
Literary Reading: Establishing a Classroom Culture of Inquiry Middle School, 8th Grade

**Project READI Curriculum Module
Technical Report CM #10**

Rick Coppola, MariAnne George and
Project READI Literature Team

PROJECT **READi**

inquirium



UIC
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

WestEd 

Citation for this Report: Coppola, R., George, M. & Project READI Literature Team. (2016). *Literary reading: Establishing a classroom culture of inquiry. Middle School, 8th Grade*. Project READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM #10. Retrieved from URL: www.projectreadi.org

With acknowledgement to the following members of the Project READI Literature Design Team: Carol Lee, Susan R. Goldman, Sarah Levine, Teresa Sosa, Allison Hall, Angela Fortune, Jessica Chambers, Jenny Gustavson, and Courtney Milligan.

Please send us comments, questions, etc.: info.projectreadi@gmail.com

Project READI was supported by the *Reading for Understanding (RFU)* initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education through Grant R305F100007 to the University of Illinois at Chicago from July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2016. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U. S. Department of Education.

Project READI operated as a multi-institution collaboration among the Learning Sciences Research Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago; Northern Illinois University; Northwestern University; WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative; and Inquirium, LLC. Project READI developed and researched interventions in collaboration with classroom teachers that were designed to improve reading comprehension through argumentation from multiple sources in literature, history, and the sciences appropriate for adolescent learners. Curriculum materials in the READI modules were developed based on enacted instruction and are intended as case examples of the READI approach to deep and meaningful disciplinary literacy and learning.

Establishing a Classroom Culture of Inquiry
Rick Coppola
READI Literature Design Team Teacher (Middle School)

Introduction:

I have been involved with Project READI since the first year of the project. Being a member of the Literature Design Team presented a unique opportunity, in being able to view the project from the lens of the researcher as well as classroom practitioner. In participating in ongoing dialogue about how to design modules to embody the design principles of the project, I piloted a variety of participation structures and strategies, in pursuit of more clearly defining how to create a classroom culture that empowered my students and supported them in this intellectual endeavor. What follows is a sampling of tips and strategies—by no means a script, but things to be mindful of as you think about launching the school year. Many of these tips will be practices you already employ, while others will hopefully support you as you create your own Project READI-like classroom. (See Appendix A-READI Literature Learning Goals)

Classroom Environment

Why it's Important:

Being mindful of the physical arrangement of the classroom space can serve to facilitate inquiry-based classrooms, where discussion and collaboration structures among students are supported and nurtured.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- The physical arrangement of my classroom reflects seating arrangements conducive to both pair share and small group discussion. In order to really create an environment where collaboration thrives, I strive to create more relaxed and comfortable seating options (tables rather than desks, beanbags, sofas, round tables, etc).
- In an effort to make students feel more at home in the classroom, I bring in plants, fabrics, and bright colors to make the environment feel more inviting and safe.
- I encourage students to sit where they want during the first few days to provide me with valuable anecdotal data regarding student interactions, while making the students feel more comfortable.
- Students, particularly at the middle school level, benefit from the ability to move around the room with a certain degree of freedom and autonomy. I allow students to get up and stretch, sharpen pencils, grab some tissue, or get a drink of water as simple measures to make students feel that the classroom is a shared environment.

Discipline Structures

Why it's Important:

Having strong classroom management is integral to the delivery of engaging inquiry-based discussion that respects the developmental location of all students while attending to academic as well as social-emotional needs.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- I normalize struggle with the adoption of a classroom golden rule: **“You may opt for help, you may opt for a break, you may opt for a second chance, but you may NEVER, EVER opt out.”**
- When students have some ownership in the creation of classroom norms, I have found that discipline issues can be greatly reduced. My students (working independently) generate a list of no more than five norms that the classroom should adhere to, complete with a series of consequences should those rules be violated. Upon completion, students share, while I scribe. At the activity’s end, the class works to negotiate a list of up to five norms. They are written on chart paper, and a contractual statement is attached to the bottom of the rules, which all students sign: *I promise to the best of my ability, to adhere to the rules we have created as a classroom community.* Additionally, a copy of the norms are printed for each student individually and they are sent home to parents, who are asked to sign verifying receipt of the norms and a commitment to assisting students realize the expectations they have helped to create.
- Enlisting the full partnership of parents can be a means to experience less issues with discipline, in addition to promoting consistent messaging of expectations. I send a welcome letter home to establish a positive tone, especially when followed up with a personal phone call to each caregiver. The phone call allows me to obtain cell phone numbers and email addresses, since having multiple channels to contact with parents is useful when the year gets more hectic.
- Consider different avenues to enlist parental support. An easy way to better understand the students is to send home a survey asking their parents, their first teachers, about their students’ strengths and areas of growth. Or, you may try a “Connect to the Curriculum” event or series of events. During these sessions, parents are exposed to the types of texts/tasks asked of their children. Making parents explicitly aware of the ways in which both standards and expectations have evolved helps to bridge the gap between parent and student. Providing parents with a copy of the Common Core Standards associated with the discipline being instructed reinforces the idea that there is a marked increase in expectations for all student learners, in order for them to be college and career ready.

Building the Classroom Culture

Why it’s Important:

Designing a dynamic learning environment that encourages active participation and the shared endeavor of high expectations for all is a most ambitious endeavor. Having a clearly articulated, descriptive roadmap in place from the beginning optimizes learning and engagement.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- In order to fulfill the promise of our classroom golden rule, I assume the pedagogical stance that since students are engaging in intellectually challenging work, that mistakes are part of the learning process. Students may have fossilized the behavior of simply refusing to complete a task when they do not understand or are unsure as to how to proceed. As the teacher, I model what it's like to struggle by sharing my own challenges with texts I am reading. Additionally, providing multiple opportunities for students to "get it right" or more closely approximate the expectations set forth really makes them feel that they have room to make mistakes and grow. Consistent mindfulness may be the difference between a resistant learner and a persistent learner.
- I foster and develop the notion that text is valuable and it adds to our lives. I reinforce the idea that texts (in whatever form they assume) help us understand something about ourselves, and the world we share with others. Making dictionaries and other reference materials available and accessible, as well as Google and other technological tools can send a powerful message that we have tools at our disposal to assist us making meaning.
- I encourage students to share their ideas about which texts to use, activities they like, etc, and solicit reflections on lessons, particularly what could have been handled differently. This helps make them feel they are a valuable stakeholder in the design and implementation of curriculum. As the year progresses, I continue to create opportunities for them to exercise some choice in curricular directions.
- Having a strong vision for where instruction will go is part of the vision required of a teacher in the creation of a unit plan. However, variance in students' abilities warrants flexibility and a willingness to adapt instruction as it unfolds. I try to be sensitive to those cues that create teachable moments where instruction can be differentiated in the moment to bring all learners on board.
- Almost immediately, my students get acclimated to analyzing data. I begin with the interest inventories, and have students create data tables/charts as well as reflect on what they've discovered. Do they agree? Disagree? Analyzing data early on is a means to promote shared accountability. When students (and parents) are made aware of their scores, their strengths and areas of improvement, they take the assessments more seriously and tend to see them as a challenge, rather than a source of stress. Also, in that vein, consider having students set realistic goals in a data folder that they maintain. Accountability measures are here to stay, so I have found that sharing the load can alleviate some of the pressure from teachers and distribute it more equitably to both students and parents.
- I apply the principle of shared accountability to initial work with small groups. Investing in some audio recorders or videotaping interactions of groups I am not working with makes my students realize that group work is not synonymous with break time. Listening to excerpts of the audio/video and providing some targeted feedback to groups reinforces

the idea I am everywhere, monitoring everything that is occurring in the room.

- I create multiple opportunities for students to showcase their thinking, either through academic and/or social channels to make all students feel more comfortable speaking in public. I look for topics that might engage even the most reluctant discussants to provide them with practice to voice their ideas. When faced with a larger number of students who are quiet, I use small groups and provide time for them to discuss their ideas away from the rest of the class, so they can build up their confidence. They may not get to the level of volunteering openly, but they will grow more comfortable when called on from time to time.
- I am constantly thinking of ways to increase the technological presence in the classroom and looking for ways to incorporate the tools of technology in my instructional design. Showing students important apps to download on smart phones and tablets can help bridge the gap between the worlds of home and school. Allowing the use of these apps when appropriate during instructional time can more authentically reflect the type of learning that takes places outside of the classroom, and can be a value resource to support literacy.
- Once a week, my students submit an anonymous comment to the “anything box,” where they are able to vent or let off steam, about the classroom, students, administration, their personal lives, etc. I provide students with norms that make you feel comfortable (i.e. three inappropriate comments and the anything box is closed for the week, a student can only respond if they are mentioned directly, no profanity, etc). I have found there’s a certain tension to navigate in the amount of freedom students are afforded while not undermining the safety of the classroom community.
- Overall, the norms that are established influence how the classroom culture takes shape and plays out for the duration of the year. Holding students accountable to the norms they’ve established, especially during the first few weeks is most critical for helping me to actualize the classroom culture I envision.

Interest Inventories/Informal Reading Assessments

Why it’s Important

When students feel that they matter, they assume a larger responsibility for their own learning, and the larger classroom community. Taking an active role in uncovering and discovering information about how your students learn, their interests, their strengths and struggles helps to reinforce the notion that they are dynamic human beings who matter.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- I provide students with a variety of interest inventories at the beginning of the year, in order to gain greater individual insights about them. These inventories include such topics as reading level, growth/fixed mindset analysis, interests both in and out of school, and their previous school experiences.

- I also get a *baseline* for where students are at in terms of their reading levels/fluency with informal reading assessments.
- **A TEXT TO OWN: Three Minute Reading Assessments Word Recognition Gr. 5-8** by Timothy Rasinski and Nancy Padak provides useful feedback regarding word recognition, fluency rate and expression, and comprehension. Each grade features four passages, which can be used for ongoing progress monitoring. The rubrics are easy to use, and are especially useful in developing a response to intervention (RTI) plan.

Inquiry Stance/Multiple Pathways

Why it's Important?

Acknowledging and making transparent the process of making meaning as a reader helps to turn the discipline into a journey of inquiry, an invitation for all to explore text, its affordances and challenges, en route to negotiating comprehension, particularly as students encounter more challenging, grade-level texts.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- Making the distinction between reading as decoding and reading for understanding is critical in the first few days of instruction. In the initial days, I unpack what it means to be a “good reader” as a way to elicit a lot of ideas from students as to what the phrase means to them. This initial activity can be framed as the initial exploration of taking a meta-cognitive stance, or thinking and reflecting on one’s thinking.
- **A TEXT TO OWN: Reading for Understanding: How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms** by Ruth Schoenbach, Cynthia Greenleaf and Lynn Murphy is a wonderful resource for getting started, not only on the Reading Apprenticeship Framework, but also in orienting students to the principles of metacognition in classroom practice.
- I work with students to develop a list of strategies they use to make meaning when reading. I document student thinking, adding to the list in the first few weeks of instruction.
- I have found that it’s effective to model taking a risk, by introducing students to a challenging piece of text you’re reading. I make my thinking transparent to show the work it takes to make meaning. My list isn’t exhaustive, but representative of the various dimensions to be mindful of when reading. Thinking aloud is one of the most valuable tools in my arsenal when acclimating students to a new skill or initiating them into a new routine. Next, I employ a challenging piece of text that I think my students might find intriguing. I revisit this anchor text once or twice throughout the year as a means to show students how far they’ve come along. Nothing motivates like success and growth, and there is a compelling argument for students to experience depth of coverage, rather than breadth of coverage, when it comes to reading texts.

- I invite students to take cognitive and intellectual risks through embracing divergent and multiple interpretations of a text, as long as they are grounded in evidence from the text.
- Working with the Project READI, I have developed a series of “go-to” inquiry based conversation stems. Simple wording can make the difference between a classroom that promotes inquiry and one that does not:

Question Stems That Promote Inquiry	Question Stems That Inhibit Inquiry
<i>What did you think?</i>	<i>Does anyone have anything to share?</i>
<i>What questions did you have as you read?</i>	<i>Does anyone have questions?</i>
<i>What parts did you find confusing? Why?</i>	<i>Was anyone confused as they read? Why?</i>
<i>Would you elaborate on your thinking, so we all could understand your thought process?</i>	<i>I don't understand what you're saying...</i>

- Consider providing students with a metacognitive bookmark (Reading for Understanding has an example), or develop your own, tailored to the strengths and needs of the students in your classroom.

Promoting Self-Accountability **Why it's Important**

As we move into a climate that focuses more on evidence-based teaching practice, with the Common Core Standards and teacher evaluation measures (e.g. Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching), it's valuable to be transparent with students about expectations, and establishing structures, which allow them to develop a sense of ownership for their learning.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- By having students participate in analyzing their interest inventory data and beginning of the year assessments, I have a lever to help the students understand why the tests are given, and what the data reveals about them as students. When students have a better sense of assessments, I have found they tend to be less frightened and more determined to demonstrate what they know, especially when they feel strongly that the content covered in class has given them a way to think through the language of standardized tests.
- I habituate students in taking a critical eye towards their work samples through developing and scoring rubrics, or reflecting on the success and areas of opportunity/growth after the completion of a lesson/activity. This can be an easy way for students to develop their metacognitive capacity as learners. Additionally, once students begin to realize the quality of the work matters, I tend to see a marked improvement on the caliber of work submitted by my students, because they pay closer attention to the expectations.

- I try to create structures to hold students accountable for work done not only in the classroom, but outside of school as well. I spot check homework, assigning students numbers according to level of completeness using a simple scale (1= all work complete; 2=partially complete; 3=insufficient). When creating groups, those who've completed the work are allowed to progress while those who are struggling are given additional time and support. I reinforce the message that students who are hardworking get rewarded and those who show signs of struggling get additional support. In time, students will internalize the idea that completing work allows for a more productive use of class time.

Annotation/Close Reading

Why it's Important

The process of close reading and annotating text can be a mechanism through which students make their thinking visible as they negotiate complex texts. Students feel safer and better prepared for discussion and follow-up activities, once they've had an opportunity to work through a text in this manner.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- The first few days of instruction can provide opportunities to model the type and variety of annotations that students can draw from. They include applying reading strategies (i.e. predict, visualize, question, connect, infer, summarize, and synthesize), identifying areas of struggle, selecting and defining vocabulary (either through context clues or by way of the dictionary), as well as identifying areas of the text that are image-rich or worded interestingly and of course annotating for disciplinary reading strategies. There are numerous applications, depending on your specific learning goals.
- I have students use the left side for comprehension and the right side for some application of a specific goal connected to the lesson as a way to instill the notion that literature can be examined through a variety of lenses. This strategy is especially useful when students are asked to annotate more than once, since it provides a very manageable way to track progression of student thinking over multiple exposures to the text.
- As I orient students to the process of annotating, I begin with texts that lend themselves to analysis, making sure to include a variety of text types (i.e. poems, ads, short stories, etc).
- I photo-copy the text, leaving generous margins and spaces between paragraphs is ideal. However, when copying presents an obstacle, I use post-it notes or a double-sided journal. If you do not have the luxury of having copies, another point to be mindful of is the amount of writing students are asked to do: develop "short cuts" so students do not have to copy entire sections of text, since they will spend their energy on this aspect and be less likely to elaborate on their thinking. (A few short cuts to consider include having students write the first few words of a quote followed by an ellipsis, and the last few words. Be sure to have students include page numbers, so they can easily cross-reference and toggle between documents. Or students may highlight a particular section,

number it, and then use that number and page number when sharing their thinking).

- As students transition to a reading journal (especially useful when close reading/annotating longer texts, such as novel, be sure to have students date each entry and provide their initials. Later, when students work in groups and share ideas, I then have an easier time figuring out if the student authored the comment or determined if the idea of another student was worth noting in their own journal.

Collaborative Oral Discussion

Why it's Important

Adherence to the principles of metacognition implies that students negotiate text meaning with each other, rather than relying on the teacher to share analysis.

Employing a variety of structures for students to collaborate ensures ALL students contribute. Finally, productive oral discussion can be the means through which students pilot their ideas and refine their understanding of texts.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- Collaborative discussion models take many names (i.e. Socratic Seminar, Shared-Inquiry, Accountable Talk, etc) but they intersect as they relate to students owning the responsibility for directing and negotiating the discourse in the room. For me, a good way to initiate students into taking ownership of class discussion is to have them get in the habit of directing their comments towards each other, and responding to one another directly.
- I establish the ground rules for classroom discussion in the first days. Here's one way to set the stage:
 1. Read the selection carefully before participating in the discussion.
 2. Support your ideas with evidence from the text.
 3. Listen to other participants and respond to them directly
 4. Expect the leader (facilitator) to only ask questions
 5. Adhere to the principle of equity of voice: Be aware of when to step in and when to step out and listen.
- Text selection is critical to the promotion of high quality, sustained discussion. I choose texts that support extended, interpretive discussion/raise genuine questions for adults and students.
- It is helpful for me to think through the various iterations of collaborative oral discourse, from pair-share, to small group work to whole class discussion. For example, pair share promotes greater accountability, since students are not able to opt out of their responsibility to advance the thinking. Small groups may be especially salient when working through something more challenging. I promote accountability by assigning individual grades, as well as overall group grades, according to a rubric.
- Consider a silent discussion as a viable tool to promote written discussion. Small groups of students are given a sheet of chart paper with a prompt/quote to analyze. Each student gets a different color marker, and they first work to document their own thinking, followed by responding to the ideas of others. The teacher works to advance the conversation by

moving between groups, writing questions to direct students' thinking in black. Students are not allowed to speak; so all their thinking must be communicated in writing. At the end of the activity, I have an anchor chart that I can refer back to for a variety of purposes, including having students identify claims (circle), evidence (box), reasoning (cloud), and even counterclaims (stars).

Written Argumentative Discourse

Why it's Important

With the adoption and rollout of the Common Core Standards, writing has become more discipline specific. Thinking through how to facilitate students ability to construct arguments that are grounded in evidence, and supported through warrants and backing will ensure they are positioned well to be college and career ready.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- **A TEXT TO OWN:** Teaching Argument Writing: Grades 6-12 by George Hillocks is a resource that will transform how you approach the task of writing with your students. From it's opening scenarios, which walk students through the process of constructing arguments of fact, through work with more stylized and complex arguments of judgment and policy, this text clearly unpacks how to assist students as they learn to construct compelling arguments. A sample of the introduction and chapter 1 is available from the following website:
<http://www.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/EO1396/introAndChapter1.pdf>
- The writer's workshop model helps students work through constructing their own arguments. This model include the use of mentor texts to model what effective arguments look like, mini-lessons to teach specific components of the argument (i.e. thesis, introduction, claim, evidence, warrants, counterclaim, conclusion, etc), independent writing, conferring, and sharing.
- Consider paragraph and sentence stems as students learn the nuance of argumentation. I fade the scaffold as students internalize more formalized ways of writing arguments of their own. In order to acclimate students to using graphic organizers, I explicitly model how to fill out each component of the organizer, so there is no misunderstanding. I also have students keep such an exemplar in a protective sleeve or as part of their writing journal.
- At times, some assignments lend themselves to having students write group essays. They find it engaging and it helps me manage the delivery of feedback, especially when trying out argumentative writing. The caliber of work students are able to create when working collaboratively exceeds what any one student is capable of on their own, as long as groups are formed with an attention to identifying and distributing strengths across groupings.
- I have found that developing a couple of strong rubrics that can be used across the school year will streamline expectations and promote

consistency. A simpler rubric, more akin to a checklist, can be used for rough drafts, while a more elaborate rubric may be appropriate for finished products. I have students grade themselves so we can align expectations and demonstrate places where my evaluation mirrored theirs, while having important conversations according to categories where they differ.

- I try to collaborate with grade level partners who work in other disciplines. We identify a common vocabulary, so students can leverage cognitive capacity at examining how each discipline treats argument rather than trying to unpack terminology (i.e. claim vs. premise, reasoning vs. backing, etc).
- **A TEXT TO OWN:** Getting It Right: Fresh Approaches to Teaching Grammar, Usage, and Correctness by Michael Smith and Jeffrey Wilhelm is a text to assist students with grammatical concepts and correctness issues focused on the issues most commonly experienced by student writers. It does a tremendous job balancing research on grammar instruction with effective practice.

Text Selection Rationale

Why it's Important

Teachers are accustomed to the thoughtful planning of units and daily lessons. Thinking through the affordances and challenges presented by the use of more complex texts (as dictated by the Common Core) can be a way to anticipate areas which may require more instructional attention, to ensure the texts are positioned well to help students realize learning goals.

Things I Pay Attention To:

- I first survey the text by looking over the graphics and illustrations. Then I read the text, keeping in mind the focus is on identifying resources the text offers and how those may assist in supporting students' learning of key content.
- As I work through selecting texts, I think about potential sources of confusion or problems for my student learners. For example, does the format of the text present a challenge? What about content, or background schema required for comprehension? Vocabulary?
- I develop supports to assist students in building a mental representation of the text. Perhaps a graphic organizer, or some front-loading of key terminology would make the text more accessible. In other situations, finding images, or a short clip introducing the topic may be beneficial.
- I have found that knowing the main idea of key "take-away" from a text helps me focus students' thinking and negotiation of the text. First, it provides me with a destination to develop specific discourse moves, in the forms of questions, prompts, and signals to students.
- As students begin to work through more complex texts, I develop a log where I can provide evidence of student understanding and/or confusion about text ideas (see example below).

• Student Name:	John Piper		
Date:	May 1 st , 2013		
Text Name:	"The Tell Tale Heart" by Edgar Allen Poe		
Areas of Focus:	Main Idea	Prior Knowledge	Inference
Score:	2	1	1
Comments:	Identifies main idea, but needs support on elaborating to make statement more robust	Makes a text-to-self connection, and does not use information from the text to provide evidence to substantiate connection.	Unable to identify implicit relationships

Key: Advanced (3),
Intermediate (2)
Novice (1)

The log allows me to have differentiated conversations with students as well as track progression throughout the year. I think of this more as a periodic check-in.

Conclusion:

By no means do these suggestions serve as an exhaustive list; rather, these principles and practices have created a strong foundation from which to seed and grow a disciplinary learning community, reflecting the READI design principles and learning goals. It is my strong conviction that as educators, we don't give students voice, but rather create spaces for our students to negotiate and leverage their voices in powerful, agentive ways.

While this document is intended to be used at the onset of a new school year to establish a classroom community, it can also be referenced periodically as a metacognitive tool, indicating areas of strength and perhaps more importantly, spaces for growth and opportunity.

For further information about the READI design principles and examples of how the principles and learning goals (Appendix A) are embedded within literature modules, see the following publications at www.projectreadi.org:

- Project READI Technical Report #9 – *Guiding Principles in Literature*
- Project READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM #2 - *Literary Reading: Symbolism/Coming of Age, Middle School, 8th Grade*

- Project READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM #6 – *Literary Reading: An Author Study of the Reliability of the Narrators in Edgar Allen Poe, Middle School, 8th Grade*
- Project READI Curriculum Module Technical Report CM #8 – *Literary Reading: Introduction to Argument, Middle School, 8th Grade*

Appendix A

Project READI Learning Goals for Literary Reading

1. Engage in close reading of texts and show evidence that the reader has employed literary strategies to notice salient details with regard to plot, characterization, and rhetorical as well as structural choices made by the author.
2. Synthesize within and across literary texts patterns and anomalies in order to construct generalizations about theme, characterization, and the functions of structural and language choices made by authors.
3. Construct written arguments with claims, evidence, and warrants, organized logically and expressed clearly, using appropriate academic language. Arguments address author generalizations and/or structural generalizations (Hillocks & Ludlow, 1984).
4. Establish criteria for judging interpretive claims and arguments that address author generalizations, explaining how the text meets the criteria and justifies the claim (Hillocks, 1986, 1995). Justifications may be drawn from the text; from other texts, literary constructs or critical traditions; or from the reader's judgments from experience in the world.
5. Construct arguments addressing structural generalizations (Hillocks & Ludlow, 1984), explaining the logic of how the claims are supported by evidence in the author's choices about use of language (e.g., structure, word choices, rhetorical devices).
6. Demonstrate understanding that texts are open dialogues between readers and texts; literary works embody authors' interpretations of some aspect of the human condition (which the reader may reject); authors make specific choices about language, structure, and use of rhetorical devices upon which the reader may draw in constructing interpretations.