to teaching texts that portray disability. A qualitative method also allowed me to collaborate with the participant to help him understand disability from a sociocultural perspective and in creating lessons together. I also used a variety of data sources to gain insight into how various factors influence a teacher's choices and actions during this process.

Research Question

This project was designed to examine the following research question: In what ways might a sociocultural lens support an English teacher's efforts to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically?

Study Propositions

I used a qualitative case study (Yin, 2009) to examine a teacher's perspective and response to planning for the topic, as well as an indication of how he or she implements the pedagogy with students. Patton (2015) explained that researchers using qualitative analysis seek an understanding of the whole system so that "greater attention can be given to nuance, setting, interdependencies, complexities, idiosyncrasies, and context" (p. 68). To do so, the naturalistic inquiry of a qualitative study seeks to detail the context in findings and then "highlights and deciphers context when interpreting findings" (Patton, 2015, p. 69). To fully examine the context in this study, it was important that I examine the multiple contexts of a teacher's learning experience. As Borko (2004) stated,

> For teachers, learning occurs in many different aspects of practice, including their classrooms, their school communities, and professional development courses or workshops. It can occur in a brief hallway conversation with a colleague, or after school when counseling a troubled child. To understand teacher learning, we must study it within these multiple contexts, considering both the individual teacher–learners and the social systems in which they are participants. (p. 4)

To explore the social nature of teacher learning, I examined multiple sources of data that illustrated a teacher's learning and construction of their social world (Barone, 2011). In addition to the learning experiences the teacher may have in typical spaces—the classroom, school

community, professional development—through interviews with the participant I sought to gain an insight into places not typically considered—conversations with other teachers, talks with students, and encounters with disability and disability literature outside of school. My goal in gathering data in these places was to uncover the meaning-making processes that the teacher used to make sense of his teaching about disability in literature, while highlighting the particular contextual nature of these processes (Marvasti, 2014).

My Position as Researcher

As Rossman and Rallis (2012) pointed out, reflexivity derives from the Latin word *reflexus*, which means a bending back, yet it also leads to the word reflex, the reactive response of an individual. As we react as researchers, it is important that we also reflect back on those reactions. My reactions throughout this study were focused on the many areas of my personal subjectivities as outlined below.

Patton (2015) explained that to practice reflexivity as a researcher, we must turn "mindfulness inward" in order to create self-awareness (p. 70). As I turned inward to reflect on these experiences, I identified and labeled the area as "subjective I's" in a similar manner to Peshkin (1998) who argued that researchers should identify their subjectivities and maintain an awareness throughout their research (p. 18). The first subjectivity I possessed was my Rural School Teacher I. For eight of my fifteen years teaching, I taught in a small, rural school with a disproportionate amount of white, lower to middle class students. This close-knit community allowed me to better understand the skepticism of outsiders by local townspeople as it took me several years to finally feel accepted and at "home" there. Although, I shared these small-town values, as one who hails from a small town in West Virginia, the same cultural insecurity for appearing "hillbilly" and "country" that I knew growing up was slightly different in this

community. Simply being an outsider put me at a disadvantage in this one-stoplight town and the linguistic and cultural insecurity of students who had lived with hurtful stereotypes of rural life, often led them to attempt to reclaim some agency in how they were perceived by others. I heard many West Virginia jokes in my first few years teaching in this community and the few differences in my Appalachian dialect were quickly pointed out by students. Some students would also transfer their feelings of cultural insecurity into prejudices against other races and cultures, as was shown with the West Virginia jokes so widely circulating in the student body and racial slurs I often overheard in the hallway. This experience gave me a heightened awareness of cultural difference and struggles with acceptance by the larger mainstream culture which allowed me to better understand why and how students might perceive difference or those seen as Other. However, it might have also made a clear analysis and understanding difficult; therefore, I remained aware of its influence on my analysis.

A second subjective I was also influenced by my years teaching and was labeled the Pedagogical Expert I. For four of my teaching years I served as department head to the English Department. This involved leading teachers in professional development, supervising and providing training to new teachers, and leading departmental meetings. These experiences both helped and interfered with my work as a researcher. For example, while I understood questioning methods that teachers may employ to promote dialogue in class discussions, I also had certain expectations of how one leads an English class. As the teacher shied away from discussions on larger social justice issues, an area I typically would cover in depth with students, I made note when my Pedagogical Expert I stepped in as an attempt to relay the "best" way to promote dialogue in the classroom, rather than allowing the teacher to develop his own method. On the other hand, my experiences teaching and leading other teachers afforded better opportunities for

working collaboratively with the teacher, as well as allowed me to construct meaning and understanding of data from interviews and classroom observations.

As I engaged in this study, I was also affected by the etic perspective of my interest in the field of disability studies. I labeled this subjectivity my Disability Justice Seeking I. My interest in disability studies sprung from my identifying with the field based on my past experiences growing up with a sister who is autistic. I came upon the field of disability studies, which is oftentimes heavily vested in social advocacy work, after searching for a lens to interpret and understand the portrayal of disability in literature. Because I had read and studied the literature in this field for the past five years, I took note of where my preconceptions may impact the decisions I make as a researcher. While my intentions was to lead a teacher to critique depictions of disability with students, I tended to react to stereotypes and possible unpleasant teacher or student responses with my own perceptions of what I felt was "right." In these cases, I followed the advice of Rossman and Rallis (2012) to note the differences between "compelling interest in a subject, advocacy, and out-and-out bias" (p. 50). I saw my role as researcher was, in part, to bring a new awareness to the teacher and students when examining disability in texts, yet I also was aware that I needed to remain openly conscious of how my own political and social views on disability shaped what questions I asked, how I interpreted data, and how I interacted with the participant.

My own configurations and likely misperceptions of what it means to have a disability also affected how I configured disability with the teacher participant. Because my work has been guided by critical inquiry and as such calls into question current ideology and power structures surrounding disability, my aim in research colored my understanding of teacher practice and influenced the way I interpreted my data. As I studied the teacher in his planning and

implementation of a sociocultural look at novels that portray disability, I also held a larger goal of leading teachers to challenge the oppression they see in the social and cultural relations surrounding disability as maintained in texts. And as I searched for understanding in my data, I also searched for a form of praxis (Freire, 1986), a way of acting through emancipatory knowledge (Crotty, 1998). I attempted to remain reflexive and aware of how this Disability Justice Seeking I impacted my openness to new understandings.

Methods

I employed qualitative case-study (Yin, 2009) and content analysis (Schreier, 2014) to support my efforts to develop insight into the use of a sociocultural lens as a tool for exploring disability critically. As Creswell (2013) explained, a qualitative study is needed when a researcher seeks to give a detailed understanding of an issue in order to empower the individuals involved with the issue with sharing their stories. In my interaction with the teacher, I sought to understand what his experience of using a sociocultural lens to critically examine disability in literature might look like—the how and why a teacher might integrate such an approach.

Case study. My subjectivities were important to note as I underwent the use of a case study. As the primary instrument for data collection and analysis I attempted to acknowledge my biases and not ignore relevant knowledge I possessed about the subject (Merriam, 2009). As I used the case study method, I explored the symbiotic meaning-making between students and teachers when reading texts, as well as how a secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teacher navigated the process of planning and implementing novels that portray disabilities. As Yin (2009) stated, the case study allows the researcher to investigate a "contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). The bounding of my case to one teacher allowed me to

work closely and in detail with the participant so that I could focus on how our transactions were allowing meaning-making. Through a case study, I was better able to understand the experience of the teacher when co-constructing and implementing lessons holistically and in its own uniqueness (Stake, 1995).

Because I believe the forming of knowledge is a social act, as Freire (1968/1986), Bakhtin (1981), and Gee (2008) suggested, the case study approach also afforded opportunities for conversation and meaning-making with the participant(s). As Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, and Morales (2007) explained, in addition to exploring a bounded system over time, the researcher uses "detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 245). In addition, the dialogic nature of interviewing that may be present in a case study made possible the ability to "act critically to transform reality" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 99). As Shor and Freire (1968/1986) explained this process,

> In communicating among ourselves, in the process of knowing the reality which we transform, we communicate and know socially even though the process of communicating, knowing, changing, has an individual dimension. But the individual aspect is not enough to explain the process. Knowing is a social event with nevertheless an individual dimension…Dialogue seals the relationship between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know, and who try to know. (p. 99)

In the co-construction of knowledge surrounding literature and disability, made possible through dialogue with the participant, I was able to learn how a teacher might focus on oppression and social injustices surrounding disability in an ELA classroom.

Content analysis of lesson plans and reflection journals. I used qualitative content analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Schreier, 2014) to study the teacher's

lesson plans and reflective journals. Content analysis allowed me to look for trends and patterns regarding how the teacher considers a sociocultural view of disability as they plan lessons that critically examine disability, as well as how these lessons were implemented. Schreier (2014) explains that content analysis allows the researcher to focus on aspects of meaning that are related to the research question in a highly systematic way. This form of analysis was fitting for my research question in that it offered both a highly structured and efficient approach to examining material that is related to my question, yet it also offers the flexibility of using both concept-driven and data-driven categories in one coding frame (Schreier, 2014). This flexibility allowed me to structure my categories so that I could consider the concepts and theory related to a sociocultural approach to examining disability in literature, and also create codes based on data generation so that the simultaneous collection and analysis of data might mutually shape each other (Sandelowski, 2000). With the former objective, I followed a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) in order to conceptually extend the sociocultural theory surrounding critical literacy approaches in literature instruction. I used the categories in Table 2, the Indicator of Critical Disability Stance, to form codes based on these theoretical tenets. In the latter, I followed a conventional content analysis process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) in which coding categories were derived from the data to examine the teacher's thinking behind their work as made evident through reflection journals and interviews.

Although the use of content analysis on lesson plans and reflection journals was meant to afford me the opportunity to gain insight into how a teacher considered culture, power, and dialogue when planning and implementing lessons on reading disability critically, I found that in practice this process did not work as neatly as I had planned. Rather than having the opportunity to review lesson plans and journals as the teacher completed them, I had to wait until Mr.

Peterson forwarded them to me, which was after our last interview in the study. At this point, lessons were presented to the class and I had observed them in context, as well as discussed Mr. Peterson's planning and implementing of the unit in interviews. In addition, his plans and journals were somewhat short and underdeveloped, which made it difficult to search for specific categories and codes that were generated in workshops, interviews, and observations, as well as discover new patterns and codes in the data.

Although I was disappointed that the content analysis of lesson plans and reflection journals did not always lead to newly generated codes, I found that when data in lesson plans was placed into dialogue with other sources of data, it corroborated what I had been seeing earlier in the study through observations, interviews, and workshops. Fortunately, I had developed a matrix to display and catalogue these themes early on so that I was then able to search for related areas in lesson plans and journal entries. Furthermore, because my observations of lessons were done before my actual analysis of lesson plans, I was able to gain a clearer picture of what these thematic understandings looked like in the context of the classroom and then analyze and make note of them further once I was able to analyze the actual plans. It was helpful to realize that my conclusions were further supported by data in lesson plans.

Narrative construction of interviews. I used a dialogic/performance approach to constructing narrative data of my interviews (Reissman, 2008). This approach considers both how the participant assembles their stories through language to communicate meaning and also how the dialogic environment surrounding the participant impacts their narrative. Holstein and Gubrium (2004) posited that researchers must attend to both the process and products of the interview, as well as the social construction of knowledge. By attending to *what* (the social world of the interview) and the *how (*the way in which the respondent's comments are produced and

“construct aspects of experiential reality in collaboration with the interviewer,”) of the interview, the researcher can focus on the process of knowledge construction (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, p. 156). Interviews are interactional; therefore, researchers should embrace the approach of interviewing to consider the joint construction of narrative and meaning (Reissman, 2008). This broader context was especially important during the interviews conducted for this study. As I examined the teacher’s lesson plans and reflection journals, the interviews gave me a chance to think about how our discussion of culture, power, and language surrounding disability effected the teacher as he made decisions about instruction.

Participant selection. I used purposeful sampling to select a teacher that I hoped would offer an “information-rich” case from which I could learn a great deal on my research question (Patton, 1990, p. 69). This purposeful sampling required a search for a secondary ELA teacher who was open to the idea of working collaboratively with to discover how to best plan and implement the teaching of novels dealing with disability using a sociocultural perspective. I also hoped to avoid choosing a participant who eagerly agreed on such a study because he had an “ax to grind” (Seidman, 2013, p. 54). For these reasons, I identified a teacher with at least two years of experience in the classroom, one who had taught canonical and/or young adult literature in the past and who felt comfortable with basic skills of teaching such as class management and unit planning. My participant was enthusiastic and open to learning a new approach to literature, but having never heard of disability studies, as he shared in Interview 1, he was not doing so for any overt political cause or intention.

Data Generation

Creswell el al. (2007) explained that in addition to exploring a bounded system over time, with a case study the researcher uses “detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple

sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports)" to report a case description and case-based themes (p. 245). The data generation strategy that I used for this case study followed the recommendation of Yin (2003) to gather six types of data: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observations, and physical artifacts. In this process, I used the theoretical propositions that I reviewed in chapter 2; however, because the knowledge base surrounding a teachers' use of literature to examine disability critically is somewhat sparse, the study also assumed the characteristics of an exploratory study rather than a descriptive or explanatory one (Yin, 2009). As such, it was important to state what was to be explored, the purpose of the exploration, and the criteria by which I would judge the exploration successful (Yin, 2009). In what follows, I make these three areas clear as I review the types of data I gathered, as well as the phases of my study that structured this process.

I began my data generation by completing four semi-structured workshops in which the participant and I co-created a unit plan and ten lesson plans for teaching literature that examined disability critically. This phase is discussed in more detail below. I also generated data through three semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 2009) at the start, midway, and completion of the study. Throughout the implementation of these lessons, I took detailed, comprehensive notes of four classroom observations of the teacher leading students in the lessons. In addition, as mentioned above, I gathered documents in the form of a teacher reflection journal in which I asked the teacher to share his progress and thoughts about planning for and teaching the lesson, as well as his reflections on student experiences with the text(s) and lesson. Additional data included field notes and memos from the four developmental workshops conducted at the start of the study, each lasting 2 to 3 hours and in interviews with the participant. The data gathered in interviews,

training sessions, classroom observations, co-created lesson plans, and reflection journals allowed me to follow the process alongside the teacher as he used a sociocultural lens to view and teach disability critically.

Table 1 details the three phases I created for the study. These phases guided me in stating explicitly what would be explored, materials used, and protocols for each data generation.

Table 1

Phases of Research Study

Phase	Activities	Purposes	Data Sources
Phase 1: Initial meeting/ Workshop	Interview on understanding of ideas inherent to a sociocultural view of disability and how to implement in the classroom	Relationship building; reflection on the teacher's existing classroom practices; novel choice for study to allow time for reading and planning	Interview 1 Lesson plans Transcription of training session
2nd Workshop with Teacher	Distribution of literature & workshop in sociocultural lens of disability, critical literacy, and dialogic teaching practices	Adapting of classroom practices to promote dialogue on disability acceptance	

(continued)

Table 1 *(cont.)*

Phase	Activities	Purposes	Data Sources
3rd Workshop with Teacher	Discussion of literature and video read independently.	Further discussion and synthesis of ideas; answering participant's questions regarding new theory and teaching ideas	
4th Workshop with teacher	Creation of teacher curriculum	Formulation of lesson plans	Transcription of training session
Phase 2: 2nd interview on initial experiences; needed curriculum adjustments & observations	*Teacher reflection*-collect teacher's reflections; observations of classroom lesson	Documentation of evolving shared interpretations of lessons. Further collaboration on lesson plan ideas.	Interview 2 and four classroom observations
Phase 3: Final interview	Reflection on teacher journal entries; submitting lesson plans	Comparing and analyzing data in dialogue with other previously generated.	Interview 3 and lesson plans

Workshops. In Phase 1, I formed collaborative partnership with the participant to begin considering how he would use a sociocultural perspective in using literature to discuss disability critically. These initial meetings with the participating teacher followed a workshop-based process in which the teacher and I progressively discussed existing ideas about disability, a sociocultural approach to disability, and how to structure the teaching of novels to foster acceptance for disability in students. We also discussed the teacher's dialogic practices in the classroom and the constraints, challenges, and broader contexts surrounding these practices through the reading and sharing of resources. In our last workshop, the teacher and I collaboratively selected class novels for literature circles that would be used to create lesson plans

focused on fostering student awareness of the marginalization of people with disabilities and ways in which students can embrace difference. These four semi-structured workshop sessions in Phase 1 were audiotaped, transcribed, and coded in order to look more closely at how a teacher underwent the training process.

Participant lesson plans. Beginning with our fourth workshop and throughout the course of the study, the participant and I co-created ten lesson plans following a sociocultural approach to using literature to critically examine disability. The purpose of this exploration together was to introduce the teacher to the sociocultural tenets which served as a guide for how he might plan and implement such ideas when critically examining disability. As I explored the process we took when undergoing this work, I used the guide in Table 2 to guide me. My overarching goal in lesson planning with the teacher was the successful exploration of a sociocultural lens to view disability in literature and the integration of those ideas into his lesson plans. Data gathering in this process consisted of content analysis as described above.

Instructional materials used. As discussed above, I fostered four workshop-based meetings to review the sociocultural tenets of inclusive thinking and rejecting normative discourse when discussing disability with the teacher participant. These initial meetings with the participating teacher followed a workshop-based process in which the teacher and I progressively discussed existing ideas about disability, a sociocultural approach to disability, and how to structure teaching that worked to create acceptance for disability in the classroom. The texts used for sharing this information in workshop included the essay “Citizenship and Disability” (Bérubé, 2009), and various online articles and blogs such as “The Disability Visibility Project” (Wong, 2017) and “Don’t label people with down syndrome” (Perry, 2012). I also asked the teacher to view short video clips such as “Shutting down the bullsh*t about autism” (Marron, 2017) and

"Inspiration porn and the objectification of disability: Stella Young at TEDxSydney" (2014). Together we reviewed the "All Means All (ALA)" website toolkit for educators as we focus on inclusive thinking and classroom planning.

In our second meeting, the teacher and I began to examine critiques of ableist portrayals of disability in literature and society. This was illustrated through an introduction to literary portrayals of disability critically evaluated through the disability troupes illustrated by Dolmage (2014) guide on disability myths. The readings *Telethons: Spectacle, Disability and the Business of Charity* (Longmore, 2015), and "A Test of Wills: Jerry Lewis, Jerry's Orphans, and the Telethon" (Johnson, 1992), illustrated this concept for Mr. Peterson as well.

As we considered the inclusion of culturally diverse literature, I introduced popular young adult novels that demonstrated varied ways of understanding disability. These novels were first recommended to me by those in the community of disability studies through the Facebook group, Teaching Disability Studies, as positive or realistic portrayals of disability. I have also tested each novel in my own classes and discovered that they were high interest novels for many students and spurred deep conversation on disability. The novels include *Marcello in the Real World* (Stork, 2009), *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Nighttime* (Haddon, 2003), *Two Girls Staring at the Ceiling* (Frank, 2014), *Out of My Mind* (Draper, 2010), and *Say What You Will* (McGovern, 2015). Because the teacher was anxious to get started on the readings and lesson planning, I also gave him the two chapters we planned to discuss in the workshop taken from Bob Fecho's (2011) book, *Teaching for the students: Habits of heart, mind, and practice in the engaged classroom* chapters one and two.

In meeting two the teacher and I spent the majority of our time discussing the readings from Fecho (2011) in order to frame how the teacher would discuss disability with the class. He

seemed to be struggling with allowing the students' freedom and open pace for dialogue; therefore, rather than focus on covering disability from a critical perspective, I chose to instead focus on principles of practice surrounding dialogic pedagogy.

After our second meeting, I asked that the participant watch *Lives Worth Living* (Fay & Neudel, 2011), a documentary on the plight of disability people in America. I also asked that he read a chapter from *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (Shapiro, 1994), and "Nothing About Us Without Us": Disability Rights in America" (Scotch, 2009). The above work was completed at home, independent of the researcher.

In workshop three, I had intended our main focus to be creating the unit plan; however, the bulk of this workshop was spent discussing the readings done at home. Here, I briefly reviewed the concepts of dialogic pedagogy and reading for "aesthetic" and "efferent" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.73). I also delved deeper into the sociocultural lens of disability to include the social injustices those with disabilities face in our society. We discussed the reading from Shapiro (1994) and the viewing of Fay and Neudel (2011), *Lives Worth Living* in more detail. As a resource for classroom readings, I also introduced popular and current sources for students such as the *New York Times* Disability Opinion Column and popular disability blogs which I felt would be useful in creating dialogue with students on disability.

Observations. I observed four classroom lessons led by the teacher participant that engaged students in a critical analysis of disability within the context of the novel or other texts dealing with disability. Following the advice of Angrosino and Rosenberg (2011), these observations applied rigorous attention to what was being said and done in relation to the teacher's use of a sociocultural framework to guide lessons. To guide my data gathering process during observations, I considered the indicators of critical disability stance that were included in

my teacher preparation work for teaching with a sociocultural lens as shown in Table 2 below under "Presence of Supporting Conditions for a Disability Stance in Classroom" to pay attention to what was being done and said with students.

In addition to open observations which focus on the areas of Table 2, I used a closed protocol in order to limit and focus my data gathering. This protocol (see Appendix B) was used to focus the observation on: (a) the objectives of the lesson for critical examination of disability, (b) teacher pedagogy, (c) student use of dialogue, (d) relevant quotes, and (e) unexpected events. I took field notes in these areas and then typed and examined for meaningful overlap of content, pedagogy, and sociocultural lens for using literature to examine disability critically. It was important to note that my observations were not a neutral act in which I could represent the culture without my own subjectivities and power relations at play. Instead of neutrally observing the classroom interactions between teacher and student, I took notes in the form of memos of where I stood in this interaction and ways in which my presence impacted the subjects being studied.

Table 2

Condition Supporting Sociocultural Lens in Viewing Disability Critically

Indicator of Critical Disability Stance	Presence of sociocultural lens & critical disability stance in teacher lesson planning	Presence of Supporting Conditions for a Disability Stance in Classroom
Inclusive thinking	Consideration given to creating equitable student roles; sharing of power and authority between students and teacher; supportive of all learning abilities and needs; valuing of each student's unique contribution; fostering of peer connections	All students engaged in learning tasks; consideration given to grouping; differentiated tasks for students at varied readiness levels.

(continued)

Table 2 *(cont.)*

Indicator of Critical Disability Stance	Presence of sociocultural lens & critical disability stance in teacher lesson planning	Presence of Supporting Conditions for a Disability Stance in Classroom
Rejects normative discourse in class dialogue	Includes plans for addressing people first language and stereotypes surrounding disability	Teacher supports and guides students to choices in people-first language (student says: autistic person. and teacher asks, are there other qualities about this person we could use *before* we use autism- this person is creative, strong in science, and has autism…) Teacher confronts stereotypes / clichés as they appear in class discussions (kids with disabilities do x,y,z… teacher asks, what else do we see students do that might challenge that stereotype?)
Critiques ableist portrayals of disability in literature & society	Engaging in critical stance to look closely at stereotypes and oppression present in literature.	Teacher draws attention to the ways in which society views disability as one-dimensional (pitied or inspirational) or inferior (individual is defined by his/her disability); teacher looks for opportunities to challenge assumptions ("smiling at a staircase")
Uses culturally diverse literature	Teacher chooses one or more texts that offer a diverse portrayal of disability.	Teacher engages students about the importance of culturally diverse texts
Dialogic discourse on literature and social constructions of disability	Incorporates student reflection on readings and discussion of social constructions surrounding disability (reader response & classroom dialogue)	Teacher engages students in reader responses to literature; teacher guides and supports dialogic discussions on disability
Awareness of injustices experienced by people with disabilities	Incorporates introduction to and reflection on social issues facing those with disabilities in lesson plans.	Evidence of teacher using current events / social issues in discussion of the novel/ literature

Field notes. In addition to field notes during observations, data from field notes were also collected during the four developmental workshops conducted in Phase 1 and in classroom observations. Field notes focused on “emergent insights, potential themes, methodological questions, and links between themes and theoretical notions” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 287). The overall goal of this data generation of field notes was to develop an understanding of the teacher and his or her experience understanding and using a sociocultural lens to critically examine disability when planning and implementing lessons.

Memo-taking. A form of data generation that took place continuously throughout my study was memo-taking. The purpose of writing memos was to note my areas of bias, as well as work to create a story or “history grid” (Reissman, 2008, p. 25) together with the participant through the course of the study. Through memos I sought to stay open to my subjectivities—how I was being shaped by the research experience and how my thinking was informed by the data (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998). Through the constant monitoring of the subjectivities of Rural Teacher I, Pedagogical Expert I, and Disability Justice Seeking I as discussed above, I noted the biases that entered into my study and interactions with the teacher participant in memo form (Peshkin, 1988).

One means for memo-taking that allowed me to focus on subjectivities was through what Dahlberg (2006) called bridling. Bridling “aims to direct the energy into the open and respectful attitude that allows the phenomenon to present itself” (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nystrom, 2008, p. 130). In this way I was open to the experience but also interjected my subjectivity and was constantly aware of my own experiences. As Vagle (2009) explained, when bridling, the researcher must be “patient and attentive” when exploring the relationships between the subject and phenomenon and between the researcher and the subject (p. 591). Directed and constant

memo-taking and a self-analysis of my own researching process allowed me to bridle and remain reflective of the past, as well as consider what direction the future action my research could take me. My memo-taking was a recursive process that lead me to act and reflect on these subjectivities and the narrative inquiry of the participant during the process of the study.

Reflection journals. The cooperating teacher used a self-reporting tool in the form of reflection journals to gather information about the use of a sociocultural lens in teaching, areas of learning and growth experience, and the effects of classroom procedures as created in lesson planning. The log was intended to capture when and how lessons were taught, the ways and best examples in which a sociocultural lens was used to examine disability in literature with students, what collaboration was used to guide the process in the classroom, the goals for integrating a sociocultural lens to examine disability critically in the upcoming lessons, and ways in which I could assist the teacher in meeting these goals. Descriptive use of content analysis as described below was used to analyze the reflection journal.

Semi-structured interviews. To understand how the language, culture, and ideas of disability impact a teacher's view of teaching novels portraying disability, I conducted four semi-structured interviews. My first interview gathered information about the teacher's past experiences with disability and his knowledge of disability in texts, his use of language and dialogue in classrooms, and his understanding of response to reading. I posed general questions about teaching and disability portrayed in novels before asking how the teacher had proceeded to teach and discuss disability that is portrayed novels and other areas of difference in the past. In this interview, I attempted to begin with Patton's (2015) suggestion to ask noncontroversial questions (see Appendix A) focused on present behaviors, activities, and experiences in order to gain detail and fill out a descriptive picture before moving on to questions about the past. As

Riessman (2008) explains, “narrative inquiry ‘is grounded in the study of the particular’; the analyst is interested in how a speaker or writer assembles and sequences events and uses language and /or visual images to communicate meaning” (p. 11). My goal in this first interview, and those following, was to generate a detailed account of the participant’s experiences understanding and teaching about difference and disability in the past so that I might begin to create an extended narration.

In the second interview, the teacher participant was asked to describe their experiences within the start of the curriculum. I followed Patton’s (2015) matrix of question options which includes behavior/experiences, opinions/values, feelings/emotions, knowledge, sensory, and background to guide the forming of the questions for the second interview (see Appendix A). Topics of discussion in this interview was the participant and student’s reactions to the readings and instructional materials in phase 1, teacher workshops, and how these have affected planning and lessons. We also needed to calibrate our co-constructed lesson plans based on the feedback and experiences with the lessons thus far in the classroom, as well as discuss student reactions to the novel and other materials thus far. A major objective of this interview was discerning how or if the teacher is demonstrating an evolved understanding of examining disability critically. I was interested in seeing if the use of responsive reading and dialogic practices, and an overarching sociocultural lens would allow this act to proceed more smoothly or with greater difficulty.

In the final interview, the participant was asked to share his or her assessment of the curriculum, including students’ understandings of disability as shown through journals and other assessment pieces. In addition, the participant was asked to discuss the impact of the study on their own knowledge and skills in teaching novels that deal with disability (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis

As I analyzed the data generated during each phase of the study, I followed a constructionist approach (Roulston, 2010). Yates (2003) explains that data in a case study provides an in-depth understanding and detailed descriptions of a particular case and explores how the individual gives meaning to and expresses themselves, as well as the social events and complexities of a process taking place. In order to form conceptual validity in this process, I realized that I must identify and measure indicators that best represent the theoretical concepts that I wish to measure (George, Bennett, Lynn-Jones, & Miller, 2005). The indicators that represent the theoretical concepts of a teacher using a sociocultural lens to support his or her efforts in planning and implementing lessons are those stated above in Table 2 (inclusive thinking, rejecting of normative discourse in class dialogue, using culturally diverse literature, dialogic discourse on literature and social constructions of disability, and an awareness of the injustices faced by those with disabilities). Coding guides were developed using a deductive method of considering theory beforehand and also through inductive themes that emerged through the process of filtering data into groups and categories (see Appendix C). This coding process allowed for the generation of new themes that were enhanced by the theoretical framework. In the following section I discuss the data analysis procedures I used for each data source of the study.

Workshop transcripts and field notes. The most fitting tool for analyzing my workshop field notes data was Stewart's (2011) Transactional Analysis (TA) which blends narrative analysis with thematic analysis in order to examine the way that a participant's "worldviews and lived experiences are shaped as they enter into dialogue with others and with the texts they read" (p. 283). TA draws on narrative analysis techniques by paying attention to the mutual shaping of meaning through the dialogue of participant and researchers. Stewart (2011) explained that this

involves asking the following questions: "How might the participant be structuring his or her story in ways that are specific to the interview situation? How might the researchers' experiences be influencing his or her understanding of the stories told by the participant?" (p. 287). After transcribing my workshop sessions, I followed the steps Stewart (2011) outlines for TA.

Analysis of lesson plans. Lesson plans were also analyzed using content analysis in order to search for themes and patterns in interpreting how a teacher plans and implements lessons that use a sociocultural lens to examine disability in literature critically. Interpreting the data for lesson plans followed the steps below based on the suggestions of Schreier (2014):

1. I first read through the text in its entirety, familiarizing myself with the content and taking note of significant responses written by the participant.
2. To build a coding frame, I broke down materials into chunks and finalize codes one topic at a time, developing a coding dictionary as I proceed.
3. After creating a coding dictionary, I reread the entire document to code all aspects of the content related to my research question.
4. I then began structuring main categories and generating sub categories as concept-driven and data driven categories.
5. After clearly defining the categories in my coding frame, I revised and expanded my codes, making subcategories main categories and collapsing similar subcategories if needed.
6. After generating categories, I defined these categories by determining what was meant by each code and characteristics of the code, as well as the indicators of the code that point to the presence of the phenomenon.
7. I then segmented the material of the text into units based on thematic criterion. To do

so, I looked for topic changes that corresponded to a theme or to the formal inherent structure of the material (paragraphs, sentence divisions, etc.).

8. I completed a pilot phase of the coding frame to try out coding on a select material of the text, purposefully choosing this material as one in which the majority of my categories can be applied.
9. I also completed a trial coding in rounds of coding to evaluate and modify the coding frame, as well as checked for exclusive subcategories and validity.
10. After evaluating my coding frame, I was prepared to enter the main analysis phase in which I divided the material into coding units, assigning categories in the coding frame, and entering my result into a coding sheet. Throughout this process, I used memo-taking to take note of any coding inconsistencies and to keep track of why I interpreted the units differently.
11. After coding the document, I prepared the results in a data matrix that allowed me to answer the research question.

Analysis of participant reflective journals. The teacher's reflective journal was also analyzed using content analysis in order to search for themes and patterns in interpreting how a teacher plans and implements lessons that use a sociocultural lens to examine disability in literature critically. Although I followed the steps of Schreier (2014) as listed above, these journals were very short and did not allow for an extensive analysis.

Interview transcripts. I used Stewart's (2011) Transactional Analysis (TA) to analyze data generated through the semi-structured interviews. Stewart (2011) explained that this involves asking the following questions: "How might the participant be structuring his or her story in ways that are specific to the interview situation? How might the researchers' experiences be influencing

his or her understanding of the stories told by the participant?" (p. 287). Thematic analysis was used to identify themes and also to explore how dialogue shapes the worldviews of participants and to note the moments of mutual shaping in participants' stories.

Observation field notes. Field notes provided knowledge about the process a teacher goes through when implementing lessons. Understanding the complexities of both the teacher's implementation of the lesson and the guiding of student's to critically examine disability in texts was a challenge; therefore, my field notes were taken in the form of open note-taking, as well as a more structured approach through the use of a protocol (see Appendix B).

Researcher memos. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) explain that memos are a way to capture the researcher's thoughts throughout data collection, data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, conclusion testing, and final reporting. I used memos during these times, focusing specifically on the effects of my personal subjectivities, how I relate to the participant and the classroom situation. I also used memos to keep track of coding choices, emergent patterns, possible connections between codes, and any problems I encountered in the study. As I began to turn away from data gathering and towards the analysis of these notes, I wrote integrative memos in order to elaborate on ideas and to tie codes and data together. As Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) explain, integrative memos allowed me to "develop theoretical connections between field note excerpts and the conceptual categories they imply" (p. 195-196). This process allowed me to constantly analyze and create meaning in order to answer my research question.

Possible Limitations to Study

While a qualitative study allowed me to develop an in-depth understanding of how a teacher plans and implements a unit on a novel that portrays disability, the limitations of my study

involved the bounding of the case by time, events, and processes. This can be challenging as Creswell (2013) pointed out; some cases do not have clear beginning and ending points. As I set boundaries, I was excluding teachers that were just beginning their teaching careers or at the end of their career, as well as those who are resistant to a social justice curriculum. I was also looking at one teacher working within a middle class, suburban school. As a bounded, exploratory case study, the data findings were not generalizable to a larger population (Creswell, 2013). However, the data findings are intended to give meaning to why and how a teacher plans and implements the lessons we construct together, and thus the data gathered is critical in understanding how this process takes place.

Since this study was designed to understand how a teacher plans and implements the teaching of texts that portrays disability, the variables surrounding the events and process of instructional planning vary. For example, many discussions and critical analysis of books will change depending on the books that the teacher chooses and the activities students are asked to complete. However, the results and my interpretations provide knowledge about how a critical sociocultural look at disability in novels can be planned for and implemented with a teacher, allowing me to better plan for future investigations.

Merriam (1998) also warns that case studies can be limited by the sensitivity, integrity, and ethics of the researcher. Because the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the integrity of the study can be compromised if he or she is not properly trained. In addition, Merriam (1998) warns that a case writer could choose data so that anything he wanted could be illustrated; or in the opposite vein, he or she could misread what people say, think, or appear to do and miss what in fact they are actually doing. To control such limitations, this study

included meticulous and thorough field notes and the subjectivity of the researcher was monitored and analyzed through the use of detailed and constant memos.

Chapter 4

Thematic Understandings

This study investigated how a sociocultural lens might support an English Language Arts teacher's effort to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically. In this chapter, I discuss five major themes related to my research question. For each theme, I use data to illustrate how the theme relates to the instructional planning and decision making of the participant, as well as his conceptualization he has of a sociocultural lens of disability as he undergoes the work of teaching a literary unit focused on disability and difference.

In order to investigate my research question, I worked with a high school English teacher, Mr. Peterson, for a period of nine weeks. During this time, I completed four interviews with Mr. Peterson and observed him teach four different lessons. Additionally, I analyzed 14 daily lesson plans developed by Mr. Peterson as described in Chapter 3 and chronicled in the appendices, as well as a journal Mr. Peterson kept to reflect on his curriculum unit. To make meaning from data generated with the participant, I used both deductive and inductive coding. For deductive coding, I relied on the protocol cultivated from the literature on disability studies and inclusion of students with disabilities (see description on p. #), which allowed me to search for conditions in which the teacher was using a sociocultural lens in viewing disability. I also used open coding to understand how a critical disability stance for teaching literature might influence a teacher of English Language Arts (see description on p. 63 and Appendix B). In my presentation of this data, I will discuss themes through direct quotations from interviews, observed dialogue in the classroom, and email and texting correspondence with the participant. In order to provide clarity to the reader, I have omitted "filler" words such as "um," "like," and "oh" in quotes. In an effort to ensure trustworthiness, I follow direct quotations with parenthetical information to indicate the

date and source of the data and provide access to the referenced data in Appendix C. The chart below illustrates what these citations look like in the text. (I will remove these notations after my defense.) In addition, all names of people and places are pseudonyms.

Table 3

Citation Method for Various Data Sources

Data Source	**Abbreviations Used**
Interviews	Interview#.date of interview.lines from transcript For example: I1. 2/28/18. L34 Subsequent citations do not contain the date.
Workshops	Workshop #.date of workshop.lines from transcript For example: W1. 3/6/18. L178-79 Subsequent citations do not contain the date.
Observations	Observation #. date of observation For example: Obs. 5. 5/9/18 Subsequent citations do not contain the date.
Lesson Plans & Diary Entries	Lesson#, date of lesson For example, (Lesson 5, 4/13/18)

In order to examine the growth the teacher made in applying a sociocultural lens to a literature unit, I analyzed data generated from interactions with the teacher through workshops, interviews, observations, and content analysis, using Bakhtin's (1981) theory of learning as a social act. Learning as a social act leads to a person's "ideological becoming" and development of the self as a "process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). Throughout the study, attention was paid to how the participant "assimilated" the "words of others" and how he referred to a sociocultural lens when planning and implementing lessons with the purpose of examining disability critically.

I have organized the following chapter into five major themes and together, they illustrate how the sociocultural lens introduced to Mr. Peterson added to his understanding of disability during the study; however, this lens did not impact all areas of his teaching. The first theme discusses the influence of the teacher's personal experiences on his conceptualization of the sociocultural lens. The second, on how a sociocultural lens expanded the teacher's conceptualization of disability. In the third theme, I discuss the teacher's use of a sociocultural lens applied to disability in literature to lead his students' in a critical analysis of disability in literature. For the fourth theme, I present how the sociocultural lens applied to literature and disability was not sufficient to lead Mr. Peterson to engage in dialogue with students on disability. Finally, in the fifth theme I describe that the teacher did not have an inclusive classroom, which suggests the need for further professional development.

Theme 1: Personal experiences influence a teacher's conceptualization of disability. This first theme explores how the teacher's personal experiences influence his use of a sociocultural lens to examine disability in the classroom. As I considered how a sociocultural lens might support a teacher's efforts to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically, I needed to gain insight into the participant's past experiences and understanding of disability in his own life, both professionally and personally. Examining the personal experiences of the participant allowed me to understand how his past experiences might impact his approach to disability literature in the classroom.

Past teaching experiences influence the teacher's conceptualization of disability. In interview one (I1, 2/28/18), (see Appendix B for interview protocols), Mr. Peterson elaborated on his past experiences integrating disability into the ELA classroom, explaining that in his Freshman English classes he reviews appropriate language use surrounding disability with

students. As he explained, he spends one day in which he talks about "communicating with people with disabilities and being aware of person-first language and that kind of stuff, so I'm aware of that kind of stuff;" however, he added that he didn't "have a lot of personal experience myself" (I1. L27-30).

In addition, Mr. Peterson reported asking his Freshman Composition students to read a personal narrative focused on the experiences of a woman with a disability. Mr. Peterson described the narrative as one in which, "people are always looking down on her and [she describes] the stuff that people have done to her that were kind of offensive, but she knows that they were not intending to be offensive" (I1. L43-45). Mr. Peterson's rationale for teaching this material was so that students would realize when their own behaviors might be unintentionally offensive. As he phrased it, in discussing these issues students would "be able to talk to people that are a little different than you" (I1. L34). He reported that in a joking way he tells students that he could subtitle his classes, "how to not inadvertently look like a jerk" so that they are "aware of how their language can be perceived" (I1.L36-37).

As I reflected on Mr. Peterson's discussion of past lessons, I concluded that his work was a step towards integrating an examination of disability into the ELA classroom. Although these lessons illustrated a limited approach, his attempts at integrating the voice of a disabled writer and a discussion of how this person felt others should speak to her was a step towards the sociocultural lens I sought to introduce to Mr. Peterson. In my analysis of this theme, I was led to consider how Mr. Peterson's personal experiences might influence his understanding of the sociocultural lens as applied to literature. Because his conceptualization of teaching and disability was mainly concerned with "not offending" those with disabilities, i.e. language sensitivity, I wondered how he might bring these views into planning and implementing a unit that focused on

disability. Mr. Peterson's view of disability as a concern for speaking correctly, or "not looking like a jerk" illustrated a common concern of many educators, as oftentimes, teachers are told to use person first language to refer to students with disabilities such as students with "special needs" or "students with disabilities." This view is typically opposite of that of a sociocultural approach, (see discussion in chapter 3), which values honoring disability and using language that keeps disability in the forefront, an individual is a "disabled person" instead. I worried that these experiences would limit Mr. Peterson's conceptualization of disability in our work together, yet as I considered his willingness to listen to the voice of a disabled writer and the use this narrative to guide class discussion, I also sensed an openness in Mr. Peterson to better understand and honor disabled individuals.

Personal experiences influence a teacher's conceptualization of disability. In addition to discussing classroom experiences, I also asked Mr. Peterson about his personal experiences with students with disabilities because I felt this would reveal the interconnectedness between his experiences and the use of literature to examine disability critically. I felt that it might be difficult for Mr. Peterson to discuss disability in terms of social and cultural constructions, particularly in a public-school setting where the medical lens of disability is often applied to students with disabilities in school. While he might begin to recognize the perpetuation of harmful disability myths in literature, critiquing disability in the greater society, including one's own classroom, may be difficult for a teacher who is entrenched in ableist viewpoints and structures present in public schools and society (Connor, 2012; Connor, Valle, & Hale, 2014). Mr. Peterson's discussion of personal experiences with disability aligned with this opinion, and led to the theme that one's personal experiences and understanding of disability can influence the teacher's understanding of the sociocultural view of disability that is introduced throughout the course of

the study. What follows is a description of Mr. Peterson's personal conceptualization of disability in his teaching and personal life and how he relied on this to understand the sociocultural model of disability presented to him in our study workshops.

In Interview 1, I asked Mr. Peterson questions about his personal experiences with disability and familiarity with ideas surrounding a sociocultural model of disability. I found that while Mr. Peterson discussed language issues related to disability in his teaching, he also felt somewhat unsure of a sociocultural approach to disability and literature in the classroom. When asked how familiar he was with disability, he stated, "I'm aware of that kind of stuff [disability as a subject], but I don't have a lot of personal experience myself" (I.1, L. 29-30). Although he reported having experience with disability in teaching, as discussed above, he did not seem to know where or how these experiences related to his own understanding of disability.

Yet Mr. Peterson's personal experiences were quite extensive. In Interview 1, he also spoke of having relatives with disabilities. In Interview 2, he explained these relatives had been cared for by family members for their entire lives, which became increasingly difficult over time, because of health issues in these caretakers and the financial costs. Mr. Peterson reported, as his mother was constantly saying that "they [the family] needed some type of assisted living or something like that because my grandma is getting really old." As I discussed the situation further with him, it seemed that the noted financial challenges made it hard for these relatives to leave their homes and obtain medical assistance for their conditions. As he stated, his they had a "rough life," made worse by their disability, and described their world as "small" because they were restricted by both disability and limited finances (W1. 3/6/18. L175-181).

It was difficult to discern whether disability or socioeconomic status or both were to blame for the limited lives of Mr. Peterson's relatives, as he seemed mixed in his description of

them. He pointed out that a lower socioeconomic status made life more challenging, yet their disability was also a large factor. On one hand, the world of these relatives was limiting because of their disability, and “their lack of just being able to go out and do stuff” (W1. 3/6/18. L. 178-79). As he stated, “if they didn't have a disability, then I think that at least one of them would have gotten out of the situation that they're in now, but because of the disability, like she just can't” (W1. 3.6.18. l.175-81). I found it hard to imagine an aspect of the relative’s disability that might confine them to their homes, as it did not necessarily prevent them from living independent lives or rob them of the ability to get “out of the situation,” yet, Mr. Peterson felt that their disability was a limiting factor in their lives. On the other hand, it also appeared that Mr. Peterson felt money was a factor, as he explained, other family members were not able to help much and looked on them “with pity…not just because of their disability but because of the situation that they're in, but their disability adds to that” (W1. 3.6.18. l.165-72). The lower socioeconomic status made it hard for his relatives to improve their living arrangement, which was compounded by the fact that they were disabled.

Because disability, when combined with monetary struggles, was seen by Mr. Peterson and other family members as a barrier to living a full life, he demonstrated a view of disability as one that was, in his words, “very, very limiting” (W.1. 3/6/18. L175-76) at the start of the study. Although he seemed fully aware of the marginalization and suffering that his family members experienced as disabled individuals living in poverty, he did not appear to question the social and cultural forces at play, which he noted also impacted their lives. For example, had Mr. Peterson considered how their situation might illustrate the failure of our government to allocate resources which would allow the relatives to lead fully independent lives? Mr. Peterson’s experiences with disability were similar to many families and caretakers who struggle with limited financial

assistance, yet view disability as the major limiting factor. Rather than consider the social forces at play that create inequalities between disabled and nondisabled persons, disability is often seen as a source of suffering. As I considered this data I concluded that the introduction of sociocultural lens could allow Mr. Peterson to view disability in a different light than he had with past experiences, particularly ones in which he saw disability as limiting and to be pitied. I was eager to work towards a new approach to disability in the classroom that would add on to his past attempts at teaching students about disability and offer new views of disability.

The influence of Mr. Peterson's experiences as a student. Similar to his personal experience of disability as a family struggle, Mr. Peterson's conceptualization of disability was also influenced by his experiences as a student in a small, rural high school. This theme was supported in Workshop 1 when Mr. Peterson recalled memories of students with disabilities being excluded from mainstream students. During this time, Mr. Peterson was also involved in a program in which honor roll students could leave class to draw pictures with and talk to students with disabilities who were in a separate classroom. When asked, Mr. Peterson was not too clear on the inclusiveness of his school, yet from his descriptions it would appear that the school excluded students with disabilities by separating them into different classrooms. Yet, when asked if his school had inclusive classrooms, Mr. Peterson stated, "I remember there being a lot of the spec ed kids [who] were more in their own classes so there very well might have been inclusion, but I feel like I didn't see it because I don't remember there being any spec ed people in my classes" (W1.3.6.18. l. 243-45). He also explained that the visit of honor roll students to the special education classroom was his schools' "attempt to try to do some inclusive things" (W1.3.6.18. l. 267). Mr. Peterson's description of students with disabilities as being taught in a separate classroom beside the gym suggested that the school did not fully integrate students with

disabilities into classrooms. These experiences seem to have influenced his understanding of inclusion and the integration of students with disabilities into the classroom.

In addition to exclusionary classes, Mr. Peterson also remembered the mistreatment of students with disabilities at his school, as he recalled that students in high school were “cruel” to other “spec ed people” (W1.3.6.18. l. 245). He described one specific incident of cruelty, in which a boy named Buddy, who couldn’t speak and always carried a teddy bear around, was the brunt of teasing and jokes. Mr. Peterson explained that students would “shout at” Buddy "to get his attention” so that the boy would “laughingly make kind of like grunting sounds” (W1.3.6.18. l. 253-55). Yet, Mr. Peterson explained, “at the time I didn't see it as making fun of him,” as he stated, it was “not necessarily making fun of him; it was more like kind of shouting at him, trying to get his attention” (W1.3.6.18. l. 259). Mr. Peterson’s description of past experiences presented exclusionary and even bullying behaviors towards students with disabilities as the norm.

Summary. It was important to me that I understand Mr. Peterson’s view of disability before as we began the study so that I might better understand how a sociocultural lens could influence his view of disability, as well as his ability to lead students in a critical analysis of disability. In my interview and discussion on disability with Mr. Peterson, I found that he was open to new ideas with disability and had even tried integrating one aspect of disability into his classroom. I also noted that his memory was not one that was negative or critical of discriminatory and exclusionary practices towards those with disabilities. For this reason, I was curious to observe how his past experiences could impact his personal understanding of disability in literature and schools presently. More specifically, I wondered how he might view similar scenarios as those discussed in school if presented in literature; for example, how might he treat a novel in which a disabled student is bullied and mistreated? In addition, how might his past

schooling experience in which students with disabilities were taught in separate classrooms impact his view of disability in general? In his discussion of his secondary high school, Mr. Peterson saw students with disabilities as separate from the mainstream classroom. I was curious how this experience might affect his own teaching of students with disabilities.

As I realized later in the study, these experiences did play a role in Mr. Peterson's view of disability and in how he implemented the unit. First, however, in following the progress of the study, I discuss how the sociocultural lens was received by Mr. Peterson and how our work impacted his planning of a disability focused curriculum unit. In the following section, I discuss how my introduction of the sociocultural lens applied to disability in literature effected Mr. Peterson's understanding of disability and in turn his planning of the unit.

Theme 2: A sociocultural lens expanded the teacher's conceptualization of disability. Although Mr. Peterson's discussion of teaching and personal experiences with disability were somewhat traditional and in some ways negative, his personal conceptualization of disability was challenged and expanded in several ways with the introduction of a sociocultural lens. Through resources shared during workshops, addressing both the portrayals of disability in literature and the sociocultural models of disability, Mr. Peterson was better able to understand the lived realities of the disability community, especially resources dealing with civil rights and marginalization. For example, after sharing a YouTube video on autism entitled "Shutting down the bullshit about autism," (Marron, 2017) which presented a more sociocultural view of disability, it appeared that Mr. Peterson was able to expand his notions of what it meant to be autistic. He expressed surprise at the "high functioning" autistic individuals he witnessed in the video and stated, "It was weird for me…to be like, wow, it was just different than the autism I know" (W1, l. 16-17). The video exposed Mr. Peterson to common stereotypes surrounding

autism, bringing them to his attention and spurring the realization that many television shows are stereotypical in their representation of disability. As he stated,

> If they're going to show somebody who has a disability in some way, they're going to take the extreme and make it clear to the audience that this person has a disability, and by doing that, it almost makes it a caricature of disability. (W1, L19-22)

It was clear that this video countered Mr. Peterson's previous views about autism, allowing him to develop new understandings of autism and to reconsider stereotypical depictions of autism.

In another example, Mr. Peterson's views of disability were expanded by an additional video I shared, the TED Talk by Dan Habib entitled "Disabling segregation: Dan Habib at TEDx Amoskeag Millyard" (Habib, 2014). In his talk, Habib discusses the benefits of creating a more inclusive environment for those with disabilities in schools and communities. He explains how inclusion is beneficial not only for the student with a disability, who in this case was his son, but also for other nondisabled students. As Mr. Peterson discussed the video, he made connections to other positive views of disability in our society. He shared that the video reminded him of a television show he frequently watched entitled *Speechless*, (Silveri, Gernon, Kasda, & Mar, 2017), which details the daily life of a teenage boy with cerebral palsy in school and at home. He expressed that *Speechless,* did a good job of making the viewer feel "awkward" over the treatment of disability. As he described it,

> He's [JJ's] just like a regular teenage boy in the way that he behaves and stuff like that. There's certain episodes where it's just like, wanting to get a date, or dealing with like, kissing a girl for the first time. Just like, teenage boy worry stuff, and then there's several times where it's like, it deals with the disability segregation [that the] TED talk kind of reminded me a little bit of it because he wants to be in a regular school and so his mom

> fights tooth and nail to get all these accommodations and stuff like that. So, it was just kind of interesting seeing that and then seeing it also in the [TED talk] (W1, L41-40).

Through the introduction of the TED talk and our discussion of it, Mr. Peterson seemed to be expanding his original concept of disability that he gained from personal experience. Early on he seemed to lean towards a “disabling” and deficit view of disability, as in the case of his disabled relatives. As he connected the TED talk to the television show *Speechless*, however, he pointed out that the main character JJ was a “regular teenage boy,” which suggested the understanding of disability as more than an inherent condition, separating people into groups of normal and not normal, and instead a unique way of being. Mr. Peterson was cognizant of the fact that shows such as *Speechless* were challenging viewers and himself to think differently about disability, as he explained further,

> Yeah, cause at no point do you feel sorry for JJ. They don't do anything to make you feel sorry for him. There's a couple of times where you feel awkward, but I think, this is something, I haven't actually said this to any of my students this year, but I, I have said it before in the past to my students, that learning is a lot like working out, that if it doesn't feel weird, like if you're not pushing yourself, if it's not a struggle. Or if you don't feel awkward about it, then you're not growing in any way, you're not learning anything. And I think that through feeling awkward, I think that's where we do most of our growth. When we feel awkward and we feel challenged, I think that's when we grow more. So I think *Speechless* does a good job as far as you feel awkward at times and then it's just like *ohhh.* (W1, L766-774)

This discussion illustrated a self-reflective view of disability for Mr. Peterson that was changing and expanding as new models and depictions were introduced. His description of growth as

“pushing yourself” through the “struggle” while watching *Speechless* could also describe his own struggles, which at times made him feel “awkward” and “challenged.” It appeared that the show *Speechless*, one in which an actor with cerebral palsy plays a character with this disability, offered a bridge between Mr. Peterson’s previous understandings of disability and the new ideas on inclusion and acceptance he encountered through our workshops. In connecting these ideas to his own personal conceptualization of disability, Mr. Peterson seemed to understand newer ideas surrounding disability more clearly, demonstrating that his conceptualization of disability was evolving beyond that which was shown at the start of the study.

Connecting disability history to other forms of marginalization. In addition to videos on disability acceptance and inclusion, I also shared the history of disability with Mr. Peterson, including the marginalization and discrimination of disabled people. After I reviewed information on U.S. history and disability, Mr. Peterson again expanded on his conceptualization of disability, connecting these new facts with other examples of discrimination and persecution in our country. For example, after we discussed the screening process of denying those with disabilities entrance in the United States at Ellis Island, he concurred that “It's a very dark spot on history” and stated that

> The same kind of thing happened with Native Americans…they would be set up on reservations and they would say, yeah, we're offering free healthcare, screenings and that kind of stuff. And they would actually, without the knowledge of the patients, they were giving them drugs and stuff like that were causing sterilization and that kind of stuff (W1, L441-46).

Through his sharing of his own understanding of disability, Mr. Peterson connected his previous knowledge about the mistreatment of other cultures in our society, i.e., Native Americans, to the

newly presented information about disability, i.e., eugenics of disabled people, leading to a new awareness and assimilation of these ideas. As such, Mr. Peterson was able to consider the impact of disability history and eugenics on how we view disability in our society today. He was then able to further investigate other instances of disability marginalization and injustices in our country in preparation for lesson planning.

These connections also seemed to help Mr. Peterson better understand the history of disability so that he could then teach this information to students. When I asked what most helped him in workshops, Mr. Peterson reported that the documents and videos on the history of disability were most helpful, particularly a documentary on the historical fight for civil rights for people with disabilities. As he stated,

> Hearing the stories from the people that were there and what they experienced and stuff like that, how they were able to kind of laugh about some of the stuff they did, like being all chained together in building and that kind of stuff. I thought that that was really interesting stuff and [it] really helped me when I was talking about the history and the laws and stuff like that with my students. It really helped me to be able to make it seem more real and not as just kind of sterile, this was the history, this is what happened from point A to point B to point C. It was more of like this was what was going on. This was some cool stuff. (I3, L83-89)

My analysis of this data, showed that the resulting lessons were indeed "more real" and offered a less "sterile" discussion of disability history. In analyzing his lesson plans and materials, I found that Mr. Peterson demonstrated an extensive knowledge of disability history, much of which he gained through independent research that he completed after our workshops. For example, he created a PowerPoint of 20 slides, outlining the major historical events concerning disability in

the United States and other countries. He reviewed these with students in class as an overview of major moments in disability history with students.

Although I did not observe this lesson, according to Mr. Peterson, it was well-received by students. As he explained, students were "just blown away at how horrendous that we [the United States] were in the past" (I.2. 4.26.18, l.297-98). They were unfamiliar with much of the history he reviewed, such as the Nazi euthanasia program and how the U.S. also acted upon similar ideas of ability and disability during the eugenics movement. As a result, he felt that the information was shocking and eye-opening to many of his students. As he stated, "they knew little footnotes, like during the Holocaust a lot of Jews died, [pause] and also some people with disabilities." He argued that "they [the students] almost get a sugar-coated version of history, especially going through middle school" (I.2. 4.26.18, l.302-03). In addition to providing a detailed overview of disability history, it also appeared that the lesson allowed Mr. Peterson to connect disability history to other forms of marginalization in his planning. As with his earlier connection to Native American history, Mr. Peterson was quick to realize that the history of Nazi, Germany was connected to our other examples of discriminatory practices in the United States, which he then reviewed with students.

Expanding one's conceptualization of disability requires the voices of disabled people. It was clear that Mr. Peterson was building on the discourses of his past, as well as the newer ones I introduced to him through the study. He was then able to evolve in his understanding of disability and to create a new approach to teaching the history of disability. This theme was in line with Bakhtin's (1981) theory that discourse can "reveal even newer *ways to mean*" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346). A sociocultural lens was helpful in that it offered multiple discourses or voices of those with disabilities from which Mr. Peterson could consider and adapt into his classroom. Most

noteworthy of these discourses was the inclusion of resources that shared the real-life stories and words of those with disabilities. These resources seemed to make the history more real for the participant and offered an interesting approach to helping students understand disability oppression and acceptance. As Mr. Peterson stated, “the DVD really gave me like the human side of it. If that's the best way to say it. That it was actually that experience part of it” (I3, l. 99-100). Videos such as these included the voice of people with disabilities as they spoke of the experiences and challenges they faced in society. Thus, it would appear that another requirement for discourses surrounding disability to “reveal even newer *ways to mean*” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346), is that the participant be exposed to multiple voices and points of view surrounding disability.

It is important to note that these resources were purposefully chosen as a way of valuing the voices of those with disabilities, which I defined as one aspect of the sociocultural lens. In the disability community, the phrase “nothing about us, without us,” is commonly used to argue for the inclusion of those with disabilities in important matters surrounding their lives (Shapiro, 1994). A conclusion in my study, then, was that the work with the teacher must also follow this mantra and include the actual voices of those with disabilities. In order for the teacher to gain a deeper and real appreciation for analyzing disability critically, these voices need to be many and from disabled people themselves. Rather than having a paternalistic approach to policy changes, life choices, and other issues surrounding disability, a sociocultural lens should allow the ideas and written voices of disabled people guide the conversation. Thus, workshop resources such as the documentary mentioned above, YouTube videos, and personal blogs of disabled people were helpful in offering Mr. Peterson a new approach to teaching history and the marginalization of others.

Through this process, Mr. Peterson came to realize that including voices of people with disabilities is an important step in fighting against stereotypes surrounding disability. In our last interview together he reflected on what he would do differently in this regard. He reported that he would work towards "knowing the text and being able to point out where the text diverges from reality, where the text may seem very realistic in its portrayal" (I3, l. 349). He argued that in using this context "we actually see [the] real life, personal experiences from people who have that same disability or who are dealing with the same issues" and that in the future he would "actually tie in those personal blogs as a kind of additional kind of side piece" (I3, l. 350-56).

A possible future workshop on a sociocultural approach to disability in literature would be to point out how the "text diverges from reality," as Mr. Peterson suggested, and include "real life personal experiences" of people with disabilities. Such examples would offer support for developing dialogue on disability and allow the voices of people with disabilities to fully dispel disability myths.

Summary. The presentation of a sociocultural lens in the form of video resources, articles, and workshops, expanded Mr. Peterson's personal ideologies surrounding disability. Through the use of a sociocultural lens Mr. Peterson was able to connect his previous understandings of disability to new understandings as introduced in the study, specifically in regards to autism and disability history. These perspectives in turn led to the use of new material and ideas with students. In addition, real-life experiences of living with a disability from the voices of those who are disabled seemed to lead to the most growth in his conceptualization of disability. These resources gave voice to disabled individuals and supported Mr. Peterson as he sought to better understand the lived realities of the disability community, especially during times in history in which basic civil rights were fought for and gained. In the following section, I

discuss this latter process in more detail to better understand how a sociocultural lens can lead to a critical analysis of disability in literature when enacted in the classroom.

Theme 3: A sociocultural lens supported the teacher's efforts to facilitate a critical analysis of disability in literature. While my first and second themes discussed how Mr. Peterson's conceptualization was formed through past experiences and was expanded through the introduction of a sociocultural lens, this third theme explores how a sociocultural view supported Mr. Peterson's efforts to lead his students towards a more critical analysis of disability in literature. After I introduced the sociocultural lens as an approach to literature in our workshops, Mr. Peterson was quick to adopt these ideas into his lessons, starting first with a focus on disability stereotypes in specific literary works. One example was seen in his teaching of the short story, *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes (1966/2007). Mr. Peterson had first mentioned a desire to teach the short story in interview one because he explained that when he read the book in high school, he thought it was the saddest book he had ever read and that it had really touched him. Later, after he had read the Dolmage (2014) chapter as a resource for workshop one, his intention for using the Keyes (1966/2007) work was much different. Because the Dolmage (2014) chapter shared a critical approach to disability in literature, Mr. Peterson was able to use the story to lead students to question normalcy and myths surrounding disability and difference. For example, he explained, that he first used *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007) with students to discuss their reactions and feelings about disability:

> We talked about the emotional response—how does the author want you to feel about Charlie, the situations that Charlie was in, how does that make you feel and stuff like that. Which on the surface is just kind of talking about how do you feel about this book? (I2, l. 183-84)

A week later, he again returned to the story to apply newly learned disability myths (Dolmage, 2014) and to discuss the author's intentions in using disability in the novel. For this lesson, he created a shortened list of Dolmage's (2014) disability myths as a way to lead his discussion and to ask students to think back over the novel to determine which myths in literature could be found in the Keyes (1966/2007) story.

Mr. Peterson reported that when analyzing the novel, he told the class, "They [the author] actively were using this myth to make you feel this pity for him in this way" (I2, l. 188-89). By asking students to consider the writer's "moves" in writing, Mr. Peterson was attempting to create a critical analysis of the ways in which author's use disability to guide the reader's response to situations in the novel.

On the other hand, in this analysis Mr. Peterson seemed to miss that many authors, Keyes (1966/2007) for example, sometimes include these stereotypes in their texts, projecting them onto their characters. Thus the analysis was somewhat cursory and failed to also analyze the author's purpose and treatment of disability as a whole in the novel. Still, this early discussion of disability signaled a shift in Mr. Peterson's thinking of disability in literature, as one that questioned disability's role in moving the narrative along.

A second example of leading an analysis of disability in literature was shown in a later lesson as Mr. Peterson examined disability myths in Flowers for *Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007). Here he reviewed the definitions of the medical model and social model of disability with students, using the definitions of each from article I had shared with him earlier. After reviewing the definitions aloud with students, he asked them if the main character Charlie could be viewed as disabled under the medical model and/or the social model. In his reflection on the lesson, Mr. Peterson reported that students answered "both," and explained that, "He [Charlie] has his mental

disability, but also everybody is just like complete jerks to him and not letting him be successful or anything like that. So they were like, a little bit of both" (I2, l. 530-32). With this example, Mr. Peterson demonstrated a critical analysis of literature used to illustrate the social construction of normalcy with students. He asked students to determine whether Charlie was portrayed as disabled at different points of the novel, including the point at which he had the same intelligence level as the doctor who was working with him.

Yet, as he described this conversation further, it appeared that Mr. Peterson confused the two disability models with methods for determining how an individual is classified as disabled, either socially or medically. His class discussion was described as follows:

> They kind of thought about it for a second and they were like not really with the medical model, but with the social model he is [disabled] because he can't communicate with other people. That there's this kind of small zone where he's considered normal, if he's on one side of it, he's disabled, and if he's on the other side of it, he's disabled, the only time he's considered not disabled is when he's "normal" [air quotes]. So he's limited either way that he goes. There's only like this small little sliver of time when he's actually seen as being happy. (I2, L538-41)

Closer consideration of his treatment of the novel reveals that Mr. Peterson also narrowly classifies normality in individuals. This was expressed in his delineation above—"there's this kind of small zone where he's considered normal, if he's on one side of it he's disabled," which refers to Charlie before the experiment and he has a lower IQ, and "on the other side of it, he's disabled,"—a reference to Charlie's state after the experiment as an individual with a higher IQ yet still unable to communicate with others.

Flowers for Algernon (Keyes, 1966/2007) presents a solid example of the medical model of disability's influence on literature. The novel begins with the character Charlie having a low IQ level until he undergoes a new medical treatment that miraculously raises his intelligence level to surpass all expectations of doctors, eventually becoming more intelligent than his doctors. An interpretation of this text using the social model or a sociocultural lens might have pointed out that the mocking of and unacceptance of Charlie when he was of a lower intelligence level (before the experiment) was more disabling than his actual mental ability. Instead, Mr. Peterson seemed confused over the two models and asked students to consider how both high intelligence and low intelligence could be disabling to an individual. Although students were led to discuss the treatment of those with disabilities in the analysis, Mr. Peterson's point on when the individual is "considered normal" and is "seen as being happy" (I2, l. 538-41), could have misled students into believing that there exists an ideal level of intelligence, a point which is contradictory to a sociocultural model. Still, aside from his confusion on the medical and social model, *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007) did allow Mr. Peterson to discuss strictly enforced behavior boundaries, i.e. the status quo or norm in society, and to point out the difference between the social and medical model of disability, albeit on a cursory level. Perhaps with further guidance on how to discuss the text, Mr. Peterson might have provided a thorough and accurate discussion of the social model.

His discussion of disability and normalcy in the text was discussed later in the study as well. In Interview 3, Mr. Peterson repeated his overview of teaching *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007) as one that focused on intelligence and normalcy. Unfortunately, Mr. Peterson used a misleading interpretation of the social model, as he again appeared confused on

the definition of the social model. He explained that in questioning the intelligence and disability of the main character, Charlie, students had a greater understanding of disability. As he explained,

> Once he [Charlie] becomes highly intelligent and he can't interact with anybody, would you say he's disabled then? That this high intelligence becomes disabling? And I think it was kind of a light [bulb] moment for a lot of them to understand. Oh, not just a disability or mental handicap or anything like that would cause you to be disabled, but just your inability to interact with the world at large or the inability to be understood by the world around you. (I3, l. 763-68)

In the above statement, Mr. Peterson is again suggesting that disability can be both a physical classification, as well as a social one, with the latter being the inability to be understood or to interact in the same way that others who are not disabled supposedly act. This depiction of disability more clearly follows the medical model, whereby disability is located solely in the body and as disabled people are victims of their impairment and in need of help and support (Fine & Asch, 2000). As mentioned earlier, an address of the sociocultural model of disability in the novel would also consider the physical and social barriers the character Charlie faces that prevented him from participating equally in society, regardless of ability or inability.

Although Mr. Peterson led students to question the barriers Charlie faced in not meeting social expectations and standards, in not questioning these social barriers, he presented the failure of Charlie as an "inability to be understood by the world," in other words a deficit within. From this example and the previous one, I concluded that further discussion of a sociocultural lens was needed so that Mr. Peterson could examine how these myths and plot line served as the ploy by the author to invoke pity and sympathy for the disabled character, as well as how they reinforce the ideal body as a set level of intelligence and ability.

The teacher's continuation of a critical analysis when implementing film and media analysis. As Mr. Peterson continued to plan and implement lessons that used literature to examine disability critically, he also used the sociocultural lens to critique the portrayal of disability in film and other pieces of literature. In one lesson he asked students to work in groups to create a Google slide presentation on "heroes and villains with disabilities" (Obs.4. 4/11/18). Students were told to find characters with a disability and then provide basic information on the character, as well as "what the writer wants the audience to feel about the character" (Obs.4. 4/11/18). As an example, Mr. Peterson discussed Freddy Kruger in Wes Craven's movie, *Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), whom he said many students mentioned as an example due to his facial deformity. As he questioned students about this portrayal, he asked,

> This was a horror story, so what are they wanting you to feel, afraid of him? And, I'm like, alright, so how does that make you feel about disability? What does the author want you to feel about disability? If you equate Freddy Kruger to being scary and you equate the fact that Freddy Kruger has a disability, then does that mean that you are equating disability to being scary" (I2, l. 760-68).

Mr. Peterson then asked students to use the disability myths handed out earlier to discuss how the writer used this character in the story. As with his discussion of *Flowers for Algernon (*Keyes, 1966/2007)*,* Mr. Peterson sought to offer a redefined view of disability and an expansion of disability stereotypes. In exposing these stereotypes to students, he advocated for a more realistic view of disability as one that is not associated with pity or fear. In our interview, his discussion of the lesson was somewhat sparse; he shared that students really enjoyed the activity and found many examples of villains who perpetuated disability myths. From this discussion, I concluded that similar to his level of analysis with literature, Mr. Peterson exposed students to the issues, yet

did not delve deeper into why these myths were so pervasive in our society and how they served to reinforce stereotypes of disability. Again, I felt that further application of a sociocultural model to this text would provide Mr. Peterson guidance for leading an in-depth critical analysis.

On the other hand, Mr. Peterson's process for examining films with students pushed a little deeper into an analysis of disability in society than his work with literature had. In addition to the Google slide lesson, Mr. Peterson also created a lesson in which he asked students to critically analyze short scenes from movies that portrayed disability. In this lesson, Mr. Peterson reviewed approximately 30 minutes of film clips with students, including movies such as *Finding Nemo* (2003), *The Elephant Man* (1980), *A Beautiful Mind* (2001), *Freaks* (1932), and *A Quiet Place* (2018). After each clip, Mr. Peterson led the class to "discuss which, if any, disability myth is being portrayed and how the director wants the audience to feel during the scene" (Lesson 5, 4/13/18). He also reported discussing "the marginalization of disabled actors and the standard of able-bodied actors playing disabled characters" (Lesson 5) in order to expose these stereotypical representations to students. This approach exposed students to disability myths also present in film, such as "pity and kill and cure" (I3, L235) in the hopes of leading students to a more realistic and accepting view of disability.

> In describing his discussion about the portrayal of disability in film he shared that, I was able to talk about why this is being portrayed, this is what this is doing, here is the effect that it's having on us and the effect it has on society and that kind of stuff. And then I did the same thing with a lot of the disability myths…I was showing them film clips and stuff like that from pop culture from, like Disney movies and stuff like that. For a lot of students or a lot of kids, that's how you are taught, how you learn a lot of morality…so, if we're seeing characters with disability being portrayed as someone that we should feel

sorry for, then is that [not] also teaching us you know our morality? We talked a lot about … those metacognitive thinking about why you think something. (I3, L273-38)

In this instance, it appeared that Mr. Peterson was able to expose the stereotypical portrayals of disabled characters in film so that he could help students reflect on how their society helped form their views of disability. As his argument suggests, these are socially constructed stereotypes, ones that teach us "our morality" and therefore students must learn to critique and reconsider these structures. Mr. Peterson phrased this as "metacognitive thinking about why you think something" (I3, l. 277-78), which suggests that he viewed critical analysis as one means of creating an awareness and acceptance for difference in students. He hoped that focusing on metacognitive strategies with students would foster acceptance and also allow students to think more critically about their understanding of disability in film. Coded lesson plans, as well as field and observation notes showed how a sociocultural lens fostered Mr. Peterson's critical analysis of disability stereotypes in texts with students. In addition, this lesson demonstrated some growth towards a more in-depth approach to examining disability critically in society.

Expanded applications of critical analysis to other pieces of literature. Although Mr. Peterson appeared to struggle with the sociocultural lens at the start of the study, as he became more familiar with this lens for examining literature and film, he began to apply these ideas to other instances in literary study. To foster student interaction with disability through literature, Mr. Peterson assigned young adult novels with themes of disability to students which I presented at the start of the study. Students were able to choose from the novels *Marcello in the Real World* (Stork & Stork, 2009), *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Nighttime* (Haddon, 2003), *Two Girls Staring at the Ceiling* (Frank, 2014), *Out of My Mind* (Draper, 2010), *Say What You Will* (McGovern, 2015), and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, (Alexie & Forney,

2007). They were then grouped into literature circles of four or five and asked to take notes on how disability and difference were presented in the novel. Using the critical analysis questions below from Patricia Dunn's book *Disabling Characters: Representations of Disability in Young Adult Literature* (2015) students shared their analyses of disability in the chosen novel.

Questions to Ask When Analyzing Disability in Literature

- Do power dynamics exist between able bodies and disabled bodies?
- Are characters with handicaps pitied? Promoted? Abused? Scorned? Celebrated?
- How does the setting affect characters with disabilities?
- How are able/disabled characters treated by other characters in the text?
- What does the author intend to get from their able/disabled characters?
- How does the text define normal? Is the book's idea of normal different from your own?
- What internalized judgments from society must the narrator confront and ultimately reject?
- What assumptions about limitations on people in your society have you discovered?
- How might this novel be analyzed from a perspective that considers the role society plays in putting limits on people with disabilities?
- How does this novel challenge or confirm stereotypes about people with different from the narrator? (Older people? People of the opposite sex? People from different background? (p. 104-05)

In addition to analyzing the portrayal of disability in their novels, students were required to bring in one article for group discussion that either discussed the novel itself or focused on a certain aspect of the book. For example, they might bring in an article on autism while reading *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-time* (Haddon, 2003). Whereas the questions were intended to help students identify stereotypes and the author's use of disability to advance plot and ideologies surrounding ability, the non-fiction articles were intended to inform students of the reality behind the disability portrayed in their novels.

Lesson plans involving this work demonstrated that Mr. Peterson was leading students to examine disability critically in literature, both independently and in student-led groups. This

interpretation of literature instruction was in line with Rosenblatt's transactional approach theory (2005) as it offered students opportunities to analyze and transact with the text in groups. Mr. Peterson explained that his rationale for teaching literature in this way was to let the student derive his or her meaning from literature, rather than "have a teacher tell you what it means" (W1, L647). He reported that he often tells students, "the worse things a teacher can tell you is what a text means… that's not the purpose of literature. The purpose of literature is for you to have, like we all see things through our own lenses. We have our own understanding" (W1, L648-49). In allowing students to form their own aesthetic responses to literature, rather than have the teacher interpret the text, or "tell what it means," Mr. Peterson placed value on the responsive ideas and voices of students to literature, rather than the teacher's own interpretation of the text.

The teacher's challenges to critically analyzing disability in literature. Although Mr. Peterson emphasized independent responses to literature, one frustration he felt in the literature circle assignment was not being able to discuss the novels individually with students. Whether this frustration was due to his having not read the novels beforehand, or his own uncertainty in discussing disability is not clear. However, the effect of allowing students to analyze literature independently did result in lost opportunities for critical analysis of disability.

I witnessed such lost opportunities when I attended student presentations on the novel. For example, a group that read the novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Nighttime* (Haddon, 2003), reported that the book "helped to figure out how people with autism think differently" (Obs. 5. 5.9.18); yet, as they reviewed the four articles shared within the group, a student shared an article that incorrectly suggested that vaccines lead to autism. Although this myth has been discredited in medical research, it still remains as an example of misinformation on autism that the general public can fall prey to. The student summarized the article during the presentation,

and when time was given for questions, a classmate asked how vaccines can cause autism. The student answered that there are “two hypothesis, one that it was causing it and one saying that it was not” and that “their environment around them was helping contribute rather than just all vaccines” (Obs.5). Mr. Peterson’s silence at this point revealed that he was not sure how to discuss this issue surrounding autism and to analyze why this myth exists surrounding autism. In addition, had he felt more comfortable discussing disability beforehand, he might have intervened when the student first brought the article to the class.

A few days later, when I questioned Mr. Peterson about this moment, he replied that, “[i]t seems like it's still very stereotypical. The thing that was like bummed me where they're talking about the vaccine and then someone asked, what was the result? It's like it [the vaccine] sort of kind of does [cause autism] and then it's like [I thought], oh dang it, it didn't go away” (I3, L338-39). Mr. Peterson knew the student was wrong, yet either from not being aware of the facts surrounding autism and the vaccines himself, or his hesitancy to interrupt students, he failed to analyze this myth with the class. In this example and other instances during presentations, Mr. Peterson chose not to discuss disability in great detail. Instead, as he reported in the past interview, he hoped that the students themselves would dispel these myths. Yet after realizing that they did not, he grew frustrated and chose not to intervene. It was clear that more preparation and training was needed in order for Mr. Peterson to feel more confident in his ability to discuss disability in young adult novels and other texts.

A second example of Mr. Peterson’s hesitancy to speak in detail on disability was demonstrated in a similar student presentation on disability in the novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-time* (Haddon, 2003). Most group members reported being pleased that the novel offered a differing perspective on autism than they had before. One student stated, “I didn’t

know a lot about autism before. I first thought his [the main character's] talents were just a way of compensating for his disability, but then I realized these are just characteristics of people with the disability" (Obs.5). Another remarked that he enjoyed, "[l]earning about how someone with autism thinks—they're not dumb they just think differently and have a different thought pattern than I would" (Obs.5). A third student, however, illustrated an excellent talking point for difference and disability as he stated, "I liked the book a lot; I didn't know at first what disability he had. I thought he was a bit weird, and that someone else had a disorder at first. It seems that people with autism are just a little bit different but society makes them look really different" (Obs.5). These comments illustrated that students were engaged and interested in disability, particularly in how the novel revealed something new about the disability that they did not know before. Mr. Peterson was aware that students were "developing their own thoughts and opinions;" however, an analytical discussion could have encouraged critical thinking about the social construction of disability in our society. I concluded that more guidance in how to apply the principals of the sociocultural lens and in analysis of disability in the novel could have further aided Mr. Peterson in this process. In this previous instance, the application of a sociocultural lens in class discussion might have offered deeper insight into how disability was portrayed and what classifies a person as disabled and "different."

As a final illustration of the need for further guidance in applying the sociocultural lens, I considered a second group presentation which also revealed discrepancies in students' analysis of the text and a sociocultural view of disability. In the discussion of *Marcello in the Real World* (Stork & Stork, 2009) a student described the character Marcello as "an 18-year-old who deals with autism, has a mild case of autism, probably Asperger's" (Obs.5). This student also discussed the traits of Marcello's disability as "not a serious form of autism but enough to be noticeable;

he's bad at socializing, hears music, melodies in his head, refers to himself in the third person" and "he acts very rudely to other people so that disables him socially and being acquainted with people" (Obs.5). Group members then reviewed the four articles they read for the unit. My field notes from the observation recorded student descriptions of each:

> Article 1-What is autism? No two people will have the same symptoms, some do not feel the same empathy, emotions and feelings for someone else as a regular person would. Autism socially, they usually are a little bit clumsy, and they can be harsh with their words.
>
> Article 2-on Asperger's syndrome; high end of autism spectrum. Have more intelligence, which is kind of rude to say. They think more intelligently than those on the lower end of the spectrum. He is smarter than what we would call normal people. He thinks things very deeply. Also has bad social abilities and he can't really interact with people as well as anybody else.
>
> Article 3-on working with colleagues with autism—how to interact with someone you work with, with autism to not make them uncomfortable. (Obs.5)

As I analyzed this presentation, it became clear that Mr. Peterson's students presented a conflicting and uncertain portrayal of autism. In phrases such as "deals with autism," "not a serious form of autism," "that disables him socially," and "he is smarter than what we would call normal people" it was apparent that students were following a medical model of disability and did not go past assumptions of typical, normative standards. The last statements about rude behavior that "disables him socially" and "bad social abilities" suggested that students were attributing the character's behavior with reasons for why those with disabilities are excluded from society. These comments also suggested that students misunderstood the social model of disability and, despite

the critical questions and introduction to myths and stereotypes, were continuing to subscribe to myths and stereotypes surrounding normalcy and disability. As in the previous presentations described above, Mr. Peterson did not lead students to question the portrayal of disability in their novel during class discussions. The data generated from these observations demonstrated that an aesthetic reading of the novel without some form of teacher guidance might not lead students to a critical analysis of disability. Students need guidance in the form of critical questioning and challenges to standard ways of thinking and discussing disability.

Summary. By exposing students to myths surrounding disability in literature, Mr. Peterson had shifted from acceptance and "buy in" of stereotypically tragic novels, such *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007) to attempting to expose disability myths portrayed in film and in young adult novels. The introduction and discussion of disability myths, according to Mr. Peterson, were the "backbone" to his unit, which later led him to transition into other lessons on disability myths in pop culture, disability rights, ableism, and disability laws, which I discuss in the following section (I2, L194). Yet, it also appeared at times that Mr. Peterson was still growing in his own understanding of disability, as well as his use of a sociocultural lens for examining it. As the examples above illustrate, discussions on disability, were at times vague or contradictory, focusing mainly on the identification of myths and how they made readers feel. I was encouraged by the fact, however, that Mr. Peterson more readily adopted a sociocultural lens with some success, such as the discussion on film clips where he questioned students on how morality and ideals are formed from popular culture. Further guidance on the application of a sociocultural lens might bring into conversation the ideas surrounding disability and lead to deeper analysis of disability in literature and society.

Theme 4: The teacher's use of a sociocultural lens did not foster classroom discussion surrounding disability. In this next section, I illustrate that while the teacher made significant progress in his understanding of the sociocultural lens as applied to disability, the lens did not necessarily foster dialogue on disability in the classroom. As the study progressed, I noted that Mr. Peterson's development of a personal ideology for disability was one that was shifting and morphing with each new discourse faced. The initial uncertainty he expressed over disability could be seen as a sense of awkwardness in his understanding of disability from a sociocultural lens. Just as he reported feeling a sense of "awkwardness" over challenges to old perceptions and societal norms by the show *Speechless* (Silveri, Gernon, Kasda, & Mar, 2017), Mr. Peterson was also awkward in discussing this new lens as applied to disability critically. In what follows, I discuss the possible challenges the participant faced when leading students to question their understanding of disability through dialogue.

Teacher as moderator of language and dialogue surrounding disability. From the start of the study, I realized that Mr. Peterson concerned himself with creating safe spaces for students. In interview one, he shared a concern of offending students. When discussing difficult subjects in class, he was careful to be sensitive to others in his language choice, stating that, "I always try to make sure that if I'm talking about this, [I think], am I going to accidentally offend somebody, or is this something that somebody in the class might make a joke, and that offends somebody else?" (I1, l. 315-17). Mr. Peterson expressed his concern that a teacher's actions might also unintentionally offend others by singling students out with differences. He shared a story about a friend in college whose teacher constantly put an African American student on the spotlight when discussing race in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1962). He concluded that this must have been "awkward as hell" and that a teacher needed to "be careful not to draw that one student and

be like, hey this has to do with you, what do you think? As like, you speak for this entire population of people" (W1, L902-05).

In a similar way, Mr. Peterson was worried that students might also make unintentional offensive remarks in class involving disability. He expressed concerns with students' display of "ignorance" and of "not being aware because they're ninth graders, [and] they're not socially aware" (I1, L 318-19). He worried that while these remarks were not malicious, when stated by inexperienced ninth graders, they could be construed as a "stupid remark" (I1, L319). I coded these moments as unintentionally offensive, as they were not addressing the bias behind offensive statements, but the speaker's inexperience with social norms and expectations. This code was also related to Mr. Peterson's earlier discussion on teaching lessons on language sensitivity in his class. The connection between the two led me to conclude that Mr. Peterson felt viewing disability critically was in part tied to speaking correctly and not offending those who are seen as different.

The theme that a teacher's use of a sociocultural lens did not alter his discussion on disability was first tied to the fact that Mr. Peterson saw himself as moderator classroom dialogue. As moderator, he concerned himself with making sure students' comments were considerate of others, rather than on directing the class in a scripted discussion. This role of teacher as moderator, rather than dictator, aligned with dialogic pedagogy. As described by Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013), within the dialogic classroom "power relations are flexible, and responsibilities for the form and content of talk are shared among group members" (p. 116). Mr. Peterson seemed to express a desire for students to feel accepted and equal members of the classroom as he first began discussing race and gender. It is important to note that these examples are not meant to conflate race and gender with disability, but to point out that Mr. Peterson valued his role as a

moderator of language and dialogue in multiple ways in the class; disability was then added to this list of marginalized populations that he discussed with students.

In workshop one, Mr. Peterson shared that a transgender student confided in him regarding a change in school policy which would no longer allow her to use the bathroom of her identified gender. Mr. Peterson agreed this was wrong and agreed to sign the student's petition stating that she be allowed to continue using the girls' bathroom. This act endeared him to the student, as well as other students in the class who were also gender nonconforming. Mr. Peterson explained that later he overheard these students saying that he was their "favorite teacher," mainly because, "I acknowledge that they have concerns that are legitimate and that I defend them in class from somebody saying something rude" (W1, L538-40). The role of moderator of language in the classroom meant the teacher must shield nonconforming students from harmful actions by administrators and from offensive statements made by classmates.

Although Mr. Peterson's actions were helpful in establishing him as a caring and trusted teacher, as well as a facilitator of dialogic interchange, they did not reflect his comfort level in promoting dialogue surrounding difficult topics that involved disability. In classroom observations, I witnessed little to no discussion around such topics. I concluded that one possibility for this limitation could have been Mr. Peterson's worry that students were "attacking the other person instead of debating ideas" (W2, l. 164). As Mr. Peterson explained, when discussing race and sexuality, he felt that students were more likely to attack one another:

> I don't want it to be something that happens and somebody says something that they aren't thinking about, or they're just wanting to say it just because they just want to piss somebody off kinda thing. And then it just makes the conversation just implode. (W2, L175-77)

This concern was in line with Fecho and Amatucci's (2008) argument that many secondary teachers "worry that by validating students' personal searches for meaning, their own identities as teachers and the traditional culture of the classroom will spin out of their control and chaos will reign" (p. 6). As Mr. Peterson's concern for difficult conversations carried over to discussing disability in literature, he explained how a student might believe making fun of a disabled character would be acceptable to other students, a kind of "victimless crime" act, and added that, "the character may be a like a fictitious character, but what you're making fun of might directly impact somebody else who sees themselves in that character" (W2 L219-20). Mr. Peterson worried that these moments could be "unintentionally" offensive to some students in the same way he was with race and sexuality.

As we worked through this issue in workshopping, I suggested that Mr. Peterson also consider how he might deal with offensive words surrounding disability in class, such as dealing with a student using the word "retard." He replied,

> I honestly don't know how I would. Probably start by asking, so why would you use that word and asking them, why is that the word they decided to use? And then, whatever their reasoning is and then let them know like, a lot people would see that word as being very demeaning and very dismissive to a large chunk of people. Also it's not, it's just not an appropriate word to use because it just means too slow, like, that's exactly what it means and when you're using it in the way that you're using it, cause it's uh not necessarily like I don't, I don't see it or hear it very often as being specifically like looking at somebody who has a disability and calling them a retard and something like that. Like I don't see that; I see it more as just passively saying something like, ah this assignment is retarded. (W2, L 257-65)

This conversation was the first instance of Mr. Peterson working through ways he might discuss disability and language with students. He realized that the goal was to get students to listen to the other's person's ideas; however, he worried that students may voice inappropriate comments or that they would not be open to new ideas. As he explained, some students will stay "ingrained" in their beliefs and therefore see the other person as "stupid and bigoted" or "stupid snowflakes" (W2, L 236-37).

When asked how he might change this situation, Mr. Peterson felt he could circumvent such behavior would be to "put a spotlight" on the issue. As he stated, "right off the bat you can emphasize it and then have it controlled" through class rules (W2, L 514-15). The ideas Mr. Peterson had for dealing with these roadblocks to discussion, however, did not appear to promote the discussion around disability. His struggle with leading discussion surrounding disability was shown in classroom observations and lesson plan analysis. In the three observations in which Mr. Peterson had opportunities for discussion, I found that he often shut down conversations very quickly, allowing one or two students to reply to a question before moving on in the lesson. Hoping to encourage more discussion in class, I emailed Mr. Peterson several discussion questions to follow a video he requested. While observing the lesson a few days later, I was surprised to see that rather than using these questions to spur discussion, Mr. Peterson had instead placed them in a google document and asked students to respond in writing. These questions were intended to offer Mr. Peterson a way to discuss disability advocacy with students. Although I could sense that students wanted to discuss the videos aloud, Mr. Peterson asked them to answer silently at their desks instead.

After witnessing these lessons, which I coded as *derailed discussion* or *no discussion*, the larger code of *discussion of disability challenges* was generated. This code was carried over to my

analysis of daily lesson plans, handouts, and journals. Analysis of the overall unit plan (see Figure 3) revealed that although students spent time discussing disability in groups and class presentations, Mr. Peterson did not plan for a whole class discussion. Daily lesson plans also illustrated a hesitancy to enter into dialogue that directly focused on disability or disability in literature with students. For example, most plans followed a pattern of a warm up activity in the form of a "question of the day" that focused on the topic of the class lesson. Mr. Peterson would then present information on disability in the form of handouts, PowerPoints, and video, before giving students a brief activity or assignment to complete in literature circles. For the remainder of class, students continued work in groups, either discussing the reading or reading silently. Rarely did Mr. Peterson factor in time for student questions about the material or whole class discussion in lessons. This data led me to question if Mr. Peterson's pattern of instruction was typical of his teaching style, rather than a consequence of using a sociocultural model in analyzing disability. In other words, it may be that it was not the failure of the sociocultural lens to foster classroom discussion surrounding disability, but the comfort level Mr. Peterson felt in discussing issues with the class in general that prevents fuller discussion.

Challenges with critical discussion of disability law. As I further analyzed classroom lessons of Mr. Peterson teaching, I determined that although he was open to the ideas presented in workshops, particularly those on disability law, history, and film analysis, he continued to struggle with how to fully discuss these ideas in class. For example, in one lesson he asked students to answer the question of the day— "What do you think the word ableism means?" (Obs. 2 4/17/18). After asking students to respond in writing, Mr. Peterson asked students to share their responses. One student answered, "It means you can do something" to which Mr. Peterson replied, "not quite" and asked for more responses. Another student answered, "It's when people

are discriminated against with disabilities." Mr. Peterson replied, "Yes!" and asked students to think back to the social model, stating that ableism can be direct or indirect and explained that direct was saying "I don't like him because he's in a wheelchair" and indirect was "this restaurant doesn't need a ramp or I'm making a public notice, but I don't use big font that assumes everyone can see that." He then explained that this was ableism and that we have "laws to protect against that" (Obs. 2).

After this quick review of ableism, Mr. Peterson then passed out a handout describing major disability laws passed in our country and announced to students that after they read through the laws, they would be asked to identify scenarios that the law would fall under. Students studied the laws with their groups for the next ten minutes before Mr. Peterson challenged them to a game on the overhead using an online gaming platform meant to increase student engagement. This lesson was impressive in its overview of ableism and its engaging, interactive activity used to introduce students to disability law; however, I noted that a critical discussion of both concepts was absent. Such a discussion might have led students to consider why these instances of ableism and discrimination occur in the first place, as well as how ableism can harm those with disabilities.

A similar example was observed in week four of the study. Here Mr. Peterson integrated a lesson inspired by an *English Journal* article I shared during our third workshop. In this lesson students examined the controversial court case of a 12-year old disabled girl, Tracy Latimer, who was killed by her father, Robert Latimer, for what he claimed was a mercy killing (Maples, Arndt, & White, 2010). Robert claimed that he killed his daughter because he couldn't bear to see her suffer. Tracy was in constant pain and was set to undergo more surgeries before the killing. The case sparked outrage in the disability community as it illustrated the prejudice against disability in

our society and the dangers they face from abuse and violence (Council of Canadians with Disabilities, 2013). Mr. Peterson began the lesson by sharing this history with students and then showing a news interview of the father on why he killed Tracy.

After watching the video, Mr. Peterson asked students to read a credo statement, also found in the *English Journal* article (Maples, Arndt, & White, 2010), written by Norma Kunc in honor of Tracy Latimer on how society should treat those with disabilities. He explained to students that "a credo is like your own personal guiding statement" and then asked them to discuss "A Credo for Support" with their group before sharing their thoughts with the class. This lesson again offered an engaging and interesting approach to considering disability law and offered students a chance to discuss the harm stereotypes can have on those with disabilities. It was clear that the video and credo activity were thought-provoking and again students appeared eager to discuss the case further, however, discussion time was not given to the class. After a few students shared their thoughts, Mr. Peterson asked students to connect the credo to the school mission statement he had posted on his classroom wall. Although students raised their hands, eager to share their reactions, Mr. Peterson quickly moved on to the next assignment.

As he reflected on this lesson in Interview 2, Mr. Peterson stated that he was aware that he needed to pull conversation back to disability but he was struggling to do so. He reported that in another class, the discussion surrounding Tracy Latimer went much further, yet disability was not the main focus of the conversation. As he stated,

> I wish, like thinking about it now, I wish that I had made more comments about bringing disability into it, especially like that there's higher rates of like assault against people with disabilities and there's higher rates of sexual assault, I wish I had brought that stuff in, but

> I actually thought about that like later. It was just kinda like, in the moment it just kinda going with it, we're having a conversation, it just kinda went wherever. (I2, l. 85-89)

It became clear that Mr. Peterson was not completely resistant to discussing disability concepts with students, as he shared that within the first few moments of conversation students were able to make connections with disability and other social issues. He simply did not think to tie the conversation back to disability. In this example, students discussed Tracy Latimer in more detail than when I observed. He explained that his students noted how Tracy Latimer "wasn't completely miserable all of the time, that she still had fun" and discussed victim-blaming and the incident. However the conversation did not stay focused on disability for long. He reported that the point on victim-blaming led to "talking about sexual assault and people were talking about the current #metoo movement" and "there's this idea that rape is a very underreported crime and that because of that like victim blaming, where it's like, she shouldn't have been wearing that" (I2, l. 76-79). Despite being aware that much of the conversation surrounding sexual assault applied to disability as well, Mr. Peterson let the conversation lead itself to other social issues and did not connect this issue with disability.

In this last example, Mr. Peterson illustrated a willingness to discuss disability critically with students, albeit without the focus and attention paid to other social issues. Yet one avenue that could have better prepared Mr. Peterson in discussing disability with students, might have been guidance on how to connect disability with other social issues. For example, after providing information surrounding the death of Tracy Latimer and disability law in workshops, I might have pointed out that violence is more common towards those with disabilities. In addition, the severity of killing one's child was considered as less severe by many members of the public because of Tracy's disability. Mr. Peterson's activity and discussion of the case went well beyond the

English Journal lesson he was inspired by, however, his inability to fully consider the ramifications of the court case and how damaging it was on the disability community, suggested that he was not yet comfortable using the discourse surrounding a sociocultural approach to disability. It was clear that more work was needed to guide Mr. Peterson on how to discuss the issue of disability and euthanasia, as well as other issues surrounding disability with students.

Development of a teacher's use of the sociocultural lens involves making connections. While these last two examples demonstrate Mr. Peterson's development of a personal discourse for disability, as with all learning, change is gradual and rarely happens in a linear fashion. In many ways Mr. Peterson succeeded in using a sociocultural lens to examine disability critically. In lessons focused on literature and film that portrayed disability, he appeared to be developing a new understanding of disability and its connection with other forms of marginalization, demonstrating growth in his personal understanding of disability. He also adapted many of the concepts presented from a sociocultural model of disability to his own practice as a teacher, creating engaging lessons and activities that asked students to examine disability. However, as discussed above, the use of disability as a way of promoting acceptance to all forms of difference was still in the process of developing. While the latter led him to, as he explained, "really kind of encapsulate a lot of different stuff and this concept of othering" (I2, l. 497-98), he struggled with how to discuss disability as a form of othering with students. Thus, a sociocultural lens supported Mr. Peterson's practice by creating the conditions in which he might better create a curriculum that was focused on critically analyzing disability in literature, yet more attention to how the participant might discuss disability as an additional form of othering or marginalization was needed.

An approach to disability that Mr. Peterson might have been comfortable with was in connecting disability to other forms of difference. As he explained his credo lesson, he stated that students were assigned the task of writing a new mission statement for their school because it would allow students to understand that "disability is an umbrella term that hit a lot of stuff. It's not just you're in a wheelchair; it's not that you have cerebral palsy or it's not that you have cerebral palsy or anything like that. It's all of these things. A multitude of differences" (I2, L505-506), This focus on a "multitude of differences" was meant to foster acceptance along a larger continuum and to show students how they might treat others perceived as different with respect and kindness. Although Mr. Peterson chose not to directly assign that students write statements made about disability as the sample credo in the *English Journal* lesson had, his reconfigured credo assignment as a bridge connecting disability to other forms of difference with the writing of a school mission statement served. I interpreted this action as Mr. Peterson's attempt at emphasizing a broader approach to disability and the treatment of others, one that focused on relationships, rather than solely disability. This assignment also revealed an avenue into ways in which teachers can connect disability to other social issues and discuss them with some level of comfort and experience.

It appeared from conversations late in the study that Mr. Peterson valued many aspects of the sociocultural approach and was beginning to develop a more accepting approach to teaching about disability, as he stated, "all of them [people with disabilities] have accommodations that need to be met, but they all also have things to offer society" (I2, l. 507-08). Disability was discussed as something that must be accommodated for, yet also must be valued for all that those with disabilities have to offer our society. In addition, Mr. Peterson received these ideas with great enthusiasm and was eager to help students make connections between disability,

stereotypes, myths, history and the wider culture. Midway through the study I received a text (see figure 1) from Mr. Pederson stating the following:

> I wanted to mention how serendipitous this unit has been. I'm gathering all the stuff we discussed yesterday and together with the questions you sent and calling the lesson 'The Power of Words'.' Well, I just realized that today is actually the National Day of Silence. The stars just keep aligning for this unit haha (text 1).

He added, "I really hope that you can look at and use some of my student responses cause they are awesome" (text 1).

Figure 1. Text from Mr. Peterson on April 27, 2018.

Mr. Peterson connected the Day of Silence, a student-led event at his school, in order to spread awareness of bullying and harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students,

to the treatment of those with disabilities. This text and other statements suggested that he was enthusiastic in considering ways that students could also focus on acceptance for disability as another form of Othering and was on the verge of an integrated approach to disability that is connected with other forms of marginalization.

The next day, Mr. Peterson sent another text (see Figure 2) with a screenshot of a tweet from Twitter. The screenshot showed a response to a tweet that stated “Disabled parking should only be valid during business hours of 9 to 5 Monday to Friday. I cannot see any reason why people with genuine disabilities would be out beyond these times” (tweet 2). The second tweet in reply stated, “We’re disabled, Daniel, we’re not werewolves” (text 2).

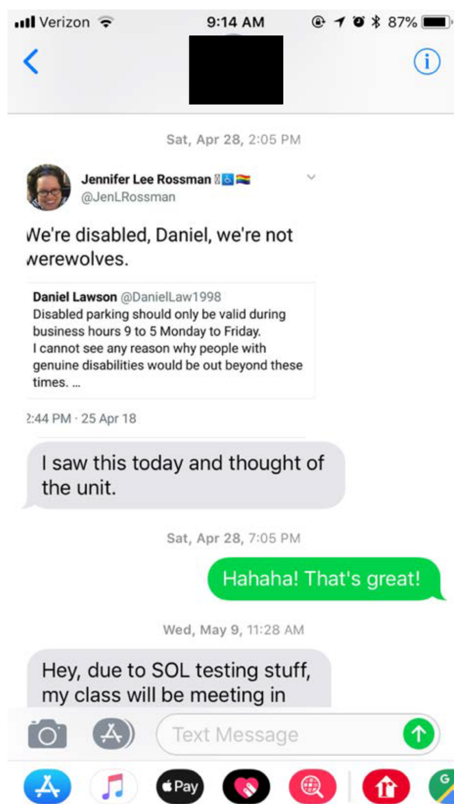

Figure 2. Text from Mr. Peterson on April 28, 2018.

Mr. Peterson appeared to enjoy seeing the ideas present in a sociocultural approach to disability in other texts outside of our study, which again illustrated his willingness to understand and consider

the ideas presented through the course of the study. His enthusiasm for these ideas and adaptation of them into his teaching practice suggested that more time spent with the sociocultural lens would support continual development of critical practices towards disability.

Summary. The challenges Mr. Peterson faced in fostering classroom discussion around disability suggest that he felt limited in his ability to discuss deeper issues and controversies surrounding disability. Although many resources were shared with him prior to beginning the unit, this material was new and therefore there was a disconnect between how he may have understood the ideas and what he shared with the class aloud and in group discussions. His response to the unit resources was typically enthusiastic and positive, yet often Mr. Peterson did not use this information to foster dialogue surrounding disability and the injustices done to disabled people.

I am not sure that Mr. Peterson neglected to foster discussion around disability consciously, but rather this theme is in line with Bakhtin's (1998) generative aspect of language. With other voices and dialogues introduced, Mr. Peterson might better assimilate these discourses into his own personal discourse. In the limited amount of time we spent together working with a sociocultural lens, Mr. Peterson grew more accepting, if not excited, to examine disability critically through literature. Further time with these discourses could spur growth and assimilation of personal discourses so that his ability to discuss disability and to make connections between disability and other forms of marginalization would strengthen.

Theme 5: A need to develop an inclusive classroom. While Mr. Peterson's growth in his practices as a teacher were developed throughout the study, I concluded from classroom observations that that Mr. Peterson was examining his views on students with disabilities while also working in an environment that was often exclusionary. As I observed Mr. Peterson teaching

lessons to his ninth grade English class, I used the indicators of critical disability stance set forth in chapter 3 (see Table 2) to guide my work. The first indicator, inclusive thinking, was noted if the teacher considered creating equitable student roles, shared power and authority between student and teacher, remained supportive of all learning abilities and needs, valued each student's unique contribution, and fostered peer connections. Evidence of these behaviors was marked if all students were engaged in learning tasks, consideration was given to grouping, and differentiated tasks were offered for students at varied readiness levels. When reflecting on these indicators, I concluded that Mr. Peterson appeared limited in his strategies for fostering inclusion of students with disabilities in his own class. I noted that in workshops and classroom observations, he often demonstrated exclusionary and deficit thinking.

This point was first shown through a discussion of a student with an auditory disability who, according to Mr. Peterson, is often is "a bit of a challenge" (W1.3.6.18. l. 343). Mr. Peterson explained that the student, Connor, put forth little effort in class, frequently listening to music on his headphones and asking to leave for water. These behaviors in turn made it harder for Connor to hear and participate in class. He also explained that Connor did not have many friends in the class and that he often asked to work outside alone. During my first classroom observation, I witnessed these behaviors as Connor asked to leave for an extended bathroom trip and made little effort to join the group work in progress when he returned. The majority of Connor's class time appeared to be spent scrolling through his phone and ignoring the pleas of classmates to answer questions or get started.

To improve this situation, Mr. Peterson reported that he had talked to the principal several times about the situation and had let Connor work alone outside of the classroom and leave for

water when needed. Yet, he appeared uncertain over what was in the best interest of the student, as he stated,

> We [professionals] talk about how great inclusion is and about how having students with disability and how amazing that is. But if there's not [pauses] it's kind of one of those things where you can take a horse to water, but you can't force it to drink kind of thing. It's like if we put a student in here with those other students, but they don't themselves take the initiative to work together, then it makes it very difficult and it creates this kind of tense, kind of situation. (W1.3.6.18. l. 355-58)

With this statement Mr. Peterson appeared to question how inclusion could be beneficial to a student if he or she is not taking "an initiative to work together" with other students, as if it were the student's responsibility to make inclusion work. He concluded that, "inclusion is great, and I want him to be right here working with the other students, but if he's doing better on his own, you know…" (W1.3.6.18. l. 363-64). Rather than considering alternative strategies to use with Connor, as well as how the class or school itself might be failing him, Mr. Peterson leaned towards blaming the student for his behavior in the class.

As this was a workshop, I offered advice on inclusion possibilities and shared research with Mr. Peterson on how to help the student succeed. Rather than letting him work in the hallway alone or take bathroom breaks, I suggested allowing Connor to work with other students in nonacademic ways, such as looking for books together, in order to promote social interaction and greater acceptance. This suggestion prompted Mr. Peterson to consider how he could use an online classroom reward system to help build a more inclusive community with future classes. Next year, when forming teams for the program, he would be "much more assertive and direct in the way that I'm going to have more collaboration happening" (W1.3.6.18. l. 381-82). In doing so,

he would make all students play a role: “Everybody on the team needs to be included. Everybody has to be a part. And that's the kind of thing I'm going to focus more on. I'm going to make sure everybody on the team has some sort of job” (W1.3.6.18. l. 385-87). He explained that this program could in, a sense, force students to contribute to the group:

> If you have a student who's going to pull their own weight and they're going to give something good and communicate with the group, they'll be pulled into the group because they'll be seen as being useful. That's just the way that humans are. But if the one person does not directly contribute a whole lot to their group, well then, the group is just going to morph and kind of leave them (W1.3.6.18. l. 395-99).

Mr. Peterson’s desire to use this system was one attempt at valuing each student’s unique contribution; however, the latter part of the comment illustrated exclusionary acts, as it echoed a common misunderstanding of students with disabilities in that the responsibility for inclusion lie in the student himself. In other words, if only he or she would try harder, they could succeed. Or as Mr. Peterson stated, if the student would just “pull their weight,” and “contribute” to the group, he or she would not be left behind. This reasoning is in line with Beratan’s (2008) argument that the assimilation of disabled students through IDEA is problematic in that it hierarchizes students and relies on a conception of disabled people as less than non-disabled people. In Mr. Peterson’s case, this appeared as a judgment of the student of having limited ability and fixed skills, based on his inability to perform in the standard ways of other non-disabled students.

Promoting agency in teaching students with disabilities. Mr. Peterson’s frustration with Connor was clear when towards the end of our discussion in Workshop 3 he stated, “I don't want it to seem like I've just kind of given up on it, but it's almost like at this point, it's almost a lost cause” (W1. 3.6.18. l. 402-03). His statement illustrated a sense of despondency and hopelessness

for Connor. In classroom observations, it appeared that Connor was indeed viewed as a “lost cause” for Mr. Peterson. He was frequently ignored and allowed to listen to his headphones, rather than led to participate in class. Mr. Peterson’s expression of powerlessness in improving the situation for Connor lead me to realize that teachers may need support in promoting student agency before beginning a sociocultural approach to disability. I also realized that Mr. Peterson could benefit from further strategies and ideas for fostering a more inclusive class.

Although I shared resources and discussed inclusion ideas, after workshop one, I decided that further readings on dialogic teaching (Fecho, Falter, & Hong 2016) might help Mr. Peterson with inclusion challenges, as well as frame future discussions of disability. A week later, at the start of workshop two we began our discussion with this chapter as a talking point. Mr. Peterson stated that he was confused over a passage in which the authors Fecho, Falter, and Hong (2016), discuss a classroom scenario when teachers call students to a meeting to discuss their failures in school. He was unsure why this incident was portrayed as negative in the chapter and stated, “it sounded almost like a 504 or SAPP meeting… but then it was like, no this was terrible and she pulled this kid out for some reason, and I was like I don't really know what was the problem” (W2. 3.16.18, l.54-56). He argued that, “if the tone doesn't have that kind of accusatory tone, then I don't see why that this was a problem” (W2. 3.16.18, l.57).

After I explained that the scenario was likely critiqued because the teachers were acting as authoritative, rather than calling for active participation on the part of the student and considering together what could be done to help them succeed, Mr. Peterson conceded that this authoritarian attitude would not be effective, and instead working together with the student would be better. As an example, he discussed a recent Individualized Education Planning meeting (IEP) in which the guidance counselors could not agree with the parents that the student needed a reading evaluation.

He shared how the conversation was not very fruitful, with parents and counselors sparing back and forth over the test and no progress made. Instead, he argued that in such meetings he tries to

> always try and ask the kid, like, hey what's your thoughts, what do you need? Um, and directly talk to them because I feel like there's so many times where it's no one else really acknowledges that they're there. It's their learning; they're the ones that this is for, so they should have the biggest say in what they need. Other times it has been different, but for the most part it's pretty good.

As Mr. Peterson considered the Fecho, Falter, and Hong (2016) chapter, his philosophy on how to include students with disabilities was made clearer. The desire to include the student in his or her plans for education demonstrated that Mr. Peterson promoted agency in his students with disabilities rather than an authoritative role as demonstrated in the article; however, as was shown by his lack of inclusive strategies with Connor, promoting agency in students might also lead to blame when a student fails to succeed in the classroom. While Mr. Peterson included his students on what best serves him or her in the classroom, he also left the responsibility for learning and student motivation up to the student as well, rather than taking on this responsibility as the teacher.

From these discussions, I concluded that Mr. Peterson was open to asking that students with disabilities aide in decision-making; however, he was unclear of what strategies he could implement to create an inclusive classroom. In addition, I felt that his personal experiences surrounding disability could have impacted the way he saw students with disabilities in the classroom. In both his high school and family life growing up, Mr. Peterson’s experienced disability as isolating and individualized. This view is concurrent with the medical model view

which places students on a continuum of intelligent and not intelligent and is one that is often followed in public schools (Ferri, 2009).

As I completed my first observation of Mr. Peterson's class, the difficulty he faced with inclusion while still attempting to promote agency became more apparent. As an illustration of the necessity for inclusive thinking that considers creating equitable student roles and fostering peer connections, I will review one classroom observation involving Connor in more detail. At one point during class, Mr. Peterson asked students to play a whisper game to earn more points on the online gaming platform. *He* explained, that this platform was used to motivate students and help them feel that they were in more in control of their work in the class. The game chosen for this particular challenge was the familiar childhood game of "Telephone" in which the leader whispers a statement in one student's ear and passes it around the room until it reaches the last person in the whisper chain, who then states it out loud. Mr. Peterson announced that if his statement stayed exactly the same by the time it reached the last student, he would award the class the 20 or so points needed to beat the other class tally. As the statement moved from one student to the next, a few students began to enthusiastically encourage one another to get the statement right. Several boys took it upon themselves to monitor the progress and accuracy of the quote by having students tell them the statement they had passed on to the next student.

When the statement came to Connor, he passed it to the next table; however, a few students later, the boys realized that the first table somehow misstated the line when passing it along. They traced this misstep back to Connor and after realizing that he had messed up the game, directed a few angry sighs and frustrated glares his way. Although I was not sure if this frustration and anger was overheard by Connor, as he again had his headphones on, this activity

certainly did not help improve his social isolation in the class. In fact, it only appeared to add animosity between him and his classmates.

I was surprised that Mr. Peterson would have considered this sort of game in a class with a student with an auditory disability. His lack of forethought did not appear intentional, but it did illustrate a lack of understanding and knowledge on how to best meet the needs of his students with disabilities and to consider beforehand how to foster inclusion. Training that focused on the areas of inclusive thinking as listed in Table 2 might have helped Mr. Peterson focus on student agency and motivation without excluding his student with a disability. Mr. Peterson's treatment of Connor illustrated that while he was growing in his understanding of the sociocultural model as applied to literature study and class discussion, equally important to creating an inclusive and critical view of disability is focusing on the immediate environment of the teacher, his or her classroom. Without a fully inclusive classroom, the teacher can demonstrate incongruences in following a sociocultural model of disability that seeks to accept and value people with disability and a classroom that is itself not very accepting.

Summary. An examination of Mr. Peterson's response to questions that focused on students with disabilities revealed that there was a disconnect between his understanding of disability and his own inclusive practices in the classroom. While I did not specifically ask about inclusiveness in the interviews and workshops, because Mr. Peterson often steered the conversation to his past experiences with students with disabilities and spoke of his current struggles with these students, it was an unanticipated theme.

Although the sociocultural lens helped support Mr. Peterson's efforts to implement lessons that examined disability critically, it also led to the questioning of his teaching practices around students who were disabled. Most often Mr. Peterson expressed an uncertainty on how to

approach and best reach students who were struggling in the classroom. At times he chose techniques that appeared to be exclusionary. This theme suggests that more work towards making the classroom a space of acceptance and inclusion for students with disabilities must be addressed before the teacher examines disability critically in the classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter presented five key themes from a study examining what ways a sociocultural lens might support an ELA teacher's efforts to plan and implement lessons that use literature to examine disability critically. These themes illustrate how one teacher attempted to understand and implement this lens as a critical avenue into disability as a subject of study. In his initial introduction to the lens, Mr. Peterson was influenced by his past conceptualizations of disability including his experiences as an ELA teacher, as a student in school, and as a relative of disabled family members. After the introduction of a sociocultural approach to disability in workshops, this lens helped him to better understand disability as a whole and to connect it to other history and forms of marginalization, particularly when it was introduced by disabled people. As a result, the sociocultural lens supported his efforts to facilitate a critical analysis of disability in literature, as well as in film and media. However, perhaps due to the newness of this approach or a lack of knowledge surrounding disability, Mr. Peterson struggled in the application of this lens in class discourse surrounding disability. There also appeared to be a struggle in meeting the needs of students with disabilities through inclusive teaching. In the next chapter, I offer a discussion of these themes, including their impact, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study is an illustration of one teacher's attempt to use a sociocultural model to critically analyze disability through literature. In doing so, it provides a unique study that examines how a secondary teacher can lead students through a new approach to disability in literature.[1] Case study methodology (Yin, 2009) was used to offer rich insight into how an individual teacher can lead students in literature analyses. Below, I discuss what I learned in this study and the implications for teaching and research.

In this chapter I focus on four areas of using a sociocultural lens; how it can 1) impact a teacher's understanding of disability and ability, 2) push against traditionalism in the classroom and offer needed perspectives on disability in literature, and 3) influence instructional decision making to help students relate disability to other forms of difference. In addition, I discuss how this study offers insight into how future studies, teacher mentorship, and professional development might support teachers as they adopt a new approach to examining disability in literature. I use Bakhtin's (1981) theory of "ideological becoming" and his reference to social interplay of language to guide this discussion.

Pushing Against Social Constructions of Natural and Norm

First, Mr. Peterson was able to expand his views on disability through the introduction of a sociocultural lens. His personal experiences with teaching disability as a sensitivity issue, growing up with relatives with a physical disability, and attending an exclusionary secondary school, as discussed in Themes 1 and 2, influenced his conceptualization of disability. The

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[1] Favazza and Odom's (1997) study illustrates one attempt at disability acceptance through literature; however, this is done with primary school students.

introduction of resources and ideas surrounding a sociocultural lens appeared to expand his views on disability. This work supported him in recognizing stereotypes and common tropes of disability, as well as the injustices disabled people face in our society. Although he seldom questioned the disparity and harm disabled characters faced, such as those with Charlie in *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007), he became more critically aware and thoughtful in his approach to analyzing disability in literature. At times he led students to consider how disability was used as a trope in literature. Other times, he asked students to consider how stereotypes portrayed in movies might lead them to believe unwarranted opinions about disabled people.

Although this study did not intend to look at the teacher's personal ideologies surrounding disability, a major theme was also that the teacher's personal conceptualization of disability was a key factor in introducing a sociocultural lens. To use a sociocultural lens, teachers need to challenge their own ideas about normalcy before they can work towards helping students accept varying interpretations of disability. This idea was supported as Mr. Peterson discussed the disability of the character Charlie in the short story *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007). Here he explained disability to students not just as a "handicap," but also as "your inability to interact with the world at large or the inability to be understood by the world around you" (I3, l. 763-68). However, in defining disability as an inability to interact with or be understood by the world, Mr. Peterson illustrated that he did not yet clearly adapt or understand the sociocultural lens. Instead, his personal ideology seemed to remain with the view of disability as a lack and personal limitation.

This understanding of the teacher's personal conceptualization of disability also suggested that teachers need opportunities to examine their own personal views surrounding disability and to consider how those views may impact their teaching. Mr. Peterson's hesitancy to

challenge sociocultural interpretations of disability suggested that he may have needed more time and guidance to fully implement a sociocultural approach. This work can be done in future workshops as questioning the teacher on what defines disability, as well as how the ideals of normality and deficit function in society and literature. The facilitator and teacher could also work to create lessons that lead students in similar questioning of disability. Considering the ways in which the idealized body is defined and ingrained in our consciousness can serve to challenge the stereotypes in literature that present disability as defective or outside of the norm.

An Offering of Needed Perspectives in Literary Study

In addition to pushing against personal conceptualizations on disability, the data also illustrated that the sociocultural lens was also of use when further analyzing other depictions of disability outside of literature. In Chapter 4, I discussed how Mr. Peterson used the sociocultural lens as a springboard to further analyze disability in history, film, and law. The sociocultural lens, as presented in workshops, introduced Mr. Peterson and his students to a needed perspective on literary study, which included the cultural constructs surrounding literature and disability. Lessons on disability law surrounding a case on disability and murder, as well as a broader discussion of historically discriminatory practices toward those with disabilities were not only interesting and relevant to students, but they also provided much needed perspectives and insights into disability in our society.

However, developing confidence in discussing issues surrounding disability requires that a teacher consider new ways of thinking about and discussing disability. In-depth discussions such as these often involve working through ideas with students, helping them to apply these ideas to their own lives, and imagining ways that they might seek other approaches to disability. While the sociocultural lens supported Mr. Peterson's analysis of the construction of social norms and

stereotypes in literature, discussing disability with students was frequently a challenge for him. He struggled with class discussions on disability, approaching the topic with trepidation during interviews and moving quickly past it in classroom observations. I speculated that this struggle could be partly due to Mr. Peterson's teaching style or his unfamiliarity with the material, yet an important consideration was that his uncertainty could have been due to an inexperience with analyzing disability in literature. Implications from this theme suggests that the teacher could benefit from a better understanding of how to lead students in discussions and analytical readings of literature through a sociocultural lens of disability.

For example, as the study began, in addition to reviewing disability concepts within the sociocultural framework in workshops, the participant could have benefited from deeper reflection on his personal experiences with and understanding of disability so that he might then feel more comfortable speaking about disability with students. As Mr. Peterson described his teaching of disability as a matter of avoiding negative perceptions when using offensive language, mostly as a way to educate students to "not be a jerk" through language sensitivity, I, as facilitator, might have suggested that this approach is not typical of a sociocultural one. Gernsbacher, Raimon, Balinghasay, and Boston (2016) found that attempts to correct language with educational euphemisms, such as *special needs* or *students with autism*, do not result in more positive student associations with disability. Instead, it is recommended that the non-euphemized word disability is used as a means of ensuring that students are not speaking in an offensive manner. Although I shared several pieces of literature on language use and disability with Mr. Peterson, an approach that examines one's past language used to discuss disability in relation to the sociocultural model was needed. In workshops, I might have discussed misconceptions

surrounding disability such as disability first language and reclaiming of the word disabled, as well as connected his past views of disability with ideas present in workshop readings.

In addition, workshops could have provided more ideas on how to analyze disability as a social construct as applied to literary study. Previous literature suggests that teachers struggle as they teach social issues to students. Bender-Slacks (2010) noted that teachers saw their role in social justice work as simply introducing students to social justice issues rather than changing their minds on issues. Mr. Peterson seemed to view his role as introducing the ideas surrounding disability to students, rather than leading students in a critical analysis of disability through literature. The danger in approaching literary analysis in this way is that, as Bender-Slacks (2010) argued, when taught in isolation, social justice issues can have the effect of isolating the issue as "individually based rather than institutionalized" (p. 195).

This point was illustrated in how Mr. Peterson often spoke of disability as something inherent within the individual in discussions of Charlie in *Flowers for Algernon* (Keyes, 1966/2007), as well as how students shared misperceptions surrounding autism and other disabilities as individualized. For example, one student in Peterson's class spoke of disability as something that, "disables him [the character] socially," and of intelligence that is "smarter than what we would call normal people." Not only was this student presenting disability issues as individually-based rather than institutionalized, but by not realizing the significance of disability as a form of institutional discrimination, the project Mr. Peterson assigned affirmed stereotypes rather than dispelled misconceptions surrounding disability. Perhaps a more direct approach to analyzing disability in the texts could first entail reading and discussing the literary pieces together with the teacher before their use in the classroom. To add to this discourse, the teacher and facilitator could read and discuss analytical pieces found in periodicals such as *Disability*

Studies Quarterly or *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* that discuss the depiction of disability in the literary text(s).

The thematic understanding of offering a needed perspective in literary study, was further illuminated by the theory of Bakhtin (1981) in that one's awareness of a discourse or idea can be broadened through the introduction of new discourses and subsequently assimilated into one's own. Bakhtin's (1981) theory on ideological becoming offers insight into how a teacher might grow in this awareness. Bakhtin (1981) felt there were two forms of discourse that interact with one another: 1) the "authoritative word," which he defines as the "religious, political, moral; the word of the father, of adults and of teachers, etc." that has been "acknowledged in the past," and 2) the "internally persuasive discourse," described as "the word that is denied all privilege, backed up by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged by society" (p. 342). For Bakhtin (1981), "ideological becoming" is "the process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (p. 341). As he explained,

> When someone else's ideological discourse is internally persuasive for us and acknowledged by us, entirely different possibilities open up. Such discourse is of decisive significance in the evolution of an individual consciousness: consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself…When thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse, along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us. (p. 345)

In other words, as we come into contact with the ideological discourse of others, we work through these discourses and assimilate what matters to us. These new discourses become our own, influencing what we think and becoming internally persuasive for us. As it becomes our own, the internally persuasive word "awakens new and independent words, and it organizes masses of our words from within." It is "freely developed, applied to new material, new conditions" (p. 345).

For Mr. Peterson to make new connections with the ideas presented in workshops, as well as to reveal "newer ways to mean," he may have needed more exposure to the ideas and basic tenets of the sociocultural lens, as well as other information on how to apply this lens to literature. In the future, attention should be paid to how to best develop a teacher's ideological self by providing multiple discourses surrounding disability so that he or she can then choose what is internally persuasive and assimilated. These discourses might have included articles and information from other teacher educators who have done such work, lessons and videos that focus on dialogue, and direct training on how to analyze and discuss disability in literature.

In addition, workshops might be offered to multiple teachers at a time so that learning becomes collaborative and a social act. Learning as a social act leads to a person's "ideological becoming" and development of the self as a "process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). Because the internally persuasive discourse that we assimilate from others and make our own is constantly evolving and changing as it is further developed and applied to new situations, it makes sense that this process is one that is in dialogue not only with discourses, but also other educators concerned with these topics. Stewart (2019) offers a means of learning collaboratively through his sociological method of problem-posing with teacher candidates. This method was used to support teacher candidates as they engaged in challenges in the classroom to promote critical thought and discussions that would "bridge the gap that can

often develop between theory and practice" (p.215). A facilitator could utilize this dialogic approach as a way to lead the teacher through problem-posing activities that promote reflective and critical thinking on disability. For example, teachers could examine canonical pieces of literature commonly taught in the ELA classroom and together pose and discuss problems surrounding representations of disability in the literature.

Effective Instruction That Relates Disability to Other Forms of Difference

Bakhtin's (1981) theory on learning as assimilating multiple discourses also sheds light on the process of connecting disability to other forms of social justice. When utilizing any focused curriculum, a teacher must question how it connects to the larger world, as well as the role he or she plays in this work. A possible shortcoming of my workshops with Mr. Peterson was not connecting disability to other forms of disempowerment. The data suggested the importance of sharing disability work as one that is connected to all marginalized members of society. Throughout the study, Mr. Peterson demonstrated a willingness to take part in other identity politics, such as the signing of a petition to allow a transgender student to use the bathroom of his choice. However, he often focused on race and gender issues as separate from disability. Yet, by connecting race, sexuality, and gender with disability, teachers can find a promising means of destabilizing able and non-abled binaries in literature and in society. As Cohen (1997) pointed out, multiple roles of identity can be used as "shared experiences of oppression and resistance" in order to build indigenous resources, shape consciousness, and act collectively" (p. 480).

This theme suggests that future teacher preparation that is centered on a sociocultural approach to disability must work towards connecting disability to other marginalized identities. For example, critiquing disability in literature can become a discussion that centers around all areas of difference, much in the way Mr. Peterson attempted to do so in his discussion on Traci

Latimer and euthanasia. Power can be enacted in many categories of identity; however, as Cohen (1997) argued, it can also “serve as the basis of domination and control” and can be broken down and intersected with other identities in order to create greater sources of resistance (Cohen, 1997, p. 481). The inclusion of disability into the curriculum can work to intersect systems of power that are more frequently examined in the ELA classroom, such as race and gender.

Future studies then, might include the co-development of discussion leads or planned responses that can serve as guides for teachers as they discuss disability and how it relates to other forms of marginalized identities. The teacher and facilitator could co-create activities for students in which the ideal body is critiqued and defined through what is not ideal. They might ask, in what ways is the stigma attached to disability a way of excluding and marking the body as outside of the mainstream of society? In what ways is this similar to the exclusion of bodies based on race or gender? These questions are important for leading teachers to question how systems of power and control are enacted upon the body. As Davis (1995) states, “The stigma of disability, of physical traits, creates the icon of the other body – the disabled figure – an icon that needs to be excluded in a similar way to the body marked as differently pigmented or gendered” (p, 80).

Disability Is More Than a Character in a Book

Although this study was not meant to investigate the participant’s use of inclusion, I would hope that this learning experience would create a context in which Mr. Peterson would consider his own interaction with students with disabilities in the class, while critically evaluating disability in the world of fiction. Disability critiques are not just for characters in the book; they also pertain to how teachers and students interact with students with disabilities in class.

The hopelessness described by Mr. Peterson in dealing with his student Connor, as discussed in the prior chapter, and his lack of possible solutions for inclusion, suggested that more

work needs to be done with supporting teachers as they address the needs of students with disabilities in the classroom. While not intentional on Mr. Peterson's part, he expressed exclusionary attitudes and behaviors in his teaching and his discourse on inclusion. It should not be a surprise that ableist attitudes and institutional ableism are found in schools, as they are internalized into the very fabric and culture of our school systems (Erevelles, 2002; Ferri, 2009). A short introduction to disability, ableism and a sociocultural lens was not sufficient in helping Mr. Peterson address Connor's needs.

It is important that teachers critique such practices in order to create a truly inclusive classroom, not just though literature examination, but through teaching practices. As Dan Goodley argued, "we have internalized ableist values into the very heart of our ontological souls" (2014, p. 32). Teachers and researchers would benefit by examining exclusionary practices within the classroom before such a study is put into place. For example, we might question what forms of institutional ableism or "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their disability" (Beratan, 2008, p. 339) are present in the participant's school and classroom. A sociocultural approach must also seek to advance the social justice of disabled individuals within the classroom. It must promote the idea that there are a wide variety of bodies and minds that are "deserving of respect and equality regardless of how they function" (Evans & Herriott, 2009, p. 2).

Thus, the questioning of disability, difference, and forms of marginalization is an important aspect of a sociocultural approach in the classroom, especially in regards to the teacher's attitude toward disability and the inclusion of students with disabilities. In future studies, training should involve examining the teacher's practices towards inclusive education and sharing of strategies for students with disabilities as he or she needs them. One strategy for

fostering this examination might be to introduce the teacher to disability theory, such as Castaneda and Peters' (2000) concept of "disability oppression theory," as one means of educating him or her on individual empowerment and the societal liberation of people with disabilities. As discussed in Chapter 2, this theory focuses on two areas—the discrimination against people with disabilities, termed ableism, and the process of empowering and liberating people with disabilities by equal "access to and accommodation within society's systems," by which all people are connected and depend on one another in order to "perform equally important community roles" (p. 320). Both areas are important when encouraging the teacher to examine his or her personal views surrounding disability and ableism, as well as the disempowerment of disabled people in society.

Integrating oppression theory in workshops could also serve as a way to further navigate the sociocultural lens with the teacher as he or she works through disability and social justice in the classroom. For example, the research facilitator could share examples of present and past discrimination against disabled persons in our society, such as those dealing with equal access to public spaces, health care, or employment. The facilitator could then discuss ways that these forms of discriminations are being fought against, and, if possible, work collaboratively with disability rights advocates to gain a richer insight into efforts to empower and socially liberate people with disabilities. This work can also be applied to the examination of discriminatory practices within the teacher's own classrooms and school. The facilitator and teacher might work together to consider ways in which equal access and accommodation within school systems could empower disabled students. Through such a process, facilitators may provide a clear and structured framework for examining ableism and creating avenues for social justice work in the classroom. As teachers push against the ideals of normalcy and deficit, they follow the

sociocultural idea that removing barriers for people with disability is a social responsibility rather than an individual one.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although this qualitative study allowed me to develop an in-depth understanding of how the introduction of a sociocultural lens can support a teacher as he or she plans and implements lessons that use literature to examine disability critically, the limitations of my study involve the bounding of the case by one teacher for approximately ten weeks and the collecting of limited data during this time. As Creswell (2013) pointed out, some cases do not have clear beginning and ending points, so it was important to set clear boundaries on the study; however, these boundaries did create limitations. In addition, as this was an exploratory case study, it is not generalizable to a larger population (Creswell, 2013). Regardless, the study was not intended as representative of a specific population, but rather to give insight into future development of teacher workshops and professional development on integrating a sociocultural approach to disability with teachers. In the following section, I discuss both limitations as well as areas to consider for future research.

First, because the teacher offered generalized and oftentimes terse lesson plans and diary entries, at times the content analysis was difficult to complete and did not offer a full picture of what was happening in the classroom. For this reason, I worked with Mr. Peterson on an additional lesson to be completed on the last day of the unit to include videos and critical questions. My hope was to witness more class discussion surrounding disability and to observe how Mr. Peterson planned and implemented a specific lesson with sociocultural materials shared with him. With this last observation I was able to better connect his lesson planning with his

actual performance in the classroom. In addition, I made a point to question any moments during classroom observations that I was unsure of or had further questions in later interviews.

Second, although the added email correspondence, observations, and workshop time created thick data sources, the time Mr. Peterson had in working through the ideas within the sociocultural lens of disability was limited. Extra time, beyond the seven weeks I spent with Mr. Peterson, could have offered more data and time to analyze the effect the sociocultural lens had on the teacher. I believe this would have been helpful to see if the process of Mr. Peterson's "ideological becoming" (Bakhtin, 1981) would strengthen and continue to grow.

Finally, since this study was designed to understand how a teacher plans and implements the teaching of texts that portray disability, the variables surrounding the events and process of instructional planning vary as I attempt to repeat this process with other teachers. For example, different teachers have varying access to books that are disability focused to use in the classroom. However, the results, and my interpretations of them, adds to the knowledge about how a critical sociocultural look at disability in novels can be planned for and implemented with teachers, allowing me to better plan for future investigations.

Future Research

Existing research on the challenges of integrating critical approaches to disability have focused mostly on how to foster acceptance for disabled peers in the classroom (Favazza & Odom, 1997; Krahe´ & Altwasser, 2006; Swaim & Morgan, 2001), as well as forging disability awareness in students (Ison et al., 2010). Yet an interrogation of other elements surrounding critical approaches to disability and literature is needed to gain insight into how such efforts can be used for promoting the acceptance of disability. It is hoped that with more time and the suggested additions discussed above, a teacher could develop his or her own voice in critiquing

disability in literature, as well as connecting it to other forms of marginalization. In addition, more research is needed on how this approach might be received by multiple teachers. Learning is a collaborative effort and requires the discussion and working through of these ideas in groups or pairs.

While this study illustrates how a sociocultural approach can aid a teacher in creating and implementing lesson plans that use literature to examine disability critically, it does not look at how this approach affects students. Future research is needed on how teachers can best integrate a critical approach that can impact students' understanding of disability.

Conclusion

This study indicated that, with time and support, a sociocultural view of disability can introduce teachers to a unique understanding of disability oppression and advocacy. In Mr. Peterson's case, this introduction was one that was somewhat uncertain, yet it was in the process of forming. As Fecho, Graham, and Hudson-Ross (2005) might suggest, he was still "wobbling" in his understanding of the material. Although brief and small, he made steps towards introducing students to a new way of understanding disability. Mr. Peterson's adaptation or "ideological becoming" (Bakhtin, 1987) of the sociocultural ideas led to the creation of a pedagogy that was connected to other forms of marginalization acceptance, namely race and gender, and to uncover harmful stereotypes and myths surrounding disability.

At present, teachers have many models for discussing race and gender in the classroom, yet the literature and support for discussing disability from a similar critical framework is sparse. Researchers and teacher educators might consider how we can better support the needs of teachers when teaching texts that deal with disability. It is only through the push for more accepting and realistic portrayals of disability, as well as critical examinations of disability in the cannon, will

we overcome numerous negative images of disability in texts in the ELA classroom. From Lenny in *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck, 1978) to Augustus in *Wonder* (Palacio, 2012), disabled characters are just as present as those of varying race and gender, yet they continue to be quite literally the unseen "ghost" haunting the novel, much like the madwoman hidden in the attic in *Jane Eyre* (Brontë, 1847/2006), or the frightening face that the audience dreads to see, as in the famous Broadway play *Phantom of the Opera* (Webber, 1986), or even Boo Radley hiding in the shadows in *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Lee, 1962). We, as teachers, must consider what these images teach our students about being present, valid, and accepted in the world. Among my future research plans are to consider how such negative and harmful depictions of disability can be exposed and analyzed with students. If teachers are successful in this approach, then it is my hope that we can change how our students understand and treat others with disabilities, most importantly in the world outside of fiction.

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Appendix A

Teacher Interview Protocols

Interview 1

- Tell me about your experience with disability.
- How many years have you been teaching?
- How would you describe your stance on teaching literature?
- Describe a typical class in your room.
- What are you working on in class right now?
- How are the students responding to the literature you are reading in class?
- What are the expectations of teachers in your school for literature choices?
- How did you decide on the texts you are teaching now?
- How did you decide to teach the texts? What were some of your overall goals and objectives?
- Tell me about how the class engages in dialogue in whole class discussions? Can you think of a particular time when discussion was successful? Not successful?
- What books, if any, have you used with students that deal with disability?
- If so, tell me about a time when you discussed this text. What kinds of things did students say?
- What kinds of things did you say?
- What language did you use to discuss these texts?

Interview 2

- Tell me about how you decided to structure the curriculum for teaching this novel?
- What are your goals and objectives for this curriculum?
- How did you define disability when planning this unit?
- Can you explain the process of how you considered the role of society and culture in the planning of this curriculum?
- Describe your process for choosing activities to use with this unit?
- What did students know about this novel or its major themes before beginning the unit?

- Can you tell me about a time that students responded well to the novel or unit?
- Can you tell me about a time when students responded poorly to the novel or unit?
- Tell me about a time when you used language and dialogue to discuss the texts.
- Please explain how you have integrated critical literacy skills to discuss the text over the course of the unit.
- How has your understanding of disability influenced your discussion of the text with your students?

Interview 3

- Please tell me how students have responded to the unit or novel thus far?
- Do you feel the students see this work as valuable? Why or why not?
- Can you give me an example(s) of how you used language and dialogue to discuss the texts?
- How have students responded to the text and its portrayal of disability? Please give me a few examples or specific times when they responded to the text?
- How has your own understanding of disability influenced your discussion of the text with your students?
- How do you think their understanding of disability is influencing their discussion of the text? (Using journals as reference points)

Interview 4

- Reflecting on the unit, share how you feel it went?
- Reflecting on the unit, please explain what effect the sociocultural lens had on the teaching of this novel?
- Explain the ways in which this framework was most prevalent in influencing students' responses to the novel. (Refer to journals and specific instances)
- Please share an example of how you led students through dialogue and critical analysis of the novel.
- What do you think went well with the use of these strategies (dialogue and critical analysis)? Can you give an example?
- What were challenges in using these strategies (dialogue and critical analysis)? Can you give an example?

- What activities might you change in this unit? Why?
- What activities do you feel were most useful? Why?
- Please describe how this process impacted students.
- Please describe how this process impacted you as teacher.
- What have you learned from planning and implementing this unit?
- Reflect on any other meaningful experiences or outcomes of this process.

Appendix B

Observation Protocol of Classroom Implementation of Co-constructed Lesson Plans

II. Integration Observation Rubric: For each row, place a mark in the bracket in the box best representing the situation observed. Columns 4 and 2 are provided as intermediate points. A mark in column N/A means the item is not applicable in this situation. Use of N/A in any one observation is not a sign of deficiency.

5	4	3	2	1	N/A	Notes
Most students are participating in classroom dialogue on topic. [ ]	[ ]	Some students are participating in classroom dialogue on topic. [ ]		Students are participating only when called on. [ ]	[ ]	
Students are highly involved with their teacher and peers in analyzing use of disability in text. [ ]	[ ]	Students have a more moderate role with their teacher and peers in analyzing use of disability in text. [ ]		Students await teacher or peers' discussion when analyzing use of disability in text. [ ]	[ ]	
When discussing disability, the teacher uses language that considers socially and culturally minded views of disability. [ ]	[ ]	When discussing disability, the teacher uses language considers some socially and culturally minded views of disability. [ ]		When discussing disability, the teacher considers few socially and culturally minded views of disability are used in discussion. [ ]	[ ]	
Problem solving and higher order thinking is evident in student activities. [ ]	[ ]	Problem solving and higher order thinking is evident at some point in student activities. [ ]		Little problem solving and higher order thinking is evident in student activities. [ ]	[ ]	
Student discussion of		Some student discussion of		Few instances of student		

disability is based on new learnings of disability from a social and cultural model. [ ]	[ ]	disability is based on new learnings of disability from a social and cultural model. [ ]		discussion of disability is based on new learnings of disability from a social and cultural model. [ ]	[ ]	
Relevant Quotes: Unexpected Events:						

Appendix C

Coding Dictionary

Abbreviation	Code/Themes	Definition	Instances from data
Category: Technology			
GC	Google Classroom	Indexes participant's putting of material on google classroom	Int. 1, l.164
Tech Comm.	Tech Community	Indexes when participant feels technology can help foster community	Work1, l.381-399; Work1, l.495-512
Category: Disability & Difference			
ST	Stereotype of Disability	Indexes when the participant notes stereotypes of disability or working against stereotypes	Work1, l. 19-22; Work1, l. 34-40; Work1, l.732-737
PC	Personal Connection	Indexes participant's past experiences with disability.	Work1, l. 3-10; Work1, l.160-173
Wobbling	Sub-code-Wobbling	Indexes when participant is pushing boundaries in his understanding of disability which can cause discomfort and uncertainty	Work1, l.769-776; Work2, l.37-42; Work2, l. 59-107; Work2, l.
Change of dis view	Sub-code-Change of disability view	Indexes when participant begins to think of disability in a new way	Work1, l. 3-10

Abbreviation	Code/Themes	Definition	Instances from data
VoD	Voice of disabled people	Indexes inclusion of quotes/stories of people in disability community	Work2, l.857-860
Dis. as Trag	Disability as/ as not tragic	Disability as/ as not tragic	Int. 1, l.223-227; Int. 1, l. 234-240; Work1, l. 137-149; Work 2, l. 419-423; Work2, l. 696-699; Int. 2, l. 65-68
Accept./Nonaccept. Diff	Acceptance/Nonacceptance of Difference c	Indexes participant's discussion of student or society's acceptance or lack of acceptance for disability or disabled people.	Int1, l.33-37; Int. 1, l. 253-267
	Subcode: What disabled have to offer	Indexes when participant discusses the strengths and good that disabled people have to offer society	Int. 1, l. 264-67
	Subcode: Limiting of Potential	Indexes when participant discusses the limiting of disabled people's potential	Int. 1, l. 261-267; Work1, l. 98-101 & 103-117 & 123-24; Work1, l.170-183
	Subcode: Language use and acceptance	Indexes participant's discussion of language use when referring to disability	Int.1, l. 37; Int. 1, l. 48-50; Int. 1, l.241-246

Abbreviation	Code/Themes	Definition	Instances from data
Dis Seg	Disability Segregation	Indexes the participant's discussion of the separation of those with disabilities from others or society	Work1, l. 42-57
Inc Con	Inclusion Conflict or Struggles with Inclusion	Indexes participant's struggle with inclusion of student with disability	Int. 1, l. 305-308
Exclusion of Dis. student	Exclusion of disabled students	Indexes when participant considers why inclusion is not working	Work1, l.410-423
Inclusion	Inclusion	Indexes general experiences with inclusion	Work1, l. 238-270; Work1, l. 310-373 & 391-407 & 415-423; Work2, l.144-151
Benefit of inc	Benefits of inclusion	Indicates discussion of inclusion as beneficial	Work1, l. 59-61
Dark History	Dark History	Indexes when participant discusses the discriminatory practices on those with disabilities	Work1, l. 441-48
Defending Non-conformity	Defending Non-conformity	Indexes when participant speaks about defending non-conforming students (trans & gay)	Work1, l.519-542; Work1, l. 842-858; Work1, l. 899-905; Work1, l. 928-930

Abbreviation	**Code/Themes**	**Definition**	**Instances from data**
Category: Teaching of Literature			
RW	Real World Themes	Indices participant's desire to use literature that speaks of our world	Int. 1, l. 57-64 & 73; Int. 1, l. 172; Int. 1, l. 228-29
OD	Open Discussion	Indexes participant's discussion techniques used with class	Work1, l.557-561; Work1, l.570-581; Work2, l. 654-656 ; Int. 2, l. 5-
Discomfort in Disc.	Discomfort in Derailed Discussion Sub code—discomfort in derailed discussion	Indexes participant's open discussion that creates discomfort or worry in participant	Int. 1, l. 316-320 & 322-324; Work1, l.544-550; 563-64l; Work2, l.157-170 & 172-178; Work2, l. 225-228
Openness to other (experience as you age)	Sub code to Discomfort-Openness to other through experience	Indexes when the participant expresses belief that one must be willing to listen for dialogue/discussion to occur.	Work2, l. 234-240; Work2, l. 290-291; Work2, l. 333-347 & 354-366; Work2, l. 380-404; Work2, l. 433-449; Work2, l. 543-547
Adaptation	Adaptation to others	Indexes when a participant discusses his belief that people can adapt to society whether through social pressure or interaction	Work2, l.606-628

Abbreviation	Code/Themes	Definition	Instances from data
Empathy = openness	Empathy leads to openness	Indexes when participant discusses how empathy for another person can lead to openness	Work2, l. 360-361; Work2, l. 375-378
Education= openness	Education leads to openness	Indexes when participant discusses that education can lead to openness/acceptance	Work2, l. 362-366; Work2, l.556-570
Mediator	Sub code—discussion mediator	Indices when participant discusses his role as mediator in class discussion	Work1, l.598-605 & 622-635; Work2, l.157-170; Work2, l.510-534; Work2, l. 709-724
RtoW	Reading to Write	Indexes participant's desire to use reading to teach writing skills.	Int. 1, l.154-160; Int. 1, l. 173-74
RE	Reading Enjoyment	Indexes the participant's discussion of student enjoyment or not enjoyment of reading assignments.	Int. 1, l. 127-132

Abbreviation	Code/Themes	Definition	Instances from data
Category: Teaching Students			
IN	Inclusion Attempts	Indexes participant's struggle to include students with disabilities either through instruction or other methods.	
Trad	Traditional	Indexes participant's traditional instruction methods being used.	Int. 1, l. 66-82; Int. 1, l. 97-100; Int. 1, l. 97-110; Int. 1, l. 289-91; Work2, l. 10-15
Check-ins	Check-ins	Indexes the use of quizzes or activities to check if students are doing work	Int. 1, l.100, 106, & 283; Work2, l.21-22
Discuss	Discussion	Indexes participant's relay of discussion techniques.	Int. 1, l.102; Int. 1, l. 178-187; Work1, l.652-659 &667-676; Int. 2, l. 5-
D.R. to racism	Disability Rights to racism	Indexes the leading of discussion from disability rights to racism	Int. 2, l. 34-
Dis to gender	Disability to gender issues	Indexes the leading of disability to discussion of gender issues	Int. 2, l. 49-60; Int. 2, l.75-83
Non-discussion	Non-discussion	Indexes participant's struggle with discussion	Int. 1, l.177-180; Work1, l.670-676

Abbreviation	Code/Themes	Definition	Instances from data
Argument	Argument	Indexes' participant's belief that argument and debate can convince students and/or change their mind	Work2, l.556-5783
Preparation	Preparation for teaching	Indexes when participant discusses his planning process	Work1, l.942-945
Dispelling myths	Dispelling myths	Indexes when participant discusses the dispelling of disability myths with students	Int. 2, l. 93-96