

A COMPARISON OF TENTH GRADE STUDENTS' SMALL GROUP  
DISCUSSIONS TO ADULTS' SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS IN  
RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

by

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(ABSTRACT)

No reported research studies have compared the responses of mature adults to the responses of tenth-grade students to short stories. The case studies presented here were designed to describe the kinds of responses offered by adults and students, and to compare the responses of students to the responses of adults. The case studies were also designed to report indications that any of three methods of small group discussions over a period of time influenced students to respond to short stories in a manner that is more like the responses of adults.

A tenth-grade academic English class was randomly divided into three groups of seven students. The Reflective Reading Group participated in teacher-directed small group discussions using a highly structured questioning strategy. The Question Group used the lists of questions from the questioning strategy as guides for their discussions. The Free Discussion Group participated in free discussions with no directions as to how the discussions should proceed. The Question Group and the Free Discussion Group had no

supervision by a teacher or other authority figure. The adult group also participated in free discussions.

The free discussions of the three student groups, one as a pre-treatment sample and one as a post-treatment sample, and the adult discussions were tape recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were coded as Factual and subcategories, Inferential and subcategories, Experiential and subcategories, Judgmental and subcategories, and Miscellaneous, and as Appropriate or Inappropriate. The responses were also analyzed to determine the comprehensiveness of the discussion, the length of responses, the nature of inappropriate comments, the breadth of participation, and change of mind of a discussant.

No clear patterns of change in the student responses were found as a result of the treatments. The Reflective Reading Group appeared to have become dependent on the questioning strategy. The Question Group had a less comprehensive discussion in Free Discussion II, indicating that the lists of questions might have influenced the students to focus on fewer aspects of the story. The Free Discussion Group offered responses that were categorically more like the responses of the adults in their final free discussion, suggesting that a series of free discussions may help students offer responses that are more like the responses of adults in free discussions.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

I. A. Richards (1929) and Louise Rosenblatt (1938) were among the first educators to explore the idea that response to literature involved the reader's own personal experiences as well as the text. Not until the 1960s, however, did educational researchers begin to conduct research on that subject. Since that time, investigators have looked not only at the kinds of responses offered, but also at how students formulate responses and how their past experiences and prior knowledge influence those responses.

Questions about how student groups and adult groups respond to literature remain unanswered. Reports of small group response are presented below. A review of the literature shows that no research in the analysis of adult group response to literature has been done.

One means of encouraging students to think at higher levels is the use of questioning procedures. Studies cited in the review of literature suggest that the use of higher cognitive questions produces higher levels of thinking. The questioning procedure chosen for this study uses questions that require students to make inferences and to use their prior knowledge and past experiences as they formulate responses to short stories.



### Need for the Study

Very little has been published about small group discussions of works of literature. Three British researchers, Barnes, Churley, and Thompson (1971), members of the Leeds Children as Readers Group, analyzed tape-recorded discussions of secondary students as they responded to a novel. These discussions occurred before the novel had been taught. The researcher had three objectives:

- 1) to learn about children's unguided, private responses to a book most of them enjoy;
- 2) to examine the kinds of talk the students engaged in to see how it differed from literature lesson talk; and
- 3) to see what specific indications the kind of talk might give us in the teaching of literature. (63)

In analyzing the discussions, Barnes and others saw a predominance of two kinds of talk: "Sorting-out and Re-experiencing" (74). Sorting-out included such things as checking the order of events. Re-experiencing was a shared reminiscence of the most important episodes of the novel "as if the pupils were enjoying them again and strengthening their responses by sharing them together" (74). The researchers concluded that this sort of response is lost when students participate in full-class discussions but felt it was an important part of forming and confirming responses.

Barnes, et al., detected four levels of responses in

their analysis of the student discussions:

Level 1: Putting oneself in the character's position;

Level 2: Treating the character and incident as if they were real;

Level 3: Being aware of the novel as an artifact, an expression of an author's intentions; and

Level 4: Discussing the novel as existing in its own right as a "virtual experience."  
(Barnes and others, 1971:75)

The fifteen-year-olds in Barnes' discussion groups maintained their discussion at Level 2 for the most part. Occasionally, they reached Levels 3 and 4, but returned almost immediately to Level 2. Students also responded at Level 1 briefly. Teacher-led discussions usually begin at Level 3, giving students no opportunity to talk at Levels 1 and 2. Barnes and colleagues called Levels 1 and 2 "an essential part of our total responses to a novel" (75) and saw the small group discussion as helpful in allowing students to participate in this necessary preliminary talk before moving on to more "distancing" levels.

Matsushashi (1980) replicated the study of Barnes and associates in an effort to confirm the hierarchical classification of responses. Matsushashi videotaped a discussion of the short story "The Last Spin." Her student group responded at Levels 1 and 2 for the most part, reaching Levels 3 and 4 briefly, as did the students in the Barnes, et. al., study. Students used the greater part of

the free discussion time "Sorting-out" the factual details of plot and character. They referred to personal experiences when expressing feelings and opinions about the story.

The purpose of several dissertation studies has been to investigate the effects of various strategies on the response of small student groups. Haught (1970) concluded that student-led small group discussions were more conducive to verbal involvement, personal identification with characters, and freedom of expression than teacher-led discussions. She also noted that "natural verbosity, teaching style of teachers, and content of literature affect the amounts and processes of thinking during discussions" (DA 1971:4622-A). Subjects of Haught's study were four-year high-school students.

Casey (1977) analyzed the affective responses of academic tenth-grade students to learn more about the number, kind, and pattern of affective responses in three different classroom situations: teacher-directed class discussion, self-directed small group discussion, and private reading. The students involved in the private reading group made written responses without discussing the literature; the other two groups discussed the poem for twenty-five minutes and responded in writing for ten minutes. In a protocol analysis of the written response,

Casey used seven categories of affective response to code the data: empathy, identification, association, moral reaction, appreciation, evaluation, and generalization. The investigation showed that patterns of response were similar in all three groups. The responses of small group discussions and private reading, however, tended to be somewhat more individualistic (DA 1978:6491-A).

In a 1982 study, Harris investigated the "relationship between teaching strategies and the types of responses students make after reading selected pieces of literature." (DA 1983:411-A). Each of three groups of tenth-grade students read a short story, a play, and a novel and were exposed to three teaching strategies: teacher-directed lecture-discussion, self-directed small group discussion, and creative drama exercises. In analyzing the data, Harris found subjects' affective responses were not influenced by either the genre of literature or the treatment.

In a case study, Beach (1973) described the response processes of college students in what he called private response and public response. Private response was collected by "eliciting and coding the students' free-association responses on successive re-readings of a poem and then comparing these responses to an unstructured group discussion about the same poem" (99). The tape recorded responses were coded in a modification of the Purves (1973)

categories.

The free association privately recorded responses contained more digressions than the discussions, whereas the discussions following a single reading of the poem contained more digressions than those discussions with preparation. The free association group offered more interpretative responses, indicating that a background understanding of a poem is necessary for interpretation. Students who had participated in free association were more willing to share their experiences. Their public response, however, was often a restatement of the thoughts recorded in the private response portion of the assignment. Those students who read the poem only once tended to offer more superficial responses.

Ross (1977) reported on small group free discussion of five twelfth graders. He found that students focused on problems of literal or experiential comprehension and recreated the poem from the text and from their own experiences. As the discussion progressed, students exhibited increasing cooperation in sharing experiences and admitting difficulties in interpretation, in working out problems together, and in publicly revising personal misinterpretations (61-62).

Another phase of responding to literature, the use of questions in the classroom, has had very little study.

Lucking (1976) used Bloom's Taxonomy as a model for developing sets of questions for different concepts in a story and asked students questions that progressed hierarchically through the six categories identified by Bloom. Lucking found that students made more interpretational comments and fewer miscellaneous comments after using the questioning strategy than they had made in earlier phases of the study.

Two studies have compared secondary students' reactions to situations or characters in literature to the reactions of older students, college juniors and seniors, and have suggested that age and prior knowledge affect response. In one of these, Beach (1983) reported that eleventh-grade high school students perceived embarrassing students and lecturing to be good classroom control methods, while the college students judged these acts as poor means of control. Beach concluded that since secondary students experienced these kinds of teaching situations frequently, they found them more acceptable, whereas the college students had been trained in their methods courses to view embarrassing students and lecture as poor teaching strategies. In the other study of the effect of age and experience on response, Beach and Brunetti (1976) compared tenth-grade students' perception of characters to university upperclassmen's perception of characters in two short stories. The students

were asked to use the Adjective Check List to select adjectives that best described the characters. The characters in the stories were in their mid-teens, and the researchers conjectured that for this reason, high-school students perceived them in a more favorable light. The university students perceived the characters as being more dependent than did the high-school students.

A review of the literature on questioning strategies and responding to literature showed no studies that compared the responses of student groups to the responses of an adult group.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was two-fold. Since no research on adult response to literature has been reported, one purpose was to create a profile of adult responses to short stories through the analysis of small group free discussions of four short stories. The second purpose of the study was to investigate whether or not any of three methods of small group discussion would move the responses of tenth-grade students in the direction of the responses of mature adults.

Research questions were not generated because the project was a case study.

### Definition of Terms

The reflective reading strategy, a strategy developed by Kenneth Hoskisson (1983), is a discussion procedure based on a set of questions designed by the teacher. The discussion, which takes place after students have read the story, demands that students use their background knowledge and information from the story to make inferences from the material the author presents. The purpose of the reflective reading strategy is to probe an issue presented in the story in as much depth as possible.

Questions for the reflective reading strategy are factual, inferential, or experiential. The discussion begins with an inferential main question that introduces the subject to be probed during the discussion. Factual and inferential questions that "examine the topic of the main question in as much depth as possible" (124) and experiential questions "that refer students to their own experiences as an outgrowth of the discussion of the meaning of the topic" (124) make up the format of the discussion. Questions that contain a fact begin with why. Inferential questions begin with a form of "do" or "be" and result in "yes" or "no" responses. After the student has answered with "yes" or "no," the teacher asks "Why?" or "Why not?" to get the student to justify his or her answer. Students' thinking is challenged "because they must justify their



responses and clarify or defend them if necessary" (134).

A factual response contains information that is explicitly stated in the story.

An inferential response contains information that is not explicitly stated in the story but can be logically inferred from the story.

An experiential response contains information from students' prior experience that is applicable to the story.

A judgmental response contains a judgment about the actions of a character, the quality of the story, or the author's craft.

A miscellaneous response contains information that cannot be coded as factual, inferential, experiential, or judgmental. (Please see Table 1, page 62, for a complete set of response categories and subcategories.)

A C-unit (Communication unit) is a measure of oral communication developed by Loban (1976). Based on the T-unit of Kellogg Hunt, the C-unit is defined as an "independent clause with all its modifiers" (Loban, 1976:9).

An utterance is a discussant's complete response.

#### Limitations of the Study

The study is limited in that the selection of the class used for the study was not random. Permission from the county school administration to do the study and access to a class were the key factors in the selection. The study

involved only tenth-grade "academic" students. The research design was limited to three groups of seven students each. The study was also limited by the selection of a teacher-led approach to small group discussions of short stories.

The researcher had no control over the curriculum being studied in the selected class before or during the study. The nature of the regular classroom instruction during the study was not investigated.

Since free discussion is the natural mode for talking about literature in an informal setting, this study dealt only with free discussions in the adult group.

The results of the study cannot be generalized because of the small number of students and adults who participated.

#### Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 has presented the need for the study, the purpose of the study, a statement of the problem, a definition of terms, and the limitations of the study. Chapter 2, a review of related research and literature, examines literature dealing with divergent responses to the same literary work and the use of questions as a means of raising students' levels of critical thinking. Chapter 3 describes the subjects, the design of the study, data collection procedures, and the methods of analysis. Case studies of each group's free discussions and various comparisons among the groups are presented in Chapters 4

through 8. Chapter 9 contains a discussion of the findings and implications for further research.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Though Richards published his observations about response in 1929, it was not until the 1970s that a number of researchers began to investigate the influence of prior knowledge on readers' responses to literature. It is now generally accepted that readers respond to works of literature in light of their past experiences.

The schema theory of knowledge, which explains why prior experiences are important, is presented in this chapter. Louise Rosenblatt (1938) and other educators have long recognized the importance of previous experiences as they affect a reader's reaction to literature. A discussion of response is included in Chapter 2.

This review of research about responding to literature is focused on the influence of prior knowledge because it was expected that both adult and student participants would make a large number of responses based upon their own experiences as these experiences related to the story. Students' reactions to literature, as well as science, social studies, and other subjects, are affected by the levels of questions to which they are asked to respond. Research about the effects of the use of low- and high-level questions and reports of the use of the reflective reading strategy are also presented in Chapter 2.

Finally, several categorical systems that have been developed for coding student responses to literature are presented in this chapter.

### Schema Theory

Educational psychologists and reading researchers in the past decade have used the schema theory to describe the nature of comprehension. The schema theory is derived from the works of Kant, Bartlett, and Piaget (Bransford, 1979:181). Rumelhart and Ortony developed this theory, and their ideas are "representative of those held by a large group of theorists" (Bransford, 1979:184).

Rumelhart (1977) describes a schema as

an abstract representation of a generic concept for an object, event, or situation. Internally, a schema consists of a network of interrelationships among the major constituents of the situation represented by the schema. Moreover, a schema is said to account for any situation that can be considered an instance of the concept it represents. (266)

Rumelhart exemplifies the comprehension process through this sentence: "The policeman held up his hand and stopped the car." Readers search their memory for a schema to account for this event. There are probably several schemata that might be applicable in some way, but the likely choice is that the policeman put his hand up to signal the car to stop. The reader assumes that the car had a driver who applied the brake after the policeman signalled stop. None

of these bits of information is explicit in the sentence. They are all, however, present in the reader's schema about how traffic policemen communicate with motorists and how motorists react to policemen (1977:267).

The fundamental assumption of schema theory is that situations can be understood only in terms of the schemata available to the comprehender. Distortion can occur in two basic ways: (1) new information may be added to make the story more congruent with the available schemata, or (2) presented information may be deleted to minimize the conflict with the available schemata. (Rumelhart, 1977:301)

Schema theory, then, suggests that text processing relies on the reader's past experience and prior knowledge. The reader who integrates prior knowledge with the information in the text is capable of creating new knowledge (Palmer, 1981:43). Pearson and Johnson (1978) use Piaget's terms assimilation and accommodation in explaining how new information is integrated with old information.

Assimilation occurs when we are able to categorize a new example as belonging to a pre-existing schema . . . . Accommodation occurs when we have to alter our schema or schemata.  
(35)

Schemata are the perceptual bases for reading a text. The fact that different schemata are developed by different readers accounts for the several interpretations of Emily Dickenson's lines "I never lost as much before/and that was in the sod." One student saw these lines as having to do with golf, another as an afternoon at the horse race track,

and a third as having to do with death (Purves, 1980:230).

Adams and Bruce (1982), strong proponents of the schema theory, believe that prior knowledge schema and comprehension, rather than the textual material, affect readers' responses to a story. "The text will provide clues with respect to the beliefs, plans, and goals of its characters, but their elaboration and their relationships to events, structure, and message of the story as a whole must be left to the inferential processes of the reader" (11-12).

The schema theory explains comprehension as a reaction between the reader and the text. Readers can only make sense of the text through their own past experiences and store of knowledge.

#### Response to Literature

Rosenblatt's (1938) explanation of response to literature is compatible with schema theory.

The process of understanding a work implies a recreation of it, an attempt to grasp completely all the sensations and concepts through which the author seeks to convey the quality of his sense of life. Each of us must make a new synthesis of these elements with his own nature . . . . (Rosenblatt, 1938:133)

In her more recent book The Reader, the Text, and the Poem (1978), Rosenblatt uses the term "transaction" to describe what occurs during responding. Rosenblatt defines transaction as "an ongoing process in which the elements or factors are . . . aspects of a total situation, each

conditioned by and conditioning the other" (17). In the reading process this transaction is between the reader and the text. The text becomes a set of physical symbols which the reader organizes in order to interpret the text. What is perceived involves "both the perceiver's contribution and the stimulus" (19). During the reading, the author is dropped by the reader. All that remains is the text and the reader, or as Rosenblatt puts it, "The relation with the author actually becomes a transaction between the reader and the author's text" (20).

Since reading the text occurs at a particular moment in the life of the reader, the transaction involves past experience as well as "the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader" (20). Rosenblatt warns, however, of the danger that "the transactional view may be misunderstood as focusing too narrowly on the mind of the reader" (21). The transaction is between the reader and the direction he or she senses the text is going.

Other researchers from the fields of psychology, reading, and literary criticism view reading and responding to literature as a process wherein readers draw on prior knowledge and currently held moral and social attitudes to create a dialog between the writer and themselves. Since experiences and attitudes are different, the responses of individual readers to the same poem or short story will be different.



### Categories of Response

Several researchers investigating responses to literature have developed categories of response for analyzing data. The Squire (1964), Purves (1973), and Applebee (1978) systems have been used most frequently in research studies.

Squire (1964) examined the responses of secondary students as they read short stories. He divided the stories into six segments and interviewed the reader as he or she completed a segment of the story. Squire's purpose was to determine whether responses were different as the reader became more involved with the story. Student responses after reading each portion of the story were tape recorded and each response (the smallest combination of words which conveyed the sense of a single thought [p. 17]) was coded in one of the following categories.

I. Literary Judgments: Direct or implied judgments of the story as an artistic work, including such generalized comments as "It's effective" or "It's good," where the statement appeared to refer to the literary or aesthetic qualities, rather than to judgment on specific situations in the story. Also, specific reactions to language, style, and characterization.

II. Interpretational Responses: Reactions in which the reader generalizes and attempts to discover the meaning of the stories, motivational forces, and the nature of the characters, including references to evidence

from the stories marshalled to support interpretational generalizations. Three types were found: interpretations of character or plot, interpretations of ideas and themes, visual reconstructions of scenes which seemed to represent visual interpretation of specific facts.

III. Narrational Reactions: Responses in which the reader reports details or facts in the story without attempting to interpret. The factual retelling may occur when the reader has difficulty in comprehending.

IV. Associational Responses: Responses in which the reader associated ideas, events, or places, and people with his own experience other than the association of a character with himself. These associations are direct, e.g., "This is like my home" or inverse, e.g., "These are not like my home."

V. Self-Involvement: Responses in which the reader associates himself with the behavior and/or emotions of characters. These range in degree from slight to intense and may be expressed through identification or rejection.

VI. Prescriptive Judgments: Responses in which the reader prescribes a course of action for a character based on some absolute standard, e.g., "She ought to do this," "He must do this."

VII. Miscellaneous: Responses which were not coded elsewhere. (Squire, 1964:17-18)

Squire found that the dominant form of response was interpretational for both sexes. Literary judgment responses were frequent after reading segments one and six, but decreased during the recording of the central divisions where self-involvement responses were most frequent. Responses were "generally unrelated to the intelligence and reading ability of the subjects" (51). Intelligent, able

readers made erroneous or misleading responses as frequently as they made insightful, penetrating ones.

The largest study to date in responding to literature was reported by Alan Purves (1973). The study encompassed nine countries and included students at two age levels--fourteen, the last year before leaving school in many countries, and eighteen, the year before entering a university. The International Literature Committee chose six short stories--two American, two Spanish, one Flemish, and one Russian--that provided a variety of styles and points of view. For each story, the committee developed a set of open-ended questions concerning literary comprehension. These open-ended questions were made into multiple choice and short answer questions. Students were asked to choose the questions they thought were most appropriate to ask about each story. Students responded three times to a measure of response preference: once on a questionnaire that referred to literary works in general, once after reading the short story given to every student, and once after reading one of three stories that were rotated randomly in each group. The questionnaires contained twenty questions, each of which was coded in one of the areas of Engagement-involvement, Perception, Evaluation, Interpretation, or Miscellaneous, a system of analysis developed by Purves and Rippere (1968).

- I. Engagement-involvement responses include the respondent's reaction to the work as a whole, to the specific elements of knowledge of the author and his works, and to the form and content of the work.
- II. The elements of Perception include the reader's stance, perception of parts of the work, perception of the whole work, and literary classification.
- III. Interpretation involves citation of interpretative stance, interpretation of parts, interpretation of the whole work, and typological interpretation.
- IV. The elements of Evaluation are criteria for either subjective or objective appraisal of the work. These elements are citation of criteria, affective evaluation, evaluation of author's method, and evaluation of the author's vision.
- V. Miscellaneous category was included for divergent responses, rhetorical fillers, references to other writers of literature, comparisons to other works, digressions, and unclassified statements. (Purves & Rippere, 1968)

Each of these major categories had several subcategories. There was a total of 128 different codes for student responses.

Using these categories to analyze student responses, Purves found that boys' responses differed slightly from girls', that schooling affects responses, that older students' responses are more similar, and that the most able students most frequently identified inferential questions as those most important to ask about a literary work. Individuals did not show a preferred way of responding, but national groups did (1973:279-80).

Applebee (1978) developed a model of evaluation that shows how readers evaluate, rather than what they evaluate. His hierarchical model of evaluation has four categories: unintegrated, categoric, analytical, and generalizing. These stages of evaluation parallel Piaget's stages of cognitive development.

The unintegrated or undifferentiated category is an evaluation in which the child fails to separate the response and the object, as in "It's nice because I like it" (1978:99).

In the second stage, class attribute or categoric, children begin to evaluate categories rather than specific details of the book. They claim a book is "uninteresting" or "funny," and attribute "these characteristics directly to the book, though in fact they are descriptions of the way the book has affected the particular reader" (1978:101).

The analytical stage is characterized by students' treating the story in terms of "how it works: its mechanics, the logic of its structure, its images and symbols" (109). A typical analytic response might be this: "The central element--the ring--is a force that can be felt throughout the work" (109).

Generalization, the fourth stage, "puts emphasis on the work as the statement of a point of view" (110). Such a statement is different from analysis because it is the

reader's attempt to understand the world through the work. Generalizations and analyses are directly linked. "They require the construction of alternative structures, going beyond the factors presented in the book to others that might have been introduced instead" (110). Applebee sees analysis as having a facilitating role by helping the reader see how the work is structured and leading him on to see why that structure was used.

The categories of response identified by Squire (1964), Purves and Rippere (1968), and Applebee (1978) have been used widely in studies of responding to literature.

#### Research in the Influences on Student Responses to Literature

One of the first studies that revealed the influence of prior knowledge was reported by I. A. Richards (1929). In his study, Richards withheld the titles and authors of a group of poems that he distributed to Cambridge University undergraduates. Having nothing but their own resources to guide them, the students produced a variety of responses to a single poem. In interpreting these responses, Richards isolated, among other reasons, the moral and social attitudes held by the students as a reason for "incorrect" responses (Richards, 1929).

A large-scale study by Purves (1973) involving over a thousand students from nine countries showed that the five

questions those students considered most important to ask about a literary work were these:

Is there anything in the story that has a hidden meaning?  
 What emotions does the story arouse in me?  
 How can we explain the way characters behave?  
 Is the story about important things?  
 Is there a lesson to be learned from the story?  
 (Purves, 1973:280)

These responses indicate that students are aware of and are concerned about the effect of personal experience on their responses.

In 1972 Purves and Beach reviewed studies in response to literature and found that little research had been done on the relationship between cognitive and psychological factors and responding to literature. They did report that (1) students who were interested in a text understood it better, (2) students have a tendency to assign to characters values that are not given by the author, (3) students formed mental pictures of characters when physical description was not given, (4) readers gave likeable traits and attitudes to characters they liked though the writer had not portrayed those traits, and (5) their moral judgment of characters reflected projection of readers' attitudes toward their friends more than the abstract moral position of the respondent (Purves and Beach, 1972:5-19).

Extensive case studies by Bleich (1969, 1971) and Holland (1975) affirm the findings reported by Purves and

Beach. Bleich (1969) compared his own reactions to Death of a Salesman to those of a student. The student was asked to pick out something in the play that attracted her. The student "came up with the 'meaning' of the character Happy" (35). She identified herself with Happy because he lied, as did she, and he was an unwanted child as she felt herself to be. Bleich's own reactions to the play, read when he was a college student, focused on the father-son relationship of Willy and Biff because, like Willy, Bleich's father was away from home much of the time directing plays, and, like Biff, Bleich was uncertain about the career he should pursue. Bleich concluded that "certain feelings sensed earlier in the life of the individual as valuable but not accessible to him are released under the influence of literary involvement and applied to present life-conditions" (1969:45). Examining these feelings enables the individual to grow. "That is, his sense of self actually enlarges as a result of this kind of insight" (1969:45).

Norman Holland (1975), a psychoanalytic researcher, found that readers' responses to the same work were congruent with their identity themes. From an analysis of five students' responses to Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," Holland developed four principles that describe the inner dynamics of reading: (1) the elements of a work act out the reader's lifestyles; (2) the reader shapes the work to make



it fit his or her own defense mechanisms; (3) the reader creates his or her own wish-fulfilling fantasy from materials taken from the literary work; and (4) the reader will adapt the characters or theme in order to make sense of the text (114-120). Holland developed a single principle for the interaction of the reader and the text:

A reader responds to a literary work by assimilating it to his own psychological processes; that is, his search for successful solutions within his identity theme to the multiple demands, both inner and outer, of his own ego. (Holland, 1975:128)

Adams and Bruce (1982), reading researchers, concur with Holland and Bleich regarding the role of the individual's background and personality in shaping responses. "The text will provide clues with respect to the beliefs, plans, and goals of its characters, but their elaboration and their relationship to the events, structure, and message of the story as a whole will be left to the inferential processes of the reader" (11-12).

Further evidence that an individual's background and personality shape response is present in Beach's (1979) summary of the research in response to reading during the two decades prior to 1978. Beach's summary included the following points:

- (1) readers respond in a highly unique manner to works;
- (2) the same reader responds differently to different works; and

- (3) differences in the readers' responses are due to differences in readers' personality, sex, literary training, age, reading ability, cognitive development, and other characteristics. (Beach, 1979:132-33)

These findings support the theory that readers recreate the story and its characters in terms of their own identities.

In a case study Petrosky (1976) analyzed the oral responses of two ninth-grade students to determine how each girl used fantasy and reality perception in explaining her reactions to novels, poetry and the Thematic Apperception Test. Petrosky's theses were "that reality, perception and fantasy give both structure and content to a reader's literary response; that an important purpose of literature is the sharing of response to reach understanding and consensus" (240). One girl responded to the TAT with complex social stories concerning conflict and mythical tales, while the other girl's responses involved past experiences and happy family relationships. The girls responded to the novels and poetry in a similar manner. Petrosky suggests that "the diversities in Mary Kay's and Kathy's responses reveal a powerful internal factor influencing their responses--a deep sense of identity" (255).

Petrosky further described the responses of the two girls as follows:

Mary Kay's style does not give much credence to reverie as a part of reality while Kathy sees reverie as an important aspect of reality. Although Mary Kay asserts the need for more facts before constructing meanings, Kathy prefers to figure out the meanings for herself through imaginative thought and day-dreaming. We hear Kathy and Mary Kay express strong feelings about the need for communication among people, yet we see Mary Kay's preference for listening and taking in information while Kathy tends to sharing and giving information. (255)

Although the girls' responses did converge at times, their personal reality perceptions were evident in their literary responses.

A later article by Petrosky (1977) further explained the reasons for divergent responses to the same literary work:

The adolescent's discriminative efficiency relies heavily on past experience and already stored information, but it also relies heavily on his stage-specific cognitive and affective abilities. (36)

Beach (1983) examined the importance of prior knowledge, attitudes, and expectations of readers as they formulated responses. The participants in Beach's study were eleventh-grade high school students and college upperclassmen. The college students were juniors and seniors majoring in English education. Beach assumed that these students had "acquired enough knowledge about teaching literature that their attitudes would differ from high school students' attitudes" (48).

Both groups of students were asked to read three vignettes portraying a teacher lecturing on Julius Caesar, asking students to recite lines from Julius Caesar, and embarrassing a student with a sarcastic remark. Students were asked to rate the extent that the teacher's behavior was "appropriate or inappropriate on a 5-point scale (1=least appropriate, 5=most inappropriate)" (48). Both groups were then asked to read Updike's short story "Tomorrow and Tomorrow, and So Forth" which contains three incidents like the ones portrayed in the vignettes. They stopped reading after each incident and rated the teacher's behavior on the 5-point scale.

High school students had predominantly positive judgments of teachers' lecturing and embarrassing students. They saw these acts as methods of controlling the class. College students judged these acts negatively, seeing them as poor instructional tools. The college students had been trained in response-oriented literature instruction and criticized the teacher's methods, going past initial judgments to infer characters' goals and motives. High-school students, who had recently experienced these kinds of teacher behavior, were less critical. The results of this study provide yet more evidence that readers derive different meaning from texts, based on their experiences and attitudes (Beach, 1983:53-4).

Age as an influence on response has been demonstrated in several studies. Applebee (1976) examined the "expectations the child develops about the spectator role as reflected in the judgment he makes about stories with which he is familiar" (227). The spectator stance, first defined by James Britton (1970), is employed when "the reader of a literary text . . . withholds judgment until the text has been completed and then evaluates it in terms of the artistic universe that the author has created" (63).

In his study, Applebee (1976) used the repertory grid technique to investigate construing in the spectator role. The results indicate that most students participating in the study expected to enjoy the stories they read. Children between the ages of six and nine began to realize that stories are fictional. At age nine, expectations for happy endings dominate. Between nine and seventeen, there is a shift to concern for the theme or meaning of the story.

In the main study, evaluation, simplicity, and realism emerged as the largest dimensions of construing. The number of evaluative constructs increased as the age of the children in the study increased. The construct "disturbing" changed from a negative relationship with evaluation among nine-year-olds to a slightly positive relationship among seventeen-year-olds, reflecting a "shift to adult literature in which ideas and themes are of increasing importance" (232).

Among the youngest children in the study, the construct "simplicity" was usually taken to mean easy, reflecting the length and reading difficulty of a story. For older students, the opposite of simple was given as complex or disturbing. In giving examples of novels from the reader's experience, older students named simple and complex adult novels.

In the dimension of realism, young children indicated whether stories were real or made up. Older students labeled such books as The Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner and Emma realistic and The Lord of the Rings not realistic. Applebee concluded that "the diversity of works which are perceived as unrealistic suggests that the judgment is a complex one" (234).

In a 1978 study, Applebee again worked with children of different ages to discover how students evaluate works of literature. Applebee identified four stages of response that paralleled Piaget's stages of development: undifferentiated or unintegrated, categoric, analytic, and generalization (101-110).

The major conclusion drawn from this later study is that children's attitudes toward literature and the kinds of responses they offered develop with age. Young children merely retell the story in whole or in part. Children at

ages seven to eleven use summarization and categorization as modes of response. At the next stage, children of twelve to fifteen begin to analyze the motives of characters and to identify their own involvement with the work. At the last stage--sixteen to adult--respondents are able to make generalizations about the meaning of the work (Applebee, 1978:123-12).

A recent study of students from grades four, six, and eight responding to A Bridge to Terabithia and Wizard of Earthsea "confirmed the idea that there are clear developmental levels of children's comprehension of literature" (Cullinan, Harwood, and Galda, 1983:37). Fourth-grade students responded at literal levels, ignoring what they could not understand. They comprehended little of the symbolic and metaphoric elements and found only the simple messages in the novels.

Sixth-grade students made inferences beyond the text, considered the possibility of metaphor and symbol, and saw some of the symbolic messages of the texts. Eighth-grade readers made evaluative judgment and justified them from the texts, saw multiple meanings for symbols and metaphors, and saw messages applicable to their own lives. "It is clear that developmental trends have a strong influence on a reader's comprehension of a text and that these influences are determined by life experiences and literary experiences" (37).

Galda (1982) examined the responses of three fifth-grade girls to two juvenile novels Beat the Turtle Drum and A Bridge of Terabithia to "determine what aspects of the texts and what characteristics of the readers influenced the creation of the story, and, in turn, the ability to assume and maintain a spectator stance" (3).

Although cognitive developmental stages are not discrete, their influence was evident in the responses of the three girls. Emily, age 10.7, was uncertain of the reasons behind her responses. Charlotte, age 10.11 measured her responses by real life. Ann, age 11.3, sought explanations for her responses in both real life and literary experience. Neither Emily nor Charlotte was able to consider the text as a whole or take a spectator stance. Ann, however, was able to assume a spectator stance and "view the texts as the author's valid interpretation of reality" (18). The responses of these students were influenced by their age and developmental level, and they present further evidence of "how aspects of the reader and text interact to influence the creation of a story" (18).

Galda classified the girls' responses using Applebee's (1978) classification system and found the following evaluative behaviors:

Emily's explicit evaluations were subjective  
categoric; Ann's implicit evaluations were both



subjective analytic, and objective analytic; Charlotte's explicit evaluations were primarily objective categoric. (6)

The responses of these girls are congruent with Applebee's classification system. Emily and Charlotte, the two younger girls, made categoric responses that are expected of children from ages seven to eleven. Ann, the oldest girl, made analytic responses that are expected of children of twelve to fifteen years of age.

The studies of Applebee (1976, 1978), Galda (1982), and Cullinan, Harwood and Galda (1983) demonstrate that the age of the child has an effect on his or her response to literature.

Odell and Cooper (1976) designed a technique to analyze the intellectual strategies a student used as he formulated written responses to three novels of his own choice. The researcher's purpose was to discover "(1) what processes students are using or failing to use as they formulate their responses, and (2) what processes students are already using but need to employ more thoroughly, more imaginatively, more carefully" (204). Odell and Cooper argue that "heuristic strategies guide not only the act of composing, but also the act of responding to a literary text" (208). Consequently, they took intellectual strategies from the rhetorical theory of Young, Becker, and Pike in the areas of focus, contrast, classification, change, time sequence, logical sequence, and

physical context and formulated a set of questions for each area. An example of the questions Odell and Cooper developed in the area of focus is this:

1. What does he focus on within the text?
  - a. One or more of the characters
  - b. Some other facet of the text (e.g., "The theme of the book is . . . "or" The clearing by the river is the setting for . . .")?
2. What does he focus on outside the text?
  - a. Himself
  - b. Some facet of his understanding, experience, preconception of the world (e.g., "Most people I know think that . . ." or "Reading the book was a real experience")?
3. How often does he shift focus?
  - a. Focusing on different sensory properties of a person or object or setting?
  - b. Focusing on some category other than Actor? (Odell and Cooper; 1976; 209-11)

Analysis of the student's response using these questions gave the researchers a clear picture of what he was perceiving. Odell and Cooper found that the student, John, rarely focused on something within the text when he made Personal Responses, while his Interpretive Responses almost never focused on himself. The text made little difference in the focus of response. John most frequently focused on an actor.

In analyzing John's responses using the questions in the other categories, Odell and Cooper found that the most frequent use of contrast occurred when the student noted a "disparity between some specific aspect of the text and his Image of the world" (214). Seventy-five percent of his

contrast statements fell into this category. The student used classification in a very limited way; in seventy-five of eighty classification statements, he classified items within the text rather than noting similarities with persons or events outside the text. John used very little detail when making responses that concerned change and rarely made responses that referred to time sequence, logical sequence, or physical context.

Odell and Cooper also analyzed John's responses using an elaboration of the Purves and Rippere categories. The researchers used four categories--Personal, Descriptive, Interpretative, and Evaluative--and developed their own subcategories for each. John's essays about the three novels reflected a "rhythmic movement from statements of engagement to statements of description of the characters and interpretations of their actions" (207). He never talked about setting or language or form, except in one brief instance, and rarely made evaluative statements of the novels or any portion of them.

The use of these combined analytical procedures gave insight into the kinds of responses John characteristically made and the intellectual processes he habitually used in formulating responses (221).

### Summary

The studies cited above add credence to the theory that responses to literature are strongly influenced by prior knowledge and personal experience. This fact was recognized by Richards in 1929, but little research was done on it for more than forty years.

This review of literature and research in responding to literature focused on the idea that an individual's experiences, attitudes, expectations, knowledge, and age shape responses. Individuals recreate the story in terms of their own personality and respond to it in terms of their own schemata.

#### Small Group Discussions and Response to Literature

The importance of small group discussions of works of literature prior to classroom instruction has been investigated by several researchers. Three British researchers, Barnes, Churley, and Thompson (1971) analyzed the tape recorded responses of student groups as they discussed John Wyndham's novel, Day of the Triffids. Several behavior patterns were shared by the groups. The groups used two methods of discussion to help each other understand what took place: "Sorting-out" and "Re-experiencing."

All groups spent a substantial part of their time sorting out the plot, checking the order of incidents, confirming causes and motives. This

sorting out was pursued with some eagerness and frequently returned to; it provided a basis from which pupils made leaps towards more interpretative and evaluative discussion. (74)

Re-experiencing is a kind of discussion which we recognized but which hardly ever occurs in lessons . . . . a shared re-experiencing of the most telling episodes, as if pupils were enjoying them again and strengthening their responses by sharing them together, perhaps in part confirming them. (74)

Barnes and his colleagues saw "Sorting-out" and "Re-experiencing" as activities that were the students' own and were a necessary part of the discussions.

Younger students had a tendency to treat the novel as if it were a chronicle of a true event and to put themselves in the place of the hero, ignoring the cultural constraints created by the author.

One group made up of older students who "had confidence in their speaking ability to make their points in complete well-structured sentences" (72) held a discussion that flowed smoothly and allowed each speaker to express his ideas without interruption.

Barnes, et al., indicated that five is the optimum number of participants in discussion groups. Larger groups put a strain on self-control and encouraged competitiveness. The researchers also found that in small group discussions, students aired their misconceptions about literary elements of the plot and were aided in clearing up these

misconceptions by other group members. Another characteristic of the groups in this study was the emergence of a spokesman or chairperson who kept the discussion focused on the novel.

The researchers found limitations in what groups could achieve. The discussions moved slowly and were sometimes circular and inconclusive. Some of the best points went unnoticed because no one picked them out and emphasized them. There was no attempt to stop and summarize what the group had accomplished, creating a lack of explicitness.

Matsuhashi (1980) replicated the Barnes study in order to confirm the hierarchy of response established by Barnes and his colleagues and to learn about "the depth and breadth with which [students] could work with a piece of literature" (27). Matsuhashi's group discussed the factual elements of the story and relied on their own experiences and expectations in formulating responses. A leader emerged in this group and asked questions of the kind she thought a teacher might ask. Another student attempted to clarify statements. There was little effort to summarize what had been said; instead, the discussion jumped from topic to topic. Matsuhashi said of the discussion:

What looked to me at first glance as an aimless, rambling session, full of irrelevancies and careless thinking . . . . may have been a necessary sorting out and an attempt to develop a personal, idiosyncratic relationship with the text that is preliminary to a more public, modulated discussion. (29)

Matsuhashi also confirmed that, at least for the members of her group, Barnes' hierarchy of levels of discussion is an appropriate descriptor of secondary students' group discussions.

In an attempt to learn more about the private responses or thoughts as the readers read a work as compared to their public responses, Beach (1973) had college students record their free-association responses as they read and re-read a poem. Then these private responses were compared to their responses in an unstructured discussion of the same poem. Beach divided a class into three groups and gave each group a different assignment.

One group was given a short contemporary poem and a tape cassette and asked to record all their thoughts while reading and re-reading the poem for an hour. The second group was asked to write down their thoughts as they read and re-read the same poem. The third group was asked to read the poem one time before responding in class. The assignments were rotated so that each group had all three assignments.

In the public responses or group discussions, initial

responses generally set the direction for the discussions. Such responses revealed basic misunderstandings and reading difficulties and the need to clarify the facts, or they created problems that made a puzzle or game of the response. Another characteristic of the discussions was the emergence of a leader or facilitator.

Beach also found that autobiographical digressions seemed to be an important part of the individual's formulation of response.

The privately recorded responses contained more digressions than did the discussions, while those discussions without previous preparation had many more digression responses than those discussions with preparation. This suggests that digression responses are an important phase of response....  
(112)

Although digression responses contributed to group cohesion, Beach reached no conclusions as to why they seemed beneficial to the individual.

An important study of small group student-led discussions versus teacher-led discussions (Haight, 1970) produced these interesting conclusions:

- (1) There is more verbal involvement in student-led small groups than in teacher-led large groups.
- (2) There is more personal identification with characters, situations, and truths in literature in small groups.
- (3) There is more freedom of expression in small groups.
- (4) Teacher-led discussions focus on convergent thinking.



- (5) Student-led small groups focus on evaluation.
- (6) There is 10 percent less use of pure recall (memory) in small group discussions.
- (7) Students tend to follow the pattern of thinking set by the teacher. (DA 1971:4622A)

Haught's conclusions indicate that small group discussions are beneficial to students. The students in her study were ability-grouped. Students at all levels of ability participated in the study. Although below-average ability students did not sustain a discussion for as long as students of average and above-average ability, their verbalizations increased dramatically in small group discussions.

Using the studies of Barnes and his colleagues (1971), Beach (1973), and Haught (1970) as a basis for his investigation, Ross (1977) tape-recorded the discussion of six high school seniors as they responded to a poem, "Bushed," by Earle Birney. Three students in Ross's group carried the discussion at various times; no single leader emerged. During the discussion, one girl said she did not understand a particular line of the poem, and that line became the subject of the discussion as students worked out the ambiguity. Ross concluded, as did Beach, that "the initial phase of publicly expressed response seems sufficiently great to suggest that many teachers should more

frequently give up their role as discussion-leaders" (69).

The studies cited above indicate that students of all ability levels talk more freely about literary works in small group student-directed discussions. It is necessary for students to sort out the facts about characters and the sequence of events before moving on to interpretive statements. Re-experiencing the incidents in the story is an important element of response. A leader or facilitator usually emerges in small group discussions.

#### Research in the Use of Questioning Strategies

The questioning strategy that was chosen for this study is composed of low level questions that require factual responses and high level questions that require inferential or experiential responses. This review of literature and research is focused on studies that use different levels of questions as a means of stimulating different levels of response.

Research done within the past twenty years on the use of questioning strategies has generally investigated the effect on student responses, IQ, and achievement of asking questions in a sequentially ordered hierarchy. Questions at each of the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) were used most frequently in the research.

Bloom identified six major categories for evaluating student performance:

- (1) Knowledge - bringing to mind appropriate material
- (2) Comprehension - lowest level of understanding
- (3) Application - use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations
- (4) Analysis - breakdown of communication into its constituent parts and seeing the relationship of the parts
- (5) Synthesis - putting together parts to form whole
- (6) Evaluation - judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes.  
(Bloom, 1956:186-93)

Winne (1979) reviewed several studies done by researchers who investigated the effects of the use of questions at each of Bloom's six levels. The results of some of the tests indicated that the use of higher cognitive level questions helped students make statistically significant improvement in achievement scores, while the results of other investigations suggested that the use of higher cognitive level questions made no difference in student performance on achievement post-tests.

In a more recent study, Martin (1979) investigated the "ongoing effects of a teacher higher order questioning strategy on student process and product variables" (183). He predicted "that the teaching strategy would positively affect specifically targeted pupil classroom behaviors, but would fail to alter pupil achievement attitudes" (183). The

subjects of the study were urban sixth-grade students who were performing at least minimally in the school's academic-level program. The study ran for eight weeks and employed the ABAB reversal design. The four phases of the experiment were a) initial baseline, b) experimental intervention, c) return to baseline, and d) experimental intervention. The experimental intervention was the higher order questioning strategy. Each phase of the study consisted of ten half-hour biology lessons.

The study showed that student achievement scores were higher in the baseline phases of the experiment than in the experimental phases. "Some evidence exists which shows that use of multiple levels of teacher questioning, which involve both lower and higher-order questions, has a more beneficial effect on student achievement than the frequency of higher-order questions alone" (186).

Yost, Avila, and Vexler (1977) did research "to determine the effect on learning of science subject content of having students make overt responses to questions of varying degrees of complexity following sequential segments of instruction" (400). The study was done with 196 middle-school students taught by four science teachers. The instructional materials for the study were programmed learning packets prepared by TEMPAC. The researchers modified the unit by placing questions to produce

verbalization in writing at about every twentieth frame. The material consisted of 250 frames, with questions placed at 13 points in the materials.

A multivariate analysis of covariance was used to analyze the achievement levels of students using the data. The achievement levels of students using the programmed instructional materials were raised. There was a significant difference in the average achievement of Treatment Groups 3, 4, and 5 (those who received instruction and answered questions) over Treatment Group 2 (those who only received instruction). The students in Group 5 who were given the most complex questions and took more time in completing their answers had higher achievement scores. "This higher achievement was a result of additional experience or practice students obtained or a function of responding to the interspersed questions and may have been due to students' engaging in inspection behaviors that were a function of the questions to which they responded" (407).

One of the findings of Smith (1977) in a study with sixty second- and fourth-grade students was that "factual questions appear to inhibit the higher cognitive processes for the subjects . . . while the interpretive questions, in contrast, stimulate higher cognitive processes" (115).

Robert Lucking (1976) explored the effects of using a questioning technique designed to lead students to higher

levels of response, using questions at each level of Bloom's Taxonomy. Lucking developed sets of hierarchically ordered questions based on concepts from stories. "The queries progress through levels of the hierarchy once for each major idea" (270). An example of a set of Lucking's questions for "A Mother's Tale" appears below.

#### Concept One

1. What event takes place as the story opens? (Knowledge)
2. What do the calves want to know? (Knowledge)
3. Can you summarize the story that she tells them? (Comprehension)
4. How would you apply this tale to her uncertain feelings about humans? (Application)
5. What motivates her to tell the tale even though she is not sure it is true? (Analysis)
6. What might be other situations where a mother might have this kind of concern for her son? (Synthesis)
7. Do you think the mother is presented in a sympathetic manner? (Evaluation)

Lucking's subjects were three heterogeneously grouped ninth-grade English classes, a total of 84 students. There were three distinct treatments: "Phase I--no instruction; Phase II--instruction by teachers without special training in questioning techniques; and Phase III--instruction utilizing the experimental questioning technique" (271). Students' responses to the questions were coded using Purves' Content Analysis categories. A multivariate analysis of variance run on the four dependent measures--Estrangement, Perception, Interpretation, and Evaluation--showed that there was a significant difference

between the no-instruction scores and the experimental-instruction scores. After the hierarchically ordered question treatment, students made "highly significant increases in the number of Interpretational comments" (247), and there were significantly fewer miscellaneous responses. Students developed a more favorable attitude toward reading during the hierarchically-ordered questioning phase of the experiment.

In a high school chemistry laboratory, Ray (1978) investigated the "effects of lower and higher level questions on students' abstract reasoning and critical thinking" (DA, 1979:3220-A). The study lasted for twenty-four weeks and had fifty-four subjects from tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Questions from each level of Bloom's Taxonomy were used with one group, while only knowledge level questions were used with the other group. The results of an analysis of covariance showed that students with both high and low grade-point-averages in the higher level questioning group performed significantly higher on critical thinking and abstract reasoning tests.

Bowen (1982) performed an experiment "to determine the efficacy of a questioning strategy on reading comprehension scores and attitude changes of secondary remedial students" (DA, 1983:1810-A). Subjects were forty students who read below seventh-grade level. The questioning strategy used

with the experimental group included questions at each cognitive level of Bloom's Taxonomy. The control group received traditional reading instruction and only knowledge level questions. The results of two and three-way ANOVAs showed no evidence that higher level questions produced significant differences in comprehension and attitude.

Results of research on the use of higher and lower cognitive level questions are mixed. Yost, Avila, and Vexler (1977), Smith (1977), Lucking (1976), and Ray (1978) found that students who were given higher level questions scored higher on post-tests in achievement and levels of cognitive development than did students who were asked only knowledge level questions. Smith also found that using only knowledge level questions inhibited higher cognitive processes.

Bowen (1982) found that the levels of questioning employed made no statistically significant difference in student performance on pre- and post-tests. Martin (1979) concluded that a mixture of higher and lower cognitive questions had a more beneficial effect on student achievement than the use of higher order questions alone.

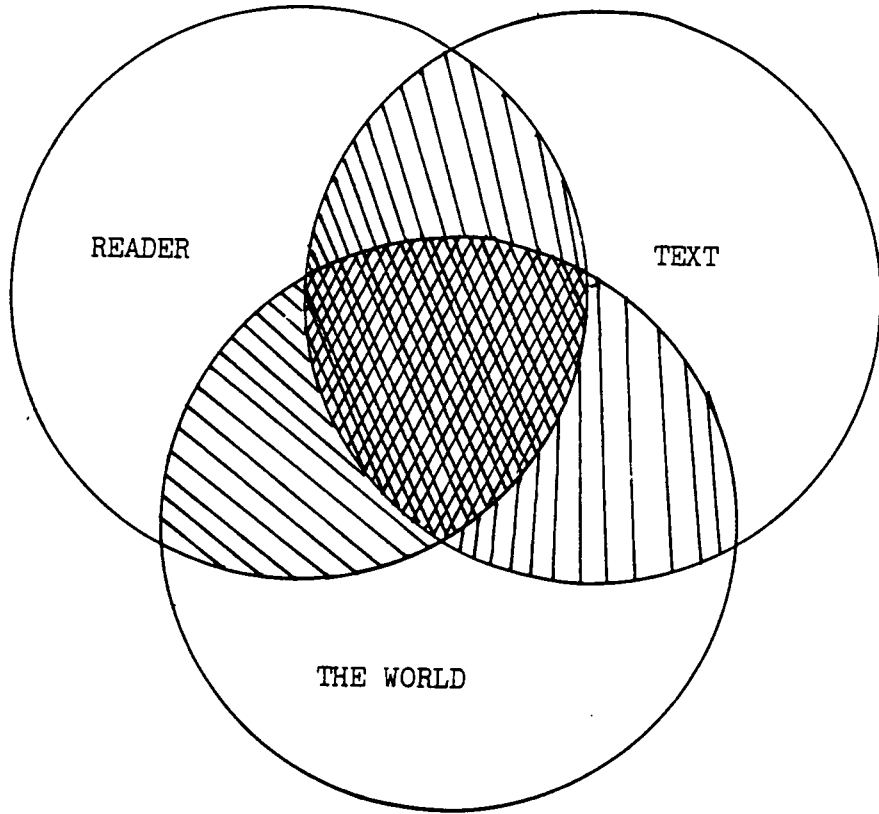
#### Research in the Reflective Reading Strategy

The reflective reading strategy, the questioning strategy chosen for use in this study, does not contain hierarchically ordered questions. The discussion begins



with an inferential question that introduces the issue to be discussed. Questions for the reflective reading discussion can fit into the different areas of the Questioning Circle developed by Christenbury and Kelly (1983) as "an alternative to sequential and hierarchical schemata" (12) for developing instructional questions. (Please see Figure 1).

The Questioning Circle is designed to use three levels of questions. In a literature class, white questions involve the matter (the text), personal reality (the reader), and external reality (the world/other literature). Shaded questions involve two overlapping areas of the Questioning Circle, and dense questions require the use of all three areas as the student responds. In using the Questioning Circle as a model for developing and using questions, the authors recommend that a dense question be asked early in the discussion in order to use that question as a focal point for the discussion. "If the teacher using a hierarchical schema carefully orchestrates the questions from lower order to higher order and then springs the 'big question,' the effect on students is often not positive" (17). Christenbury and Kelly see the dense question as a "basis for the ongoing discussion rather than the culminating question used late in the questioning sequence" (17). The reflective reading discussion begins with the



(Christenbury and Kelly, 1983:15)

Figure 1  
The Questioning Circle

"big question" and the issue is explored in-depth through questions that require the reader to integrate past experience, the text, and the world.

Three research studies using Hoskisson's reflective reading strategy at the elementary school level have been reported. Biskin, Hoskisson, and Modlin (1976) attempted to determine whether the predictive reading strategy, used before and during the reading of a story, or the reflective reading strategy, used after the reading is completed, would result in greater recall of theme in first- and third-grade students. Thirty-four first- and third-grade students who were a year or more below grade level in reading participated in the study. Students were tested using the Goodman-Burke Reading Miscue Inventory for story retelling on the recall of characters, events, plot, and theme immediately after the strategies were used and again two weeks later. It was expected that students who were in the predictive reading groups would have greater recall of factual information "because they were required to make predictions that involve the story character and story events directly" (138). However, two weeks later there was no statistically significant difference in the two groups in the recall of theme. The reflective reading group was more successful in recalling factual information. The researchers concluded that the fact that the reflective

reading group scored better on recall after two weeks "seems to indicate that the formulation and defense of a personal position resulted in greater recall during delayed testing" (139).

Biskin and Hoskisson (1977) used the reflective reading strategy to discuss moral dilemmas found in children's literature and basal reading texts. They performed two experiments with elementary school children to determine the effects of structured discussions about moral dilemmas on the moral reasoning of children.

In the first experiment, ten fourth- and ten fifth-grade students were assigned randomly to a control group and an experimental group. Their level of moral maturity was measured before the experiment using Kohlberg's assessment protocols. Mean scores of moral maturity were 166.6 for the experimental group and 177.10 for the control group.

The experimental group was divided into two subgroups of five students each; each group participated in a reflective reading discussion once each week for seven weeks. The control group read the same stories as the discussion group but did not participate in any structured discussion. On the post-test, the mean score gain for the experimental group was 52, almost twice the mean gain of the control group, which was 27.6 (413). The researchers warn that these scores must be interpreted cautiously.

In a second experiment, thirty-four fifth-grade students were divided into control and experimental groups, and treatment (the reflective reading strategy) was administered for eighteen weeks. The mean scores on the pre-test for moral maturity were 183.65 for the experimental group and 175.71 for the control group. On the post-test, mean scores were 213.2 for the experimental group and 185.65 for the control group. Because of the differences in scores on the pre-test, analysis of covariance was done. The results showed that the treatment was successful ( $p < .005$ ) in accelerating moral judgment in the experimental group (Biskin and Hoskisson, 1977).

The use of the reflective reading strategy in research studies at the secondary school level has not been reported.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This study was designed for two purposes. The first purpose was to create a profile of adult responses to literature in small group discussions as adults reacted to four short stories read for the first time. The second purpose was to investigate whether or not the use of teacher-directed small group discussions using both low and high level questions, self-directed discussions using the questions from the teacher-directed discussion, or self-directed free discussions of short stories moved student responses in the direction of the responses of mature adults. Subjects who participated in the study are described in this chapter, as are data collection procedures and assessment techniques. Synopses of the short stories appear in the Appendices.

#### Participants in the Study

##### Adults

The seven adults who participated in the discussions were recruited by word-of-mouth from the community of Christiansburg, Virginia, and the surrounding rural area. The members of the group came from very different backgrounds and pursued a variety of careers. The common bond was their appreciation of literature and their extensive reading for pleasure.

Criteria for selecting the group were established by the researcher, and each participant met these requirements:

1. read at least six "mature" novels within the past year,
2. discussed ideas from and opinions of novels,
3. enjoyed thought-provoking literature, and
4. read different kinds of literature; i.e., science fiction, historical and contemporary novels, the classics, drama, poetry, biographies, and autobiographies.

A "mature" novel is described by the researcher as

a novel that appeals to the personal interests of the reader, has universality of subject matter and characters, and has a degree of literary ambiguity.

The appeal of a novel to a reader is somewhat like the appeal of music to a listener. The listener is searching for a melody in the music; if no melody is there, the listener loses interest. So it is with the novel. The reader is searching for some element of the novel to attract his or her attention; if there is nothing to identify with, the reader loses interest.

Universality of theme is what makes a novel such as The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn appealing to today's reader. The experience of a youth journeying from adolescence to maturity is a common experience for everyone.

Literary ambiguity forces readers to formulate their own ideas and, through this process, become involved with the novel. Novels written by a formula tend to bore mature readers.

A list of some of the novels read within the past year by members of the adult group appears in Appendix B.

## Students

The twenty-one students who participated in this study were members of one tenth-grade academic English class at Christiansburg High School in Christiansburg, Virginia. Since students in the county school system are assigned to classes on the basis of their achievement and aptitude test scores, academic performance, and teacher recommendation, students in any one class are of about the same level of academic ability. The students are fourteen or fifteen years of age, from either small town or rural backgrounds, and from varying socioeconomic levels.

## Discussion Group Settings

The adult group met at the home of the researcher. In an informal setting, the seven were introduced to each other and chatted casually for about fifteen minutes before the discussions began.

The three student groups met simultaneously in three different areas of the school. The Reflective Reading Group met in a classroom with the researcher to participate in the reflective reading discussions. The Question Group and the Free Discussion Group met in separate areas of the library. All groups sat in student desks that were arranged in a circle. The Reflective Reading Group was composed of four girls and three boys; the Question Group, four girls and three boys; the Free Discussion Group, three girls and four



boys. During the eight weeks of the study, one boy from the Question Group moved to another state, and one boy from the Free Discussion Group transferred to another school within the system.

### Selection of the Short Stories

The eight stories used in this study were selected on the basis of length, character, theme, literary ambiguity, and appropriateness for the secondary classroom. The stories had to be of a length that could be read by students in no more than fifteen minutes in order to allow for thirty minutes of discussion time. Stories had to have characters and/or themes that would appeal to the adolescent reader and have enough substance for the adult reader. The stories contained a degree of ambiguity that served as a basis for the reflective reading discussions. The stories used in the study appear in either secondary literature texts or in literary magazines designed for high school students. Titles and synopses of these stories appear in Appendix A.

### Research Procedures

The researcher expected that adults would typically discuss short stories in a free discussion format. For that reason, adults were asked to participate in four informal free discussions. The stories discussed were "The Giraffe" by Mario Senesi, "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway, "On the

Sidewalk Bleeding" by Evan Hunter, and "Greyhound Tragedy" by Richard Brautigan.

An academic English class was randomly divided into three groups of seven students each. The students discussed eight short stories over a period of eight weeks. The stories were discussed in this order:

- Week 1: "The Giraffe" by Mario Senesi
- Week 2: "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway
- Week 3: "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" by Evan Hunter
- Week 4: "Only the Guilty Run" by Vin Packer
- Week 5: "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin
- Week 6: "The Far and the Near" by Thomas Wolfe
- Week 7: "The Snake" by Ervin Kraus
- Week 8: "Greyhound Tragedy" by Richard Brautigan

During Session I, the participants in all three student groups read "The Giraffe" and spent as much of the remaining thirty minutes of class time as they needed in free discussions of the story. They were given the following directions:

Read the story silently. Use the thirty minutes after you have read the story to discuss it. Please limit your discussion to things that pertain to the story. Discuss any elements of the story in as much length as you want, but do not let the discussion wander away from the story. You will not be graded or evaluated in any way.

The free discussion was held at the beginning of the study to determine the number of Factual, Inferential, Judgmental,

Experiential, and Miscellaneous responses made by each group, and the other characteristics of each group's discussion. The procedure was repeated in Session VIII at the end of the study.

During one class period per week for the next six weeks, the three student groups participated in discussions of short stories. Each group read and discussed the same short story on the same day. Students were provided with copies of the story and read it silently for the first ten to fifteen minutes of the class period. The remaining thirty minutes were used as discussion time. All discussion sessions were tape recorded, but only the sessions to be analyzed were transcribed. The reason for taping all sessions with students was to ensure that they would participate fully in all discussions. Students might have felt that, if the discussion was not taped, it was not important.

During the six weeks of the various treatments, the Reflective Reading Group read the story, then participated in a teacher-led reflective reading discussion.

Students in the Question Group were given the story, a copy of the same questions as those used in the reflective reading discussion, and these directions:

Read the story silently, then use the remaining class time to discuss the story. Use the list of questions as a guide. You do not have to follow the order of the questions. You will not be graded or evaluated in any way.

Students in the Free Discussion Group were given the story and the directions given for the free discussion at the beginning of the study.

Read the story silently. Use the thirty minutes after you have read the story to discuss it. Please limit your discussion to things that pertain to the story. Discuss any elements of the story in as much length as you want, but do not let the discussion wander away from the story. You will not be graded or evaluated in any way.

#### The Coding Scheme

The coding scheme used in this study was developed by the researcher. Since the questions generated for the questioning strategy asked for factual, inferential, and experiential responses, three of the categories are, of course, Factual, Inferential, and Experiential. (Please see Table I.) A Judgmental category was incorporated into the coding scheme to accommodate such responses as "I liked it" and "The boys should have called the police." Each of these four categories have subcategories. A Miscellaneous category was included for responses such as "Just say something" and fragments of statements such as "I wonder why . . . why . . . ."

The responses were coded according to category, subcategory, and appropriateness or inappropriateness of the response. Responses were coded Inappropriate only if they

Table 1

## Subcategories of Response with Examples

Coding Scheme	Examples
<b>Factual</b>	
Plot - FP	The climax is when the boy was caught stealing.
Setting - FS	The story takes place in a small town.
Character - FC	John was sixteen.
Style - FSt	It is written in short sentences.
Point-of-view - FP	She is telling the story.
<b>Inferential</b>	
Theme - IT	I think the theme is "know yourself."
Intent of Author - II	He is showing the reader the importance of honesty.
Char. Motives - IC	He did it because he was angry.
Moral - IM	He didn't think it was the wrong thing to do.
Other - IO	It could happen to me.
<b>Experiential</b>	
Personal - EP	The same thing happened to me when I was ten years old.
TV - ET	I saw that same kind of thing on TV.
Literature - EL	That's like what happened in Forever.
Other - EO	It could happen in this town.
<b>Judgmental</b>	
Literary judgment - JL	It's effective.
Prescriptive judgment - JP	She ought to do this.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Miscellaneous - M	I don't know.

could not be construed by the researcher as having a connection to the story or if they gave an incorrect fact about the story.

Each C-unit and each response that contained a part of a major grammatical structure (Kelly, 1975:46) was coded.

An example of the use of the coding scheme is given below:

Evidently, there are evidently a lot of dreams that have died, or haven't died at all,/ or you wouldn't have a lot of marriage breakups, people taking off or walking out, heading for parts unknown./ There must be something inside,/ there must be something they're looking for./ Maybe, as Dorothy said, it was all in her own backyard.

#### Reliability of the Researcher as Coder

To establish the reliability of the researcher as coder, two English instructors with experience as teachers at all secondary levels and the college level participated in checking intercoder agreement. One of these teachers has ten years experience, and the other has eight years experience in teaching English. One has an Ed.D. in English education; the other is a doctoral student in English education.

The researcher set as a criterion a two-way reliability of .80 (Swope, 1983; Lucking, 1976). Two-way agreement

occurs when at least one other coder agrees with the researcher.

In preparation for this coding session, seven eleventh-grade honors English students participated in a free discussion of "The Sea" by Anna Matute. The discussion was tape recorded, and the recording was transcribed. The transcription was divided into five-minute segments to be used in the coding sessions.

Before the coding session began, the two coders read the story, and the researcher explained the coding scheme and answered questions. Several sample responses were coded, and the reasons for coding them as they did were discussed.

After the coding of each five-minute segment of the transcription, agreement among the coders was checked and the results were discussed. Further questions about the coding scheme were also discussed. A two-way reliability of .85 on the categorization of responses was established during the third coding session. A two-way reliability of .94 on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of response was established during the first coding session.

#### Method of Analysis

Transcriptions of all adult free discussions and Sessions I (Free Discussion I) and VIII (Free Discussion II) of the student discussions were coded. Each C-unit and each

response that contained a part of a major grammatical structure were coded as Factual and subcategories, Inferential and subcategories, Experiential and subcategories, Judgmental and subcategories, or Miscellaneous. The results are presented in percentages of response in the various categories (Lucking, 1976; Galda, 1982).

In order to determine the comprehensiveness of the discussion, the researcher compiled a list of story strands that could be discussed as a group worked with a short story for the first time. The data were analyzed in terms of whether the participants moved to new subjects or whether they restated previously made observations as in Matsuhashi's (1980) study wherein students tended to repeat "what if" questions.

Length of response was measured in the number of words in each response. Smith (1977) found that fourth-grade students used an average of 7.2 words per interpretive response and an average of 3.56 words per factual response. Haught (1970) found that students of all ability levels increased their verbalization in student-led small group discussions.

The nature of inappropriate comments was examined in terms of why they were not appropriate to the story. An attempt was made to determine whether they stemmed from



misreading (Beach, 1973), lack of comprehension (Beach, 1973), or some other source.

Breadth of participation concerns the number of times group members contributed to the discussion. In some instances group leaders emerge (Barnes, 1971), and in other cases two or three persons do most of the talking (Ross, 1977). Matushashi's (1980) group of five students all participated about equally. Breadth of participation was measured in this study by the number of times each person responded.

Change of mind by a discussant "indicates a deeper level of thinking" (Hoskisson, 1983:145). Changes of mind were examined in an attempt to determine what caused the change.

The percentage of response in each subcategory was derived by counting the number of responses per subcategory for each of the four discussions, dividing the totals by four, then calculating the percentages.

The average length of response in both the adult profile and the student discussions was derived by counting the number of words in each response, totaling the number of words in each subcategory, and dividing the total number of words by the number of responses in that subcategory.

The number of times a participant responded in the adult profile was derived by adding the number of times the

participant responded in each of the four discussions and dividing that total by four.

A profile of adult responses was written using the above criteria. Case studies of each student group's first and last free discussions were written and the following comparisons were made.

Free Discussion I of the Reflective Reading Group was compared to Free Discussion I of the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group, to the adult profile, and to Free Discussion II of the Reflective Reading Group. Free Discussion II of the Reflective Reading Group was compared to Free Discussion II of the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group and to the adult profile. (Please see Figure 2.) The same comparisons were made with the discussions of the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group.

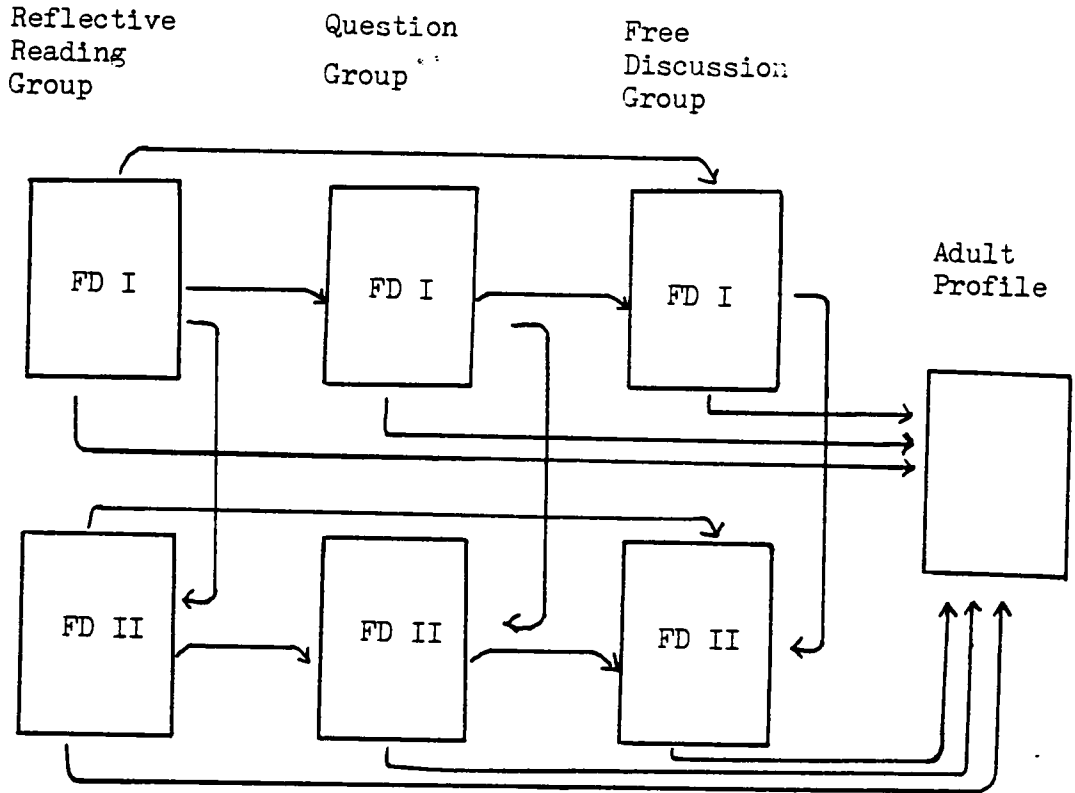


Figure 2

Comparisons of Free Discussions Among Groups

## Chapter 4

### PROFILE OF ADULT RESPONSES

The adults participated in free discussions of four short stories: "The Giraffe" by Mario Senesi, "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway, "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" by Even Hunter, and "Greyhound Tragedy" by Richard Brautigan. This group was given no directions except to discuss the story in any way they felt was appropriate. The data from the adult responses to four short stories have been compiled to compose a profile of adult group response to short stories. (Please see Appendix C for case studies of the adult discussions.)

#### Percentage of Responses in Each Category

The percentage of responses in each category and subcategory was derived by adding together the number of responses in each category and subcategory and dividing the totals by four, then calculating the percentages.

Examination of Table 2 shows that in responding to a short story, this group of adults made more Inferential and Experiential responses and fewer Factual, Judgmental, and Miscellaneous responses. When the percentage of response is broken down into subcategories, the greatest percentage of response occurred in the Experiential Personal category. In both the Inferential and Factual categories, the greatest percentage of response concerned Character.

Table 2  
Percentage of Response by Category and Subcategory  
Adult Profile

Subcategory	Category
Factual	17%
Plot	2%
Setting	3%
Character	10%
Style	2%
Point of View	-*
Inferential	31%
Theme	4%
Intent of Author	6%
Character	19%
Morals	0%
Other	2%
Experiential	33%
Personal	20%
Other Literature	4%
Television	-*
Other	9%
Judgmental	13%
Literary Judgment	11%
Prescriptive Judgment	2%
Miscellaneous	6%
Total	100%

\*Less than one percent.

In the Factual category, Plot, Setting, and Style accounted for a very small percentage of responses. There were only two responses in the entire series of discussions that concerned Point of View.

Inferential responses that concerned Theme, Intent of Author, and Other make up small percentages of the total of responses in that category. The Inferential Other responses dealt with the setting in "The Giraffe," "Indian Camp," and "On the Sidewalk Bleeding." No Inferential Other responses were offered in "Greyhound Tragedy." There were no Inferential Moral responses in any of the four discussions.

A small percentage of Experiential responses made reference to Other Literature. In one instance, five of the references to Other Literature were coded Inappropriate because, though the novel was a work by the same author whose short story was being discussed, there were no similarities in character, theme, or setting between the novel and the short story. Nine percent of the Experiential responses were coded Other. Of the Experiential Other responses, the greatest number were Inappropriate responses in the form of an anecdote brought to mind by the story, in one case, and a reference to an unrelated television movie brought to mind by the mention of a novel by the author of the story under discussion.

Literary Judgment responses were prevalent in the

Judgmental category. Prescriptive Judgmental statements were made only in the discussions of "Indian Camp" and "Greyhound Tragedy."

Miscellaneous responses comprised six percent of the total responses.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

Comprehensiveness of the discussion was measured by the number of story strands from lists developed by the researcher for each story discussed by the group. The lists contained fifty-four items; the discussions covered thirty-eight of the items. In quantitative terms, the group discussed or at least mentioned seventy percent of the story strands. Eleven additional items that did not appear on the researcher's lists were discussed by the group. These items have been added to the researcher's lists for comparison of student discussions to the adult profile.

In general, the discussants focused on the literal elements of the stories, making inferences and calling upon experiences that could be related to the facts of the stories. Only in "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" did the group discuss theme at any length.

#### Length of the Responses

The average length of responses, measured in number of words per response, is presented in Table 3. As can be seen

Table 3

Average Length of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Adult Profile

Subcategory		Category
Factual		8.5
Plot	6.0	
Setting	8.8	
Character	8.1	
Style	5.0	
Point of View	8.8	
Inferential		10.0
Theme	10.0	
Intent of Author	10.9	
Character	10.1	
Morals		
Other	8.4	
Experiential		10.2
Personal	10.5	
Other Literature	10.2	
Television	6.5	
Other	7.8	
Judgmental		8.9
Literary Judgment	9.4	
Prescriptive Judgment	8.4	
Miscellaneous	4.1	4.1



in looking at the tables, the briefest responses are Miscellaneous, at an average of 4.1 words per response. Factual responses average 8.5 words per response. Judgmental, Inferential, and Experiential responses are longer than the Factual and Miscellaneous responses. These results correspond with the findings of Smith (1977).

#### The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

There was a series of Inappropriate responses in two of the discussions. In both instances, the discussants seemed almost to be playing a word association game. In "On the Sidewalk Bleeding," the discussion went from an appropriate response concerning Hunter's novel Sons, to an Inappropriate comment about the novel The Book of Daniel. A was reminded of a similarity between The Book of Daniel and a television movie All the President's Men. A brief exchange about whether Woodward and Bernstein were still employed by The Washington Post ensued. D brought the discussion back to the story by answering a question about the journalists, then making a comment about the story in the same utterance.

In the discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy," comments about the kind of movies shown during the late thirties prompted A to remark about Esther Williams. C was reminded of the time she saw Williams in person at Lake Erie. E lamented the dirty condition of Lake Erie today and the discussion ended with A's saying the Williams' show was

typical of the times. After this discussion, the tape recorder was turned off by one of the group members.

#### Breadth of Participation

Throughout the four discussions, A, D, and carried the discussion with B, C, F, and G making occasional comments. A and E were older women who had been acquaintances for many years. D was in her mid-twenties and was a friend of A's children. Three of the members, B, F, and G, had just met each other and the other group members for the first time. C was well acquainted with A, D, and E.

It appeared that in some instances, all members looked to A for leadership, or at least approval as the discussions progressed. A spoke in a louder, more positive manner than other members of the group. For whatever reason, A emerged as the most frequent contributor to the discussions, responding with an average of 89.2 C-units per discussion. D responded with an average of 58.6 C-units; E, 59.0; G, 19.2; F, 12.7; C, 9.3; and B, 6.8. (Please see tables 4 and 5.)

#### Change of Mind by a Discussant

There was one change of mind in the four discussions. A switched from human uncleanliness, stuffy conditions and smoke to a gangrenous infection as the cause of a stench in the room. The idea of gangrene was offered fairly early in

Table 4

Total Number of Individual Responses by Category  
for the Four Discussions

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot	3		3	5	12		1	24
Setting	5		2	8	8		5	28
Character	32		9	17	19	4	12	93
Style	8			1	4			13
Point of View	1			1	1			3
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	18			15	8	1	2	44
Intent of Author	24			22	4	4		54
Character	50	6	6	76	35	6	10	189
Morals								
Other	9	2		2	5	1	2	21
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	85	3	7	46	17	9	21	188
Other Literature	17	2		1	16	2	4	42
Television	3							3
Other	29	2	5		16	12	9	73
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary Judgment	39	12	2	21	25	7	4	110
Prescriptive Judgment	5		1	8	1		2	17
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	28		1	11	65	4	1	110
<b>Totals</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>1012</b>

Table 5

Average Number of Individual Responses in Each Category  
Adult Profile

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<b>Factual</b>							
Plot	.8		.8	1.3	3.0		.3
Setting	1.3		.5	2.0	2.0		1.3
Character	8.0		2.3	4.3	4.8	1.0	3
Style	2.0			.3	.3		
Point of View							
<b>Inferential</b>							
Theme	4.5			3.8	2.0	.3	.5
Intent of Author	6.0			5.5	1.0	1.0	
Character	12.5	1.5	1.5	19.0	8.8	1.5	2.5
Morals							
Other	2.3	.5		.5	1.3	.3	.5
<b>Experiential</b>							
Personal	21.3	.8	1.8	11.5	4.3	2.3	5.3
Other Literature	4.3	.5		.3	4.0	.5	1.0
Television	.8						
Other	7.3	.5	1.3		4.0	3.0	2.3
<b>Judgmental</b>							
Literary Judgment	9.8	3.0	.5	5.3	8.3	1.8	1.0
Prescriptive Judgment	1.3		.3	2.0	.3		.5
<b>Miscellaneous</b>							
	7.0	.3	2.8	1.5	1.0	1.0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>89.2</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>19.2</b>

the discussion. Later, A said it could be the cause of the odor. The idea of gangrene apparently incubated in A's mind for several minutes before she decided it was plausible.

#### General Characteristics of the Adult Discussions

1. The average length of the adult discussions was 18.5 minutes.
2. Three of the four discussions began with responses of Literary Judgment.
3. Adults generally used Factual statements to justify Inferences.
4. A leader emerged, and the leader and two other discussants responded more frequently than other group members.
5. The adult discussions were comprehensive.
6. Four percent of the adult responses were Inappropriate, usually in the form of digressions.
7. The adults had a higher percentage of responses in the Inferential and Experiential categories than in the other categories.
8. The longest responses were in the Inferential and Experiential categories.
9. The adults spoke in syntactically mature utterances, making their points clearly.
10. The discussions flowed smoothly from subject to subject.
11. There was never an attempt to summarize what had been

said about one subject before moving to another.

12. When the discussion was over, a group member turned the tape recorder off. There was no attempt to bring a discussion to closure.
13. All members of the group seemed to enjoy participating in the discussions.
14. The adults were polite, allowing a participant to complete an utterance without interruption.

Chapter 5  
ANALYSES OF THE FREE DISCUSSIONS OF  
THE REFLECTIVE READING GROUP

The portion of the study done with student groups began with a pre-treatment free discussion of Mario Senesi's "The Giraffe" and ended with a post-treatment free discussion of Richard Brautigan's "Greyhound Tragedy." The Reflective Reading Group participated in six reflective reading discussions, one per week for six weeks, led by the researcher. Reflective reading discussions are designed to explore in as much depth as possible one issue presented in a short story. An analysis of the pre-treatment free discussion (FDI) of the Reflective Reading Group appears below.

Analysis of Free Discussion I

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

This discussion, which lasted for twenty-four minutes, began with a statement of Literary Judgment. (Please see Table 6 for percentage of responses in each category and subcategory.)

1 B I didn't like it. I thought it was weird,  
confusing.

Other Literary Judgment responses were interspersed in the discussion.

125 G I thought it was a little kiddy story when I  
first seen it.

Table 6

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I  
The Reflective Reading Group

Subcategory		Category
Factual		18%
Plot	3%	
Setting	5%	
Character	9%	
Style	1%	
Point of View	0%	
Inferential		26%
Theme	4%	
Intent of Author	-*	
Character	16%	
Morals	0%	
Other	6%	
Experiential		31%
Personal	19%	
Other Story	-*	
Television	0%	
Other	12%	
Judgmental		12%
Literary Judgment	10%	
Prescriptive Judgment	2%	
Miscellaneous		13%
Total	100%	100%

\*Less than one percent.



. . . . .

336 C I don't know, I thought it was pretty well-written. It's just . . . . .

337 D I thought it was kinda poorly written.

Several Prescriptive Judgment statements were offered in the form of "What if" statements.

281 D Would it be different if it was another animal?

284 D Maybe if it was a squirrel, or an elephant, or a kangaroo.

285 C Yeah, because . . . . .

286 B He had a good point, you know.

287 C Because right here they wouldn't have had the trouble finding it a place to stay or something.

288 B If it was a little doggy?

289 C Yeah, because they could just take it up as a pet or something, but everybody sees a doggy. That's just too ordinary. The guy would have to advertise . . . . .

The group did not actually say that the author should have used another animal, but did spend a few minutes discussing how the story could have been different if another animal had been used in the story.

Factual responses made up eighteen percent of the total number of responses in this discussion. Of the Factual responses, the greatest number of comments were Factual Character responses.

13 C The giraffe had red eyes.

. . . . .

29 B Isn't that, isn't that that guy Rolandino? . . .  
 Isn't that him that they're talking about?  
 Because they say he's short . . . .

Factual character responses were generally used to affirm an inference, either before or after the inferential statements. Utterance 29 above ends with this Inference about Rolandino: "Maybe they pick on him because he is short."

Factual Plot responses were statements such as this:

24 B Remember when they went through the square?

Factual Style responses concerned literary devices.

197 F Looking at the first paragraph, it's a foreshadowing sorta . . . . [F reads the first paragraph.]

The last words of the paragraph ". . . and rosy and good like stars at dawn" evoked B's "That's a simile there."

In the Inferential category, as in the Factual category, the greatest number of responses concerned character.

46 C Well, the giraffe, the giraffe was advertising. You know, everybody wanted to come see his giraffe, and I'll give you a free thing . . . . I'll give you a free thing of razor blades.

C made the logical inference that the old razor blade seller had the giraffe as an attention-getter. Some of the responses coded Inference Character were in the form of questions that asked others to draw inferences.

106 G Do you think the giraffe seems to be acting bad?

107 B Yeah, I thought he did.

108 G Yeah, I think that's why he died.

109 C I don't see why a man would have a giraffe anyway.

[Pause]

110 C Advertisement.

G's question about the giraffe's actions leads to a conjecture that the giraffe died because he was acting bad. C contradicted his earlier statement about the purpose of the giraffe at utterance 109, then remembered at 110 after a brief pause.

The group had a lengthy discussion of the theme of "The Giraffe." This part of the discussion was precipitated by F's reading a sentence from the story.

51 F Did you read this right here: "The town was stuck with the beast and only the small boys knew what it would mean."

52 B What did it mean?

53 C I think it means . . . I think it means we are more mature than older people. I think that's the way you've got to look at it. Older people go by older ways and are all stuck up.

54 G Are you serious?

55 C Yeah, I'm serious. I think we have a different look on life than older people do.

56 G Yeah, well, we'll be the same way.

57 C . . . compared to our younger children, our younger generation. Now, I think our views, some of our views, are a lot better. Like last night. This had nothing to pertain to the story. Last

night my mom goes "You can't go to no concert! You can't do that, you can't do this." It's like that when a girl calls me on the phone . . . .

58 B uh huh.

59 C . . . You can't just let girls call you like that. And I go, "Mom, this is 1985, you know. This is not eighteen, oh, hundreds."

60 B Eighteen, oh, hundreds [laughter].

61 C And I just think we have a better perception of our life, you know. We treat people the same, or at least I do.

C is trying to get at the theme of "The Giraffe" here, despite some teasing about his phone call and his "eighteen, oh, hundreds." Interestingly, though he says his examples do not pertain to the story, he is comparing an incident in his own life to the situation in the story. Both the story and C's experience have to do with the maturation process.

Later in the discussion, another sentence from the story was quoted:

221 A Yeah, "There's only room for the things that are already here."

This statement leads to further responses that concern theme.

222 F Maybe the town can't accept new things.

223 B Maybe they're old fashioned.

. . . .

228 F I think the town is old-fashioned in the way they talk and all.

230 F Because they wouldn't let anything new . . . .

At this point the discussion became a lengthy digression about the picture used to illustrate the story.

B steered the remarks back to the theme with this response:

267 B Are we going to talk about the older people discriminating against the kids?

268 E We can talk about that.

269 G Older people discriminated against the giraffe coming in because it was new and they had already set the ways of their town.

270 D Have you ever discriminated against a giraffe?

271 F . . . cause they wanted to kill the giraffe. I mean, they must have had other reasons then . . . because he ate flowers and candles.

That the older people feared the giraffe, rather than discriminated against the giraffe, would be more accurate. The students did sense, however, that the giraffe represented the newness or creativity of the youth and the older people wanted to stifle it or drive it away.

In this discussion most of the responses coded Inferential Other had to do with setting of the story and whether or not the story was autobiographical.

362 B What was this in the first place?

363 E It must have been in New Mexico or something.

364 C Yeah, on the border.

365 C I think this guy . . . could have been a town member.

366 E I don't know.

367 B It sounded like he was one of the boys. It sounded like a gang of boys, you know.

Inferences about the Author's Intent included these statements:

368 C He felt sorry for the giraffe. You can tell by  
 . the way he's writing.

The students sense that Senesi intended for the giraffe to be a character with whom students could sympathize, and they treated the giraffe kindly throughout their discussion.

The Experiential Personal responses generally had to do with how the students would have handled the dilemma of the giraffe.

89 C . . . 1971 is the date, 1971. Why couldn't they just take it to the Humane Society, or something like that, you know? They have stuff like that. Or turn it in to a zoo somewhere.

. . .

91 C They shouldn't be allowed to kill him, not nowhere in the United States to kill a giraffe.

92 F . . . I know.

93 G Who would have a giraffe and a not have a zoo around?

The students seemed to be unable to grasp the idea that the story was set in a small European town. They probably are not aware of the inaccessibility of help for stranded animals or of transportation problems involved in moving a giraffe from a small rural area to a city that has a zoo. They suggested disposing of the giraffe in the only way they knew--calling the Humane Society.

This group made reference to one other work of literature.

75 C It says right here that the town was Amityville. Right here.

C's response was coded Experiential Other Literature Inappropriate. C had previously said the giraffe was possessed because he had red eyes which led to response 75 C. Apparently all the students were familiar with The Amityville Horror.

This group made no references to television.

There were several Appropriate Experiential Other responses in this discussion concerning the logistics of the giraffe's entering the church and the reactions of people to it.

293 C I would like to have seen how the giraffe got through the doors, to get into the church.

294 B Well, maybe, some of the churches, like maybe, St. Paul's has a big church. If it's a big church . . . .

. . . .

301 E Could you see a minister walking into your church and seeing a giraffe standing there?

302 B My preacher would laugh.

[Pause]

303 B My preacher would laugh and say join the congregation. That's just how my preacher is.

304 E We need to let this . . . .

305 B I'm sure that some of the other people would freak out.

These students are drawing on their own experiences about the size of churches (the church mentioned above is a local church) and the personality of the minister and parishioners. Interestingly, the reactions expects of her minister and others parallel the happenings in "The Giraffe."

Miscellaneous responses included such remarks as those cited here.

8 F What was that for?

9 C That was, that was, that was . . . .

42 C The giraffe . . . .

73 C I told you, we've got thirty minutes. We're going to be here all day long.

166 B That's what we discussed a little while ago.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

The researcher developed a list of story strands that might be discussed in order to determine the comprehensiveness of the discussion. The last three story strands on the list are aspects of the story discussed by the adults and added to the researcher's list. The Xs indicate the items mentioned in the discussion.

#### "The Giraffe"

1. How the giraffe came to be in the town X
2. The boys' description of the giraffe X
3. The reaction of the townspeople to the giraffe X



4. The effects of the weather in a strange climate on the giraffe
5. Sheltering the giraffe in the church X
6. Priest's understanding of the boys and the giraffe
7. People's hatred of something new and different X
8. People's fear of something new and different X
9. Death of the giraffe as the death of newness and creativity X
10. Boys' realization that there was not room for new ideas in their society X
11. Death of innocence in the boys
12. Symbolism of the giraffe
  - a) could see above the rooftops--intellect or creativity of boys X
  - b) head of giraffe in the dark skies--intellect or creativity obscured
  - c) periscope of the boys--vision of great things
13. Setting of the story X
14. Care and feeding of the giraffe X
15. Literal cause of the giraffe's death X

This discussion could be called comprehensive because the students did touch on most of the story strands enumerated above. They discussed items 1, 2, 3, 14, and 15 in considerable depth and mentioned the others briefly.

One reason that ideas weren't explored fully is that students frequently interrupted each other.

228 F I think the town is old-fashioned, in the way they talk and all . . . .

229 C It is . . . .

230 F . . . because they wouldn't let anything new . .  
 . .

231 C Well, let's look at the picture back here. It  
 looks like an old town . . . .

After two interruptions, F gave up trying to discuss her ideas about the people and their social conventions. The group turned to a discussion of the illustration at the beginning of the story. The remarks cited above are the only ones concerning the people's fear of newness. Several other story strands got no more attention than that cited above.

#### Length of the Responses

In looking at the average length of individual responses (please see Table 7), has a high average in the category Factual Character. That average, however, comes from one response.

206 E Cause when you look at him, like, the first thing that pops out at you are his eyes.

The situation is the same for A's average of twenty-one words per Factual Character response.

374 A Well, it says the parents and bosses and their mothers and bosses were yelling as they were leaving with the giraffe.

A made only this one response in the Factual Character subcategory.

G's relatively high average in the Inferential Theme

Table 7

Average Length of Individual and Total  
Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I  
The Reflective Reading Group

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Sub Cat	Cat
Factual									8.0
Plot	9.0	8.8	10.0	7.5	6.0	8.5		7.5	
Setting	3.0	7.2	5.5	6.5	11.0	6.0	6.0	6.5	
Character	21.0	6.3	8.3	7.2	18.0	12.3	7.0	8.6	
Style		3.0	7.6			8.0		6.1	
Point of View									
Inferential									8.7
Theme	10.0	13.0	11.4	5.0		9.6	14.5	10.4	
Intent of Author		12.0	7.5					6.8	
Character	8.1	7.8	6.4	6.6	11.5	10.7	11.5	7.8	
Morals									
Other		7.3	7.4	5.0	6.3	10.0	5.6	10.1	
Experiential									6.6
Personal		6.7	7.0	9.0	11.0	3.7	7.0	6.7	
Other Literature			9.0		2.0			9.0	
Television									
Other		7.8	6.4	4.0		8.0		6.3	
Judgmental									8.6
Literary Judgment	5.0	7.4	8.1	12.6	7.8	11.0	13.0	7.8	
Prescriptive Judgment		6.0	12.2	10.5	3.0		10.0	11.1	
Miscellaneous	3.5	3.4	4.0	3.7	4.6	2.5	6.0	4.7	4.7

subcategory is the result of two inferential statements.

56 G Yeah, well, we'll be the same someday.

269 G Older people discriminated against that giraffe coming in because it was new and they had already set the ways of their town.

D's high average of 12.5 words per response in Literary Judgment was achieved because of his three Literary Judgment responses, one consisted of twenty-eight words. In the long response, D read the excerpt from the story that was used with the illustration.

165 D It doesn't make sense, the little subtitle, or whatever, where it says "The town was stuck with the beast and only the small boys knew what it meant."

The most consistent length of response is in the Miscellaneous category. Though there were a large number of Miscellaneous responses, they were brief.

Examination of the average length of all responses (please see Table 7) shows that Factual, Inferential, and Judgmental responses were of about an equal length with Experiential responses a word to a word and a half shorter. Miscellaneous responses were the briefest of all categories of response.

#### The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

This group veered into Inappropriate comments several times during the discussion. The first time Inappropriate comments were made was early in the discussion when A asked, "Buy why did the man die?"

- 11 C Cause, I think the giraffe was possessed.
- 12 B They did talk about his eyes a lot. (Appropriate)
- 13 C The giraffe had red eyes . . . was killing people, it was killing . . . . It was out to get everybody. I know it.
- 14 F . . . out to get the flowers . . . . (laughter)
- 15 C That's right. I think it was possessed--that's what I think. I think Steven King wrote this Mario Senesi.

The group later returned to the idea of demonic possession when someone asked who the old man was.

- 73 C . . . The guy's possessed, man. I know it. I tell you. I think the kids are possessed, too.
- 74 B The whole town is possessed, right \_\_\_\_\_?
- 75 C It says right here that the town was Amityville. Right here.

. . . .

- 210 E Maybe he was right, maybe he was possessed.

The students appeared to be looking for some concrete explanation for the death of the old man; and, when they could find none, they turned to demonic possession of the giraffe for an explanation. The tone of their voices on the tape, however, makes it evident that they were kidding when they talked of possession.

Other Inappropriate comments were made when the students discussed the illustration that accompanied the story.

- 126 C Look at the picture. You can see the church back there. Notice how high the church is.
- 127 B That looks like a covered bridge, you know, that goes over the top of a river.
- 128 C See how high the church is?
- 129 B That little thing up there, it looks like a covered bridge. See?
- 130 C . . . . Covered bridge? Where?
- 131 B Right there I think. It looks like a covered bridge.
- 132 C It's the trees.
- 133 B Oh, I don't think so.
- 134 C That's trees.
- 135 D It's trees.
- 136 B It looks like a covered bridge to me.
- 137 C Man, please tell her that this is trees.
- 138 B I think it's a covered bridge.
- 139 D It's trees.
- 140 B I don't think so.
- 141 E It's trees. You can tell . . . if it was a covered bridge, it wouldn't go that high.
- 142 C Men are more superior and they know what they think.
- . . . .
- 147 E The people are standing up closer to the camera, too.
- 148 B Yeah, you've got to look at that. The depth of field.
- 149 D The camera . . . .

150 C You've got to look at the brains compared to the giraffe.

151 B Like, if that was a picture taken. You've got to consider depth of field.

This exchange of Inappropriate responses ended when D began to discuss the actual size of a giraffe. They returned to the question of whether or not the item in the picture was a covered bridge when they were trying to decide what kind of town the story was set in.

233 B That covered bridge proves that it's old . . . .

234 C That's trees.

235 D There's no covered bridge.

236 E There's no covered bridge.

237 B Then it's a house behind the trees.

238 C Okay. [Several talking at the same time]

239 B I still think it's a covered bridge.

240 D It's a barn behind the trees.

241 B At least it looks like a covered bridge.

242 C You look at that. You can't tell me . . . .

243 B It looks like a covered bridge.

244 E Bull. You're looking at it wrong.

245 D It looks alright like that. Turn it upside down and look at it.

246 C I believe they haven't got no rain in a long time because the grass is black.

[Pause]

247 C I think the writer wrote this on a summer's day when he wanted to be out on the beach somewhere

and he was thinking of something else when he wrote it.

The series of Inappropriate comments, concluded by Inappropriate Literary Judgments response may have been caused by competitiveness between B, who insisted that the structure in the photograph was a covered bridge, and C and D who argued that it was something else. C probably got bored with the exchanges and mentioned the drought which led to his comment about the time of year the story was written and the author's state of mind as he wrote the story. F brought the discussion back to the story with this question:

251 F Did you read that part, that part where the boys cussed it, made fun of it like a girl with a long neck?

Of the 547 responses in this discussion, 101 or 18 percent were Inappropriate. This high percentage of Inappropriate comments could have been caused by the group's attempt to use the entire half hour allotted for the discussion.

#### Breadth of Participation

All members of the group participated in the discussion. B and C spoke more frequently than the others (please see Table 8). At times it seemed that B and C were carrying on a conversation, as in the excerpts cited above on page 81 and the excerpt cited here.

254 B You know how boys are, boys, girls, kids are when



Table 8

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
Free Discussion I  
The Reflective Reading Group

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
<b>Factual</b>								3
Plot	2	4	3	2	1	2		14
Setting	2	10	4	2	1	1	1	21
Character	1	10	15	5	1	10	4	46
Style		2	3			1		6
Point of View								
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	1	1	9	3		5	2	21
Intent of Author		1	2					3
Character	9	13	41	3	6	10	4	86
Morals								
Other		9	14	2	3	1	3	32
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal		36	42	3	10	7	4	102
Other Literature			1		1			2
Television								
Other		20	23	5	12	1		61
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary	3	22	16	3	4		2	50
Judgment								
Prescriptive		1	5	2	1		1	10
Judgment								
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	2	22	36	7	19	2	2	90
<b>TOTAL</b>	20	151	214	37	59	40	23	544

they're young.

255 C That was a long time ago.

[Pause]

256 C All right. There's three guys and four girls here.

257 B That's right.

258 C All right. What do you feel about discrimination?

This exchange led to responses by other members of the group. By and large, however, B or C usually introduced new topics, eliciting responses from other participants.

Discussant A responded the fewest times, usually answering questions asked directly of her.

64 C What did you think of the story, \_\_\_\_\_?

65 A I thought it was confusing.

66 C Confusing?

67 A Yeah, it was real confusing.

68 C One word synopsis.

69 A The giraffe was all over the town.

Rather than try to clear up A's confusion, D asked about the man who died, and the discussion took another direction.

The comments of D, E, F, and G were generally responses to the story strand under discussion.

#### Other Characteristics of Free Discussion I

The discussion opened with statements of Literary Judgment, denoting personal judgments of the story. Then

discussants began sorting out facts about the characters, setting, and plot (Barnes, et al., 1971; Ross, 1977; Matsuhashi, 1980). Early in the discussion C began to digress about the giraffe's being possessed (Beach, 1973) and returned to the subject later. B led the discussion back to the story after the first digression by wondering about the town the story was set in. When the discussion turned to possession a second time, B again steered the group back to the story by saying, "I thought it was pretty good that they put him in the church." In the other digressions, D returned to the story once and F once.

The discussion was generally led by B and C, who made the most responses (Barnes, et al., 1971; Ross, 1977). There was never an attempt to assess where the group had gotten with their discussion (Barnes, et al., 1971). They merely moved from subject to subject as new ideas came into their minds. Occasionally when a group member introduced an idea, someone would say, "We've already talked about that."

The discussion ended in a comparison of the sections of big cities, i.e., Chinatown, to the town in the story, suggesting the possibility that the story could have been set in a particular section of a larger city.

## Analysis of Free Discussion II

### Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

The post-treatment free discussion (FDII) of Richard

Brautigan's "Greyhound Tragedy" lasted for twelve minutes. The discussion began with responses of Literary Judgment. (Please see Table 9 for percentage of responses by category and subcategory.)

1 E It was a pretty dumb story to me.

. . .

3 C This story is really uninteresting to me because it appeals not to my age group. It appeals to the age group just a little bit above me. . . .

. . .

6 G It was dumb. I didn't understand it.

. . .

8 D I thought it was pretty stupid. She should have just gone up and bought it. Gone up, you see, "How much does a ticket cost?" I mean everybody does it.

1 E, 3 C, and 6 G are responses of Literary Judgment.

8 D begins her utterance with a statement of Literary Judgment, and makes a Prescriptive Judgment response in justifying her pronouncement that the story is stupid.

There were few Factual responses in this discussion. The one Factual Setting response was made as the students discussed whether or not the girl was pretty. referred to the glamorous movie stars of that era.

43 E . . . This was in the thirties.

Factual Character responses were offered as participants made inferences about the character. As the group tried to determine her age, offered this fact:

Table 9

Percentage of Responses in Each Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II  
The Reflective Reading Group

	Subcategory	Category
Factual		9%
	Plot	0%
	Setting	-*
	Character	8%
	Style	0%
	Point of View	0%
Inferential		33%
	Theme	2%
	Intent of Author	5%
	Character	26%
	Other	1%
Experiential		16%
	Personal	11%
	Other Literature	0%
	Television	4%
	Other	2%
Judgmental		16%
	Literary Judgment	12%
	Prescriptive Judgment	3%
Miscellaneous	26%	26%
Total	100%	100%

\*Less than one percent

56 E She had been out of high school three years.

Later in the discussion, students talked about the character's life at the present time using facts from the story to create an older version of the girl, treating her as if she were a real person.

74 E I wonder what she's doing now. I wonder if she has a job or anything.

75 C It doesn't say.

76 D Well, it says she has two children named Jean and Rudolph, and . . . .

77 E Trying to be a beautiful movie star. [She gave up trying to be a beautiful movie star.]

78 C Now thirty years later she still blushes when she passes the bus station.

[Pause]

79 C I think the woman is insane.

C's Inference about the character ended the discussion of what her life might be like now.

Other Inferences that referred to the character were this series of statements about her ignorance of what life in Hollywood is really like.

37 C . . . I don't think she really knew too much about acting cause . . . from reading books. She only knew the good side of acting.

38 E Yeah.

39 C And going to Hollywood, what Hollywood was all about. But she didn't know nothing about like going to Hollywood and facing the crowd and drugs and what movie stars have to go through to be movie stars.

The last portion of 39 C is C's view of the realistic side of Hollywood life. The character in the story had created an image of Hollywood that excluded everything but the glamor.

Inferential Theme responses were all made by C. They were lifted from the various utterances and cited below.

3 C . . . This woman, I think, she didn't get her desires out. And when she gets old she will realize that she didn't go for her chance. You know? She blew it.

. . . .

73 C . . . well she took up being a wife when she wanted to be a movie star. I think when she gets to be about sixty-five she will realize that she's gonna wonder if she could have made it as a movie star.

The last sentence of 73 C was coded Inappropriate because, though the theme deals with unfulfilled dreams, the character realized during the story that she was incapable of taking positive action toward the realization of her dream.

Several Inferential responses in this discussion concerned the author's intent.

87 C Well, all right. He wrote this, uh, play about American dream.

. . . .

133 E . . . It's like the writer is telling the reader to go for your dreams.

134 D Go for your dreams.

. . . .

136 E To go for your dreams whether you make it or not.

137 C Yeah, I think the American way, the American dream.

Experiential Personal responses dealt with varied subjects. C made a personal response about his expectations when he read the title of this story.

48 C "Greyhound Tragedy." When I first read it, I felt like a bus was going to [sound effects of a bus wrecking] POW! There's blood.

Discussants turned to personal experience as they attempted to determine the character's age.

57 E And you usually graduate when you are eighteen, don't you?

58 A Unhuh.

59 E That's when you usually graduate.

Four percent of the responses were related to a television show. Just what show they refer to is unclear.

98 E The lady with all my sons, it was a movie and it was turned into a TV show.

[Pause]

99 E The guy who wrote the story.

100 C Was he the father or something?

[Pause]

101 C Well, he wrote a novel that had a short story and poetry and another kid. I don't . . . I don't remember the writer or anything. But I think he has a lot of villains in this story. You know, like he didn't get out his desire, and it shows the American dream like how people don't get it out. They just uh (indistinguishable), I like mid-Atlantic wrestling.



It seems that this long utterance by C refers to a television program since he concludes by saying he likes wrestling. The ideas he presents are congruent with the ideas in the story, except the last sentence which was coded Inappropriate.

Experiential Other responses were generalizations drawn from students' lives.

92 C Really, a lot of people like to be movie stars and a lot of people think they are good and give up a chance to be a movie star . . . .

Several of the Miscellaneous responses were the result of not having questions or directions for the discussion.

16 E A doesn't know what to say.

17 C Coach, you have another question?

18 D It's a lot easier when you are asking questions.

. . .

42 E I wonder why . . . why . . . Ask about the title "The Greyhound Tragedy."

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

The list of story strands that could be discussed by a group who had just read "Greyhound Tragedy" appears below. The items checked were discussed or at least mentioned by the Reflective Reading Group. Story strands 12, 13, 14, and 15 were added to the researcher's list because they were referred to by the adult group in their discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy."

1. The girl's dreams for her future X
2. The girl's reluctance to find a way out of her present circumstances X
3. The girl's prospective husband X
4. Mother's oblivion to almost everything in life
5. Father's hints that the girl should do something with her life X
6. Girl's visit to the bus station X
7. Girl's inability to act at bus station X
8. Girl drifts into marriage with the Ford salesman X
9. Girl's inability to cope with the real world X
10. The story as a tragedy
11. Metaphors in the story
  - a) movies as a religion
  - b) movie magazines as Bible
  - c) suitcases as burned out light bulbs
12. Story as a picture of life in a small town
13. Girl's shallowness of character
14. The Depression as a backdrop for the story
15. Metaphor: Her face as red as an earthquake beet

This discussion could not be called comprehensive. The participants mentioned only six of the seventeen story strands listed by the researcher and the adult group.

On several occasions, one participant or another urged other participants to speak.

93 D Say something.

94 C Please.

[Pause]

95 C Just say something.

The discussion was halting, with no attempts at stopping to look at what had been said before moving to a new subject. Usually, when a subject was exhausted, members of the group repeated their plea for someone to respond.

### Length of the Responses

The greatest average length of response in any category in this discussion (please see Table 10) occurred in the Factual category. The high average of 10.2 words per response came about because there were relatively few Factual responses, and those responses were lengthy.

76 D Well, it says she has two children named Jean and Rudolph and . . . .

. . . .

116 G Cause every time she goes by the ticket station she thinks about it.

. . . .

140 C Yeah, I think she kinda, like a, just got married and became a housewife for the rest of her life.

Extraneous words like those in 140 C help to account for the length of Factual responses.

Examination of the average length of individual responses shows that C's responses are generally longer than the responses of other discussants. C tended to use expressions such as "I mean," "you know," and "I guess,"

Table 10

Average Length of Individual and Total  
Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II  
The Reflective Reading Group

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Sub Cat	Cat
Factual									10.2
Plot									
Setting					5.0			5.0	
Character	4.2		13.6	12.0	8.3		11.0	10.4	
Style									
Point of View									
Inferential									8.6
Theme			13.8					13.8	
Intent of Author			11.0	4.0	12.0			10.6	
Character			10.9	10.8	7.4		6.0	7.7	
Morals									
Other			10.5					10.5	
Experiential									8.7
Personal	1.0		8.3	7.6	6.7		8.0	7.0	
Other Literature									
Television			9.4		6.0			8.0	
Other			11.5	4.3	15.0			9.3	
Judgmental									5.5
Literary	5.0		4.5	5.4	6.2		3.5	4.9	
Judgment									
Prescriptive	11.0			9.5	7.0			8.3	
Judgment									
Miscellaneous	3.0		5.3	4.8	5.66		2.0	4.2	4.2

which made his responses longer.

50 C But, it's just, you know, I guess she was just scared, you know. I guess it was decent. I guess she was just scared to go ask for a ticket.

Judgmental responses (please see Table 10) were brief.

They usually consisted of such comments as these:

44 C I could think of a better title.

45 E A lot better title.

46 D It's a cool title. I think it is pretty cool.

47 E It's a pretty cool title.

. . .

103 A . . . I didn't like the story.

. . .

108 D I don't like this story.

Miscellaneous responses were brief, sometimes fragments and sometimes two or three word sentences.

110 E We're stumped.

133 E The kind of meaning . . . .

145 C Just do it.

#### Nature of the Inappropriate Comments

There were very few Inappropriate comments in this discussion, occurring randomly. They are, for the most part, a result of careless reading of the story.

9 C . . . But in a way she's, you know, probably thinking the smarter choice is not leaving her husband there and everything.

The statement above is Inappropriate because the girl was

not married when she tried to ask the price of a ticket to Hollywood. C probably read the story hurriedly and missed that point.

In trying to discover the girl's motive for her desire to go to Hollywood, C offered this possibility.

26 C I think she likes to talk to somebody. Discuss, you know, like with an audience, you know, with her parents.

27 E With her parents . . .

The responses concerning the girl's desire to communicate are inappropriate because her dream was to go to Hollywood, and die tragically, and become a beautiful corpse. Again, it appears that these responses were made because C did not read the story carefully.

### Breadth of Participation

Examination of Table 11 suggests that C monopolized the discussion because of the high number of responses he made in comparison to the number of responses of the other discussants. C's utterances, however, contained several responses. He actually made 59 utterances that contained a total of 111 responses. C did emerge as the leader of this discussion, often urging other discussants to respond. E made a total of 59 responses. His utterances generally contained one or two responses. E, too, urged other participants to respond. D responded 31 times, usually in one-response utterances. A and G responded infrequently, usually in

Table 11

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
Free Discussion II  
The Reflective Reading Group

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot								
Setting					1			1
Character			5	5	6		2	18
Style								
Point of View								
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme			5					5
Intent of Author			8	1	3			12
Character	6		30	4	12		2	55
Morals								
Other			2					2
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	1		9	3	9		1	23
Other Literature								
Television			7		1			8
Other				3	1			4
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary Judgment	1		11	8	5		2	28
Prescriptive Judgment	1			2	4			6
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	1		33	5	17			57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>111</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>59</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>219</b>

reply to a direct question. and F were not present for this discussion.

### Other Characteristics of Free Discussion II

This discussion began with statements of Literary Judgment and moved rapidly to mention of theme, then to Inferences about the character.

Three participants, C, D, and E, did most of the talking (Ross, 1977). A and G usually spoke only when asked a direct question. C emerged as leader of discussion, speaking more frequently and at greater length than the others.

Early in the discussion, D remarked that it was easier to talk about a story when questions were asked. Several times during the discussion, the person speaking urged others to respond.

In this group's discussion of the story as a statement of the American dream, it was appropriate that their view of the American dream had to do with sports since C, D, and E are male.

88 E It's an American dream to come in the seventh game of the World Series and come up with the homer of the night. To stretch his . . . .

89 C Yeah. Yeah.

90 D Two strikes, three balls, bases loaded, last pitch of the game and you're down by three runs.

91 C I think he wrote it for the American dream.



With C's response, the discussion returned to talk of people's dreams of becoming famous movie stars.

This group turned the tape recorder off once during the discussion. When it was turned on again C said:

65 C "The Greyhound Tragedy," Part 2, page 2.

Apparently, the students had tried to think of discussion topics while the recorder was off. They turned to a discussion of the illustrations that accompanied the story.

This was not a comprehensive discussion. Only one-third of the subjects for discussion were mentioned by this group. Perhaps the absence of B, one of the most vocal members of the group in the first Free Discussion, accounts for the narrowness and brevity of this discussion.

#### A Comparison of Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II

Free Discussion I lasted twice as long as Discussion II. The number of responses in Free Discussion I was more than twice the number of responses in Free Discussion II. One reason for this decrease in time and number of responses in Free Discussion II was the absence from school of two group members. Another reason could be the difference in the stories. "The Giraffe" was a narrative of an unusual event in the lives of the characters. "Greyhound Tragedy" was a mildly satirical sketch of a neurotic young woman.

The percentage of total responses in the Factual

Category decreased by half in Free Discussion II. In Free Discussion II all Factual responses except one were character responses (please see Table 12). Factual Setting was the other response in that category.

There was an increase in the total number of responses in the Inferential category in Free Discussion II and a decrease in the Experiential category. Judgmental responses increased in Free Discussion II and the percentage of Miscellaneous responses doubled.

Group I had participated in the reflective reading discussions and apparently had grown dependent upon them in their discussions.

15 C . . . don't know what to say.

18 D It's a lot easier when you are asking questions. In several instances students made statements similar to those cited above. The absence of questions accounted, in part, for the increase in Miscellaneous responses.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

In Free Discussion I, Group I had a fairly comprehensive discussion covering twelve of the seventeen story strands on a list compiled by the researcher with the addition of subjects discussed by the adult group. This group discussed only seven of the seventeen possible subjects in Free Discussion II. The second Free Discussion was not comprehensive, reflecting the training effects of

Table 12

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussions I and II  
The Reflective Reading Group

	FDI Subcategory	FDI Category	FDII Subcategory	FDII Category
Factual		18%		9%
Plot	3%		0%	
Setting	5%		-*	
Character	9%		8%	
Style	1%		0%	
Point of View	0%			
Inferential		26%		33%
Theme	4%		2%	
Intent of Author	-*		5%	
Character	16%		26%	
Other	6%		1%	
Experiential		31%		16%
Personal	19%		11%	
Other Literature	-*		0%	
Television	0%		4%	
Other	12%		2%	
Judgmental		12%		16%
Literary Judgment	10%		12%	
Prescriptive Judgment	2%		3%	
Miscellaneous	13%	13%	26%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

\*Less than one percent.

the reflective reading strategy which move the participant from random thinking to focusing on an in-depth examination of one aspect of the story.

### Length of Responses

The average length of responses by category (please see Table 13) increased in the Factual and Experiential categories and decreased in the Judgmental and Miscellaneous categories from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. There was no appreciable change in the number of words per response in the Inferential category.

The average length of all responses by subcategory shows a substantial increase in the average number of words per response in the Factual Character, Inferential Theme and Experiential Other subcategories. Conversely, there were decreases in the number of words per response in the Prescriptive Judgment and Literary Judgment subcategories.

### The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

In Free Discussion I, Inappropriate comments occurred as the group discussed the picture that illustrated the story. The students talked about the picture on two separate occasions, perhaps in an effort to prolong the discussion. They also made several Inappropriate responses indicating that, because of his red eyes, the giraffe was possessed.

Table 13

A Comparison of the Average Length  
of All Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussions I and II  
The Reflective Reading Group

	FDI Subcategory	FDI Category	FDII Subcategory	FDII Category
Factual		8.0		10.2
Plot	7.5			
Setting	6.5		5.0	
Character	8.6		10.4	
Style	6.1			
Point of View				
Inferential		8.7		8.6
Theme	10.4		13.8	
Intent of Author	6.8		10.6	
Character	7.8		7.7	
Morals				
Other	10.1		10.5	
Experiential		6.6		8.7
Personal	6.7		7.0	
Other Literature	9.0			
Television			8.0	
Other	6.3			
Judgmental		8.6		5.5
Literary Judgment	7.8		4.9	
Prescriptive Judgment	11.1		8.3	
Miscellaneous	4.7	4.7	4.2	4.2

Few of the responses in Free Discussion II were Inappropriate. These Inappropriate responses mainly concerned Inferences about the character that could not apply to the girl as she was presented in the story. For example:

9 C . . . But in a way she's, you know, probably thinking the smarter choice is not leaving her husband there and everything.

The girl in the story was not married when she went to the bus terminal, so the information on which the Inference is based is incorrect. Several other Inferences seemed to be drawn from misinformation.

#### Breadth of Participation

The same participant made the greatest number of responses in both Free Discussions. In Free Discussion I, two students responded more frequently than the others. In Free Discussion II, one person spoke more frequently than the others. The two group members who spoke the fewest times in Free Discussion I responded even less in Free Discussion II (please see Table 14).

#### A Comparison of Free Discussion I and Free Discussion II to Adult Profile

The response pattern in Free Discussion I is more like the adult profile than the response pattern in Free Discussion II (please see Table 15). This difference is due to the group's training in the reflective reading strategy.

Table 14

Number of Responses by Individual Discussants  
Free Discussions I and II  
The Reflective Reading Group

	FDI	FDII
A	20	10
B	151	X*
C	214	111
D	37	31
E	58	59
F	43	X*
G	24	8

\*Student not present during discussion.

Table 15

A Comparison of the Percentage of Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I and Free Discussion II to Adult Profile  
The Reflective Reading Group

	Adult Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDI Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDII Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		17%		18%		9%
Plot	2%		3%		0%	
Setting	3%		5%		-*	
Character	10%		9%		8%	
Style	2%		1%		0%	
Point of View	-*		0%		0%	
Inferential		31%		26%		33%
Theme	4%		4%		2%	
Intent of Author	6%		-*		5%	
Character	19%		16%		26%	
Morals	0%		0%		0%	
Other	2%		6%		1%	
Experiential		33%		31%		17%
Personal	20%		19%		11%	
Other Literature	4%		-*		0%	
Television	-*		0%		4%	
Other	9%		12%		2%	
Judgmental		13%		12%		15%
Literary Judgment	11%		10%		12%	
Prescriptive Judgment	2%		2%		3%	
Miscellaneous	6%	6%	13%	13%	26%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\*Less than one percent



In Free Discussion I, the students were discussing the story randomly, as were the members of the adult group. After six weeks of training in the use of the reflective reading strategy, the students attempted to focus their discussion on one aspect of the story and to examine it in some depth.

The only category that contains about the same percentage of responses for the adult profile and the student discussions is the Inferential category. Within that category, the subcategory Theme is almost the same, varying only two percent for the three discussions. The subcategory character contains more responses than other Inferential categories in all three discussions. The most dramatic and least desirable difference is the increase in the percentage of Miscellaneous responses in Free Discussion II.

Free Discussion I and the adult profile were both comprehensive discussions. Free Discussion II was not comprehensive, but was focused mainly on one aspect of the story as is done in reflective reading discussions.

The average length of responses by category was higher in the adult profile in the Inferential, Experiential, and Judgmental categories than the average length of student responses (please see Table 16). In Free Discussion II, the average number of words per response was greater than the adult profile in the Factual and Miscellaneous categories.

Table 16

A Comparison of the Average Length  
of All Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I and Free Discussion II to Adult Profile  
The Reflective Reading Group

	Adult	FDI	FDII
Factual	8.5	8.0	10.2
Plot	6.0	7.5	
Setting	8.8	6.5	5.0
Character	8.1	8.6	10.4
Style	5.0	6.1	
Point of View	8.8		
Inferential	10.0	8.7	8.6
Theme	10.0	10.4	13.8
Intent of Author	10.9	6.8	10.6
Character	10.1	7.8	7.7
Morals			
Other	8.4	10.1	10.5
Experiential	10.2	6.6	8.7
Personal	10.5	6.7	7.0
Other Literature	10.2	9.0	
Television	6.5		8.0
Other	7.8	6.3	9.3
Judgmental	8.9	8.6	5.5
Literary Judgment	9.4	7.8	4.9
Prescriptive Judgment	8.4	11.1	8.3
Miscellaneous	4.1	4.1	4.7
		4.7	4.2
			4.2

The adult group made relatively few Inappropriate comments in their discussion; four percent of the responses were Inappropriate. Eighteen percent of the responses in student Free Discussion I were Inappropriate. In Free Discussion II, the student group had the same percentage of Inappropriate responses as the adult profile.

In the adult profile a leader emerged and two other members of the adult group spoke more frequently than the remaining participants. In the Reflective Reading Group, two discussants made about the same number of utterances, with one student's utterances containing multiple responses in Free Discussion I. One of the same students responded most frequently in Free Discussion II. (Please see Table 17).

One change of mind occurred in the adult profile. No change of mind occurred in either student discussion.

Table 17

A Comparison of the  
Number of Responses by Individual Discussants  
Free Discussion I and Free Discussion II to Adult Profile  
The Reflective Reading Group

	Adults	FDI	FDII
A	89.2	20	10
B	6.8	151	X*
C	9.3	214	111
D	58.6	37	31
E	45.6	58	59
F	12.7	43	X*
G	19.2	24	8

\*Student not present during discussion.

## Chapter 6

### ANALYSES OF FREE DISCUSSIONS OF THE QUESTION GROUP

The Question Group was given the list of questions used in the reflective reading discussions for each of the six short stories discussed during the six-week treatment period. The group was instructed to use the questions as bases for its discussion. There was no teacher or other authority figure present at any of the discussions of the Question Group. Analysis of the pre-treatment free discussion appears below.

#### Analysis of Free Discussion I

The Question Group's free discussion of "The Giraffe" lasted for seventeen minutes. The responses of this group were difficult to transcribe because students spoke softly, several talked at once, and they interrupted each other frequently.

#### Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

The discussion began with a question that required an Inferential response. (Please see Table 18 for percentage of response in each category.)

- 1 I How did the giraffe die?
- 2 H Well, I think he died because he was lonely.
- 3 J Well, I think he died because . . . .
- 4 H I think he died because he was cold. Or he died because [indistinguishable]

Table 18

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I  
The Question Group

Subcategory	Category
Factual	21%
Plot	0%
Setting	3%
Character	15%
Style	2%
Point of View	0%
Inferential	33%
Theme	8%
Intent of Author	5%
Character	16%
Other	5%
Experiential	11%
Personal	6%
Other Literature	3%
Television	-*
Other	2%
Judgmental	17%
Literary Judgment	17%
Prescriptive Judgment	-*
Miscellaneous	18%
Total	100%
	18%
	100%

\*Less than one percent.

[Pause]

5 H But he had fur, why would he die if he was cold?

6 M He was traveling . . . .

7 N . . . Africa . . . .

The Inferential Character response 2 H is logical, given the situation in the story and the theme of newness and creativity dying or being killed by the adults in the community. H changes her mind almost immediately, saying the giraffe died because he was cold. The factual responses 6 and 7 were included here as examples of the interruptions that occurred frequently in this discussion.

Inferential Theme responses were introduced by L with this utterance:

173 L Why didn't they understand it? They knew where it was from. Why didn't they . . . why didn't they accept it?

174 I Well, the . . . maybe they didn't want to accept it. Maybe they didn't understand why . . .  
[several talking at once]

175 H Maybe they didn't understand why the old man had died and left him there. Maybe he thought the guy did it on purpose.

[Indistinguishable]

176 H Yeah, maybe that's what they thought.

177 N I think they didn't want to accept the new because they liked the old ways.

178 K Yeah.

179 N . . . they didn't want a bunch of new stuff.

180 H . . . they said in the story when mothers were

calling after the guys . . . to get them back to a normal life.

Even with the interruptions, it is clear that the respondents cited above had a sense of the theme of the story. The discussion of theme was brief but did get to the heart of the matter.

Responses that were coded Inference Author's Intent included these:

210 H I wonder why the author had the old man die?

. . . .

217 K If the owner didn't die, we wouldn't have the little boys. We wouldn't have the story.

K is saying it was the author's intent to create a story scenario by leaving an exotic animal in a town where everyone fears it except the little boys.

Inferential Other responses generally referred to the setting of the story.

18 N I think it was pretty old [the town].

. . . .

108 I Do you think it is set in Europe?

109 M Could be.

In talking about the giraffe's placing his head on the picture of Jesus in the church, the group made these

Character Inferences:

197 I Maybe the guys had talked to the giraffe about Jesus. I mean not like he really talked to Jesus, but you know, you've talked about the giraffe was sick of seeing him.



198 L Maybe the giraffe walked up there and didn't know nothing about it.

The students were inferring reasons for the giraffe's seeming recognition that the picture was a safe place for his head. In utterance 197, the antecedent of the last word, him, is unclear.

Factual statements were generally used to clear up confusion.

83 L So, why are they scared of it? If they knew it was from Africa, they would . . .

84 H But the boys knew it was from Africa, didn't they?

85 J They all knew it was from Africa.

Factual setting responses generally dealt with time.

14 I Well it says it was . . . in 1953.

. . .

216 N It said it got dark that night.

The two Factual Plot responses were these two C-units:

225 N Well, the giraffe did leave the town to die. The giraffe ran way up there in the hills.

Factual Style responses had to do with the literary devices Senesi used in writing "The Giraffe."

136 J That was something foreshadowing what would happen.

. . .

209 N It foreshadows it all through the story because its eyes are red and demon-looking.

Interestingly, there were fewer Experiential responses than other kinds of responses in this discussion.

102 H How many people do you see walking down the road with a giraffe?

103 K Well, how many people do you see having a mass every day? You know?

104 H Catholic people.

105 N Catholic people do.

106 K I don't see people walking around in black on Sunday . . .

107 N I've never been to Europe either.

This series of Experiential Personal responses was brought on by I's Literary Judgment "I don't think it was supposed to be a real town." Students are applying their own experiences to the events in the story.

This group made several references to Other Literature.

119 D Ya'll seen the movie . . . .

120 I Ya'll seen Old Yeller, haven't you?

121 J Yeah.

122 I Animals do have an instinct.

. . . .

138 H Well, course, none of us are going to favor this story because we are used to reading stuff like Amityville Horror and stuff like that.

139 C Things that make sense.

. . . .

186 G It was like the play Our Town cause they got mad cause all the, uh, automobiles . . . and they didn't like it . . . . You know, if they had one giraffe, they had two giraffes . . . nine or ten more giraffes.

In the first excerpt cited above, the students are searching for a cause for the death of the giraffe. They were leading into the idea that the giraffe died from loneliness because his owner had died. The second extract represents a Literary Judgment response, comparing "The Giraffe" to the kinds of fiction popular with their age group today. The last excerpt occurred as students searched for the "meaning" of the giraffe. There were no references to television in this discussion.

There were very few Experiential Other responses. When the discussion was focused on the giraffe's going out of town to die, these Experiential responses were offered:

226 K It's like an elephant going to a graveyard.

227 N Yeah.

228 K . . . the elephant graveyard.

This group made a large number of Literary Judgment responses.

140 H I think younger children would like it.

141 N No, they wouldn't.

142 I They wouldn't understand it.

143 H Not young children, well, I mean like . . . .

144 K If they made it simple . . .

145 I If you read it to them, I think they could understand it.

146 K They could probably understand it better than us.

147 J It's just that it . . . it just doesn't make any sense.

148 I It's hard to understand.

Interestingly, discussant I thinks young children could understand the story if it were read to them, yet she reiterates her difficulty with it at response 148.

The relatively high percentage of Literary Judgment responses is the result of H's attempt to direct the discussion into a format she was familiar with.

66 H Okay, let's start with each person going around and asking a question.

67 I Okay.

68 K Let I start.

69 I Did you like this story or why not?

70 N Okay. Let's go around the room.

Whenever there was a lull in the discussion, I returned to her question, asking each group member his or her opinion of the story.

There were no Prescriptive Judgment responses in this discussion.

The high percentage of Miscellaneous responses in this group is possibly accounted for by the tendency of these discussants to interrupt each other.

3 J Well, I think he died because . . . .

16 N Well, it could have been like a . . . .

19 K I didn't know . . . .

21 N I don't understand what the little guy . . . .

22 H I wonder what that little guy . . . .

One Miscellaneous response gave insight into the confusion students felt at being "on their own" in this discussion situation.

42 N I wish we had some guidelines to help our discussion along.

43 I I know.

Apparently, these students had rarely been asked to perform any kind of class activity without some directions or supervision.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

Comprehensiveness of the discussion is measured by the number of story strands on a list compiled by the researcher and additions from the adult discussions. The items checked are the story strands that were discussed or at least mentioned by this group.

#### "The Giraffe"

1. How the giraffe came to be in the town X
2. The boys' description of the giraffe
3. The reaction of the townspeople to the giraffe X
4. The effects of the weather in a strange climate on the giraffe X

5. Sheltering the giraffe in the church X
6. Priest's understanding of the boys and the giraffe X
7. People's hatred of something new and different X
8. People's fear of something new and different X
9. Death of the giraffe as the death of newness and creativity X
10. Boys' realization that there was not room for new ideas in their society X
11. Death of innocence in the boys
12. Symbolism of the giraffe
  - a) could see above the rooftops--intellect or creativity of boys
  - b) head of giraffe in the dark skies--intellect or creativity obscured
  - c) periscope of the boys--vision of great things
13. Setting of the story X
14. Care and feeding of the giraffe X
15. Literal cause of the giraffe's death X

This group discussed twelve of the seventeen items listed above. They dealt with "Priest's understanding of the boys and the giraffe," "People's hatred of something new and different," "Death of the giraffe as the death of newness and creativity," and "Boys' realization that there was not room for new ideas in their society" in the form of questions. For example:

9 H I wonder why people are so scared of him?

10 K If you've never seen a giraffe in your life. . .

[Pause]

11 K You've never see a giraffe before?

H brought up the issue of the people's fear of the giraffe, and K responded from her own experience. She did not turn to the story in search of an answer to the question. This pattern of bringing up a new idea then being side-tracked by the response occurred several times throughout this discussion.

#### Length of the Responses

Responses of H and were longer than the responses of the others in some categories. (Please see Table 19.) H made four Inferential Theme responses of about fourteen words each. Her responses concerning theme were in the form of questions or "I don't understand why" statements.

33 A I wonder why they [the boys] got so mad at the town when he died.

H's high average of words per response in Experiential Other Literature is due to her lengthy response concerning the students' passion for such books as The Amityville Horror.

N's responses in the Inferential Theme category are the result of his attempts to express the theme clearly.

170 N It's just that the people didn't want to accept anything new. They liked the old ways.

177 N I think they didn't want to accept the new because they liked the old ways.

N's high average number of words per response in the

Table 19

Average Length of Individual and Total Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I  
The Question Group

	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	Sub- cat	Cat
Factual									6.8
Plot							9.0	9.0	
Setting	5.3	6.0	9.0				9.3	6.2	
Character	6.7	3.0	6.5	5.6	6.5	3.0	7.8	6.3	
Style	1.0		7.0	1.0			9.0	5.4	
Point of View									
Inferential									7.7
Theme	13.8	6.5		4.3	7.5		10.2	8.1	
Intent of Author	8.6	9.0	8.6	8.0				8.5	
Character	8.8	9.5	8.0	6.1	8.2		7.0	7.6	
Morals									
Other	3.5	9.3		7.8		2.0	7.5	7.0	
Experiential									7.7
Personal	5.8	9.0	8.6	11.0			7.6	7.8	
Other	16.5	5.0	4.0	4.0			10.5	9.6	
Literature									
Television									
Other				6.0			1.0	5.2	
Judgmental									5.6
Literary Judgment	6.0	4.1	7.6	5.0	3.0	7.0	4.4	5.6	
Prescriptive Judgment									
Miscellaneous	6.3	4.4	4.3	3.2	3.0		5.4	5.1	5.1



category Experiential Other Literature was derived from two responses.

186 N It was like the play Our Town cause they got mad at all the, uh, automobiles . . . and they didn't like it.

K's average of eleven words per Experiential Personal response was the result of two statements.

102 K Well, how many people do you see having mass everyday? You know?

. . .

106 K I don't see people walking around in black every Sunday.

The students' other responses ranged in average word length from four to nine words per response. One reason for so many brief responses is the frequent interruptions of the speakers. There was also a high percentage of Miscellaneous responses in this discussion, and these Miscellaneous responses tended to be brief.

#### Nature of the Inappropriate Comments

There were only four comments deemed Inappropriate to the story in this entire discussion.

In discussing the setting H made this response:

95 H . . . It could have been New York City.

The story simply could not have been set in a big city because the boys walked out of town with the giraffe, then brought it back that night to shelter it in the church.

The three responses concerning the Author's Intent were coded Inappropriate.

199 H It was a coincidence, yeah.

200 K It was a coincidence; he just walked up then and happened to be next to it.

Few things in fiction are coincidental.

### Breadth of Participation

All students took part in this discussion (please see Table 20). H and responded more frequently than other group members. H assumed a leadership role when she suggested that each person formulate a question about the story. Only two questions were asked in this manner. The first, cited above, had to do with whether or not students liked the story. The second, actually two questions, is this:

173 L Why didn't they understand it? They knew where it was from. Why didn't they . . . why didn't they accept it?

L's questions led to responses concerning the theme of "The Giraffe." Though said he did not like the story, he seemed to be interested in the discussion, and participated throughout.

M made only seven responses, but they were relevant to the discussion. He was paying attention to the discussion; he simply didn't seem to have much to contribute.

### Change of Mind by a Discussant

One of the participants in this discussion changed her mind.

Table 20

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
Free Discussion I  
The Question Group

	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	Total
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot							2	2
Setting	3	1	1				4	9
Character	13	1	4	5	2	1	16	42
Style	1		1	1			2	5
Point of View								
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	4	2		4	7		6	23
Intent of Author	5	1	3	4				13
Character	11	15	1	7	5		4	43
Morals								
Other	2	3		5		1	2	24
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	5	2	3	2			5	17
Other Literature	2	1	1	1			2	7
Television								
Other				5			1	6
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary Judgment	12	12	7	4	3	3	7	48
Prescriptive Judgment								
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	8	9	8	5	3	2	14	49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>277</b>

88 H Did you like it?

89 I No, did you.

. . . .

164 H Did you like it, I?

165 I Yeah. Yeah.

166 N That's a very good question.

167 I Yeah. Yeah, cause I think, I think the giraffe is so different from anything and the way they set it up.

168 H I know, the way they were created . . . .

169 I . . . they think, it was a monument . . . you know?

The discussion just prior to utterance 164 had been in response to J's "I sorta liked it" and her reasons for liking the story. K also "thought it was all right." The positive reactions of these two respondents might have influenced I to change her mind.

#### Other Characteristics of Free Discussion I

The outstanding features of this discussion were the frequent interruptions of speakers and the tendency for several persons to talk at the same time. This could have been caused by competition among the group members (Barnes, et al., 1971), or it could have been that students felt insecure because they had no guidelines to follow in the discussion. The interruptions seemed, in several instances,

to keep the discussion on a literal level.

36 N The town didn't want to keep it. They wanted to . . .

37 J I know [indistinguishable]  
[Several talking at once]

38 H I know because remember here it said . . . .

39 N I'm glad they didn't shoot it.

40 H . . . good parents were yelling at them . . . .  
[Several talking at once]

The responses cited above could have led to a discussion of theme. J, however, said "Why couldn't they put it in a zoo?" This response led to more people talking at the same time.

This group stopped the tape recorder twice during the discussion, and at the end of the discussion, they turned it off and on several times, but nothing was clearly stated. The first time the tape recorder was turned off, students replayed their responses up to that point to see if the tape recorder worked.

The second time the machine was turned off, it might have been to allow N time to think about his reason for not liking the story.

155 N Why not? I don't know. I just didn't like it.

156 I You have to have a reason.

[Tape recorder turned off]

157 N Well, let me see. I don't know why I didn't like it.

If turned off the tape recorder to think, it obviously was not a productive period of time. At the end of the discussion, it seemed as if someone was simply playing with the machine.

Two participants, and H did more talking than the other five (Barnes, et al., 1971). N was the more articulate of the two, verbalizing the theme.

170 N It's just that the people didn't want to accept anything new. They liked the old ways.

N's contributions to the discussion were logical and helpful.

H assumed the role of "teacher" when she suggested that everyone be asked whether or not he or she liked the story and the reason for liking or disliking it (Barnes, et al., 1971). She proceeded to ask every group member the question. Many of H's other responses were in the form of "I wonder why" statements (Matsushashi, 1980).

9 H I wonder why the people are so scared of him.

33 H I wonder why they got so mad at the town when he died?

H's ideas kept the discussion moving, but there seemed to be no cohesiveness in this group. It could have been that these students were too immature to have an orderly discussion or it could have been that they were so unaccustomed to self-directed work that they were not able

to focus their responses on one idea for a long enough period of time to examine it in detail.

### Analysis of Free Discussion II

#### Percentage of Responses by Subcategory and Category

The post-treatment discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy" lasted for sixteen minutes. This discussion began with a question that required an Inferential Other response followed by two responses of Literary Judgment.

1 I What did you think it was?

2 K It was different.

3 M It was interesting.

4 I What did you think this story was about?

[Pause]

5 I Well, it was just like all the sort of things kids when they are younger want to do.

I finally answered her own question with an Inferential Other response when none of the other participants offered a comment.

Inferential Theme responses were interspersed throughout the discussion. There was never an attempt to summarize what had been said about the girl's inability to act out her dreams.

8 K It seems like people have their dreams, but they're too chicken to fulfill them.

9 H Too chicken.

10 K Yeah, she was too chicken. It seems like she wouldn't take a chance.

K later returned to her idea that the girl was too afraid to take positive action.

27 K Yeah, the way she was sitting and waiting for something to happen. She had to do something. It was Hollywood or marry him, and she was too chicken for Hollywood.

Several other responses reiterated this idea that the girl was afraid to take the chance and go to Hollywood.

An example of Inferential Intent of Author is this:

49 I He might have did something like this, that happened.

Though the syntax is awkward, I is saying that the author's intent was to write about one of his own experiences.

Inferences about character included these responses:

63 I Don't you think someone should have been suspicious with all those movie magazines around?

70 I I guess the father was an airhead.

Literary Judgment responses have been cited. There were few Prescriptive Judgment responses, only one percent of the total responses (please see Table 21).

27 K . . . She should do something. . . .

. . . .

62 K She could have called on the phone.

Prescriptive Judgment responses concerned the things the girl could have done to realize her dream of getting to Hollywood.



Table 21

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II  
The Question Group

Subcategory	Category
Factual	9%
Plot	0%
Setting	2%
Character	7%
Style	-*
Point of View	0%
Inferential	30%
Theme	11%
Intent of Author	-*
Character	7%
Other	12%
Experiential	38%
Personal	21%
Other Literature	1%
Television	-*
Other	15%
Judgmental	3%
Literary Judgment	2%
Prescriptive Judgment	1%
Miscellaneous	20%
Total	99%**
	100%

\*Less than one percent.

\*\*This figure is due to rounding the percentages.

Factual responses occurred in three categories -- Character, Setting and Style.

17 M It has the date, 1938.

This response was offered as the group tried to establish the time frame of the setting. Factual Character responses were made in an effort to verify Inferences.

63 I Don't you think someone should have gotten suspicious with all those magazines around?

64 H Yeah, they did. She had a stupid mother.

65 M Her father didn't like it. They said that.

Response 65 M "Her father didn't like it" is a Factual response. "They said that" is Miscellaneous. Responses 63 I and 64 H are Inferences. One response was coded Factual Style because I referred to a metaphor in describing the bus station.

82 I . . . Suitcases like burned out light bulbs . . .

Experiential responses constitute thirty-eight percent of the total number of responses in this discussion.

29 K Shoot, I could think of a way to get out of town.

. . .

45 I Since this is a girl they are talking about it seems like, like I would write this because it might have happened to me.

46 J It seems like the guy that wrote it would be writing about a guy instead of a girl.

I and J were responding from personal experience in that they felt incapable of writing from the masculine point

of view. Students in this group seemed surprised that a man had written this story with a girl as the main character.

Two Experiential responses concerned Other Literature.

7 M It reminds me of that story of the guy on the train; he waited so long that he was let down.

M was referring to Thomas Wolfe's "The Far and the Near," a short story that was also used in this study.

Responses coded as Experiential Other were, for the most part Inappropriate as will be discussed later. An example of Appropriate Experiential Other response is cited below:

121 H I know, but they should have fun while they're young.

122 M Yeah, but they could ruin their own lives if they don't know what they're doing.

123 H Yeah, but you have to do it in moderation.

There was one Experiential Television response in this discussion. When the discussion turned to the girl's reasons for not going to Hollywood, H offered this response.

11 H I think it was like one of those small towns where you live forever.

12 K Little House on the Prairie, right? Or Christiansburg.

K used the setting for a television program and her own town as examples of the kind of small town H referred to.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

Comprehensiveness of the discussion is measured by the

number of story strands from a list developed by the researcher with additional items discussed by the adult group.

1. The girl's dreams for her future X
2. The girl's reluctance to find a way out of her present circumstances X
3. The girl's prospective husband X
4. Mother's oblivion to almost everything in life X
5. Father's hints that the girl should do something with her life
6. Girl's visit to the bus station X
7. Girl's inability to act at bus station X
8. Girl drifts into marriage with the Ford salesman X
9. Girl's inability to cope with the real world
10. The story as a tragedy X
11. Metaphors in the story
  - a) movies as a religion
  - b) movie magazines as Bible
  - c) suitcases as burned out light bulbs X
12. Story as a picture of life in a small town X
13. Girl's shallowness of character
14. The Depression as a backdrop for the story
15. Metaphor: Her face as red as an earthquake beet

This discussion could be called comprehensive because Group II discussed or at least mentioned ten of the story strands listed by the researcher and the adult group.

In speaking briefly of the story as a tragedy, K called

it a "tragedy of ignorance." That response was coded Inappropriate because the real tragedy was that the girl did not have control of her life. Examples of references to the other story strands have been cited above.

### Length of the Responses

In several instances, individuals had a high average number of words per response because they made only one or two responses in a particular subcategory (please see Table 22). L's seventeen word per response average in the Inferential Theme subcategory is derived from this one response:

28 L It seems like to me she wanted to get out to Hollywood before her chance was gone.

J's average of eleven words per response in the subcategory Inferential Theme is also the result of one comment.

170 J . . . its about a girl who had a dream and her shadows.

Miscellaneous responses average just over four words per response when looking at the length of all responses by category. Experiential responses are briefer than Factual, Inferential and Judgmental responses because in several instances students responded to an Experiential remark with "Yeah," or "Me, too" or other brief words of agreement. The responses that were in agreement with Experiential responses were also coded Experiential. For example, in the digression cited below, all responses were coded

Table 22

Average Length of Individual and Total  
Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II  
The Question Group

	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	Sub- Cat	Cat
Factual									6.7
Plot									
Setting		10.0				5.0		9.1	
Character	6.6	7.0	4.0	7.0	7.0	5.5		6.1	
Style		6.0						6.0	
Point of View									
Inferential									7.1
Theme	6.2	9.0	11.0	7.9	17.0			8.2	
Intent of Author		9.0						9.0	
Character	5.0	9.8	7.5	4.0	7.0	12.0		8.2	
Morals									
Other	6.7	4.6	3.6	5.0	1.0	7.5		5.7	
Experiential									5.7
Personal	6.0	5.9	7.7	6.0	6.0			6.1	
Other Literature						11.0		11.0	
Television				6.0				6.0	
Other	6.6	6.4	5.2	9.2				5.7	
Judgmental									6.3
Literary Judgment	6.0			3.0		3.0		7.0	
Prescriptive Judgment				5.0				5.0	
Miscellaneous	4.4	4.8	4.2	3.2	3.0	3.3		4.4	4.4

Experiential Personal Inappropriate, except 133 H.

131 J Well, I took the PSAT's.

132 I Did you?

133 H Going to college is what scares me the most,  
cause I know if I don't get into . . .

134 I If I fail, my parents won't pay for me to go.

135 H I know.

136 J Me, too.

These kinds of exchanges occurred frequently in this discussion.

#### The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

One series of Inappropriate comments was just cited. These comments were brought about by I's statement regarding the girl in the story who was afraid to take risks.

128 I You have to take a chance.

The discussion turned to taking SAT's and PSAT's, and to failure in college.

Another series of Inappropriate comments occurred just after the group talked about dreams. I had just asked M what his dream is.

112 M Huh? I don't know.

113 H It's like we're all . . . .

[Indistinguishable]

114 K No, I wouldn't mind . . . .

[Indistinguishable]

- 115 I Everybody is worried about the money anymore.
- 116 H I am, too.
- 117 I I mean, everybody wants to be rich.
- 118 J It's like everyone is wandering around aimlessly. They're not really going anywhere. Seems like.  
[Appropriate]
- 119 I See, nobody has any . . . anybody has any heart. To be rich. To be powerful and buy giant houses
- 120 K And Porsches.
- 121 H I'd buy a house instead of a Porsche.
- 122 K I'd rather live in my Porsche.
- 123 I I know. You wouldn't need it. You wouldn't need a house. You'd stay in motels all of the time.

The discussion continued in this vein until M stopped it by saying, "Don't be ridiculous." It is logical that the group slipped into this discussion of what riches could bring, given the flashy materialism of today's movie stars. This portion of the discussion was deemed Inappropriate (except 118 J) because the girl in the story did not aspire to wealth. She wanted to die as a young Hollywood star and become a beautiful corpse.

Later in the discussion, the group speculated about the father's role in the girl's life. This led to a series of Experiential Personal responses that were Inappropriate to the story.

- 160 I He'd probably say . . . go on do whatever you want and I'll take care of you if something happens.



161 L Probably.

[Indistinguishable]

162 I My mom would.

163 H She ain't going to be there forever.

[Indistinguishable]

164 I My mama makes me keep a Christmas Club. I have to put two dollars out of twenty dollars every two weeks in there. It turns out to be about half of my year's allowance.

165 H But then comes Christmas.

166 I I know, but I don't want to spend it on anybody. I want to keep it.

167 H It's fun to buy presents. Yeah. But you don't have enough money.

168 K Yeah, and you end up borrowing.

169 H I never have.

[Indistinguishable]

170 I If I spend a hundred dollars on clothes . . . .

171 K Stop it! Is it on?

K seemed to realize suddenly that their remarks were being recorded. Participant I returned the discussion to careers then and now. Seventeen percent of the responses in this discussion were Inappropriate.

### Breadth of Participation

Discussant I emerged as the leader of this group. She made 91 of the 250 responses. She opened the discussion with the question, "What do you think it was?" Throughout

the discussion she asked pertinent questions or made leading comments.

20 I What about the title?

. . . .

90 I We need to talk about "Greyhound Tragedy." Why do you think this is called a tragedy?

154 I We're not really discussing the story. We're not really discussing . . .

Even though I participated in the digressions, she did try to steer the discussion toward the story a good part of the time. H and K participated almost equally with 53 and 43 responses, respectively (please see Table 23). L made only 8 responses, but he seemed to be following the discussion.

#### Other Characteristics of Free Discussion II

This discussion is characterized by many interruptions, respondents speaking so softly that their response was indistinguishable, and two or more students speaking at the same time.

Three rather lengthy digressions occurred during the sixteen minutes of tape-recorded responses. The digressions, one concerning how to spend a large amount of money, one about college boards and college life, and one about personal money management, each began with an appropriate response about the story. When an inappropriate response was uttered, other students responded. These digressions were stopped by group members who realized that

Table 23

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
Free Discussion II  
The Question Group

	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	Total
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot								
Setting		4				1		5
Character	5	4	2	1	1	4		17
Style		1		5				6
Point of View								
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	6	7	1	8	1	3		26
Intent of Author		1						1
Character	2	8	2	1	2	1		16
Morals								
Other	10	9	3	5	1	1		29
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	13	25	7	6				51
Other Literature					2	2		4
Television				1				1
Other	7	10	7	11		2		37
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary Judgment	1	2		1		1		5
Prescriptive Judgment				3				3
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	9	20	10	6	1	3		49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>250</b>

the discussion had gone far afield.

Few of the ideas presented by participants were discussed in depth. The discussion was difficult to follow, and it seemed that interruptions created changes of the subject under discussion, leaving no chance to examine any topic carefully.

The discussants used personal experiences about things they feared as a comparison to the girl's fear of asking the price of a ticket. However, students let their discussion wander far afield by allowing the fear of SAT's to lead to responses about what they had heard about college life.

#### A Comparison of Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II

Free Discussions I and II lasted about the same length of time. There were, however, fewer distinguishable responses in Free Discussion II.

In Free Discussion I several of the students expressed frustration at not having any instructions as to how to proceed. In Free Discussion II, however, no such complaints were voiced. It could be that having a list of questions for each of the six stories discussed during the treatment established the habit of discussing a story without a teacher's supervision. Free Discussion II flowed more smoothly than Free Discussion I.

The percentage of responses in the Factual and

Judgmental categories decreased by large percentages (please see Table 24). The greatest change in the kinds of responses offered by this group was an increase in the percentage of Experiential responses of twenty-seven percent. This increase was not all good; many of the responses were Inappropriate, as will be discussed later in this paper. The percentage of Inferential and Miscellaneous responses remained fairly constant.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

Free Discussion I was a comprehensive discussion with the group discussing or at least mentioning twelve of the seventeen story strands developed by the researcher and gleaned from the adult discussion of "The Giraffe." Free Discussion II was not quite so comprehensive. Group II discussed ten of the seventeen items listed by the researcher and taken from the adult discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy."

#### Length of Responses

The only change that entailed the length of one word or more occurred in the Experiential category, where the length of responses decreased. (Please see Table 25.) The high average of words per response in the Experiential Other Literature in Free Discussion II is based on two responses of one student.

Table 24

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussions I and II  
The Question Group

	FDI	Category	FDII	Category
	Subcategory		Subcategory	
Factual		21%		9%
Plot	-*		0%	
Setting	3%		2%	
Character	15%		7%	
Style	2%		-*	
Point of View	0%		0%	
Inferential		33%		30%
Theme	8%		11%	
Intent of Author	5%		-*	
Character	16%		7%	
Moral	0%		0%	
Other	5%		12%	
Experiential		11%		38%
Personal	6%		21%	
Other Literature	3%		1%	
Television	0%		-*	
Other	2%		15%	
Judgmental		17%		3%
Literary Judgment	17%		2%	
Prescriptive Judgment	0%		1%	
Miscellaneous	18%	18%	20%	20%
Total	100%	100%	99%**	100%

\*Less than one percent

\*\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.

Table 25

A Comparison of the Average Length  
of All Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussions I and II  
The Question Group

		FDI		FDII	
	Subcategory	Category	Subcategory	Category	Category
Factual		6.8			6.7
Plot	9.0				
Setting	6.2		9.0		
Character	6.3		6.1		
Style	5.4				
Point of View					
Inferential		7.7			7.1
Theme	8.1		8.2		
Intent of Author	8.5		9.0		
Character	7.6		8.2		
Morals					
Other	7.0		5.7		
Experiential		7.7			5.7
Personal	7.8		6.1		
Other	9.6		11.0		
Literature					
Television			6.0		
Other	5.2		5.7		
Judgmental		5.6			6.3
Literary Judgment	5.6		7.0		
Prescriptive Judgment			5.0		
Miscellaneous	5.1	5.1	4.3		4.3

### The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

There were few Inappropriate comments in Free Discussion I. These responses dealt with the giraffe's placing his head on the picture of Christ as a coincidence and the idea that the story might have been set in New York City. Free Discussion II had a much higher percentage of Inappropriate responses; sixteen percent of these responses were Inappropriate. About half of these responses occurred after a discussion of the girl's dream of going to Hollywood. In discussing their own dreams, the group got carried away with how they would spend their money if they were rich. The girl in the story did not seek wealth; she sought only to die in Hollywood and become a beautiful corpse.

The participants digressed again when the girl's fear of asking the price of a ticket to Hollywood was discussed. One of their personal fears was taking SAT's. Mention of SAT's led to a discussion of what they had heard about the way college professors run their classes. They also briefly discussed a Christmas Club savings account and the disposition of the money therein.

### Breadth of Participation

Breadth of participation concerns the amount of participation by each group member (please see Table 26).



Table 26

Number of Responses by Individual Discussants  
Free Discussions I and II  
The Question Group

	FDI	FDII
H	66	53
I	47	91
J	39	32
K	43	43
L	20	7
M	7	18
N	63	X*

\* Student not present for the discussion.

During the course of this study, participant moved to another state. In Free Discussion I, H and I were the most vocal respondents. In Free Discussion II, student I responded more frequently than other members of the group. In both discussions all students contributed to the discussion.

#### Change of Mind by a Discussant

In Free Discussion I, there was one change of mind. When first asked if she liked "The Giraffe, I said "No, did you?" Later in the discussion, when asked the same question, I responded, "Yeah, Yeah." Apparently the favorable responses made by the other members of the group influenced I to take another look at the story and decide she liked it.

#### A Comparison of Free Discussions I and II to Adult Profile

Free Discussion II of the Question Group was less comprehensive than Free Discussion I and the Adult Profile. This group had had six discussions using the reflective reading questions which examined one issue of the story in depth. In Free Discussion II, the Question Group examined the girl's dream and her reasons for not fulfilling the dream. There were fewer random responses in this discussion.

The percentage of Inferential responses in the student group remained almost the same in the two discussions and was consistent with the adult profile (please see Table 27). The Experiential response percentage in Free Discussion II was more nearly like the adult percentage in Free Discussion II than in Free Discussion I. The Question Group had a larger percentage of Miscellaneous responses in both discussions than the adult profile. The only subcategory wherein the percentage of student responses moved closer to the percentage of adult responses was Experiential Personal.

Comprehensiveness of the discussion was equal in the adult profile and Free Discussion I. Both groups discussed seventy percent of the story strands. The students discussed fifty-eight percent of the story strands in Free Discussion II.

The adult profile shows a larger average number of words per response than either discussion of the Question Group except in the Miscellaneous category (please see Table 28).

Free Discussion I of the Question Group had fewer Inappropriate responses than the adult profile; Free Discussion II had more Inappropriate responses than the adult profile.

In Student Free Discussion I, two students did most of the talking. In Free Discussion II, one student responded

Table 27

A Comparison of the Percentage  
of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
The Question Group FDI and FDII to Adult Profile

	Adult Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDI Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDII Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		17%		21%		9%
Plot	2%		-*		0%	
Setting	3%		3%		2%	
Character	10%		15%		7%	
Style	2%		2%		-*	
Point of View	-*		0%		0%	
Inferential		31%		33%		30%
Theme	4%		8%		11%	
Intent of Author	6%		5%		-*	
Character	19%		16%		7%	
Morals	0%		0%		0%	
Other	2%		5%		12%	
Experiential		33%		11%		38%
Personal	20%		6%		21%	
Other Literature	4%		3%		1%	
Television	-		0%		-	
Other	9%		2%		15%	
Judgmental		13%		17%		3%
Literary Judgment	11%		17%		2%	
Prescriptive Judgment	2%		0%		1%	
Miscellaneous	6%	6%	18%	18%	20%	20%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%**	100%

\*Less than one percent

\*\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.

Table 28

A Comparison of the Average Length  
of All Responses by Category and Subcategory  
The Question Group Free Discussion I and II  
to Adult Profile

	Adult Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDI Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDII Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		8.5		6.8		6.7
Plot	6.0		9.0			
Setting	8.8		6.2		9.0	
Character	8.1		6.3		6.1	
Style	5.0		5.4		6.0	
Point of View	8.8					
Inferential		10.0		7.7		7.1
Theme	10.0		8.1		8.2	
Intent of Author	10.9		8.5		9.0	
Character	10.1		7.6		8.2	
Morals						
Other	8.4		7.0		5.7	
Experiential		10.2		7.7		5.7
Personal	10.5		7.8		6.1	
Other Literature	10.2		9.6		11.0	
Television	6.5		5.2		6.0	
Other	7.8				5.7	
Judgmental		8.9		5.6		6.3
Literary Judgment	9.4		5.6		7.0	
Prescriptive Judgment	8.4		11.1		5.0	
Miscellaneous	4.1	4.1	5.1	5.1	4.3	4.3

more frequently than the others. In the adult profile also, one person responded more times than the others. Both the adult profile and Free Discussion II had two participants who spoke a moderate amount, while other participants responded few times (please see Table 29).

In both the adult profile and Free Discussion I, one participant changed her mind seemingly as a result of responses by others. No member of the Question Group changed his or her mind in Free Discussion II.

Table 29

A Comparison of the Number of Responses  
by Individual Participants  
The Question Group Free Discussions I and II  
to Adult Profile

	Adults		FDI		FDII
A	89.2	H	66	H	53
B	6.8	I	47	I	91
C	9.3	J	39	J	32
D	58.6	K	43	K	43
E	45.6	L	20	L	7
F	12.7	M	7	M	18
G	19.2	N	63	N	X*

\*Student not present during discussion.

## Chapter 7

### ANALYSES OF FREE DISCUSSIONS OF THE FREE DISCUSSION GROUP

The Free Discussion Group participated in eight self-directed free discussions of short stories. This group had no directions except to read the story and to try to keep the discussion focused on the story. The first and last free discussions were analyzed.

#### Analysis of Free Discussion I

##### Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

The Free Discussion Group spent ten minutes discussing Senesi's "The Giraffe" and began with Literary Judgment responses.

- 1 O It didn't make much sense, that's for sure.
- 2 P The story about the giraffe . . . .
- 3 T Yeah, it didn't make much sense.
- 4 O Well, I don't know, I mean, it didn't have a very good ending.
- 5 P It sounds like something you'd read in third grade.
- 6 V I thought it had a real good ending . . . The giraffe died.
- 8 U Yeah, I thought it was kinda neat.

The Literary Judgment responses became more specific a little later in the discussion.

- 75 T I think it's a reading story, like um, like it's not exciting, and it's not boring, but it would give you something to read if you wanted to learn how to read.



76 Q Like practice reading.

77 P Yeah, practice reading.

[Pause]

78 P Like in the third grade, maybe . . .

79 U Well, it's sorta like those exercises they give us to find the theme or something.

80 P Yeah. Like on exams or something.

82 U Yeah.

There were no Prescriptive Judgment responses in this discussion. (Please see Table 30.)

There were only two Factual responses concerning Setting and one concerning Style. Most of the Factual Character responses were made in an effort to clarify an Inference.

29 T I think the dude had a heart attack.

30 U I don't know.

31 T I think he had a heart attack.

32 U Cause he just keeled over I mean.

33 P It said he turned white, then red, then white again and just died.

34 U Yuk.

35 T Yeah, I think so. I think he had a heart attack.

Responses 32 and 33 are descriptive of the last moments of the giraffe owner's life. T's initial diagnosis of a heart attack is strengthened by the facts, and he reiterates his Inferential response for emphasis.

Table 30

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory  
 Free Discussion I  
 The Free Discussion Group

Subcategory		Category
Factual		11%
Plot	0%	
Setting	-*	
Character	10%	
Style	-*	
Point of View	0%	
Inferential		25%
Theme	19%	
Intent of Author	0%	
Character	5%	
Other	1%	
Experiential		21%
Personal	10%	
Other Literature	2%	
Television	0%	
Other	9%	
Judgmental		21%
Literary Judgment	21%	
Prescriptive Judgment	0%	
Miscellaneous	23%	23%
Total	100%	101%**

\*Less than one percent.

\*\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.

There were no Factual Plot or Point-of-View responses. Nineteen percent of all responses in this discussion were Inferential Theme responses.

Early in the discussion U made this comment:

- 10 U Yeah, about the town, how stupid they were because they didn't want any change in their town, and that was really dumb and old-fashioned.

Despite her use of currently popular adjectives "dumb" and "stupid," U is moving toward a discussion of theme. Much later U returns to her idea.

- 92 U I think it's sorta like, the theme is the main idea, right? So, wouldn't the theme be that the people couldn't accept something different in the town? Cause it sorta . . . .

- 93 T Modern changes aren't easily accepted, though.

The discussion turned to other ideas, then returned to theme several times.

In a series of Inferential and Experiential responses, the students examined the parallel between the story and an incident that happened in their own town a few years ago.

- 44 P It kinda reminds me of this town, like when we were going to get the new courthouse. Nobody wanted the new courthouse. They wanted the old one.

- 45 U Because it looked different.

- 46 T I think they should have saved the old courthouse.

- 47 [Several] I do, too.

- 48 P I think they should have . . . put it up like, what do they call these things?

49 Q I don't know.

50 T It's okay, but it's not no giraffe. Let's not talk about it.

51 U But, I mean, it's like different.

52 Q It's got a lot to do with the courthouse. It stands out.

[Pause]

53 Q Something like the giraffe.

54 P Yeah, I know, it's like . . . a modern building in an old-fashioned place.

Later, the issue of the courthouse was brought up again, this time to support an Inferential Theme response.

180 T Yeah, but once you've been set in your ways for so long, you know. Like if you lived the same way for forty years, and something came along and sorta disrupted that, yeah. You'd probably be mad, right?

181 U Yeah, but you've gotta go with the flow. You've got to change.

182 T It's just like a lot of people in town there. I know my parents, about the courthouse, you know.

183 U Yeah.

184 T The courthouse has been here for so long, let's just leave it. There's no need . . . .

The points made by students in their responses about the controversy over the building of the courthouse helped them to see the story more clearly and made it more real to them.

Inferences about Character generally concerned the death of the old razor blade salesman or of the giraffe.

140 U I can just picture its little neck just going blah, just falling down.

141 P It kinda, like, did the wave.

U and P are inferring what the giraffe looked like as it fell in death.

Experiential Personal responses included such comments as these:

55 T Like, who would expect a giraffe to walk into this town? You know. And, the reaction would be "Put it in a zoo. Put it in a zoo," or "kill it."

. . .

172 P If I went into my church and saw a giraffe, I think I'd be going through the ceiling.

The students were speaking from their personal knowledge of "what would happen if."

Experiential Other Literature responses compared "The Giraffe" to a play the discussants had recently studied as a class.

41 U . . . It kinda reminds me of Our Town, remember Our Town that we read?

42 O I was just sitting here thinking that same thing.

43 U Doesn't it remind you of Our Town because they didn't want any changes either. But nothing like this happened.

A series of Miscellaneous responses was made at one point after the tape recorder was turned off and on.

155 P She wouldn't give us help, stupid. This is our group. We're independent.

156 T Independent insurance.

157 P Delegate something.

158 P State Farm.

159 U We're young adults.

160 P We are. Oh, no, I don't know how to act.

Other Miscellaneous responses included fragments of statements caused by interruptions.

28 U Like he was sorta . . . .

40 O . . . the church . . . .

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

Comprehensiveness of the discussion was measured by the number of story strands the students discussed or at least mentioned.

1. How the giraffe came to be in the town X
2. The boys' description of the giraffe
3. The reaction of the townspeople to the giraffe X
4. The effects of the weather in a strange climate on the giraffe
5. Sheltering the giraffe in the church X
6. Priest's understanding of the boys and the giraffe
7. People's hatred of something new and different X
8. People's fear of something new and different
9. Death of the giraffe as the death of newness and creativity X
10. Boys' realization that there was not room for new ideas in their society
11. Death of innocence in the boys X

12. Symbolism of the giraffe
- a) could see above the rooftops--intellect or creativity of boys
  - b) head of giraffe in the dark skies--intellect or creativity obscured
  - c) periscope of the boys--vision of great things
13. Setting of the story X
14. Care and feeding of the giraffe X
15. Literal cause of the giraffe's death X

Although this group dealt at length with theme, they did not address the idea that the boys realized there was not room for new ideas in their society, nor did they discuss the symbolism of the giraffe. They discussed half the story strands on the researcher's list.

#### Length of Responses

An examination of Table 31 shows that O had an unusually high average in the Inferential Character subcategory due to one response in that category.

- 56 O Well, apparently the giraffe had been here for a while because, you know, they were wondering what they were going to do with it.

O also had a high average of thirteen words in the Experiential Personal category. Again, she made only one response in that category.

- 169 O Wouldn't you scream if you go into a church and there was a giraffe?

P's twelve word average in the Factual Style subcategory was also the result of one response.

- 177 P There was the word maturity in here, if I can find it.

Table 31

Average Length of Individual and Total  
Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I  
The Free Discussion Group

	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	Sub- Cat	Cat
Factual									6.6
Plot		5.0				4.0		4.5	
Setting		4.0	3.0					3.5	
Character	2.0	6.9	9.0			6.4	8.2	6.5	
Style		12.0						12.0	
Point of View									
Inferential									8.7
Theme	8.2	6.8	7.0			9.5	8.6	8.2	
Intent of Author									
Character	24.0					6.5	11.1	10.6	
Morals									
Other		10.0				10.0	2.0	7.3	
Experiential									8.6
Personal	13.0	10.1				5.6	4.0	8.2	
Other	9.0						10.6	9.8	
Literature									
Television									
Other	3.5	6.6				8.0	7.4	7.7	
Judgmental									7.0
Literary	7.9	6.2				7.0	6.8	7.0	
Judgment									
Prescriptive									
Judgment									
Miscellaneous	3.4	5.1	3.0			4.4	3.2	3.8	3.8



As a group, the discussants made Inferential and Experiential responses of 8.7 and 8.6 word length Judgmental responses were an average 7 words long, Factual responses were an average of 6.6 words long, and Miscellaneous responses were 3.8 words long.

The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

Participants in this group made several Inappropriate Literary Judgment comments.

104 P I'll give it a 2.3.

105 O It's amazing. A whole bunch.

106 P I'll give it a 2.3.

107 T On the Richter Scale.

108 P On a scale of.

[Pause]

109 P On a scale of

110 O 1 to 10.

111 Q 1 to 10.

112 U 1 to 10.

113 T I'll give a 2.3 on the Richter Scale.

114 P Did it shake you up?

115 P Oh, awesome.

These students digressed into this playful exchange after they had first discussed the theme and their opinions of the story.

There were several Inappropriate Experiential Other comments in response to O's wondering what the people in the story were going to do with the dead giraffe.

60 T Let's chop it up and put it in hamburgers or something.

[Pause]

61 T Sure.

62 U For McDonalds . . . .

63 P . . . for the school . . . .

64 T Let's kill a little giraffe and put it on the pizza today.

The students obviously got carried away with their solutions to the problem of having a huge dead animal to dispose of.

Three Inappropriate responses occurred when the group tried to focus the discussion on theme.

86 P I don't know what the theme is, man, I just . . .

87 T I wasn't here that day . . . right?

88 U The theme is the main idea, right?

89 O The theme's giraffe . . . giraffe.

90 U That's not really the theme. That would be the . . . .

91 P Let's see. The giraffe's the direct object and it links by the town.

Responses 87 T, 89 O, and 91 P were coded as Experiential Other Inappropriate. Again, some of the students were being playful and others serious about the story.

The Inappropriate responses seemed to be a sort of game the students played throughout the discussion. The remarks about using the dead giraffe for food could have occurred because the discussion was held during the class period just prior to lunch.

Rating people or objects on a scale of one to ten is the popular way to make an evaluation among the high school age set. The ordinariness of this rating scale is most likely to be the reason for the Literary Judgment Inappropriate comments.

The Inappropriate Experiential Other comments of T and P (87 T, 91 P) could be examples of the type of humor these boys enjoy:

#### Breadth of Participation

Three members of this group, P, T, and U contributed most frequently and made roughly the same number of responses. (Please see Table 32.) Q made only ten responses, and R, who was in emotionally disturbed classes for part of the day and mainstreamed part of the day, read a magazine throughout the discussion. S was absent from school the day this discussion was held. O contributed a moderate number of times and was paying attention to the discussion.

When the group digressed to rating the story on the Richter Scale and on a scale of one to ten, T returned to

Table 32

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
Free Discussion I  
The Free Discussion Group

	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	Total
Factual								
Plot								
Setting		1	1					2
Character	1	14	1			5	5	26
Style		1						1
Point of View								
Inferential								
Theme	9	5	5			18	14	51
Intent of Author								
Character	1					4	7	12
Morals								
Other		1				1	1	3
Experiential								
Personal	1	8				9	9	27
Other Literature	1						3	4
Television								
Other	2	7				6	8	23
Judgmental								
Literary Judgment	7	15	3			16	13	54
Prescriptive Judgment								
Miscellaneous	7	19				14	20	60
TOTAL	29	71	10			73	80	263

the story by mentioning the author.

127 T This guy who wrote this thing, Mario Senesi, whatever his name is . . . .

In another instance the group made a series of Miscellaneous responses and O returned to the story:

161 O Speaking of young adults, didn't this, you know, have something to do with this story? It's like the boys, you know, they were trying to be young adults.

Although O did not make as many responses as P, T, or U, she did make valuable contributions to the discussion.

#### Other Characteristics of Free Discussion I

This group had a large number of Miscellaneous responses which, in several instances, occurred in a series. It was as if the participants were playing a game.

The tape recorder was turned off twice during the discussion. Apparently, the tape recorder was turned off the first time when one of the participants realized how far off the subject the discussion had gotten. Participant O steered the responses back to the story with a Literary Judgment statement.

The second time the tape recorder was turned off U had just made a Literary Judgment response. When the machine was turned on, the discussants made a series of Miscellaneous responses. There is no indication as to why the machine was turned off in the discussion that followed.

Three members of this group did most of the talking, almost as if they were having a conversation among themselves at times. Two others made appropriate responses, and one did not respond at all.

This group seemed at ease having their responses recorded. They responded playfully at times, and the entire discussion was sprinkled with colorful slang expressions and cliches. Group III made half as many Factual responses as Inferential, Experiential and Judgmental responses.

#### Analysis of Free Discussion II

##### Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

Before this discussion one member of this group, R, transferred to another school in the county. This post-treatment discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy," thirteen minutes in length, began with statements of Literary Judgment. (Please see Table 33.)

- 1 P I thought it was cool.
- 2 T I did, too.
- 3 P It didn't give us very much to understand.
- 4 T Yeah, but it was a pretty good story.
- 5 O I didn't understand it at all. What was the purpose of it? I mean . . . .

The second sentence of utterance 5 O was coded Inferential Other. "I mean . . ." was coded Miscellaneous. The other responses cited above are examples of the Literary Judgment

Table 33

Percentage of Responses in  
Each Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II  
The Free Discussion Group

Subcategory	Category
Factual	7%
Plot	0%
Setting	1%
Character	6%
Style	0%
Point of View	0%
Inferential	31%
Theme	7%
Intent of Author	2%
Character	17%
Morals	0%
Other	4%
Experiential	42%
Personal	22%
Other Literature	2%
Television	5%
Other	13%
Judgmental	6%
Literary Judgment	6%
Prescriptive Judgment	
Miscellaneous	14%
Total	99%*
	100%

\*This figure is due to rounding the percentages.

responses that occurred throughout the discussion. O did make a welcome observation near the end of the discussion:

234 O You know, when we discuss it, it makes a little bit more sense.

There were no Prescriptive Judgment responses in this discussion.

Factual responses, dealing only with Setting and Character, constituted only seven percent of the responses. Factual Character responses were comments such as these:

10 P I mean she'd been getting those magazines for years and years and years.

. . .

41 O Did she marry the Ford salesman?

42 All Yeah.

43 T & U And had two kids.

Factual Setting responses included these:

13 P 30's . . . 38-39.

15 Q Right after the Depression.

These responses were made early in the discussion to fix a time frame for the story.

This group mentioned the theme at the beginning of the discussion.

6 U Well, it showed a dream she had.

7 Q It was talking about dreams.

8 P I think her dream was too big. I think she was kinda messed up in the head. I mean it's ok to dream, but I mean, she's going to have to live this.



Later U returned to the theme in this utterance.

29 U She was so embarrassed because she, uh, because she . . . that's all she ever wanted to do. . . . She was really nervous and she was really scared so she went and gave up her dream.

30 T I think . . . .

31 U Every time she goes by there, she's always feeling stupid because she didn't live out her dream, because she didn't take a chance and go ahead and go with it.

. . . .

35 T Because she knew she couldn't have her, I don't think herself would let her have her . . . .

. . . .

125 S Don't you think she would have had enough guts to want to leave that little small town?

Although no participant summarized the theme, the students did mention the girl's unrealistic dream and her inability to act to make the dream a reality.

T made several Inferential responses about the Author's Intent in writing the story.

73 T I was thinking that most of the time when they write a story that it comes from either personal experience or, uh, something that we know happened.

And later:

100 T It gives somebody . . . what he's doing is he's taking movies . . . .

101 S Oh, I see.

102 T . . . and giving everybody their fantasy.

Even though he was interrupted, T completed his response concerning the author's allowing characters to have their fantasy. In this case, however, the fantasy remains unfulfilled.

Seventeen percent of all responses were Inferential Character responses.

176 T Blushed with those silly dreams, I'm sure.

177 O I don't think she was sad.

178 T I think her herself thought it was stupid.

179 O Not at the time, she didn't.

180 U Yeah.

181 T Because if she didn't, she would've walked down there and said . . .

182 U Well, she wouldn't think it was. She wouldn't still be blushing and not think it wasn't real.

O, T, and U were making inferences about whether the girl's dream of going to Hollywood was real to her.

Inferential Other responses generally concerned setting.

9 O How long ago . . .

. . .

11 O How long ago was this?

14 U It sounds pretty old, cause it talks about the Depression, World War.

. . .

36 S Maybe it was out of the ordinary for people where she lived to go anywhere.

Forty-two percent of the responses were Experiential. Many Experiential Personal responses were made as group members talked about their dreams or plans for the future.

201 P I want to be a trash collector.

202 T Oh man, that's stupid.

203 U What do you want to be, T?

204 P Airplane pilot.

205 T I'd like to be a forestry department aviator.

206 U How about you, Q?

207 Q I don't know. I think I'll retire after I graduate.

208 U Good idea. O?

209 P What about you?

210 O You know, I've never really thought about it.

211 T You'd better start thinking, sweetie pie.

The responses in this digression were judged appropriate because the girl in the story had a dream for her life, but no real plans.

The responses cited below seem to be Experiential Other Literature. The researcher did not recognize the story but the students all seem familiar with it.

20 T Where did that kid come from? She came from Kansas you know.

21 U Arkansas . . . Are-Kansas.

22 T Eddie knows. [Eddie is not a member of the group.]

23 P Typical prostitute and stuff. They had the dream

of coming to Hollywood, but end up . . . .

24 T You can't say that on the tape!

The discussion of this story ended abruptly with T's admonition to stop.

There were several Experiential Television responses concerning a television program that has no connection to the story.

105 S A TV show like . . . .

106 Q All My Children.

107 S All My Sons.

108 P No. My Three Sons.

Thirteen percent of the total number of responses were coded Experiential Other. They generally dealt with ideas students had about life shortly after the Depression.

131 U Oh, think about the people back then. They were, you know, they never did any . . . you know, I mean, look, most people would have walked down there and asked how much it cost to get to Hollywood.

. . . .

133 U But now, but now they just go; back then you wouldn't go up to somebody and say "Would you please tell me how to get to Hollywood?"

134 Q Back then a woman probably would have been laughed at.

. . . .

144 O You know, if you think about people getting married back then at 14 or 15 years old.

145 T And during the Depression, there wasn't money to do anything. Now we can run down to Roanoke, hop

on a plane, and cruise off somewhere.

Miscellaneous responses were generally brief.

12 S I don't know.

. . .

24 T You can't say that on tape.

. . .

99 T Several of which . . . .

. . .

120 P Shh. Shh. Discuss.

. . .

132 O They said, uh, oh . . . .

### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

The story strands checked on the list below were discussed or at least mentioned by the Free Discussion Group in this discussion.

1. The girl's dreams for her future X
2. The girl's reluctance to find a way out of her present circumstances X
3. The girl's prospective husband X
4. Mother's oblivion to almost everything in life
5. Father's hints that the girl should do something with her life
6. Girl's visit to the bus station X
7. Girl's inability to act at bus station X
8. Girl drifts into marriage with the Ford salesman X
9. Girl's inability to cope with the real world X

- 10. The story as a tragedy
- 11. Metaphors in the story
  - a) movies as a religion
  - b) movie magazines as Bible
  - c) suitcases as burned out light bulbs
- 12. Story as a picture of life in a small town X
- 13. Girl's shallowness of character
- 14. The Depression as a backdrop for the story X
- 15. Metaphor: Her face as red as an earthquake beet

This discussion could be called fairly comprehensive because students touched on or discussed nine of the seventeen items listed here. Discussants went into some depth in discussing items 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7. They merely mentioned the other items checked on the list.

#### Length of Responses

The unusually long responses in this discussion are the result of one or two lengthy responses. (Please see Table 34.) Q's fourteen word average response in the Factual Character subcategory is based on this response:

91 Q It says here that she had been out of high school what . . . three years.

P also made one Factual Character response.

10 P . . . I mean she'd been getting those magazines years and years and years.

The lengthy Inferential Theme responses made by U were

Table 34

Average Length of Individual and Total  
Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II  
The Free Discussion Group

	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	Sub- cat	Cat
Factual									5.8
Plot									
Setting		3.0	4.0		5.0			4.0	
Character	4.5	12.0	14.0		1.0	3.8	6.0	6.1	
Style									
Point of View									
Inferential									7.6
Theme	11.0	10.8	5.0		18.0	8.5	14.1	10.8	
Intent of Author					3.0	13.6	8.0	11.3	
Character	5.7	5.0	5.0		8.8	6.9	6.0	6.3	
Morals									
Other	5.0	7.0	3.0		16.0	2.5	8.5	6.2	
Experiential									6.2
Personal	5.1	4.1	5.7		7.0	8.7	5.8	6.1	
Other Literature		7.5				3.3	1.0	4.5	
Television	1.6	3.0	2.0				3.6	2.8	
Other	7.3	4.5	12.5		3.8	8.9	8.4	7.8	
Judgmental									6.5
Literary Judgment	8.3	6.3				6.0	5.4	6.5	
Prescriptive Judgment									
Miscellaneous	5.9	6.0	1.0		3.0	2.9	2.6	3.6	3.6

cited above. U's Inferential Theme average was 14.1 words per response. T's unusually long Inferential Intent of Author responses were also cited above. His average words per response in this category was 13.6.

In looking at the length of all responses by category, Inferential responses were the longest. Some examples of Inferential responses will show the reason.

45 T I sorta think the kids were named after movie stars, like . . . .

. . . .

77 S Don't you all think that man was pretty stupid to ask her to marry him five times?

. . . .

172 P I think she was just trying to get through to us that her dreams didn't come true.

#### Nature of the Inappropriate Comments

There were few Inappropriate comments in this discussion. Only five percent of the comments were deemed Inappropriate. A series of such comments occurred amid much laughter as the students talked about a television program that this story must have reminded them of.

108 P No. My Three Sons.

109 O Chip, Ernie, and Rob

[Pause]

110 O I loved that thing. It was a good show.

111 U What was the little girl's name?



112 O Dodie.

113 U What was the dog's name?

114 O Tramp.

115 U Tramp.

116 Q Tramp.

117 P Uncle Charlie.

118 U Oh, yeah.

119 T Ya'll been watching too much TV, late night at that.

It seemed as if the discussants were almost making a game of naming the characters in the television show. P brought the discussion back to the story with "Shh, shh, discuss."

When students discussed their own dreams, U said "Yeah, but it stops after a while." That prompted O to make this Incorrect comment:

159 O I guess hers stopped, too. Hers stopped too when she walked home.

It is implicit in the story, however, that the character's dream did not stop because she named her children Jean and Rudolph after movie stars.

When the discussants were trying to figure out which stars the children were named after, they began to name old movie stars and got carried away.

68 P Ginger Rogers and . . . .

69 O Fred Astaire.

70 U Fred Astaire.

These responses were judged Inappropriate because the children were called Jean and Rudolph. Again, it seemed as if they were making a game of their responses.

### Breadth of Participation

All students who were present participated in the discussion. Although U responded most often, 95 times, she did not assume a leadership role (please see Table 35). U's utterances, sometimes containing six or seven responses, were longer than the utterances of most other students. T, who made 73 responses, also made longer utterances containing two or three responses.

When the discussion floundered, as it did several times, different participants made responses that brought the story back into focus.

After a series of Inappropriate and Miscellaneous responses, U said, "O.K., let's get on with the story here." Later in the discussion U and P began to play with the words obsession and exception. Q returned to the story with "I still think it was dumb." Again, Q directed the students' attention to the story after a digression with "See, we all have our dreams."

Although Q and S made the fewest responses, their comments were pertinent to the discussion.

Table 35

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
Free Discussion II  
The Free Discussion Group

	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	Total
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot								
Setting		1	1		1			3
Character	2	1	1		1	4	8	17
Style								
Point of View								
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	2	5	1		1	4	7	20
Intent of Author					1	5	1	7
Character	10	5	1		4	13	16	49
Morals								
Other	4	1	1		1	2	2	11
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	7	9	6		3	12	23	60
Other Literature		2				3	1	6
Television	3	2	2				6	13
Other	4	2	2		5	12	12	37
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary Judgment	3	3				6	5	17
Prescriptive Judgment								
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	7	5	2		1	12	14	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>282</b>

Other Characteristics of Free Discussion II

This group had a fast-paced, lively discussion. They began with a few statements of Literary Judgment, representing their personal reactions to the story.

The discussion was characterized by the longer utterances of U and T. Other discussants' utterances generally contained one response.

The tape recorder was turned off twice when the discussion faltered. At one point, two students were playing with the words obsession and exception when the machine was turned off. When it was turned on, the discussion was again focused on the story. The second time the tape recorder was turned off, P had just said, "I need to kick back and relax." When the recorded discussion resumed, O made a response about dreams that are common to everyone.

This group tried to think of the names of movie stars the girl's children could have been named for. They named Rudolph Valentino, but the only Jean they could come up with was Gene Autry. They commented on the difference in the spelling of the feminine Jean and the masculine Gene.

Although the discussion was brief, the discussants moved from subject to subject and had a fairly comprehensive discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy."

A Comparison of Free Discussion I  
to Free Discussion II

Free Discussion I lasted for ten minutes; Free Discussion II lasted for thirteen minutes. The total number of responses was about the same in both discussions.

There was a decrease in the percentage of responses in the Factual category from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. (Please see Table 36.) Factual statements in both discussions were used to verify inferences about characters and setting.

The percentage of Inferential responses increased in Free Discussion II. In looking at the percentages of response in the subcategories, the highest percentage of responses in Discussion I was in the Theme subcategory and in Discussion II, the highest percentage occurred in the Character subcategory.

There was a dramatic increase in the percentage of Experiential responses from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. Personal Experiential responses in Free Discussion II were more than doubled. There were also several Experiential Television responses in this discussion.

Judgmental responses decreased in Free Discussion II. In Free Discussion I, the students made a good many

Table 36

A Comparison of the Percentage of  
Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussions I and II  
The Free Discussion Group

	FDI		FDII	
	Subcategory	Category	Subcategory	Category
Factual		11%		7%
Plot	0%		0%	
Setting	-*		1%	
Character	10%		6%	
Style	-*		0%	
Point of View	0%		0%	
Inferential		25%		31%
Theme	19%		7%	
Intent of Author	0%		2%	
Character	5%		17%	
Moral	0%		0%	
Other	1%		4%	
Experiential		21%		42%
Personal	10%		22%	
Other Literature	2%		2%	
Television	0%		17%	
Other	9%		13%	
Judgmental		21%		6%
Literary Judgment	21%		6%	
Prescriptive Judgment	0%		0%	
Miscellaneous	23%	23%	14%	14%
Total	100%	101%**	99%**	100%

\*Less than 1 percent

\*\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.

responses of personal dislike for the story and made several Inappropriate Judgmental statements about how to rate the story. In Free Discussion II, there were fewer statements of personal reaction to the story.

In Free Discussion I, almost one-fourth of the responses were Miscellaneous. On two separate occasions there was a series of Miscellaneous responses.

116 P Don't do that.

[Pause]

117 P I almost said a bad word.

118 O That's OK. We're . . . .

119 P We rounded it.

120 T Yep. Yep.

121 U We rounded it.

122 P We erased it.

123 U We erased it.

In Free Discussion II the Miscellaneous responses were generally interrupted responses or an occasional comment that was in no way connected with the story as T's response: "You want me to do this? This is . . . .".

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

In both Free Discussions the group discussed nine of seventeen possible story strands identified by the researcher and the adult group. Both discussions could be deemed fairly comprehensive.

### Length of Responses

The average length of responses decreased in every category from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. The greatest decrease was in the Inferential category where the length of response decreased by 2.4 words per response (please see Table 37). Responses in two subcategories, Inferential Theme and Inferential Intent of Author were rather lengthy in Free Discussion II.

### The Nature of Inappropriate Responses

Ten percent of the responses in Free Discussion I were Inappropriate because the information was incorrect or did not pertain to the story. There was a series of Inappropriate comments concerning rating the story on the Richter Scale, a series about a group member's family owning a floral shop, and a series about the disposal of the giraffe's body.

Few of the responses in Free Discussion II were Inappropriate. These responses concerned a television show and erroneous information about the story.

### Breadth of Participation

Breadth of participation was determined by the number of times each member of the group responded.

The same two discussants talked most in both Free



Table 37

A Comparison of the Average Length  
of All Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussions I and II  
Free Discussion Group

	FDI	FDII	
	Subcategory	Category	Subcategory Category
Factual		6.6	5.8
Plot	4.5		
Setting	3.5	4.0	
Character	6.5	6.1	
Style	12.0		
Point of View			
Inferential		8.7	7.6
Theme	8.2	10.8	
Intent of Author		11.3	
Character	10.6	6.3	
Morals			
Other	7.3	6.2	
Experiential		8.6	6.2
Personal	8.2	6.1	
Other	9.8	4.5	
Literature			
Television		2.8	
Other	7.7	7.8	
Judgmental		7.0	6.5
Literary Judgment	7.0	6.5	
Prescriptive Judgment			
Miscellaneous	3.8	3.8	3.6

Discussions, and the same person spoke the least number of times in both discussions. The number of one student's responses in Free Discussion II was half the number of responses he made in Free Discussion I. (Please see Table 38.)

A Comparison of the Free Discussion Group's  
Free Discussions I and II to the Adult Profile

Free Discussion II was more like the adult profile in the percentage of responses (please see Table 39) by category and by subcategory than Free Discussion I. In Free Discussion II, the percentage of responses in the Factual, Judgmental, and Miscellaneous categories decreased and the percentage of responses in the Inferential and Experiential categories increased over Free Discussion I.

Both student discussions covered fifty-three percent of the story strands specified by the researcher. The adult profile covered seventy percent of the story strands on the researcher's list.

In general, the adult responses were of a greater length than student responses (please see Table 40). The greatest difference was in the Experiential category, where the adult responses were four words longer than the student responses in Free Discussion II.

The adult profile contained slightly more Inappropriate responses than Free Discussion II and slightly fewer

Table 38

A Comparison of the  
 Number of Responses by Individual Discussants  
 Free Discussions I and II  
 Free Discussion Group

	FDI	FDII
O	29	45
P	71	36
Q	10	17
R	XX*	X**
S	X**	18
T	73	73
U	80	95

\*Student present but did not respond to story.

\*\*Student not present during discussion.

Table 39

A Comparison of the Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory The Free Discussion Group, Free Discussion I and Free Discussion II to Adult Profile

	Adult Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDI Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDII Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		17%		11%		7%
Plot	2%		0%		0%	
Setting	3%		-*		1%	
Character	10%		10%		6%	
Style	2%		-*		0%	
Point of View	-*		0%		0%	
Inferential		31%		25%		31%
Theme	4%		19%		7%	
Intent of Author	6%		0%		2%	
Character	19%		5%		17%	
Morals	0%		0%		0%	
Other	2%		1%		4%	
Experiential		33%		21%		42%
Personal	20%		10%		22%	
Other Literature	4%		2%		2%	
Television	-		0%		5%	
Other	9%		9%		13%	
Judgmental		13%		21%		6%
Literary Judgment	11%		21%		6%	
Prescriptive Judgment	2%		0%		0%	
Miscellaneous	6%	6%	23%	23%	14%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	101%**	99%**	100%

\*Less than one percent

\*\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.

Table 40

A Comparison of the Average Length  
of All Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion Group, Free Discussion I and  
Free Discussion II to Adult Group

	Adult Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDI Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDII Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		8.5		6.6		5.8
Plot	6.0		4.5			
Setting	8.8		3.5		4.0	
Character	8.1		6.5		6.1	
Style	5.0		12.0			
Point of View	8.8					
Inferential		10.0		8.7		7.6
Theme	10.0		8.2		10.8	
Intent of Author	10.9				11.3	
Character	10.1		10.6		6.3	
Morals						
Other	8.4		7.3		6.2	
Experiential		10.2		8.6		6.2
Personal	10.5		8.2		6.1	
Other Literature	10.2		9.8		4.5	
Television	6.5				2.8	
Other	7.8		7.7		7.8	
Judgmental		8.9		7.0		6.5
Literary Judgment	9.4		7.0		6.5	
Prescriptive Judgment	8.4					
Miscellaneous	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.6

Inappropriate responses than Free Discussion I. In both student discussions, the Inappropriate responses were the result of the forms of humor enjoyed by this group; for example, they talked about various methods of disposing of the giraffe's body and they played word association games. Too, some member of the group occasionally made Inappropriate responses that had nothing to do with anything that was said before or after the comment. Inappropriate responses in the adult profile occurred because a group member was reminded of an earlier experience by a remark made in the discussion.

Breadth of participation was determined by the number of times each participant responded. In the adult profile one person spoke more times than other members of the group. Two other participants spoke frequently and roughly the same number of times. In Free Discussion I, three participants responded almost equally (please see Table 41). R did not respond at all and S was not in school the day of the discussion. In Free Discussion II, one person made the most responses in about the same number of utterances as another participant.

The adults had one change of mind in their discussions. There were no changes of mind in either discussion in Group III.

Table 41

A Comparison of the  
Number of Responses by Individual Participants  
The Free Discussion Group, Free Discussion I  
and Free Discussion II to Adult Profile

	Adults		FDI		FDII
A	89.2	O	29	O	45
B	6.8	P	71	P	36
C	9.3	Q	10	Q	17
D	58.6	R	XX*	R	X**
E	45.6	S	X**	S	18
F	12.7	T	73	T	73
G	19.2	U	80	U	95

\*Student present but did not respond.

\*\*Student absent during discussion.

## Chapter 8

### COMPARISONS AMONG STUDENT DISCUSSIONS

#### AND BETWEEN STUDENT DISCUSSIONS AND THE ADULT PROFILE

This chapter contains a comparison of the responses in Free Discussion I of all student groups, a comparison of the responses in Free Discussion II of all student groups, changes among the student groups from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II, a comparison of the responses in the student groups to the responses in adult profile, observations of what adults do in a free discussion, and observations of what students do in a free discussion.

#### A Comparison of Free Discussions I Among the Reflective Reading Group, the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group

##### Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

The time spent in discussion of "The Giraffe" varied a great deal among the three groups. The Reflective Reading Group responded for twenty-four minutes; the Question Group, for seventeen minutes; and the Free Discussion Group, for ten minutes. There was a total of 544 responses in the Reflective Reading Group; 277 responses in the Question Group; and 263 responses in the Free Discussion Group. The reason for the difference in time spent in discussion between the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group and the closeness in the number of responses in the two groups



can be explained by the propensity of some of the members of the Question Group to speak very softly and for two or more members of that group to speak at the same time. Thus, a good number of the responses of the Question Group were indistinguishable.

#### Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

In most instances, all three groups offered Factual responses to verify Inferences. (Please see Table 42.) In the Inferential category, the Reflective Reading Group and the Question Group each made a large percentage of their responses about character. About one-fourth of the Free Discussion Group's Inferential responses concerned Theme. Although few of the responses of the Reflective Reading Group and the Question Group and slightly more in the Free Discussion Group concerned Theme, all three groups expressed the idea that the townspeople feared and hated new ideas and drove them out or killed them.

The Reflective Reading Group relied on personal experiences more than did the other two groups in making Experiential responses. All three groups made reference to Other Literature. The Reflective Reading Group had the fewest Experiential Other Literature responses; these responses dealt with demonic possession and were deemed Inappropriate because there is no evidence of such in the story. The Reflective Reading Group called the town

Table 42

A Comparison of the Percentage of Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I  
The Reflective Reading Group, The Question  
Group and the Free Discussion Group

	RRG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	QG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		18%		21%		11%
Plot	3%		-		0%	
Setting	5%		3%		-*	
Character	9%		15%		10%	
Style	1%		2%		-*	
Point of View	0%		0%		0%	
Inferential		26%		33%		25%
Theme	4%		8%		19%	
Intent of Author	-*		5%		0%	
Character	16%		16%		5%	
Morals	0%		0%		0%	
Other	6%		5%		1%	
Experiential		31%		11%		21%
Personal	19%		6%		10%	
Other Literature	-		3%		2%	
Television	0%		0%		0%	
Other	12%		2%		9%	
Judgmental		13%		17%		21%
Literary Judgment	10%		17%		21%	
Prescriptive Judgment	2%		0%		0%	
Miscellaneous	13%	13%	18%	18%	23%	23%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	101%**

\*Less than one percent

\*\*This figure is due to rounding the percentages.

Amityville. The Question Group also referred to The Amityville Horror but in a different sense.

138 H Well, of course, none of us are going to favor this story because we are used to reading stuff like Amityville Horror and stuff like that.

139 C Things that make sense.

The Question Group and the Free Discussion Group noted similarities between the situation in Thornton Wilder's Our Town, which had recently been taught in their English class, and the situation in the story. It was interesting that two of the three groups mentioned Amityville Horror, though in different contexts. It was also surprising that the Reflective Reading Group did not see the similarity to Our Town. The Question Group also made a reference to the movie Old Yeller in an effort to strengthen the argument that the giraffe died because he was lonely after the death of his owner.

The three groups all made statements of Literary Judgment with the Free Discussion Group having the highest percentage of responses in this category.

The Free Discussion Group had the highest percentage of Miscellaneous responses. The Question Group also had a high percentage of Miscellaneous responses because of the frequent interruptions.

In general, the Reflective Reading Group made more Inferential and Experiential responses and fewer Factual,

Judgmental, and Miscellaneous responses. The Question Group made more Inferential responses, roughly the same number of Factual, Judgmental and Miscellaneous responses, and fewer Experiential responses. The Free Discussion Group made about the same percentage of Inferential, Experiential, Judgmental, and Miscellaneous responses and fewer Factual responses.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussions

The Reflective Reading Group and the Question Group each discussed or at least mentioned twelve of the seventeen story strands listed by the researcher with the addition of points 13, 14, and 15, discussed by the adult group. (Please see Table 43.) The Free Discussion Group touched on nine of the items. It can be said that the discussions of the Reflective Reading Group and the Question Group are somewhat more comprehensive than that of the Free Discussion Group.

#### Length of the Responses

Examination of Table 44 shows that responses in some subcategories seem unusually long. The average number of words in these subcategories, however, is derived from two or three lengthy responses rather than a large number of responses. The Reflective Reading Group made responses that were longer than or responses of the same length as the

Table 43

A Comparison of the Number of Story-Strands  
Discussed in Free Discussion I, the Reflective  
Reading Group, the Question Group and the  
Free Discussion Group

	RRG	QG	FDG
1. How the giraffe came to be in the town	X	X	X
2. The boys' description of the giraffe	X		
3. The reaction of the townspeople to the giraffe	X	X	X
4. The effects of the strange climate on the giraffe		X	
5. Sheltering the giraffe in the church	X	X	X
6. Priest's understanding of the boys and the giraffe		X	
7. People's hatred of something new and different	X	X	X
8. People's fear of something new and different	X	X	
9. Death of the giraffe as death of newness and creativity	X	X	X
10. Boys' realization that there was not room for newness and creativity in their town	X	X	
11. Death of innocence in the boys			X
12. Symbolism of the giraffe			
a) could be seen above the rooftops - intellect and creativity of the boys	X		
b) head of the giraffe in the dark skies - intellect or creativity obscured			
c) periscope for the boys - visions of great things			
13. Setting of the story	X	X	X
14. Care and feeding of the giraffe	X	X	X
15. Literal cause of the giraffe's death	X	X	X

Table 44

A Comparison of the Average Length  
of All Responses by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion I  
The Reflective Reading Group, the Question  
Group and the Free Discussion Group

	RRG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	QG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		8.0		6.8		6.6
Plot	7.5		9.0		4.5	
Setting	6.5		6.2		3.5	
Character	8.6		6.3		6.5	
Style	6.1		5.4		12.0	
Point of View						
Inferential		8.7		7.7		8.7
Theme	10.4		8.1		8.2	
Intent of Author	6.8		8.5			
Character	7.8		7.6		10.6	
Morals						
Other	10.1		7.0		7.3	
Experiential		6.6		7.7		8.6
Personal	6.7		7.8		8.2	
Other Literature	9.0		9.6		9.8	
Television						
Other	6.3		5.2		7.7	
Judgmental		8.6		5.6		7.0
Literary Judgment	7.8		5.6		7.0	
Prescriptive Judgment	11.1					
Miscellaneous	4.7	4.7	5.1	5.1	3.8	3.8

Question Group and the Free Discussion Group in every category except Experiential and Miscellaneous.

#### The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

Thirteen percent of the responses of the Reflective Reading Group were judged Inappropriate. These responses occurred most often in the Experiential Other category. The group got into a lengthy discussion of the picture that illustrated the story. The focus of the discussion was returned to the story, but after a few minutes an Appropriate response led to a reexamination of the picture. Other Inappropriate responses in the Reflective Reading Group discussion concerned "The Giraffe" as a tale of demonic possession. Only two percent of the responses of the Question Group were Inappropriate. They were interspersed throughout the discussion. Ten percent of the responses of the Free Discussion Group were Inappropriate. Most of the Inappropriate comments in this discussion were the result of the particular kind of humor enjoyed by members of this group and occurred in the Experiential Other category.

#### Breadth of Participation

In the Reflective Reading Group, two participants led the discussion. (Please see Table 45.) In looking at the transcription of the discussion, both made about the same

Table 45

Total Number of Responses by Each Discussant  
Free Discussion I, The Reflective Reading Group,  
The Question Group, and the Free Discussion Group

RRG		QG		FDG	
A	20	H	66	O	29
B	151	I	47	P	71
C	214	J	39	Q	10
D	37	K	43	R	X*
E	58	L	20	S	XX**
F	43	M	7	T	73
G	24	N	63	U	80

\* Student present but did not participate.

\*\* Student not present for the discussion.



number of utterances, but C's utterances were longer, containing more responses. The student who made fewest responses generally spoke only when she was asked a direct question. The others seemed to be following the discussion and responded as they saw fit.

In the Question Group also, two participants responded more frequently than the other members of the group. H emerged as the facilitator of the group when she made this suggestion:

66 H OK. Let's start with each person going around the room and asking a question.

The student who made only seven responses made five of these in response to the question: "Did you like this story or why not?" This student is shy and soft spoken and might have been out-talked by some of the discussants who spoke loudly.

In the Free Discussion Group, three of the students did most of the talking. They are good friends and probably felt comfortable in saying whatever they wanted to say. One person did not respond at all; instead, he looked at a magazine throughout the discussion. One member of this group was absent from school on the day of the discussion.

#### Change of Mind of a Discussant

There was only one change of mind of a participant in the three discussions. In the Question Group, a student

changed her mind about her initial dislike for the story. The fact that her peers had positive reactions to "The Giraffe" might have influenced the student to decide she liked the story.

#### Other Characteristics of the Discussions

Each group had a personality of its own.

The Reflective Reading Group seemed to be trying to use the entire thirty minutes allotted for the discussion. One of the members made this Miscellaneous comment:

73 C I told you, we've got thirty minutes. We are going to be here all day long. (laughter)

This attempt to use all the time could account for the lengthy digressions made by this group. The Reflective Reading Group met in their regular English classroom, a fact which could have influenced them to follow directions and try to use the entire amount of time allotted for the discussion.

The Question Group is characterized by the interruptions of speakers, participants speaking softly, and several speaking at once. This group felt the need for some kind of guidance.

42 N I wish we had some guidelines to help our discussion along.

43 I I know.

Later in the discussion, a participant came up with the idea of asking a question of each member of the group. She

assumed the role of group leader. This group met in an open area in the library. They might have thought they should speak softly so as not to disturb people in the main section of the library.

The Free Discussion Group had a brief discussion that moved along from subject to subject in a logical manner. Their responses were punctuated with slang expressions.

25 D . . . They had to gander at it for a while.

29 T I think the dude had a heart attack.

32 U Cause he just keeled over.

This group seemed to enjoy the discussion. They laughed occasionally and were playful when they digressed from the story. They kept their digressions brief. The Free Discussion Group also met in the library, but the location had no inhibiting influence on them.

#### A Comparison of Free Discussions II Among the Reflective Reading Group, the Question Group, and the Free Discussion Group

The discussion times for the last Free Discussions were twelve minutes for the Reflective Reading Group, sixteen minutes for the Question Group, and thirteen minutes for the Free Discussion Group. The total number of responses were 219 for the Reflective Reading Group, 250 for the Question Group, and 282 for the Free Discussion Group.

Percentage of Responses by Category and Subcategory

The three groups each had a low percentage of Factual responses, dealing largely with Character (please see Table 46). In the Inferential category, also, the groups had roughly the same percentage of responses. There is a rather large variation, however, in the percentage of responses in the Inferential subcategories. The Question Group had the highest percentage of Inferential Theme responses, while the Reflective Reading Group had the lowest percentage. The three groups all construed the theme of "Greyhound Tragedy" to be the death of the girl's dream because of her inability to take action.

The Reflective Reading Group made the greatest number of Character Inferences and the Question Group made the least number. The Reflective Reading Group made several Inferences about whether or not the girl was pretty, her age, her mental condition, the kind of mother she became, and how she could have coped with being a flop in Hollywood. The Reflective Reading Group and the Question Group mentioned the idea that the girl's two children, Jean and Rudolph, had been named after movie stars. The Free Discussion Group discussed the stars the children could have been named for. They came up with Rudolph Valentino, but the only Jean they knew of was Gene Autry. They did comment on the difference between the masculine and feminine spelling of Jean.

Table 46

A Comparison of the Percentage of Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II, The Reflective Reading Group,  
The Question Group and the Free Discussion Group

	RRG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	QG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		9%		9%		7%
Plot	0%		0%		0%	
Setting	-*		2%		1%	
Character	8%		7%		6%	
Style	0%		-*		0%	
Point of View	0%		0%		0%	
Inferential		33%		30%		31%
Theme	2%		11%		7%	
Intent of Author	5%		-*		2%	
Character	26%		7%		17%	
Morals	0%		0%		0%	
Other	1%		12%		4%	
Experiential		16%		38%		42%
Personal	11%		21%		22%	
Other Literature	0%		1%		2%	
Television	4%		-*		5%	
Other	2%		15%		13%	
Judgmental		16%		3%		6%
Literary Judgment	12%		2%		6%	
Prescriptive Judgment	3%		1%		0%	
Miscellaneous	26%	26%	20%	20%	14%	14%
Totals	100%	100%	99%**	100%	99%**	100%

\*Less than one percent

\*\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.

The Inferential Other responses in the Question Group dealt largely with the Setting of the story--what the bus station was like and how the town the girl lived in was similar to other small towns.

The high percentage of Experiential Personal responses in the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group are the result of the individual students sharing their personal dreams with other members, and in the case of the Question Group, their fears. Several of the Experiential Personal responses were Inappropriate, as will be discussed later.

The Question Group and the Free Discussion Group had higher percentages of responses in the Experiential Other subcategory than the Reflective Reading Group. The Question Group's responses in this subcategory were Inappropriate for the most part. The Experiential Other responses of the Free Discussion Group generally concerned what life was like "back then."

The Reflective Reading Group had the highest percentage of Judgmental responses among the three groups. There were several comments of personal reactions to the story.

The Prescriptive Judgment responses in the Reflective Reading Group dealt with the ways the girl could have found out the price of a ticket. One respondent also said, "She needs to understand the good side and bad side [of life as

an actress]." The Prescriptive Judgment responses in the Question Group concerned what the girl should have done to find out the price of a ticket to Hollywood.

The high percentage of Miscellaneous responses in the Reflective Reading Group's Free Discussion II can be accounted for, in part, by the fact that it was a Free Discussion. They were at a loss as to how to proceed with the discussion without some direction from a leader. In the Question Group, the high percentage of Miscellaneous responses was again partially due to interruptions and students speaking softly. The Miscellaneous responses of the Free Discussion Group occurred randomly throughout the discussion in the form of admonitions about behavior, interruptions, and an occasional statement that had nothing to do with the discussion.

The discussion of the Reflective Reading Group was halting, as if the participants were grasping for subjects to talk about. The Question Group got right into the discussion and seemed to have little difficulty in finding topics to discuss. The discussion in the Free Discussion Group flowed along at a quick pace. Students in the Free Discussion Group seemed to have fun discussing the story. The other two groups seemed to regard their discussions as a chore.

### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

In looking at the number of story strands discussed by each group, the discussion of the Reflective Reading Group was not comprehensive. (Please see Table 47.) That group mentioned only seven of the seventeen items from the researcher's list of ideas that could have been discussed. The Free Discussion Group's discussion was somewhat more comprehensive than that of the Reflective Reading Group. They discussed nine of the seventeen possible story strands. The discussion of the Question Group was the most comprehensive of the three student discussions, touching on eleven of the listed items. The Reflective Reading Group and the Free Discussion Group delved more deeply into the subjects they discussed. The Question Group mentioned more of the items, but because of interruptions, these items were not examined in any detail.

### Length of the Responses

The Reflective Reading Group's Inferential Theme responses were the lengthiest responses in the three student discussions of "Greyhound Tragedy" (please see Table 48). This average was attained solely from the responses of one group member. He made five rather lengthy responses concerning the girl's unfulfilled desires.

In the Question Group, the longest response averaged eleven words in the Inferential Theme subcategory. This average was derived from two responses.



Table 47

A Comparison of the Number of Story Strands Discussed by the Reflective Reading Group, the Question Group, and the Free Discussion Group

	RRG	QG	FDG
1. The girl's dreams for her future	X	X	X
2. The girl's reluctance to find a way out of her circumstances	X	X	X
3. The girl's prospective husband	X	X	X
4. Mother's oblivion to almost everything		X	
5. Father's hints that the girl should do something with her life			
6. Girl's visit to bus station	X	X	X
7. Girl's inability to act at bus station	X	X	X
8. Girl drifts into marriage with Ford salesman	X	X	X
9. Girl's inability to cope with the real world	X	X	X
10. The story as a tragedy		X	
11. Metaphors:			
a) movies as religion			
b) movie magazines and Bible			
c) suitcases as burned-out light bulbs		X	
12. Story as picture of life in a small town		X	X
13. Girl's shallowness of character			
14. Depression as backdrop for story			X
15. Metaphor: face red as an earthquake beet			

Table 48

Average Length of All Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
Free Discussion II, the Reflective Reading Group,  
the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group

	RRG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	QG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		10.2		6.7		5.8
Plot						
Setting	5		9		4	
Character	10.4		6.1		6.1	
Style			6			
Point of View						
Inferential		8.6		7.1		7.6
Theme	13.8		8.2		10.8	
Intent of Author	10.7		9		11.3	
Character	7.7		8.2		6.3	
Morals						
Other	10.5		5.7		6.2	
Experiential		8.7		5.7		6.2
Personal	7		6.1		6.1	
Other Literature			11		4.5	
Television	8		6		2.8	
Other	7.3		5.7		7.8	
Judgmental		5.5		6.3		6.5
Literary Judgment	4.9		7		6.5	
Prescriptive Judgment	8.3		5			
Miscellaneous	4.2	4.2	4.3	6.3	3.6	3.6

The Free Discussion Group's highest average of the number of words per response occurred as a result of a long statement of Inferential Author's Intent averaged in with the length of other responses in that category.

In the average length of responses by category, the Factual responses of the Reflective Reading Group are the longest categorical responses of any of the three groups. Several of the factual Character responses were read directly from the text. The Reflective Reading Group made the longest responses in the Factual, Inferential, and Experiential categories. The Question Group had the longest Miscellaneous responses, though there was little difference among the groups. The Free Discussion Group had the longest Judgmental responses.

#### Nature of the Inappropriate Comments

Less than one percent of the total number or responses in the Reflective Reading Group were Inappropriate. They occurred at intervals throughout the discussion and stemmed from misreading or misinterpretation of the story.

Sixteen percent of the responses of the Question Group were Inappropriate. These comments were on the subjects of how to spend large amounts of money, fear of college courses, and the uses of Christmas Club savings accounts. The Inappropriate responses were in the Experiential Other category.

The Free Discussion Group had few Inappropriate responses, less than one percent. These responses were offered in the form of word association games and were in the Experiential Television category. In Free Discussion II, the Question Group made more Inappropriate responses than either of the other two groups.

#### Breadth of Participation

In the Reflective Reading Group, two students made about the same number of utterances. (Please see Table 49.) The utterances of one of the participants contained multiple responses. In the Question Group, one discussant emerged as leader, making more utterances than the other participants. Two members of the Free Discussion Group made multi-response utterances and were the leaders of this discussion. At times it seemed as if these two group members were carrying on a conversation about the story.

#### Other Characteristics of the Discussions

In the post-treatment free discussion, the members of the Reflective Reading Group attempted to use the strategy as they discussed the story. Early in the discussion, one participant made a long utterance concerning the theme and urged others to comment on his responses. Once this group had discussed what they considered the major issue in the

Table 49

A Comparison of the Number of Responses  
by Each Discussant  
Free Discussion II, The Reflective Reading Group,  
The Question Group and the Free Discussion Group

RRG		QG		FDG	
A	10	H	53	O	45
B	X*	I	91	P	36
C	111	J	32	Q	17
D	31	K	43	R	X*
E	59	L	7	S	18
F	X*	M	18	T	73
G	8	N	X*	U	95

\*Student not present during discussion.

story, they seemed unsure about how to proceed. Though there were fewer responses in the Factual category, responses of the greatest length were Factual. This might have occurred because members of the group felt more secure in restating things they knew to be true. A large percentage of the responses were Miscellaneous. Many of these comments were made in an attempt to get group members to respond.

The post-treatment free discussion of the Question Group was somewhat like the first Free Discussion, in that group members interrupted each other frequently, spoke softly, and several spoke at once. This group had a high percentage of Inappropriate responses that occurred as Appropriate responses reminded them of related events in their lives. The Question Group, who used the questions from the reflective reading strategy as guidelines, seemed to have gained a measure of confidence in how to proceed with the free discussion. Though the discussion did not flow smoothly, there was no expressed confusion as to how the discussion should be done. Students simply began to talk about the various elements of the story that they liked or disliked and other topics developed from these comments.

The Free Discussion Group had the lowest percentage of responses of the three groups in the Factual, Judgmental, and Miscellaneous categories. Their Experiential responses

dealt largely with the Personal experiences that related to the story. Inferential responses concerned Setting and the Intent of the Author. The Free Discussion Group was a lively, articulate group. Students in this group seemed to enjoy participating in the discussions.

Changes Among the Student Groups from  
Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II

There were differences among the groups at the beginning of the study. Each group's personality became firmly established as the study progressed. The Reflective Reading Group seemed to be serious during the discussions. They did not project a sense of enjoyment but seemed to view the discussions as class assignments.

The Question Group appeared to be made up of immature people. Although they talked about the story, no idea was investigated in any depth because of the frequent interruptions of speakers. Some of the responses of this group were lost because two or more students spoke at the same time.

The Free Discussion Group exuded a sense of fun and enjoyment as they discussed the short stories. Most members liked the stories, and this group went into some depth as they discussed ideas from the stories. This group viewed the discussions as an escape from the routine of the classroom. Although their discussions were not long--ten to

thirteen minutes--they generally stayed on the subject and had fairly comprehensive discussions.

The differences among the groups could account, in part, for the changes in the kinds of responses offered by group members. Another factor that had an effect on the number and kinds of responses in the groups is the absence of group members in either the first or last free discussion.

The three groups all showed a decrease in the percentage of Factual responses (please see Table 50). The Reflective Reading Group and the Free Discussion Group increased the percentage of Inferential responses, while the Question Group decreased the percentage of responses in this category. In the Experiential category, the Reflective Reading Group showed a decrease; the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group had large increases in the number of responses in this category.

Both the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group made fewer Judgmental responses in Free Discussion II; the Reflective Reading Group made more Judgmental responses in the second free discussion. Miscellaneous responses increased in the Reflective Reading Group and the Question Group and decreased in the Free Discussion Group from the first to the last free discussion.

Lists of story strands developed by the researcher with



Table 50

Percentage of Change by  
Category and Subcategory in the Three Student  
Groups from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II

	RRG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	QG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		-9%		-12%		-4%
Plot	-3%		NC**		NC**	
Setting	-5%		-1%		+1%	
Character	-1%		-8%		-4%	
Style	-1%		-2%		NC**	
Point of View	NC**		NC**		NC**	
Inferential		+7%		-3%		+6%
Theme	-2%		+3%		-12%	
Intent of Author	+5%		-5%		+2%	
Character	+10%		-9%		+12%	
Morals	NC**		NC**		NC**	
Other	-5%		+7%		+3%	
Experiential		-15%		+27%		+22%
Personal	-8%		+15%		+12%	
Other Literature	+-%*		-2%		NC**	
Television	+4%		NC**		+5%	
Other	-10%		+13%		+4%	
Judgmental		+4%		-14%		-15%
Literary Judgment	+2%		-15%		-15%	
Prescriptive Judgment	+1%		+1%		NC**	
Miscellaneous	+13%	+13%	+2%	+2%	-9%	-9%

\*Less than one percent

\*\*No change

points discussed by the adult group added to the lists were used as a measure of the comprehensiveness of the discussions. Lists for both Free Discussion I and Free Discussion II contained seventeen items. In Free Discussion I, the Reflective Reading Group and the Question Group had comprehensive discussions while the Free Discussion Group was rated as fairly comprehensive. In Free Discussion II, the Reflective Reading Group's discussion was not comprehensive, and the discussions of the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group remained the same or about the same as in Free Discussion I. The Reflective Reading Group and the Free Discussion Group discussed the story strands in greater detail than the Question Group in both free discussions.

All groups experienced a decrease in the average number of words per response in the Inferential and Miscellaneous categories from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. (Please see Table 51.) No trend could be identified in the changes in the subcategories.

The number of Inappropriate comments in the Reflective Reading Group decreased from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. The Question Group made few Inappropriate responses in Free Discussion I. These comments were made at random throughout the discussion. In Free Discussion II, however, this group had a large number of Inappropriate

Table 51

Change in Average Length of Responses by Subcategory  
from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II  
in the Three Student Groups

	RRG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	QG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory	FDG Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual		+2.2		-.1		-.8
Plot	*NA		NA*		NA*	
Setting	-1.5		+2.8		+5	
Character	+1.8		-.2		-.4	
Style	NA*		+6		NA*	
Point of View						
Inferential		-.1		-.6		-1.1
Theme	+3.4		-.1		+2.6	
Intent of Author	+3.9		+5		NA*	
Character	-.1		+6		-4.3	
Morals	NA*		NA*		NA*	
Other	+4		-1.3		-1.1	
Experiential		+2.1		-2.0		-2.4
Personal	+3		-1.7		-2.1	
Other Literature	NA*		+1.4		-5.3	
Television	NA*		NA*		NA*	
Other	+3		+5		+1	
Judgmental		-3.5		+7		-.5
Literary Judgment	-2.9		+1.4		+5	
Prescriptive Judgment	-2.7		NA*		NA*	
Miscellaneous	-.5	-.5	-.8	-.8	-.2	-.2

\*No responses in this category in one of the discussions.

responses in the form of digressions about personal fears or plans that did not pertain to the story. The Inappropriate responses of the Free Discussion Group in both discussions were brief, playful exchanges. The percentage of Inappropriate responses decreased in Free Discussion II in the Reflective Reading Group and the Free Discussion Group. The Question Group experienced a substantial increase in Inappropriate comments in Free Discussion II.

Breadth of participation was determined by the number of times each group member responded. (Please see Table 52.) The Reflective Reading Group can be characterized by the decline in the number of responses offered by each member except one, who made one more response in Free Discussion II than in Free Discussion I. The decline in the number of individual responses occurred because the time spent in discussion was cut in half in Free Discussion II. The absence of two group members could have contributed to the brevity of Free Discussion II. In the Question Group, one student experienced a large increase in the number of responses offered. This student was the facilitator of the second free discussion.

The greatest change in the number of responses in the Free Discussion Group was the reduction of the number of comments by one student from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. At some point during the study, he got a job

Table 52

Changes in Total Number of Responses by Each Participant  
from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II  
in the Three Student Groups

RRG		QG		FDG	
A	-10	H	-13	O	+16
B	NA*	I	+44	P	-35
C	-103	J	-7	Q	+7
D	-6	K	NC**	R	NA*
E	+1	L	-13	S	NA*
F	NA*	M	+11	T	NC**
G	-16	N	NA*	U	+15

\* No responses in this category in one of the discussions.

\*\* No change.

at a fast-food restaurant and appeared to be tired and sleepy most of the time at school. Three participants increased the number of responses and one remained constant in the number of responses in both discussions.

In Free Discussion I, there was one change of mind by a discussant. Student I of the Question Group initially said she didn't like "The Giraffe" but later said she did like the story. This change of mind seems to have been brought about by peer influence. There were no changes of mind among discussants of any group in Free Discussion II.

Some factors that had nothing to do with the treatment probably caused some of the changes. Absence of group members, physical condition of participants, and the stories under discussion could have affected the responses of the various groups. The difference in the types of stories discussed might have precipitated some of the changes.

#### The Three Student Groups Compared to the Adult Profile Percentage of Responses in Each Category

Comparisons of each of the three student groups to the adult profile were done in an attempt to determine whether any of three methods of small group discussion moved the student response patterns in the direction of the response patterns reflected in the adult profile. The discussion that was most like the adult profile in terms of the percentage of responses by category was Free Discussion I of

the Reflective Reading Group (please see Table 53).

The percentage of Factual responses decreased in the three student groups from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II, falling well below the seventeen percent of total responses in that category in the adult profile. In the Inferential category, the Reflective Reading Group increased the percentage of Inferential responses from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II; the Free Discussion Group also increased the number of responses in that category. The Question Group experienced a slight decrease in Inferential responses. The percentage of Inferential responses made by the Free Discussion Group is almost the same as the percentage of adult responses in that category.

The Reflective Reading Group had almost the same percentage of responses as the adult profile in the Experiential category in Free Discussion I. The number of Experiential responses in Free Discussion II dropped by almost half. In the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group, the percentage of Experiential responses rose from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II.

Judgmental responses increased in the Reflective Reading Group from the first to the last free discussion, while both the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group experienced a decline in the percentage of Judgmental responses.

Table 53

Percentage of Responses by Category for All  
Student Groups to Adult Profile

	Adult	RRG		QG		FDG	
		FDI,	FDII	FDI,	FDII	FDI,	FDII
Factual	17%	18%	9%	21%	9%	11%	7%
Inferential	31%	26%	33%	33%	30%	25%	31%
Experiential	33%	31%	16%	11%	38%	21%	42%
Judgmental	13%	12%	16%	17%	3%	21%	6%
Miscellaneous	6%	13%	26%	18%	20%	23%	14%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	101%*	100%

\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.



The percentages of Miscellaneous responses were higher than those of the adult profile in all student group discussions. The Reflective Reading Group doubled the percentage of Miscellaneous responses from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. This high percentage of increase in Miscellaneous responses was partially caused by the absence of guidelines for Free Discussion II. Several of the Miscellaneous responses were made in an effort to get group members to discuss the story.

The Question Group had a slight increase in Miscellaneous responses in the second free discussion. The major reason for the high percentage of Miscellaneous responses was the frequent interruptions of the speaker.

There was a marked decrease in Miscellaneous responses in the Free Discussion Group from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. The fact that this group participated in Free Discussions throughout the study could account for the decline in Miscellaneous responses.

The greatest similarities among all groups in subcategories of responses are the high percentages of Factual Character and Inferential Character responses. In the Experiential category, all groups made the highest percentage of responses in the Personal subcategory.

In the Judgmental category, the greatest percentages of responses were in the Literary Judgment subcategory (please see Table 54).

The most obvious movement in the direction of the adult profile was the increase in the percentage of Experiential responses in Free Discussion II of the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

The adult profile presented a comprehensive discussion with seventy percent of the items on the researcher's list being discussed. The Reflective Reading Group also discussed seventy percent of the items on the list in Free Discussion I, but only thirty-five percent of the items in Free Discussion II. The Reflective Reading Group went from a comprehensive discussion at the beginning of the study to a discussion that could not be considered comprehensive at the end of the study. Because of their training in the reflective reading strategy, this group focused on one aspect of the story.

The Question Group discussed seventy percent of the story strands in Free Discussion I as did the adult group. In Free Discussion II, however, the percentage of story strands discussed by the student group fell to sixty-four percent. The comprehensiveness of the discussion declined in the Question Group for Free Discussion II because of the

Table 54

Percentage of Responses by Subcategory  
for All Student Groups to Adult Profile

	Adults	RRG		QG		FDG	
		FDI	FDII	FDI	FDII	FDI	FDII
<b>Factual</b>							
Plot	2%	3%	0%	-*	0%	0%	0%
Setting	3%	5%	-*	3%	2%	-*	1%
Character	10%	9%	8%	15%	7%	10%	6%
Style	2%	1%	0%	2%	-*	-*	0%
Point of View	-*	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Inferential</b>							
Theme	4%	4%	2%	8%	11%	19%	7%
Intent of Author	6%	-*	5%	5%	-*	0%	2%
Character	19%	16%	26%	16%	7%	5%	17%
Morals	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2%	6%	1%	5%	12%	1%	4%
<b>Experiential</b>							
Personal	20%	19%	11%	6%	21%	10%	22%
Other Literature	4%	-*	0%	3%	1%	2%	2%
Television	-*	0%	4%	0%	-*	0%	5%
Other	9%	12%	2%	2%	15%	9%	13%
<b>Judgmental</b>							
Literary Judgment	11%	10%	12%	17%	2%	21%	6%
Prescriptive Judgment	2%	2%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%
<b>Miscellaneous</b>							
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%**	100%	100%

\*Less than one percent

\*\*This total is due to rounding the percentages.

use of reflective reading questions focusing on one issue as guides for their discussions.

The Free Discussion Group maintained the same percentage of story strands discussed in both Free Discussion I and Free Discussion II. This group discussed fifty-three percent of the items on the researcher's list of story strands in both discussions.

### Length of Responses

The greatest similarities to the number of words per response between a student group and the adult profile were in the Reflective Reading Group. In Free Discussion I of this group, the Factual and Judgmental categoric responses were of about the same length as the adult responses. In Free Discussion II, the Miscellaneous responses were almost the same length as the adult responses. (Please see Table 55.) It appears that none of the three methods of discussion helped students make responses that were closer in length to the responses of adults except in the Miscellaneous category. The difference in the types of stories chosen for the discussions, however, might have influenced the length of response. "The Giraffe" was a narrative about an unusual event in the lives of a group of boys. "Greyhound Tragedy" was a mildly satirical story of a young girl's unfulfilled dream.

Table 55

A Comparison of the Average Length of All Responses by  
 Category of All Student Groups, Free Discussions  
 I and II to the Adult Profile

	Adult	RRG		QG		FDG	
		FDI,	FDII	FDI,	FDII	FDI,	FDII
Factual	8.5	8.0	10.2	6.8	6.7	6.6	5.8
Inferential	10.0	8.7	8.6	7.7	7.1	8.7	7.6
Experiential	10.2	6.6	8.7	7.7	5.7	8.6	6.2
Judgmental	8.9	8.6	5.5	5.6	6.3	7.0	6.5
Miscellaneous	4.1	4.7	4.2	5.1	4.3	3.8	3.6

### The Nature of the Inappropriate Comments

The Inappropriate comments offered by members of the adult group were the result of an Appropriate response reminding a discussant of an event from his or her past. In one instance, a digression ended the discussion. In the other series of Inappropriate responses, a discussant made a response that steered the discussion back to the story.

The Reflective Reading Group had quite a large number of Inappropriate responses. At two separate points in Free Discussion I, the group led by B entered into rather lengthy digressions concerning the picture that illustrated the story. Other Inappropriate comments were made by one student who insisted that the giraffe was possessed by a demon. In Free Discussion II, this group had fewer Inappropriate comments; these comments were the result of one discussant's misreading the story. The Inappropriate responses in both free discussions of the Reflective Reading Group were caused by different stimuli than the Inappropriate responses in the adult profile.

The Question Group had very few Inappropriate responses in Free Discussion I. They were single responses that occurred throughout the discussion. In Free Discussion II, however, this group made several digressions, prompted by Appropriate responses to the story. The Question Group

entered into these digressions in much the same way the adults did.

The Inappropriate comments in the Free Discussion Group were occasionally prompted by Appropriate responses, and at other times they seemed to occur spontaneously. The particular brand of humor enjoyed by members of this group seemed to influence the nature of their Inappropriate responses, also.

#### Breadth of Participation

In the adult profile, three people made about the same number of utterances; the utterances of one discussant contained more responses than the utterances of the other two discussants who responded frequently. (Please see Table 56.) Members of the group seemed to look to one member for approval of their responses. This person could be said to be the leader of this group.

In the Reflective Reading Group, the same discussant made the greatest number of responses in both the first and last free discussions. In Free Discussion I, two students responded more frequently than other participants. In Free Discussion II, there was a leader of the discussion, and one other student responded frequently.

The Question Group had two members who responded about the same number of times in Free Discussion I. One of these students conceived the idea of every member responding to a

Table 56

A Comparison of the Number of Responses by Individual Discussants in All Student Groups to Free Discussions I and II to the Adult Profile

Adult	RRG		QG		FDG	
	FDI	FDII	FDI	FDII	FDI	FDII
A 89.2	A 20	10	H 66	53	O 29	45
B 6.8	B 151	X*	I 47	91	P 71	36
C 9.3	C 214	111	J 39	32	Q 10	17
D 58.6	D 37	31	K 43	43	R XX*	X*
E 46.6	E 58	59	L 20	7	S X*	18
F 12.7	F 43	X*	M 7	18	T 73	73
G 19.2	G 24	8	N 63	X*	U 80	95

\*Student absent during discussion.

\*\*Student present but did not respond.



question. Acting as she thought a teacher would act, that student became group leader. A different student emerged as the leader of Free Discussion II, responding most frequently. Two other participants also responded frequently. The breadth of Free Discussion II was much like the adult profile in that one person made the greatest number of responses and two others talked a moderate amount.

In the Free Discussion Group, three students each responded almost equally in Free Discussion I. In Free Discussion II, two of those students made the greatest number of responses. No one person could be called the leader in either of this group's free discussions.

#### Change of Mind by a Discussant

Only two changes of mind occurred in the discussions in this study. A change of mind occurred in the adult profile when one discussant at first ignored then later accepted an idea presented by another discussant. The person who changed her mind decided that the idea was perfectly logical, given the time during which the story took place and the setting. In the Question Group, a participant said at the beginning of the discussion that she did not like the story. After other members of the group had said they thought it was a good story, the student said she liked it. Peer influence was the cause of this change of mind.

### Observations of What Adults Do in Free Discussions

An outstanding feature of the adult discussions was their sense of fun as they discussed the short stories. They seemed to enjoy expressing their views about the story, just as they enjoy reading works of fiction. The participants spoke distinctly as if they were aware at all times that their responses were being recorded, but this awareness seemed to have no inhibiting effect upon their responses. There was some laughter throughout the discussions and an occasional witty remark.

The adult discussions began with responses of personal reactions to the stories. Participants gave reasons for both positive and negative reactions to stories. For instance, one person disliked "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" because she thought revelations of what life could be like were so useless to a person who is dying. Adults also compared the stories being discussed to other works by the same author or similar works by other authors.

The adults treated stories as if they were works of fiction, for the most part. They said such things as this story is a good representation of life in the post-Depression years. They occasionally treated the stories as if they were narratives of real events as when one person said she could not believe the doctor because she had never

known a doctor to go anywhere without his bag.

The adult group seemed to recreate the stories through an interaction of the texts and their own experiences. For example, some of the discussants had been children during the post-Depression years, and others had knowledge of what life was like then from history courses and stories handed down through their families. Their discussion was rich with Appropriate Inferential and Experiential responses. Too, one participant made several valid generalizations to the population at large from her recreation of the stories.

The adult discussions flowed easily from subject to subject. The adults spoke with confidence about the stories, possibly because of their knowledge of good literature and their ability to express their views adequately. Too, since the adults were polite, there were few interruptions of speakers. There was never any disagreement about a response. The group accepted whatever was offered.

Adults made only two lengthy digressions in their four discussions. In one case, the person was reminded of a television show she had seen recently and simply said something to the effect that she wanted to ask a question that had nothing to do with the story. In the other digression, the story reminded a participant of an event she had witnessed during the 1930s, the time the story was set.

There was some discussion of various literary elements such as theme and point of view. Writing style of the authors was discussed at some length. Factual responses about characters were usually made to justify inferences.

Early in the first discussion a leader emerged. Possibly because this person spoke a little louder and with more assurance than the others, they seemed to defer to her opinions. Three other discussants in this group spoke frequently and three responded very little. The three quiet ones did not seem ill-at-ease; and, when they did respond, their remarks were appropriate. No effort was made by the four who responded frequently to draw the hesitant ones into the discussion.

The adults did not stop to assess where they had gotten to in a discussion as they moved from subject to subject. In fact, the discussions had a conversational quality, almost as if the group had met by accident and were talking about a story they had all read and enjoyed. There was no effort to summarize what had been said as the discussion ended. When they felt that they had exhausted the discussion, someone, usually the leader, simply said that was all they had to say.

#### Observations of What Students Do in a Free Discussion

When asked to participate in self-directed free discussions of short stories, students had difficulty

accepting the idea that there would be no teacher nor other authority figure present. They seemed somewhat ill-at-ease at having their responses tape recorded at the beginning of the first discussion. After a few minutes, however, they began to relax. There was some laughter and occasional good-natured argument about a point of discussion.

Student discussions generally began with responses concerning the individual's personal reactions to the stories. Then responses turned to questions about the events in the story or the meaning of an incident or symbol.

Students treated the stories as if they were narratives of real events in the lives of the authors. Of "The Giraffe" one student said the author had been a member of the group of boys as a child. Some students expressed surprise that the author of "Greyhound Tragedy" was a man since the story's main character is a girl. They concluded that Brautigan had experienced the same sort of disappointment in his own life.

There was a great deal of interest in facts about characters and setting that were not given in the story. Students wanted to know such things as the ages of characters and what they looked like. They wondered why characters did not act as they would have acted in the same situations.

Students made erroneous conjectures about characters

and settings based upon the information given and their own experience. For example, in trying to determine where "The Giraffe" was set, they guessed such places as an ethnic borough of a big city or a town near the border between the United States and Mexico. These students had no knowledge of small European towns nor names that are particular to certain countries.

Students made up circumstances to fit their interpretation of events in stories several times during the discussions. This example from a discussion of "The Giraffe" occurred when a student misinterpreted the reason the townspeople were afraid of the giraffe. She thought the character Rolandino made the giraffe bend his head to scare the people who had "picked on" him because he was short. Rolandino was described as being short, but there was no evidence in the story of his being "picked on" because of it. No other person in the group challenged this idea. In some instances, however, when a participant made an incorrect response, others corrected the mistake in a friendly way.

The student groups all made connections between the story under discussion and other literature that had been studied in English class, or books they had read, or movies they had seen. They seemed to try to keep discussions focused on the story, using examples from other literary

works that were appropriate in most instances.

Some students talked about incidents from their own lives that paralleled the incidents in the story but said their experience had nothing to do with the story. Others said the story was just like their own lives.

In every student group, the theme of the story was discussed. Some of the students said they were verbalizing theme, while others talked about what the story was supposed to mean without calling their ideas the theme.

The student groups usually made at least one rather lengthy digression in each discussion. The digressions were the result of a student's mentioning an appropriate incident from his or her life as an example of an occurrence in the story. The appropriate incident led other students to bring up somewhat similar but inappropriate incidents, and the discussion strayed from the subject. In all groups when students realized that the discussion had gotten off the subject, a group member turned off the tape recorder. When the tape recorder was turned on again, students were back on the subject.

Early in all discussions, either a leader or two or three students who did most of the talking emerged. These discussion leaders did not seem to be trying to take over. It simply appeared to be quite natural that the discussions proceeded this way. In every group there were two or three

students who made very few responses. Those participants who responded frequently did not exclude the quiet ones but urged them to respond by directing questions to them. Efforts to draw out the reticent ones failed. Some students simply did not respond often.

Once the discussions got under way, students moved from one topic to another with relative ease. In some instances, a subject was explored in some depth, but in many more instances a subject was raised, and an interruption of the speaker led the discussion off in another direction. Never was there an attempt to summarize what had been said about a subject before moving to another.

No student discussion was brought to closure. The discussions generally ended in a digression. When some group member realized what was happening, he or she turned the tape recorder off.



## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was two-fold. The first purpose was to create a profile of adult responses to short stories. The second purpose was to investigate whether or not any of three methods of small group discussion would help students to respond to short stories more like adults respond in free discussions. The case studies described the adult profile and tenth-grade student responses to pre- and post-treatment free discussions of two short stories.

The average length of time spent in the discussion of a story was 18.5 minutes in the adult profile. Adult discussions usually began with statements of Literary Judgment.

The adult profile showed the greatest percentage of responses in the following subcategories: Factual Character, Inferential Character, Experiential Personal, and Judgmental Literary Judgment. The highest percentage of categoric responses were Inferential and Experiential. The adults used Factual responses mainly to lend support to Inferences. The Experiential responses made their discussions richer by adding first-hand information about settings or situations related to the stories. Adults also justified their Judgmental responses with reasons for reacting to the stories as they did.

Discussions in the adult profile were comprehensive, touching on seventy percent of the story strands identified by the researcher. Adults also discussed ideas that had not been specified by the researcher.

The average number of words per response was greater in the Inferential and Experiential categories than in the Factual, Judgmental, and Miscellaneous categories. This trend is consistent with the findings of Smith (1977), who discovered that school children used more words in Interpretational responses than in Factual responses.

Adults occasionally made responses that were inappropriate to the discussion. Twice, they participated in rather lengthy digressions. Beach (1973) viewed digressions as an aid to understanding a literary work. The digressions of the adult group were so far removed from the subject of the discussion, however, that they served as distractions rather than aids to understanding. In one case, the respondent simply said she had a question aside from the discussion. In another case, a digression created a lame ending for the discussion.

The adult discussions were led by three participants, who at times seemed at times to be discussing the stories among themselves much like the students in Ross's (1977) study. A emerged as leader of the group, asking key questions and introducing new topics for discussion more

frequently than the other participants. The number of responses offered by the other four members of this group varied from seven to nineteen.

Only one change of mind occurred in the adult discussions. C made a suggestion as to a possible cause of an odor in the room early in the discussion. After five minutes or so of talk about other phases of the story, A returned to C's remark, seeing C's cause as being a plausible explanation. This change of mind did appear to be caused by a deeper level of thinking (Hoskisson, 1983).

The average length of time spent in discussions for all student groups was 15.5 minutes.

The three student groups all experienced a decrease in the percentage of Factual responses in their discussions. Perhaps, the practice of discussing a story using any small group discussion method lessened the need to dwell on the facts of the story.

The Reflective Reading Group and the Free Discussion Group increased the percentage of Inferential responses from Free Discussion I to Free Discussion II. The Question Group and the Free Discussion Group had rather large increases in the percentage of Experiential responses, while the Reflective Reading Group had a dramatic decrease from thirty-one to sixteen percent Experiential responses from the first to the last free discussion. The Reflective

Reading Group had an increase in Judgmental responses; the Question Group and the Free Discussion Group had a decrease in Judgmental responses in Free Discussion II. The percentage of Miscellaneous responses doubled in the Reflective Reading Group, increased slightly in the Question Group, and decreased in the Free Discussion Group from the first to the last free discussion.

The changes delineated above present no clear pattern of change in response patterns. The increase in the percentage of Miscellaneous responses in the Reflective Reading Group can be explained. It appears that the group had become accustomed to participating in teacher-led, highly structured small group discussions. When asked to participate in a free discussion, the students seemed at a loss as to how to proceed. Many of the Miscellaneous responses were in the form of the speaker urging other group members to make comments about the story.

Weekly participation in free discussions could have given members of the Free Discussion Group more confidence in their ability to work with a story without the guidance of a teacher. This factor could account for the large decrease in the percentage of Miscellaneous comments in this group in Free Discussion II.

The first free discussion of the Reflective Reading Group was more like the adult profile in terms of

percentages of response by category than the first free discussions of the other groups. The last free discussion of the Reflective Reading Group showed the effects of six weeks of training in the strategy. In Free Discussion II, the students attempted an in-depth examination of one element of the story, moving away from a random discussion toward a more focused discussion.

The last free discussion of the Free Discussion Group more closely resembled the adult profile than the last free discussions of the other groups. It could be concluded, then, that repeated free discussions led these students to make categoric responses that more closely fit the adult profile of free discussion than the responses of the students who participated in discussions centered around a questioning strategy or discussions using lists of questions as a guide.

Comprehensiveness of the discussion declined in the Reflective Reading Group from seventy percent in Free Discussion I to thirty-five percent in Free Discussion II. The reflective reading discussions examined one issue in the story in depth, and the group attempted such an in-depth examination in the final free discussion. They focused their discussion on the girl's regrets at not attempting to fulfill her dream.

The Question Group also experienced a decline in the

comprehensiveness of their discussion in Free Discussion II. Again, this decline could be due to the use of lists of questions that examined one issue in depth.

There was no change in the comprehensiveness of the discussion in the Free Discussion Group. In both discussions the group mentioned fifty-three percent of the story strands specified by the researcher.

In general, none of the three methods of small group discussion made any difference in the average number of words per response among the student groups. The Reflective Reading Group did experience an increase of 2.2 words per Factual response in Free Discussion II, but this result was caused by respondents reading passages verbatim from the story. In all other categories except Miscellaneous, all student responses were composed of fewer words than the adult responses. This difference could be due to the adults' speaking confidence and their ability to formulate their responses in well-structured sentences. This finding concurs with Barnes' and his colleagues (1971) comparison of the responses of younger students to those of older students.

The nature of the Inappropriate comments was different for each group. The only similarity of the Inappropriate comments to the adult group occurred in Free Discussion II of the Question Group where Appropriate Experiential

responses led to Inappropriate Experiential responses. The group began their Inappropriate digressions with Appropriate Experiential responses and failed to realize that they were getting far off the subject. It could be that the group felt that any Experiential response was Appropriate since the list of reflective reading questions included Experiential questions.

The Reflective Reading Group made several Inappropriate responses in discussing the picture that accompanied the story in Free Discussion I and made very few Inappropriate responses in Free Discussion II. The Inappropriate responses in Free Discussion II were based on a student's misreading the story (Barnes, et al., 1971; Beach, 1973; Ross, 1977).

The Free Discussion Group engaged in the same kind of playful, bantering Inappropriate exchanges in both free discussions. Their Inappropriate responses reflected their sense of humor.

A leader emerged in the adult group with two other participants responding to the leader's comments more frequently than the other members of the group (Barnes, et al., 1971; Beach, 1973; Ross, 1977).

In the six student discussions, leaders emerged in two of the discussions and two or three other group members spoke frequently. In the other four student discussions,

two or three students responded more frequently than the others (Barnes, et al., 1971; Ross, 1977).

No conclusions could be drawn about the effect of treatment on the breadth of discussion because of the absence of group members in either the first or the last free discussion. It does appear that the same respondents retained leadership roles in most of the discussions and the reluctant responders continued to choose not to participate.

One change of mind occurred in the adult profile and one student in the Question Group's first free discussion changed her mind. None of the treatments seemed to affect a respondent's taking a stance on an issue and being influenced to change his or her mind.

Generally speaking, the only group whose responses became more like adult free discussion responses was the Free Discussion Group. The percentage of responses in the various categories became somewhat more like the adult profile in Free Discussion II. It appears that participating in free discussions over a period of time helps students to make responses that are categorically more like the responses of adults participating in free discussions.

#### Other Findings

Barnes and colleagues (1971) said that five was the optimum number of participants in small group discussions



(63) because larger groups "put much strain on self-control and encourage competitiveness" (76). Groups of seven were used in this study, and in at least one instance, the spirit of competitiveness seemed to spark two lengthy digressions. Discussant B in the Reflective Reading Group argued for her interpretation of a picture that accompanied the story in Free Discussion I.

Larger groups might have had an inhibiting influence on shyer participants. In all student groups and in the adult group, two or three group members made few responses. These quiet participants might have responded more readily in smaller groups.

A time frame of thirty minutes was allotted for each discussion in this study. The average length of a discussion was 18.5 minutes for the adult profile and 15.3 minutes for the student groups. A time limit of fifteen minutes for students' group discussions seems appropriate.

In the Barnes' (1971) study there was no attempt by any group member to summarize what had been said about one subject before the discussion moved to another subject. This was also true in the current study. There were, however, statements of clarification in the first free discussion of the Question Group when one participant rephrased the remarks of others, presenting the ideas in a clearer way. There were no attempts at summarizing what had

been discussed at any point in the adult discussions.

Members of the adult group projected an attitude of pleasure as they discussed the stories, as did the Free Discussion Group. The other two student groups did not seem to enjoy the discussions. Perhaps free discussions made literature more enjoyable than structured or directed discussions.

#### Implications for Research

Douglas Barnes (1971) and other researchers on his team identified four levels of talking about literature as they analyzed tape-recorded responses of secondary student groups.

- (1) Putting oneself in the character's position;
- (2) Treating character and incident as if they were real;
- (3) Being aware of the novel as an artifact, an expression of the author's intentions;
- (4) Discussing the novel as if it existed in its own right as a "virtual experience." (Barnes, et al., 1971:75)

Barnes believed that students need to discuss a literary work at levels 1 and 2 in small group discussions before they are asked to participate in class discussions that begin with teachers' questions at levels 3 and 4.

- (1) Research studies could examine whether or not free

discussions are beneficial to students in class discussions, in answering test questions, or in writing responses to assignments.

(2) Studies could also examine the grade levels at which such discussions would be most effective.

(3) Studies need to be done to establish the most workable group size for small group discussions. The groups of seven persons in this study seemed to inhibit some group members. Usually two or three participants led the discussions and the other members made only occasional comments. Reticent individuals might have responded more frequently in smaller groups. Conversely, groups with too few members might have difficulty in sustaining a discussion.

(4) Longitudinal studies that followed a class of students through four years of high school to investigate the long term effects of self-directed small group discussions of literary works could prove useful to classroom teachers.

(5) Barnes and colleagues (1971) and Ross (1977) suggested that it could be beneficial for teachers sometimes to give up their roles of discussion leaders and allow students to explore literary works on their own. Research needs to be done in this area of teaching methodology.

(6) Lucking (1976) discovered that secondary students

who participated in a hierarchically-ordered questioning technique developed a more positive attitude toward reading. Studies need to be done in the effects of self-directed small group discussions of literary works before they are taught with regard to general appreciation of literature.

(7) Studies of adult response to literature using large enough populations to justify generalization might prove useful to adult education instructors. In the Barnes (1971) study, it was found that even students of moderate ability were found capable of managing their own discussions. Haught (1971) also found that students of low ability increased their verbalizations in small group discussions. Free discussions of literary works before classroom instruction could be beneficial to adults returning to school after a few years absence.

(8) Beach (1973) suggested that digressions are an aid to students' understanding a literary work. Studies that investigate the role of digressions in group discussions in response to literature need to be done at the elementary school, middle school, high school, and college levels.

(9) The Reflective Reading Group in this study attempted to discuss one aspect of the story in-depth in the post-treatment free discussion. A delayed free discussion a month after the treatment ended would show if the effects of the reflective reading strategy were still present.

(10) A study could be done to investigate the number of sessions necessary for a group of discussants to move away from dependence on a discussion strategy.

(11) In this study, as in the studies of Barnes, et al. (1971), Beach (1973), and Ross (1977), two or three group members spoke frequently and three or four members spoke very little. It would be interesting to put those who spoke frequently in one group and those who spoke infrequently in another group to investigate whether or not some frequent respondents become non-responders and some infrequent responders begin to speak more frequently.

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## APPENDIX A

### Summary of Stories

The short stories were chosen from secondary school texts, a literary magazine for secondary students, and books of short stories designed for use in secondary schools. They were selected because of their universal themes. A factor that entered into the selection was the length of the story. A maximum of fifteen minutes could be spent in reading the story in order to have thirty minutes for discussion.

#### "The Giraffe" by Mario Senesi

A peddler came to a small town in Italy, bringing with him a giraffe. The peddler died suddenly, and the town officials did not know what to do with the giraffe. Rolandino, a boy of about twelve, offered to take it until someone came for it. A group of young friends of Rolandino volunteered to help care for the giraffe. The weather turned cold that night, and since the town had no barn tall enough for a giraffe, the boys took it into the church. The elderly ladies who came to worship at 5 a.m. were horrified, but the priest understood. The boys took the giraffe out of town to let him eat in the hay fields. The giraffe wouldn't eat and soon died. The boys were glad the giraffe had died by itself before the town officer could kill it.

"Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway

Nick accompanied his father, a doctor, to an Indian camp where a woman had been in labor for two days. As the doctor performed a Caesarean delivery, the Indian woman's husband committed suicide in the bunk above the woman's bed.

"On the Sidewalk Bleeding" by Evan Hunter

Andy, a sixteen-year-old boy who was a member of the Royals, had been stabbed and was bleeding to death in an alley. It was a rainy March night. Andy had left a dance to get a pack of cigarettes and was stabbed by a Guardian in a street rumble. A drunken man, a teenaged couple, and an old lady came into the alley, but none offered to help Andy. His last act was to remove the Royals jacket. When his girl friend left the dance to find Andy, he was dead.

"Only the Guilty Run" by Vin Packer

Charlie is a sixteen-year-old boy who has a crush on his English teacher, Miss Lattimore. Charlie's parents treat him as if he were a mature young man. During the summer, Charlie wrote post cards to Miss Lattimore and read Shakespeare because that was her specialty. One evening early in September, Charlie walked by Miss Lattimore's apartment building and saw her light on. He climbed the fire escape to look in her window. As he knelt on the fire escape to look in her window, police officers shone a

spotlight on him and fired shots into the air. They arrested Charlie.

Charlie's parents and Miss Lattimore came to the police station. Miss Lattimore lied to the police and Charlie's parents, telling them Charlie was fixing a loose wire on her TV antenna. At midnight Charlie returned to Miss Lattimore's apartment. She became frightened and screamed when Charlie put his hands over her mouth. A neighbor heard the scream and came to Miss Lattimore's rescue. The police would come in a few minutes.

"The Far and the Near" by Thomas Wolfe

A railroad engineer had blown the train whistle at a woman and her daughter every time he passed their house for more than twenty years. The woman and her daughter, at first a child and now a woman also, came to the porch and waved to him. The engineer had created a vision of the woman and her daughter as beautiful and unchanging. This vision helped the engineer to cope with the tragedies he experienced throughout the years. After he retired from the railroad, he went to visit the old woman and her daughter. His vision of these women as objects of beauty was destroyed by the ugliness of their lives.

"The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chapin

Louise Mallard had a heart condition and when news of

her husband's death in a train crash came, her sister told her very cautiously. At first Mrs. Mallard cried in sorrow, but as she sat alone in her room, she realized that now she was free to live her life as she wanted. The reports of her husband's death were incorrect; he had not been on the train. When Mr. Mallard walked into the house, Mrs. Mallard died of a heart attack.

"The Snake" by Ervin D. Krause

The farmer encountered a beautiful snake with orange and green and brown diamonds on its back. He stopped the tractor, climbed down, picked the snake up, and admired its beauty. He released the snake and continued to plow. The farmer's nephew, who was eleven years old, came to bring him water. When the farmer first saw him, the boy was in the act of killing the snake. The farmer became enraged. He had to finish killing the snake, and when he had finished, he wrapped the snake around the boy's neck and shouted, "It's alive! It's alive!"

"Greyhound Tragedy" by Richard Brautigan

The narrator's dream was to leave her home in Oregon to go to Hollywood and die, becoming a tragically beautiful corpse. The girl studied movie magazines and thought about going to the Greyhound terminal to ask the price of a ticket to Hollywood. She avoided the bus station for several

years. Finally, her father hinted that she should do something with her life. The girl went to the Greyhound station but was unable to ask the ticket agent the price of the ticket. Instead, she married a Ford salesman and stayed in Oregon.

APPENDIX B

Literature Read by the Adult Group  
Within the Past Year

<u>The Eden Express</u>	Kurt Vonnegut
<u>The Young Lions</u>	Irwin Shaw
<u>Lee and Grant</u>	Gene Smith
<u>Lady Washington</u>	Dorothy Wilson
<u>*And Ladies of the Club</u>	Helen H. Santmyer
<u>*Growing Up</u>	Russell Baker
<u>Mortal Lessons</u>	Charles Seltzer
<u>On the Wings of Eagles</u>	Ken Follett
<u>*Evergreen</u>	Belva Plain
<u>The Headmaster's Papers</u>	Richard Hawley
<u>Ohio Tower</u>	Helen Santmyer
<u>Authorio</u>	Barbara Pym
<u>The Centaur</u>	John Updike
<u>Birdy</u>	William Wharton
<u>The Razor's Edge</u>	Somerset Maugham
<u>*The Color Purple</u>	Alice Walker
<u>Strong Medicine</u>	Arthur Hailey
<u>*Prisons</u>	
<u>O Beulah Land</u>	
<u>*Know Nothing</u>	Series by Mary Lou Settle
<u>*The Scapegoat</u>	
<u>The Killing Ground</u>	
<u>*The Bridal Wreath</u>	Kristen Lavransdatter
<u>*The Mistress of Husaby</u>	trilogy by Sigrid Undset
<u>*The Cross</u>	



Lovestrong

Greenhouse and Laiken

Lord Foul's Bane

The Illearth War

The Power that Preserves

The Wounded Land

The One Tree

The Thomas Covenant  
series by Stephen  
Donaldson

Surprised by the Joy

C. S. Lewis

\* Books read by more than one member of the group.

## APPENDIX C

### Analysis of the Adult Discussions

The adult group met one time and discussed four short stories. The stories were discussed in this order: "The Giraffe" by Mario Senesi, "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway, "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" by Evan Hunter, and "Greyhound Tragedy" by Richard Brautigan. The analyses were done according to the criteria set forth in Chapter 3.

#### Analysis of the Adult Discussion of "The Giraffe" Kinds of Responses in Each Category

The discussion of "The Giraffe" lasted for eighteen minutes. Responses were coded using the coding scheme presented in Table I.

Of the Inferential responses that were offered, most were inferences about the giraffe and other characters in the story. (Please see Table C1.)

21 C He was probably old and ill anyway and that's how the old man got him.

22 A Probably.

23 D It also stressed too how little anybody knew about it. You take this exotic animal, and he obviously didn't know how to keep it alive or take care of it.

. . . . .

56 A Ah. That's probably one thing the adults didn't like about it because they mentioned in there something about the fact that the giraffe was looking into second-story windows. It kinda upset people.

Table C1

Percentage of Responses in Each Category and Subcategory  
"The Giraffe"

Subcategory		Category
Factual		18%
Plot	5%	
Setting	2%	
Character	11%	
Style	0%	
Point of View	-*	
Inferential		32%
Theme	5%	
Intent of Author	5%	
Character	19%	
Morals	0%	
Other	3%	
Experiential		32%
Personal	22%	
Other Literature	6%	
Television	0%	
Other	3%	
Judgmental		15%
Literary Judgment	15%	
Prescriptive Judgment	0%	
Miscellaneous		4%
Total		100%
		101%**

\* Less than one percent.

\*\* This total is due to rounding the percentages.

- 57 D It's kinda funny too that they reacted so strongly toward the giraffe as if it really was really going to see what they were doing.

These responses represent the Inferential statements made about the enigma of the origin of the giraffe and the reactions of the adults to the giraffe.

Questions by D concerning the author's intent in writing the story led to Inferential remarks about the theme of an old established society's unwillingness to accept newness and creativity of the younger generation.

- 66 D What do you think the point of the story is? What's he trying to get across? Besides relating the incident?
- 67 A I think it was one of those lessons. I think he's trying to show, it's one of those lessons we have to learn growing up that are real sad. You know, but it's just impossible to keep the things we want to keep or have things the way we want to have them, no matter how many feelings are hurt.
- 68 G It's our responsibility for the boys to take care of him without even thinking of all the implications, the problems that you are going to run into. I can see it with my kids always wanting pets, but they don't want to feed it or take care of it.
- 69 A They learn a lesson in here [others agreed] and I think that's nice because a lot of us protect our kids from this lesson. Because rather see that animal suffer, we'll take care of the animal. Or we will do thus and so or we will do something else. And they learn later than they should about a lot of things. Or they learn in an easier way.
- 70 D The difference between when you are young and want to hang onto all the dreams and fantasies, you still think they are possible. But when you are older, you get disillusioned.

71 A That is sad here.

72 D It is sad.

73 A You are old enough to know a little bit of that. It's like somebody said one time that they like adults, but it's grown-ups they can't stand. We do see adults act like children.

74 D I think part of the anger of the adults was realizing how disillusioned they were, how far they had let go of all that fun. . .

75 A Probably.

76 D and dream-like. . . .

77 A Probably.

At utterance 67, A refers to the boys' desire to keep the giraffe. Then at utterance 68, G applies the situation in the story to his own situation of trying to teach his sons to be responsible for their animals. A continues in that vein until at response 70, D steers the discussion toward the abstract idea of the disillusionment in dreams that comes with maturity. In response 73, A, who has known D for many years, tells D she should understand disillusionment because she is now an adult. A uses an expression she has heard to apply D's statement to childish behavior she has observed in adults. A and G seem to want to keep the discussion on a more literal level than D, who is attempting to discuss the theme of the story.

Responses that were coded as Inferential Other were these:

7 G I wonder if this is true?

8 A Struck me as being.

20 A . . . Maybe that was a symptom of an illness. . .

42 E That's probably the most exciting thing that's happened here in a long time.

59 A . . . Imagining how that would upset people. . .

Responses 7 and 8 refer to the story itself, 20 is an inference about the red eyes of the giraffe, 42 refers to the giraffe's coming to the town and his owner's dying, and 59 concerns the giraffe's causing the people to see the town in a different perspective.

A high percentage of the Experiential responses were coded as Experiential Personal.

11 A Well, you know, I identified immediately with the boys, as to how they felt about the giraffe, but I could also identify with a couple of the adults too, because you just see the problems it creates. Yeah, you know, what to do with it. . .  
. I was just as upset that he wouldn't fit in the town as the kids were, you know.

12 D Just think along the way how much hay it would take to feed him.

13 G I think I saw something just the other day. They don't eat hay, they eat leaves.

14 D Yeah.

15 G . . . because they don't compete with the farmers or the cattle for the fields. So they don't mind if they graze. . . .

. . . .

24 A . . . And I was just thinking where, where,

where? And there's no place in Christiansburg or Childress or any other place to protect him. Maybe the runway of a barn that was two-story, you know, the runway part, but not in a stall.

Most of the Experiential Personal responses had to do with the care and keeping of the giraffe. In the excerpts cited above, A is concerned about the problems created by the sudden, unexpected appearance of the giraffe in a town not equipped to deal with it. D and G discussed what the animal would eat, D assuming it would eat hay and G passing along information about what giraffes actually do eat.

Experiential Other Literature responses were made by A.

63 A \_\_\_\_\_, who was that author that was so popular a few years ago? Uh, we had a story and some literature by him. He was born and raised in Kentucky. \_\_\_\_\_ knew him real well, and he did a lot of . . . .

64 E Jesse Stuart.

65 A Jesse Stuart. I read a story last night by Jesse Stuart, you know. I said he was in the literature book, the one on "If I Were Sixteen Again." It was terrific! You know, we were talking about the type of story, this isn't your type of story. He wrote, he looks into the heart of people, you know, the feelings and everything, the way people . . . .

A, C, and are members of the same book club and apparently had discussed the works of Jesse Stuart at some time. A was beginning to draw a parallel between "The Giraffe" and the Stuart story when she was interrupted and did not pursue the comparison.

The responses coded as Experiential Other include such

statements as these:

44 A We've got to guess about the name, Sicily, Italy  
 . . . . [Speaking of the pronunciation of the  
 names]

All of the Judgmental responses in this discussion were  
 coded Literary Judgment.

28 A . . . There are a lot of things in here that  
 young children wouldn't understand. They  
 wouldn't understand the attitudes of the adults.  
 You know, adults can understand it because there  
 were a lot of things that just weren't practical  
 as far as keeping the giraffe.

29 B Was this story intended for children?

30 E I don't know.

31 A It doesn't strike me as being something for  
 children.

[Pause]

32 A No, un huh. But also it's from . . . . I notice  
 it's evidently a thing from Scholastic magazine  
 because I read a little thing here on the front  
 cover. . . owner's manual, the circulation. . . .

33 E It's part of the story . . . .

34 A . . . Anyhow, what level it's on, if a 13 or 14  
 year old reads this, at that age you still don't  
 see why adults act like they do.

35 B It doesn't appear to me to be suitable for  
Scholastic magazine. There are too many adult  
 implications.

36 D Now when you compare it to the high school  
 stories. It's comparable to high school stories.

[Pause]

37 D The kids would identify with the boys in the  
 story. They would hold on to the fantasy of it.

The focal point of this portion of the discussion is



the appropriateness of "The Giraffe" for secondary students. It is interesting to note that D, the youngest member of the group, felt that the story was appropriate for students, while A and deemed it too complex for high school students.

When Factual statements were made, they usually were used to justify an Inferential or Judgmental statement.

26 E I thought the author did a good job of describing how it would look to a child. It was as tall as a church steeple.

. . . .

38 E Did you notice the girls were watching, and they wanted to go, but they couldn't.

[Pause]

39 E The boys went out with it. They stayed out all night with it.

40 D You wonder why the boys were staying out all night.

41 A Well, whoever it was written for, it was obviously from their point of view, from the boys' point of view. And I thought it was real cute when they said, "Damn this town anyway. The giraffe can't live here."

Excerpt 26 begins with a response of Literary Judgment, then uses a fact from the story to justify her statement. Responses 38 and 39 are factual statements about the plot. Response 40 is asking for an inference about characters' motive. Excerpt 41 contains a Factual statement about the point of view and a Literary Judgment statement concerning the author's choice of words in the final paragraph of the story.

Miscellaneous responses included the following utterances:

32 A Unhuh. But also, its from . . . .

34 A Well, I was interested in it because, you know, they use Scholastics a lot, you know, and the Voice magazine and a lot of those.

67 A You know.

### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

The researcher developed a list of story strands that might be discussed in a small group discussion. The items checked are the story strands that were at least touched on in this discussion.

1. How the giraffe came to be in the town X
2. The boys' description of the giraffe X
3. The reaction of the townspeople to the giraffe X
4. The effects of the weather in a strange climate on the giraffe X
5. Sheltering the giraffe in the church X
6. Priest's understanding of the boys and the giraffe
7. People's hatred of something new and different X
8. People's fear of something new and different X
9. Death of the giraffe as the death of newness and creativity X
10. Boys' realization that there was not room for new ideas in their society X
11. Death of innocence in the boys X
12. Symbolism of the giraffe

- a) could see above the rooftops - intellect or creativity of boys X
- b) head of giraffe in the dark skies - intellect or creativity obscured
- c) periscope of the boys - gave them a vision of great things

The story strands that were discussed by the adults but not on the list are these:

The setting of the story

Care and feeding of the giraffe

Literal cause of the giraffe's death

The discussion of "The Giraffe" was fairly comprehensive. The group dealt with literal elements of the story more than with symbolic and thematic elements. There were no repetitive responses in the discussion, but rather, the discussion flowed smoothly from subject to subject.

#### Length of the Responses

The average length of response measured in number of words per response, was slightly lower in the Factual and Miscellaneous subcategories than in the Inferential and Experiential subcategories. The Judgmental subcategory Literary Judgment responses were an average of 8.1 words per response, while the Experiential subcategory Other had responses that averaged 5.2 words per response. Aside from these two subcategories, Inferential and Experiential responses were longer than Factual and Miscellaneous responses. The average Factual Point of View response was derived from one lengthy statement about the point of view

Table C2

Average Length of Individual and Total Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
"The Giraffe"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual									11.7
Plot					8.0			8.3	
Setting	14.0			7.0	7.0			9.3	
Character	13.0		4.0	9.0	12.5		15.5	11.6	
Style									
Point of View	20.0							20.0	
Inferential									11.8
Theme	15.0			14.2				14.4	
Intent of Author	17.8			10.0				11.1	
Character	9.2		9.3	11.7	8.0		13.7	10.4	
Morals									
Other	18.0				8.0		6.0	11.6	
Experiential									11.8
Personal	13.7			5.3			10.5	12.3	
Other	12.3				2.0			11.3	
Literature									
Television									
Other	21.0							5.2	
Judgmental									10.9
Literary Judgment	15.8	7.3		8.0	14.0			8.1	
Prescriptive Judgment									
Miscellaneous	9.0				5.0				8.3

from which the story was written (please see Table C2).

Examination of the average length of all responses shows very little difference between the Factual, Inferential, Experiential, and Judgmental categories. Miscellaneous responses were shorter than other kinds of responses.

#### The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

There were no Inappropriate responses nor incorrect comments about factual items in this discussion.

#### Breadth of Participation

In this discussion, as in Ross's study (1977), three discussants A, D, and did most of the talking (please see Table C3). A spoke more times and at greater length than the others. Group members seemed to look to A for approval of their responses. D and contributed almost equally to the discussion. The comments of B, C, and G were quite appropriate, though fewer in number than those of A, D, and E. F made no responses in this discussion, probably because she arrived twenty minutes late and the others were about five minutes into the discussion when she arrived.

#### Analysis of the Adult Discussion of "Indian Camp"

#### Kinds of Response in Each Category

The discussion of Hemingway's "Indian Camp" lasted twenty-three minutes. This discussion began with several

Table C3

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
"The Giraffe"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Totals
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot	1				6			7
Setting	1			1	1			3
Character	10		1	1	2		4	18
Style								
Point of View	1							1
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	2			5				7
Intent of Author	5			2				7
Character	13		3	10	1		3	30
Morals								
Other	2				2		1	5
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	24			3			6	33
Other Literature	9				1			10
Television								
Other	4				1			5
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary	9	4		5	5			23
Judgment								
Prescriptive								
Judgment								
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	5				1			6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>155</b>

responses of Literary Judgment because, of course, all group members were familiar with Hemingway's works.

1 E There are so many parodies of Hemingway. To read a Hemingway story is interesting.

2 B I had a much easier time reading this one than the last one. I don't know if it was the author, or what. . . .

3 A I think the author has a lot to do with it.

(Pause)

4 A It's easier, too, even though it's more fun to read dialog. It's easier, faster to read than description, you know, paragraphs. . . The first part of this is pretty descriptive. Most of this story . . . .

These statements of Literary Judgment are concerned with the author's style but could not be coded as Factual Style because they were opinions of the respondents. The only comment coded Factual Style was A's "The first part of this is pretty descriptive."

In this discussion, as in the discussion of "The Giraffe," there were more Inferential responses in the subcategory Character. Of a total of 132 Inferential responses, 104 of them concerned characters in the story (please see Table C4).

21 A Well, I'm sure that even though he doesn't say why the man killed himself, don't you all feel that you know why he killed himself?

22 D Why did he kill himself?

23 G Yeah, why did he kill himself?

24 A I think that he killed himself because when he

Table C4

Percentage of Responses in Each Category and Subcategory  
"Indian Camp"

Subcategory		Category
Factual		20%
Plot	3%	
Setting	2%	
Character	13%	
Style	2%	
Point of View	0%	
Inferential		32%
Theme	-*	
Intent of Author	4%	
Character	32%	
Other	4%	
Experiential		32%
Personal	12%	
Other Literature	1%	
Television	0%	
Other	10%	
Judgmental		8%
Literary Judgment	5%	
Prescriptive Judgment	3%	
Miscellaneous	10%	10%
Total	101%**	100%

\* Less than one percent.

\*\*This figure is due to rounding the percentages.



saw the doctor make an incision for the Caesarian operation, he thought possibly the doctor was killing his wife.

25 E Especially without anesthetic. . . . That would take a pretty strong man.

26 A That's right. Maybe he thought, even though he seemed very calm, that, you know, in the order of things, he wasn't going to live.

27 D Wasn't the father on the top of a bunk, though? Where he couldn't see. . . .

28 A Well, it says he turned over, too, with his face to the wall.

29 D With his face to the wall.

(Pause)

30 D Well, you know, too, that he had been lying there for two days listening to her scream.

31 E And he had that injury, too. And that . . . .

32 A So maybe he did.

33 E He was shocked.

34 A Maybe he did it because of his own depression.

35 C You know at the time he could have developed gangrene in that foot, too.

36 E Yeah.

37 A I thought . . . .

38 F I think he killed himself because he had caused his wife so much pain.

39 D Yeah, I think it was listening to her scream.

This portion of the discussion is made up principally of inferences about why the Indian killed himself.

Utterance 25 E's "Especially without anesthetic" is a

Factual statement as are 27 D, 28 A, 29 D, and 31 E.

Response 35 C is an Experiential Personal statement because the story gives no hint of a gangrenous infection. The other responses cited above are inferences about the Indian father's reasons for committing suicide.

There were few responses that dealt with the author's intent. An example of a response that was coded Inferential Author's Intent is this:

110A Hemingway always gives you a good look into people's personalities, or at least makes you think about them. Terrible inner-battle of The Old Man and the Sea.

The statement was made after a discussion of the doctor's arrogance and his attitude toward Indians. A seems to imply here that the doctor was a compassionate man on the one hand since he saved the Indian woman and her baby, and a bigot on the other because he referred to her as a "Damn squaw." A does not pursue this idea and the group turns to trying to decide Nick's age.

Two responses were coded as dealing with possible themes in the story.

17 G Birth and death.

. . . .

73 D This is victory and when the guy died, it was his defeat, too.

Before G's statement, A had talked about the implications of Nick's father wanting Nick to watch the

birth and then rushing him from the room when the doctor discovered the suicide. D's response was made after a discussion of the doctor's saving the Indian woman's life with nothing but a knife and fishing line. The group had agreed that the doctor was "showing off" for his son. After D's remark, they began to speculate about where George had gone.

The responses coded as Inferential Other concerned the setting.

147 A Another thing, you know you said gangrene, and I thought well, you know, just maybe something that you'd just say that could be. But I remember reading this thing, but now this could be the cause. They said the room smelled very bad. I was just thinking of unwashed bodies, closed up things, and fires, and things like that. But maybe it was gangrene.

. . . .

149 F It's also not going to smell very good from the birth, either.

As A speculated about the cause of the bad smell in the room, she returned to C's earlier comment about gangrene. The only portion of A's utterance that was coded Inferential Other is this: "I was just thinking. . . and things like that." This part of her rather long utterance can be inferred from the story, as can F's response.

Personal Experiential responses were the most frequently offered Experiential comments.

63 G I know this whole area up here. They're very poor and they feel like, they probably feel like

the white people are cruel and exploit them terribly like they do everywhere.

G related his personal knowledge of the northern Michigan lake area and the Indians who live there.

As previously cited, A made reference to Other Literature in her comment about the terrible inner-battle of the old man against himself.

There were no Experiential Television responses.

Several responses were coded Experiential Other. In discussing the Indian man's suicide, the discussants relied heavily on their experience. A had suggested that the man might have accidentally rolled over on a straight razor that he had been using to work on his sore leg.

182 F He wouldn't have kept rolling right over.

183 D Yeah.

184 F He would have jumped out.

185 A But, but, but would you do a whole ear to ear on yourself?

186 D Yeah.

187 F Indians especially. When they do it, they do it whole hog.

190 D Yeah. Like the Japanese mentality.

(laughter)

191 B Yeah. Lie down on your sword.

In these excerpts, the group members were applying their own knowledge about suicide to the situation in the

story.

Examples of Literary Judgment were cited at the beginning of this description of the discussion of "Indian Camp." Several Prescriptive Judgment responses were offered in this discussion.

211 G Yeah, I wonder why he didn't give the wife some liquor.

212 D Yeah, really.

Miscellaneous responses included such statements or fragments as these:

37 A I thought. . . .

. . . .

57 B This guy . . . .

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

Comprehensiveness of the discussion is gauged by how extensively the discussants cover a list of story strands developed by the researcher. Story strands that emerged during the discussion were added to the list. The items checked are the ideas that were at least mentioned by the group.

1. Isolation of the Indian camp parallel to the isolation of the incident in Nick's life
2. Poverty of the Indians X
3. Indian woman's suffering X
4. Seeming indifference of the other Indians to the woman's plight X
5. Nick's seeming indifference to the operation his

- father was performing X
6. Indian woman's husband's suicide X
  7. Nick's reaction to the events of the evening X
  8. What Nick learned about birth and death
  9. Tranquility and permanance of nature after the traumatic experiences of the evening
  10. Symbolic seating arrangement in the canoe: Nick leans against his father and father's arm is around Nick as they go to the camp. Nick is seated alone at the back of the canoe as they return.
  11. Nick's feeling of immortality as they return home
  12. Nick as a typical adolescent

This group focused their discussion more on the doctor's attitude and the possible reasons for the Indian's suicide than on the effects of the evening's activities on Nick. To be added to the researcher's list are these topics:

The doctor's attitude

Isolation of the Indian camp

Reasons for the Indian's suicide

The group's discussion of "Indian Camp" was not comprehensive. They only mentioned Nick nine times. The first mention was of the significance of his name when A said, "I don't think you'd have a boy named Nick then. Nick is a kind of . . . ." A mentioned Nick again at utterance 79:

79 A I kinda get the impression that the censure (?) kinda, you know, as far as I felt about the

doctor, was that the boy was concerned about the woman's feelings and about her screams and the doctor said, "That doesn't bother me. . . ."

Several responses were devoted to trying to determine Nick's age.

111 E How old do you suppose Nick was?

112 D Fairly young since he was in his father's arms.

113 A Yeah.

114 E . . . His actions were childish  
(indistinguishable)

115 D Especially if this was way back when the father was kinda arrogant macho-type guy. He wouldn't put his arms around him unless something terrible  
. . . .

As D's response turns toward the strong patriarchal figure, the discussion moves to the suicide of the Indian as a failure on the doctor's part.

C merely mentioned Nick's name as a point of reference in this utterance:

146 C Well, when the father tells Nick, "No I haven't any anesthetic. Her screams are not important. I don't hear them because they're not important." And then the husband in the upper bunk rolled over against the wall. . . .

Nick is mentioned again at utterance 171, but to show how uncaring the father was, not to focus on Nick's character.

171 E But to bring a child in, you know, without an explanation. I mean, what would Nick think about it? He doesn't seem to let that faze him a bit. He just thinks he's going to be a great doctor like me. I won't let a little thing like this

bother me.

A was concerned about Nick's reaction to the Caesarian.

172 A You notice that, I would say that one way to show that Nick was very young was that there, constantly the statement is made that Nick didn't look at it, and Nick didn't watch, and Nick wasn't interested. I think Nick was pretty, I don't think Nick wanted to know what was happening to this woman, because he was, he was worried about her screams. He just didn't want to see what was going on that would make somebody hurt that, you know, hurt like that.

In general, the responses that were about Nick dealt with his age, his reaction to the birth, and his father's uncaring attitude toward Nick. The group apparently got so caught up in the birth and the death and the doctor's role that they seemed to see Nick as a bystander or a character of not much importance. In this discussion, as in the discussion of "The Giraffe," a greater number of responses were about characters and few responses dealt with theme or symbolism.

#### Length of the Responses

In looking at the average length of individual responses (please see Table C5), A's responses were generally longer than the responses of the other discussants. C averaged 34 words in Inferential Character responses. She made only one response concerning character, however, and this response was composed of 34 words.

The average length of all responses by subcategory



Table C5

Average Length of Individual and Total Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
"Indian Camp"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual									8.0
Plot			15.0	10.6	4.8		8.0	8.9	
Setting	7.0			5.0	11.0			7.7	
Character	8.4		9.3	7.8	6.5	8.3	6.0	7.5	
Style			4.5					4.5	
Inferential									8.9
Theme	15.0			11.0			3.0	7.0	
Intent of Author	6.7			9.6		10.5		8.4	
Character	13.3	34.0		10.6	9.1	11.0	8.8	8.2	
Morals									
Other	10.4	4.0		13.0	1.0	12.0		9.0	
Experiential									10.5
Personal	10.6			16.5	8.0		7.0	10.2	
Other	12.0							12.0	
Literature									
Television									
Other	10.8	2.0	12.5	8.5	12.5	9.6		10.0	
Judgmental									9.0
Literary Judgment	12.7	11.0		6.3	7.0		15.0	9.7	
Prescrip- tive Judg- ment	14.7			3.4	6.0		10.5	8.5	
Miscellaneous	4.9	4.0	5.0	4.2	2.0	6.0	2.0	4.4	4.3

shows Experiential Personal responses to be the longest at 10.2 words per response, and the shortest are Miscellaneous responses at 4.3 words per response.

#### Nature of the Inappropriate Comments

Only two comments were coded Inappropriate in this discussion. F had been commenting on her husband's guilt feelings when she was in labor during the birth of her son to substantiate the response of A, who didn't believe that men felt guilty at causing their wives pain, pertinent to guilt as a possible motive for the Indian's suicide.

51 F Yes, he felt guilty. When I was in the middle of my labor, he felt guilty. He said he wished he could have the pain right then.

52 B And you said, "So do I."

53 F Exactly! And a few other words. At the end I went "RRRRRRR" [to simulate a growl].

The responses in utterance 51 F were coded as Experiential Personal Appropriate. B's and F's responses were coded as Experiential Personal Inappropriate because they could not be construed as affirming the guilt feelings of the Indian woman's husband.

#### Breadth of Participation

Examination of Table C6 shows that all the discussants participated in this discussion. A, D, and E, however, again made more responses than B, C, F, and G, with making the fewest responses. did not appear ill at ease in the

group, and the responses she did make were pertinent to the subject under discussion.

#### Change of Mind by a Discussant

A considered C's comment about the possibility of gangrene at utterance 35. Much later in the discussion at utterance 147, A said, "Another thing, you know you said gangrene, and I thought well, you know, just maybe something that you'd just say that could be." It seems that A changed her mind from "unwashed bodies, closed up things, and fires, and things like that" to gangrene as the cause of the terrible stench that permeated the room. A concluded with, "But maybe it was gangrene."

Although the group was discussing the cause of the Indian's suicide when C offered utterance 35, A kept the idea, considered it, and accepted it as a probable cause at utterance 147.

#### Analysis of the Adult Discussion of

#### "On the Sidewalk Bleeding"

#### Kinds of Responses in Each Category

The discussion of "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" was the briefest of the four adult discussions, lasting fifteen minutes. C began the discussion with Judgmental response.

- 1 C It's depressing.
- 2 D That's what I was going to say. It's really depressing. A horrible story.

Table C6

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
"Indian Camp"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Totals
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot			2	3	4		1	10
Setting	1			2	1		2	6
Character	14		6	11	9	4	1	45
Style	2							2
Point of View								
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme				1			1	2
Intent of Author	6			5		2		13
Character	32	1		37	25	5	4	104
Morals								
Other	7	2		2	1	1	1	14
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	14			4	6	4	7	35
Other Literature	1							1
Television								
Other	9	2	3	10	2	8		34
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary Judgment	7	2		3	4		1	17
Prescriptive Judgment	3			5	1		2	11
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	10	2	1	6	1	3	1	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>318</b>

- 3 F It seems to me that the author must have had a very close call to death to have written that description. It sounds like he's been close himself. Or else has read a lot of descriptions of people that are dying.

All of the above responses were coded Literary Judgment. Although F's responses are speculations about the author's life, F's thoughts are the result of having read the author's description of Andy's death, so in this sense, the responses are Judgmental. There were no Prescriptive Judgment responses in this discussion. (Please see Table C7.)

Factual responses concerning the setting and plot revolve around the definition of a jump.

26 C I know I'm getting old, but what's a jump.

27 A It's a dance.

28 C A dance?

29 A Un huh.

32 C He left the jump.

33 E Just left the jump.

C's question "but what's a jump?" was coded as Factual Setting as were 17 A, 28 C, and 29 A. C's utterance 32 and E's utterance 33 were coded Factual Plot. There were other brief Factual responses about plot and setting, but they were used for clarification as were the Factual comments cited here.

The Factual comments that concerned the character are

Table C7

Percentage of Responses in Each Category and Subcategory  
"On the Sidewalk Bleeding"

Subcategory		Category
Factual		22%
Plot	3%	
Setting	8%	
Character	6%	
Style	5%	
Point of View	-*	
Inferential		30%
Theme	12%	
Intent of Author	2%	
Character	10%	
Morals	0%	
Other	2%	
Experiential		26%
Personal	16%	
Other Literature	8%	
Television	1%	
Other	5%	
Judgmental		19%
Literary Judgment	18%	
Prescriptive Judgment	0%	
Miscellaneous		3%
Total		99%** 100%

\*Less than one percent.

\*\*This figure is due to rounding the percentages.

in the nature of describing his injury.

40 D And too, it said the blood was in his mouth . . .

41 A Okay, all right, they could all right. He couldn't say anything. . . .

42 E There's a noise later.

43 A Yeah.

44 D Not much.

45 E The kids heard some kind of noise.

46 D At the beginning he didn't realize that he was able to. He thought, "Why, why can't I speak, why can't. . . ?"

47 E He was just lying there.

The Factual responses led into a few remarks about the unwillingness or inability of the people who entered the alley to help the dying Andy.

This utterance represents Factual Style responses:

22 D You know, this has a real vivid imagery. You don't like the story because it's depressing, but you can look back and really feel like you were lying in the rain.

Only the first response, "You know, this has real vivid imagery" was coded as Factual Style. The other two responses in that utterance were coded Literary Judgment.

Twenty-five of the Inferential responses in this discussion dealt with theme.

80 E I don't know, it was really pointed there at the end. He wanted to be known as a person. At first, he probably got in the group like that because he wanted to be a part of the group, but

now he wants the individuality, and at the end, even though he started to take the jacket off, they still said no.

. . . .

86 E You are torn between wanting to be like everybody else and wanting to be different from everybody else.

87 G Right.

88 A And the big thing is that it's so sad that something, somebody, some event or your parents or father hasn't convinced you somewhere along the line that you are, no matter what you are, you are something. Some person. You are different from everybody else.

. . . .

90 D Especially since teenagers, they define themselves so much by material things and titles, and you know, it's not "I'm a certain person," but it's following a track and that's who I am.

The above responses and several others examined Andy's desire for individuality when he realized he was dying, not because he was Andy, but because he was a Royal.

D's response to a comment about Andy's death as Hunter portrayed it was, "We can look and see what's meaningful." This was coded as Inferential Intent of Author because D had just made the Literary Judgment "But it's a revelation to the reader, you know." She is implying that the author intended for the reader to examine his or her life situation and determine what is important and what is not.

Inferential responses about the character include these:



96 D . . . and I think that he might, it's probably just as remarkable that he would think, if he did think about it, what was his life . . .

97 E They didn't know him. They just saw his jacket.

The responses above are inferences about the character's thoughts and the reason he was stabbed.

One set of Experiential Personal responses was offered because the importance of the Royals jacket to Andy reminded her of a similar situation in her own girlhood.

88 A . . . But that doesn't keep you from, I wanted to, you know, go along with the crowd, or be with a crowd, just like we all did. When we were talking about the long skirts, the loafers. the white socks, the black long skirts and the bulky sweaters, and she was so tiny that her dream was to get her mother to please let her get one of those big bulky sweaters. And she said when I finally got it, the sweater came down to there [gestures] and it folded back this way, and she said, but I was in heaven.

A switches person from we to she to I, but she seems to be referring to her own girlhood when she wanted and got the "in" clothes for adolescent girls, just as Andy wanted and got the Royals jacket.

Several Experiential responses compared "On the Sidewalk Bleeding" to other works by Hunter.

4 E Well, you know, a scene very similar was in his novel called Sons. And it has people from World War I, World War II, and then the one that goes to Viet Nam is killed and is dying there in the jungle and it's very similar, the young person dying in such a waste of life and everything.

. . . .

56 E That's the most recent, and I believe he's the

one who wrote a book based on the Rosenberg trial, a fictional account of that. It's called The Book of Daniel.

Four was coded as Experiential Other Literature because of the scene in Viet Nam and Andy's death. Fifty-six was coded as Experiential Other because, although it is another literary work by Hunter, it is not used as a reference point for "On the Sidewalk Bleeding."

In this discussion there were three Experiential Television responses. A said, "We watched All the President's Men the other night. I'd never seen the movie, and I was interested." These three responses, a part of a larger utterance, were inappropriate to the discussion, as will be discussed later.

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

The items checked on the list of story strands are the ones that were at least mentioned in the discussion.

1. Andy's age
2. Importance of Andy's membership in the Royals X
3. Freddie and Angela's not helping Andy X
4. Drunk man not helping Andy X
5. Old lady not helping Andy X
6. Andy's philosophical approach to death
7. Symbolic significance of the jacket X
8. Sacrifices necessary for becoming a member of a group X

9. The desire to belong as a typical human desire X
10. Symbolic significance of Andy's removing the jacketX
11. Symbolism of the spring season as it relates to Andy
12. Tragedy of Andy's death in his youth
13. Indifference of the policeman to Andy's individuality X
14. The danger of gangs X

The one element of the story the group discussed that was not on the researcher's list was this:

The amount of time it took Laura to come looking for Andy

#### Length of Responses

The unusually high average length of A's Factual Plot response, G's Inferential Theme response, and C's Inferential Character response is based on one response for each. The length of response is consistently greater in the Inferential category in this discussion. (Please see Table C8.) Factual and Miscellaneous responses were generally shorter than Inferential, Experiential, and Judgmental responses. In the average length of all responses, Inferential, Experiential, and Judgmental responses average 8.5 to 9.3 words per response; Factual responses average 6 words per response; and Miscellaneous responses average 4.1 words per response.

Table C8

Average Length of Individual and Total Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
"On the Sidewalk Bleeding"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual									6.0
Plot	14.0		3.0	7.0	7.5			7.0	
Setting	6.7		6.0	6.5	6.7		4.0	6.4	
Character	1.7			8.0	6.3			5.6	
Style	6.0			8.0	10.7			9.2	
Point of View				15.0				15.0	
Inferential									8.5
Theme	13.8			11.8	11.8		22.0	9.0	
Intent of Author	16.5			10.3				14.8	
Morals									
Character	5.0	1.0	18.0	13.7	8.0		10.2	8.9	
Other				8.5	3.5		6.0	6.0	
Experiential									8.8
Personal	9.9			7.0	12.7			9.2	
Other	9.5			1.0	9.6			9.7	
Literature									
Television	6.0							6.0	
Other				7.0	10.0	4.0	2.0	6.2	
Judgmental									9.3
Literary	12.2	3.0	14.3	6.9	7.4	11.8	1.0	8.8	
Judgment									
Prescriptive									
Judgment									
Miscellaneous	5.0			2.5	2.0	5.0		4.1	4.1

The Nature of Inappropriate Comments

Inappropriate comments were introduced as E and A discussed other works attributed to Evan Hunter.

55 E Well, he had one that one was called Sons, and that was real good.

(Pause)

56 E And he has a more recent one, I don't remember the name of it, but it was about a New England school or something, but I didn't like it at all.

57 A Unhuh.

58 E That's the most recent, and I believe he's the one who wrote a book based on the Rosenberg trial, a fictional account of that. It's called The Book of Daniel.

59 A Oh, yes.

60 E And that's an excellent book.

(Pause)

61 E But I've never read any of his short stories.

(Pause)

62 E I think...

63 A Two little things aside from this. We watched All the President's Men the other night. I'd never seen the movie. And I was interested. I don't buy a Washington Post. Does anybody know if those two journalists work for the Washington Post? What were their names? Charlie...

64 G Bernstein and. . . .

65 A Bernstein and what?

66 F No, I don't think so.

(Pause)

67 F Berstein and Woodlig.

68 A Do they still, are they still...?

69 F I don't think so.

70 E They're making too much money in lecturing.

71 A Well, probably.

72 D One of them is still a journalist. I assume he's working for the paper.

(Pause)

73 D Basically, I like the difference in his point of view and the kid that died.

In the portion of the discussion cited above, E's comment about Sons was appropriate as discussed earlier. She did, however, begin to talk of other Hunter works that had no similarity to "On the Sidewalk Bleeding." E's reference to The Book of Daniel reminded A of All the President's Men, a television movie she had seen recently. D brought the discussion back to the story with her Literary Judgment comment about the point of view of "On the Sidewalk Bleeding." The Book of Daniel was written by E. L. Doctorow, not Evan Hunter.

Twenty-eight or 10% of the responses in this discussion were coded inappropriate.

#### Breadth of Participation

Again, A, D, and were the chief discussants, while B, C, F, and G made occasional appropriate comments. It is

interesting to note that in the discussion of theme, A, D, and each made eight comments and G was the only other person to make any response at all concerning the theme. Again in Literary Judgment, A, D, and made the same number of responses--ten, but in this subcategory all members of the group contributed at least one time. (Please see Table C9.)

Analysis of the Adult Discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy"  
Kinds of Responses in Each Category

The discussion of Richard Brautigan's "Greyhound Tragedy" lasted for eighteen minutes and began, as did the discussions of "Indian Camp" and "On the Sidewalk Bleeding," with responses of Literary Judgment. (Please see Table C10.)

1 E It's got some good lines.

Several Unhuh.

2 B This is typical of him.

Several Yeah.

3 F If you like him, you should read some of his books.

4 A You can like something, like something like this for a couple of times and then it gets old. It's like who wrote The Grass is Always Greener over the Septic Tank?

5 B Erma Bombeck.

6 A Erma Bombeck. Erma Bombeck is Erma Bombeck.

7 E It's good in small doses.

8 A Yeah.

Table C9

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
"On the Sidewalk Bleeding"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Totals
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot	2		1	2	2			7
Setting	3		2	4	6		1	16
Character	5			4	4			13
Style	6			1	3			10
Point of View				1				1
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	8			8	8		1	25
Intent of Author	2			3				5
Character	1	1	1	11	4		3	21
Morals								
Other				2	2		1	5
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	20			7	3		1	31
Other Literature	2			1	14			17
Television	3							3
Other				2	3	4	1	10
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary Judgment	10	1	2	10	10	4	1	38
Prescriptive Judgment								
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	1			2	3	1		7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>209</b>



Table C10

Percentage of Responses in Each Category and Subcategory  
"Greyhound Tragedy"

	Subcategory	Category
Factual		8%
	Plot	
	Setting	1%
	Character	6%
	Style	1%
	Point of View	0%
Inferential		26%
	Theme	1%
	Intent of Author	10%
	Character	14%
	Morals	0%
	Other	0%
Experiential		50%
	Personal	32%
	Other Literature	5%
	Television	0%
	Other	14%
Judgmental		14%
	Literary Judgment	11%
	Prescriptive Judgment	2%
Miscellaneous		2%
Total	99%*	100%

\*This figure is due to rounding the percentages.

9 E I wouldn't sit down and read a whole book of this.

The responses cited above are coded as Literary Judgment and Inferential Other Literature because, though Bombeck's book has nothing to do with the subject or plot of "Greyhound Tragedy," the humorous satirical style of Brautigan and Bombeck is similar.

Prescriptive Judgment responses were in the form of what the main character could have done.

28 D . . . She could say, "I'm going on a vacation. I want to see it."

29 Or she could call and not have to explain who...

30 D Yeah.

31 C tell who she was.

These remarks refer to the inner conflict of the main character who found it impossible to ask the price of a Greyhound ticket to Hollywood.

The Factual statements about the setting had to do with the time the story took place.

134 G This was written in the 1930's, 1937, 1938.

135 D Yeah.

Factual Character responses were intertwined among Inferential Character responses to verify the inferences.

55 A Her mother was a nitwit--that's what I think.

56 E That's like her memory pooped out at 11:30.

57 A That she baked real fancy if the recipes were simple. Right there was a description of the mother.

Factual responses are 56 and the first sentence of 57 A, used to support the inference about the mother's intelligence.

A Factual Style response by A was: "It had some puns."

Inferential Theme responses were brief.

106 A Evidently there are evidently a lot of dreams that have died, or haven't died at all, or you wouldn't have a lot of marriage break-ups, people taking off or walking out, heading for parts unknown. There must be something inside, there must be something they're looking for. Maybe, as Dorothy said, it's all in her own backyard.

The first independent clause above was coded Inferential Theme. The second independent clause was coded as Experiential Personal. "There must be something . . . they're looking for." was coded as Inferential Theme. The last sentence is coded as Experiential Other Literature.

Author's Intent responses were interwoven with Literary Judgment responses.

32 A You know, the thing that struck me--the story was funny, or was cute, it had puns, and I thought the writer was a good writer until I got to one sentence here, and I thought what sense does that make. Of course, I realize he's not trying to make sense. You could, the part about the suitcases, the old couple that was in the bus station.

33 G Unhun.

34 D Oh, yeah.

35 A They now wanted to be heard, and their suitcase was like a burned out light bulb. There are a million things you could have compared an old suitcase to besides a burned out light bulb. What in the world?

36 E I know. It caught your attention.

The response, "Of course, I realize he's not trying to make sense," was coded Inferential Author's Intent, as was the following sentence in 32 A where A seemed to be explaining what she meant. In 35 A the first two independent clauses pursue the explanation of A's statement that the author wasn't trying to make sense. "There are a million things you could have compared an old suitcase to besides a burned out lightbulb" was coded as Prescriptive Judgment and the question "What in the world?" is an Inferential Author's Intent response. E's "It caught your attention" was offered as an explanation of the author's intent at choosing the metaphor.

Several of the Inferential Character responses dealt with whether or not the character was happy in her marriage.

89 G The last paragraph was pretty good. She married the guy, has two kids and a new car every year. She settled for it.

90 A Settled for what?

[Pause]

91 A Settled for what people call the good life because she never got to Hollywood. . . .

92 D You wonder if she, there's one thing I wonder, was she happy with this? Or was she always . . .

93 G Yeah. It didn't say.

94 D I mean, did she really accept and go on to be a happy mother and wife and like her community, or do you think she was always miserable?

(Pause)

95 D Always a part of her wanting to have gone to Hollywood, and always when she was young. . .

96 E She didn't strike me as having so much depth that she'd worry about it.

97 D That's true.

98 A Amen to that!

Beginning with 89 G "She settled for it," the responses cited above are Inferences about the character's life after her abortive effort to find out the price of a ticket to Hollywood.

No responses were coded as Inferential Moral or Inferential Other.

Some of the Experiential Personal responses focused on the dreams of individuals in a small town.

68 D Everyone born in a small town has dreams of being bigger, or moving away, and it always falls in and you end up being there anyway. You know, you . . .

69 F You're always afraid, not always, but a lot are afraid to venture out and test the waters.

70 D Well, it's such an ordeal to get out of town.

D's responses reflect her own brief move to another part of the country and her return to her hometown and are appropriate in the discussion of "Greyhound Tragedy."

In making reference to other works of literature, A continues with Experiential Personal responses, bringing in the other works.

71 A But you know, it's funny, the things we would relate to when we were growing up more and more the population cannot relate to. Like Our Town, Spoon River Anthology, this type of thing. There are so many people that just miss. . . .

. . . .

101 G You know that Harry Chapin song with the taxi. . . .

102 D Yeah.

103 G . . . he drives up in his taxi and she's a big, she's a rich. . . . They're high school sweethearts.

104 D Yeah.

105 F She had to be in love with him at the start.

G had begun to draw an analogy between the main character and the lyrics to a song, but the discussion veered off to dreams that died and G dropped his subject.

Experiential Other responses usually dealt with generalizations that could apply to the girl in the story in this discussion.

108 A More and more I realize that those people, and isn't it funny, you don't hear about it in the world of politics or leaders as much as you hear it in the world of performers. Those people who set their sights, Dolly Parton. All those singers and performers that say this is all I've wanted to do and by the time they were fifteen . . . .

109 E Well, that's what it takes to succeed in that

kind of business. It's dog eat dog, and if . . .

110 A But that's what it takes to succeed in anything.

These Experiential responses apply to the girl in a negative way. She lacked the ambition or strength of determination that the kind of performers spoken of above possessed.

Responses coded Miscellaneous included the following:

72 A . . . But so many people now aren't, can't even, the young people . . . .

. . . .

52 E Yeah, but . . . .

#### Comprehensiveness of the Discussion

The story strands checked on the list are the ones mentioned or discussed by the group.

1. The girl's dream for her future X
2. The girl's reluctance to find a way out of her present circumstances X
3. The girl's prospective husband X
4. Mother's oblivion to almost everything in life X
5. Father's hints that the girl should do something with her life X
6. Girl's visit to the bus station X
7. Girl's inability to act at the bus station X
8. Girl drifts into marriage with the Ford salesman X
9. Girl's inability to cope with the real world X
10. The story as a tragedy X

## 11. Metaphors in the story:

- a) movies as a religion X
- b) movie magazines as Bible
- c) suitcases as burned-out light bulbs X

Story strands to be added to the researcher's list:

Story as picture of life in a small town

Girl's shallowness of character

The Depression as a backdrop for the story

Metaphor: Her face was red as an earthquake beet

The treatment of "Greyhound Tragedy" was the most comprehensive discussion of the four. Only one point in the researcher's list was not at least mentioned in the discussion--the metaphor of the movie magazines as the girl's bible. They did, however, refer twice to a metaphor not listed: Girl's face as red as an earthquake beet.

140 A Well, we never know whether she's plain or whether she's pretty, and there's a comment in here that nobody looked at her, though she could have rented herself out as an earthquake beet.

141 G What is an earthquake beet?

142 D I thought it was just they kept referring to her red face. I thought it just meant her face was red and she was nervous at how overwhelmed she was at asking for the price of a ticket.

The discussion for this story moved along briskly. As in the other discussions, there was no repetition of already stated ideas. There were no attempts in this discussion or any of the other three to summarize what had been said prior to moving to a new subject.



Length of Responses

The average length of Miscellaneous responses has shrunk to 1.4 in this discussion (please see Table C11). The average length of response in the Inferential, Experiential, and Judgmental categories was at least 1.4 words longer than Factual responses. In looking at the average length of individual responses, one of the higher averages is 14 in Literary Judgment. F, who had this average, was an avid admirer of Brautigan and had read some of his works in a college course. She was quite positive in her judgment of his work.

12 F Well, his books, they're not real thick but we had to read two of them for an English class when I was in college. It was just like unuh, unuh, unuh, [to simulate a repetitive sound] the same thing over and over. But when we sat down and talked about it in class with the teacher leading us, he really had a lot to say. We just have to be able to wade through all this stuff to get to the meat of it.

The other individual high averages were A's. A's speech mannerisms account, in part, for the length of her responses.

153 A You know, I heard too, that during the Depression, I guess to escape from reality maybe, that there was some more money, not money, because movies didn't cost that much,/ but people went to movies more in the Depression than they had at any other time./ And even after, you know, just as a form of escape./

The slash marks denote the break between responses.

Table C11

Average Length of Individual and Total Responses  
by Category and Subcategory  
"Greyhound Tragedy"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Sub- cate- gory	Cate- gory
Factual									8.4
Plot									
Setting				1.0			17.0	11.6	
Character	14.3		9.0	8.0	5.3		5.4	7.6	
Style	4.0				9.0			6.5	
Point of View									
Inferential									10.9
Theme	14.5			6.0		4.0		9.5	
Intent of Author	9.3			9.8	2.8	13.5		9.2	
Character	14.5	10.0	13.5	13.8	10.0	7.0		12.0	
Morals									
Other							7.0	7.0	
Experiential									9.8
Personal	12.1	14.0	10.0	7.8	9.0	8.3	8.6	10.1	
Other	8.4			5.0	5.0	11.0	7.0	7.6	
Literature									
Television									
Other	10.9	2.0	14.5		9.1		9.7	7.0	
Judgmental									9.8
Literary	8.5	5.0		3.7	9.3	14.0	3.5	10.9	
Judgment									
Prescrip- tive Judgment	9.5			4.6				7.8	
Miscellaneous	2.0			1.0	2.0			1.4	1.4

The responses cited here were coded Experiential Other. The number of extraneous words, especially in the first response, account for the large number of words per response.

### Nature of the Inappropriate Comments

A few remarks about the spectacular movies made in the late thirties and early forties led to this rather lengthy digression.

161 A Esther Williams and the big productions. You know, you see all these old movies and you say, "Look! Look! Everybody's in step and nobody's out of step. They just don't do that type of thing--it seems so corny now. But those were real shows, weren't they? Everybody was . . . nervous. . . Looked like ten million people on the stage.

162 C I wasn't impressed with . . . I saw Esther Williams in person once and still wasn't impressed with her.

163 A I guess I saw one or two Esther Williams movies.

164 C They have that, what do you call it, water ballet. . . .

165 A Unhun.

166 C In Lake Erie. It was a cold night, and they were pouring big vats of hot water in . . . .

(Laughter)

167 E . . . into Lake Erie.

(Laughter)

168 E It would take quite a big of hot water to heat up Lake Erie.

196 C Real story.

(Pause)

170 C Sort of an old, uh, framework around it, a pier or something, built around the stage. I thought it was the funniest thing I ever saw.

171 G That was when the water was pretty clean, probably.

172 E I was going to say, you couldn't swim down in it today.

(Pause)

173 E They'd walk on it today.

174 A Well, I think that was typical of the times.

The Inappropriate remarks cited above constitute the ending of the discussion. None of the members of the group attempted to steer the discussion back to the story.

C's responses concerning Esther Williams were coded Experiential Personal Inappropriate; the responses of A, G, and were coded Experiential Other Inappropriate. Of the 271 responses to "Greyhound Tragedy," 23 or 11.8% of the responses were Inappropriate.

#### Breadth of Participation

A and D responded about the same number of times in this discussion (please see Table C12). Though none of the discussions was balanced, the four less responsive members of the group did offer more comments in this discussion. It could have been that they were beginning to feel more comfortable with other members of the group, or it could

Table C12

Number of Responses by Subcategory for Each Discussant  
"Greyhound Tragedy"

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Totals
<b>Factual</b>								
Plot								
Setting				1			2	3
Character	3		2	1	4		7	17
Style	2				1			3
Point of View								
<b>Inferential</b>								
Theme	2			1		1		4
Intent of Author	11			12	4	2		29
Character	4	1	2	18	5	1		31
Morals								
Other								
<b>Experiential</b>								
Personal	27	3	7	32	8	3	7	87
Other Literature	5	2			1	2	4	14
Television								
Other	20			1	7		8	36
<b>Judgmental</b>								
Literary	13	5		3	6	3	2	32
Judgment								
Prescriptive	2			1	3			6
Judgment								
<b>Miscellaneous</b>								
	2			3	1			6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>217</b>

have been that the story appealed more to them than the other stories had.

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