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The intersection of curriculum and pedagogy: A teacher’s theory of content

Riney, Mark Reisz, Ph.D.

The University of Arizona, 1994

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THE INTERSECTION OF CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY:
A TEACHER'S THEORY OF CONTENT

by

Mark Reisz Riney

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
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1994
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Mark Reisz Riney entitled The Intersection of Curriculum and Pedagogy: A Teacher's Theory of Content and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Walter Doyle 4-28-94
Dissertation Director Date
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to several people, who have made an important difference in my life. Lynette, my loving wife, and our daughters, Teressa Lyn and Gemavie Marie, have blessed me with joy and laughter and have taught me to love life.

My father, J. Carl Riney, and my mother, Mary Patricia Reisz Riney, taught me the value of education. Their loving support encouraged me to persevere in my doctoral work.

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ABSTRACT

This case study is an examination of a high school English teacher's role in the curriculum process. The researcher wrote a "grammar" of a teacher's conception or theory of her subject matter from the perspective of its enactment as curriculum events. In other words, her theory of content was studied to provide an indepth examination of the teacher's role as a transformative agent of curriculum. Three different constructs were employed to capture various expressions of her theory of content during her six weeks unit on the Odyssey: (1) interviews, (2) individual lessons, and (3) academic tasks. The researcher found that the teacher had a visible theory of her subject matter. For example, she organized her curriculum around different genres (e.g., epic, tragedy, comedy, etc.), and she exposed her students to the structure of the epic. Also, her theory of literary criticism was influenced by American formalism and archetypal criticism. These schools of literary criticism complemented each other. Her version of formalism gave her a specific vocabulary and a general method to teach students to explicate literature in general. She emphasized close textual reading and required to support their ideas with passages from the text. Also, she used Joseph Campbell's monomyth to structure the narrative of the Odyssey, and she encouraged students to relate themes and symbols to their own lives and to society in general. She
stressed that the *Odyssey* is an archetypal myth that is relevant to every epoch. In short, this study illustrates that curriculum and pedagogy are intertwined; her version of literary criticism is a pedagogy in itself, a pedagogy that is unified with - not separated from - content.
CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION OF THE PROBLEM

John Dewey (1916) once defined the connection between curriculum and pedagogy with the following image:

A piano player who had perfect mastery of his instrument had no occasion to distinguish between his contribution and that of the piano (p.73).

He sought, in other words, a union - not bifurcation - of method and subject matter. He conceptualized curriculum as the attempt to bring students and curriculum together in what he referred to as "occupations" or contexts, in which students and teachers used content to solve problems or to complete appropriate tasks.

Dewey's conception of curriculum and pedagogy, however, did not take root at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when most people were amazed by the many technological and scientific successes of the industrial revolution - the world of mass production, assembly lines, and affordable goods. This time of rapid industrialization affected all aspects of society including the school curriculum (Lincoln, 1992). For example, Ellwood Cubberley (1917) compared schools to manufacturing units, and he advocated that schools needed to be modeled after factories in order to educate and to control the deluge of immigrants arriving primarily from Europe (Lincoln, 1992). Cubberley sought to standardize the curriculum and to employ standardized tests
as evaluation tools for superintendents and teachers (Doyle, 1992). Similarly, Franklin Bobbitt (1918) viewed the construction of curriculum as a scientific task. He primarily was concerned with the determination of key objectives, which were arrived at through what he termed "activity analysis"- the meticulous study of the occupational, social, and domestic activities of adults (Doyle, 1992). These objectives served to standardize the curriculum, which was supposed to be implemented, not created or transformed by teachers. Consequently, curriculum and pedagogy began to become separated by scholars in that curriculum specialists were not overly concerned about pedagogy any more than teachers were supposed to be concerned about designing curriculum.

Another factor that widened the growing chasm between curriculum and pedagogy was that behavioral psychology began to dominate the research on teaching during and after the World War I era (Lagemann, 1989). Thorndike, for example, attempted to identify predictable links between stimuli and responses in order that the so-called scientific laws of learning could be developed and then prescribed to teachers, who were supposed to follow these scientific principles to foster student learning. This behavioristic research placed little emphasis on the importance of context or content. With the exception of Dewey (1902, 1938), most of the
prominent educators of the first half of the twentieth century favored the psychologization of pedagogy; consequently, it is not surprising that during this time the teacher effectiveness paradigm developed (Barr, 1931).

The teacher effectiveness paradigm is based on the assumption that improvements in pedagogy are fostered more by the determination of generically effective teacher behaviors (Doyle, 1976), and these early teacher effectiveness studies formed the intellectual foundation of the process-product paradigm which dominated educational research during the 1970's (Rosenshine, 1976; Gage, 1983; Brophy and 1986). Researchers in the process-product tradition assumed that there was a direct relationship between a teacher's behaviors and students' learning outcomes (Dunkin and Biddle, 1974); in other words, the goal of process-product research was to find generic strategies for effective instruction by correlating observable teacher behaviors with student outcomes, which were often standardized test scores (Brophy, 1988). Researchers working in the process-product paradigm made little if any mention of subject matter and context. In short, the primary purpose of the teacher effectiveness studies was to produce a generic body of research on teaching that would assist administrators in the evaluation of teachers and that would enable teacher educators to organize content for their programs (Brophy, 1988).
Furthermore, the chasm between curriculum and pedagogy remained intact even into the 1970's because Tyler's (1949) views of curriculum were influential. Tyler shared many of the assumptions of Bobbitt concerning curriculum development. For example, in addition to Bobbitt's two step model of (1) defining educational objectives and (2) devising learning experiences,... Tyler added two additional steps to that process, one having to do with organizing learning experiences and the other with evaluating (Jackson, 1992, 26).

Tyler, like Bobbitt before him, viewed curriculum development as a linear process and viewed the curriculum specialist as the advice giver to practitioners, who were not considered transformative agents of curriculum. In other words, curriculum specialists developed objectives, assessed the initial academic levels of students, created instructional experiences, and evaluated instructional outcomes; in contrast, the teacher's responsibility was to implement the instructional design.

Curriculum scholars today, however, are beginning to investigate how teachers transform and, in a sense, create curriculum in the course of their practice. Cornbleth (1988), for example, posits that

... curriculum is constructed and reconstructed in practice. Whereas a technical perspective views curriculum as instrumental to practice; a social perspective sees curriculum as existing in practice, not independent of it (p. 143).
Similarly, Weade (1987) argues that curriculum and pedagogy are interconnected to such an extent that distinctions between one and the other are often blurred:

Curriculum 'n' instruction is a dynamic developing process through which teacher and student mutually construct the activities and events of life in classrooms as they work together to reach curriculum 'n' instruction goals (p. 16).

Likewise, a growing number of researchers of teaching view teachers as "curriculum makers" - not just mere implementors of prescribed curriculum (Clandinin and Connelly, 1992), and some researchers have attempted to tackle the difficult task of studying curriculum in practice. For example, Elbaz (1983) studied an experienced teacher’s conceptions of curriculum and "practical knowledge" of teaching. One important finding of Elbaz’s study is that the teacher was cognizant of the complexities of both curriculum development and classroom instruction. Similarly, Clandinin (1989) studied the "personal practical knowledge" of a novice teacher, who was at odds with the written curriculum, which he transformed and adjusted to his own pedagogical and curricular affinities.

Like the research of Elbaz and Clandinin, the pedagogical content knowledge studies of the Stanford Group are significant in that these studies form a much needed link between pedagogy and the experienced curriculum. For example, Grossman (1989) focused on understanding teachers’
orientations toward their content. She found that some English teachers were text centered, requiring their students to meticulously interpret passages from the text in contrast to other English teachers, whose personal response orientations (Rosenblatt, 1978) concentrated more on the elicitation of students' personal reactions than on close textual reading. In brief, Grossman's study significantly illustrates that teachers have their own conceptions of their content, which they represent in different ways in the classroom context.

In addition to Grossman, other researchers such as Golden (1989) and Heap (1985) have studied how content is transformed and played out during individual lessons. For instance, Golden (1989) analyzed a reading lesson with text analytic procedures based on reader response literary theory. She found that the "text" was constructed by the class during the course of reading lessons and that the teacher selected what she considered to be the significant themes of the story. In short, Golden's study is important because she examined from a microperspective the ways that content is transformed and experienced by both the teacher and students during lessons.

Another important way that curriculum is represented by teachers and is experienced by students is through academic tasks (Carter and Doyle, 1987; Blumenfeld et al. 1987; Doyle, 1983; Mitman et al. 1984). For example, Mitman et
al. (1984) found that most of the middle school science teachers relied almost exclusively on tasks that merely required the memorization of facts or the application of an algorithm. In these incidences students were not expected nor were given the opportunity to understand the significance of the scientific concepts that they studied. Consequently, even if a teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge is exemplary (Shulman, 1987), students’ opportunities for learning are not maximized if tasks are poor representations of the curriculum or if tasks require few cognitive demands (Emmer, 1986). The study of tasks also is important because tasks influence the social structure of classrooms. For instance, familiar tasks are easily completed by students and easily managed by teachers in contrast to novel or higher cognitive tasks (Doyle and Carter, 1984). When students are given higher cognitive tasks, they often attempt to truncate the task’s academic demands; consequently, students become significant players in the transformation of academic tasks.

In brief, educational researchers have neglected studying the intersection of curriculum and pedagogy for much of the twentieth century. However, some researchers recently have recognized the teacher’s role in the transformation of subject matter and have called for the study of curriculum within the social context of the classroom (Cornbleth, 1988; Weade, 1987). This current
emphasis in educational research is significant, because the research community must examine how teachers are "curriculum makers" if it is to understand the content of teaching.

The Present Study

This study is an examination of a classroom teacher's (Ruth's) role in the curriculum process, and the researcher attempted to write a "grammar" of Ruth's conception of her subject matter from the perspective of its enactment as curriculum events. In other words, Ruth's conception or theory of the content that she taught was studied in an attempt to provide an indepth examination of a teacher's role as transformative agent of curriculum. During the fall of 1992, the researcher observed and audiotaped Ruth's lessons during her six week unit on the *Odyssey* in her ninth grade advanced English class. In addition, the researcher interviewed her before, during, and after the completion of the unit, and students' written work provided another source of data. Ruth was chosen as a subject because she has the reputation for having an exemplary knowledge of her content and because she was given the opportunity to design her own curriculum.

To guide my investigation of Ruth's theory of content, the following questions were formulated:

(1) How does Ruth represent her theory of content as articulated in interviews?
(2) How is content transformed by both Ruth and her students during interactive lessons, and what do these representations of content reveal about her operative theory?

(3) How is Ruth's theory of content represented in the concrete form of academic tasks?

In other words, Ruth's theory of content was examined from three different vantage points in the attempt to unite some of the ways that researchers have studied teachers' conceptions of content and the enacted curriculum: (1) her articulated theory as reflected in interviews, (2) lessons and (3) tasks.

Some studies such as the research on pedagogical content knowledge have found that a teacher's orientation to his/her content influences how content is represented, and one of the goals of this study is to provide a more indepth examination of a teacher's theory of content. As stated previously, Grossman (1989) contrasted the different approaches of reader response oriented teachers with text-oriented teachers; however, in consideration that a number of literary theories have gained acceptance, (e.g., Marxist, Eagleton, 1981; Structuralists, Culler, 1975; Poststructuralists, Foucault, 1986; Reader-oriented theories, Iser, 1978; Feminist, Showalter, 1986; New Criticism, Brooks and Warren, 1960; Archetypal Criticism, Frye, 1970), it seems that Grossman has neglected an
important aspect of a teacher’s content knowledge base. The pedagogical content knowledge studies illustrate that teachers know how to transform their knowledge in ways that are understandable to their student audience; however, these studies do not provide a complete picture of a teacher’s conceptual framework. For example, a researcher may know that an experienced teacher can anticipate students’ questions concerning a difficult work of literature or passage (e.g., Mercutio’s "Queen Mab" speech in *Romeo and Juliet*), but this does not mean that a researcher has understood the teacher’s theory of content any more than the knowledge of surface plot translates into themes.

A teacher’s transformation of content is more intellectually demanding and more complex than these important studies suggest; consequently, researchers need to focus on teachers’ underlying theories of content to build on the research base of the content of teaching. If Graff (1987), a literary critic, is correct in his assumption that every literature teacher’s presentation of content is "theory-laden," then examining a teacher’s theory of content is an especially important consideration if one is to study how teachers are "curriculum makers" within the classroom context:

In some ways, the current quarrel over whether to theorize or not to theorize in the teaching of literature rests on a false premise. For any teacher of literature is unavoidably a literary theorist. Whatever a teacher says about a literary work, or
leaves unsaid, presupposes a theory - of what literature is or can be, of what literary works are worth teaching and why, or how these works should be read and which of their aspects are most worth being noticed and pointed out. Even the most seemingly intuitive encounter with a literary text (or any text) is, as we have learned to say, already theory-laden (p.250).

In addition, this study may interest researchers who have studied the processes and content of individual lessons, (e.g., Golden, 1988, 1989; Heap, 1985). These studies are important in that they illustrate how texts are interpreted by the teacher and students alike within the context of the classroom curriculum. However, this study places the analyzed lessons within the macrostructure of an extended unit, therefore illustrating how a teacher’s theory of content is played out over a longer period of time to determine if the observed lesson is a typical lesson or an anomaly.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Introduction

With the exception of Dewey (1902, 1938), few American educators examined the link between curriculum and pedagogy during the first half of the twentieth century (Doyle, 1992). However, some researchers (Clandinin, 1989; Elbaz, 1981; Trumbull, 1990; see Clandinin and Connelly, 1992 for a comprehensive review) recently have stressed that teachers are "curriculum makers" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1992). This review, which is divided into four sections, discusses some of the ways that teachers are transformative agents of curriculum. The first section concerns the recent research on teachers' personal practical knowledge, which illustrates how teachers adapt curriculum to meet the needs of their students and themselves, and in the second section the studies on teachers' knowledge of content show that teachers acquire the knowledge to transform content in ways that are appropriate for students. The third section discusses studies on individual lessons that illustrate how subject matter is played out in the classroom context. Lastly, research on academic tasks is reviewed. Tasks are an important part of the curriculum because tasks are "a context that frames the interpretation of events, texts, and episodes" (Doyle, 1992, p. 504).
Studies of Personal Practical Knowledge

The studies on teachers' personal practical knowledge illustrate that teachers have their own conceptions of both curriculum and instruction. Clandinin (1989), for example, studied the "personal practical knowledge" of a novice teacher. She used several data sources such as fieldnotes, interviews, transcripts, journal entries, and biographical data "from which narrative reconstructions of classroom practice are written" (p.124). The teacher wrote daily journal entries about his most salient classroom experiences, and he was interviewed three times. Also, the researcher wrote a narrative in the form of a long letter to the teacher, who likewise responded to the researcher with a letter.

The researcher found that the teacher, who taught kindergarten, viewed teaching "as relating to children" (p.125). He had no desire to teach at the higher elementary grades because he didn't want to have to justify whether or not he covered the written curriculum. For example, he was upset that he was forced to hastily complete a unit about pioneers, so that he would have time for a Christmas unit; however, he was able to adapt the established written curriculum to meet his own curricular and pedagogical concerns. Likewise, he had problems conforming to the established daily routines such as getting the children to gym on time. Nevertheless, he eventually developed "his own
rhythmic knowledge of various planning cycles" (p. 134). He acquired the ability to organize and to teach the required units although he was frustrated because the units in his view were imposed. In short, he adapted the curriculum to meet his own pedagogical and curricular concerns.

Similarly, Elbaz (1981) studied an experienced secondary English teacher's conception of pedagogy and curriculum. She used several recorded open-ended interviews to conceptualize the teacher's structure of "practical knowledge", which she typified in terms of "rule of practice, practical principle, and image" (p.61). The simplest level of practical knowledge - "rule of practice" - is a rule that guides a teacher in specific situations. For example, in one instance the teacher, knew that one of her learning disabled students often interrupted her when she gave instructions, so she sagaciously reminded the student not to ask questions until after she finished giving directions to the entire class. In short, each "rule of practice" that a teacher develops is the result of her experiences and ruminations about these experiences within her classroom context.

In addition to "rule of practice," Elbaz used the theme of "images" to captured "the teacher's feelings, values, needs, and beliefs" (p.61). Elbaz identified five categories of images that conceptualized the teacher's cognitive style: curriculum imagery, subject matter imagery,
 instructional imagery, social imagery, and imagery of self. One commonality among these categories of imagery was that the teacher's primary concern was the students. For example, she was involved in the development of a new course, and she adjusted the sequence of instruction to meet students' needs in concert with the "rhythm of the school year" (p.63). More importantly, she valued subject matter according to its own inherent potential to be "a window, a medium which allowed for contact and communication between teacher and students" (p.63). In short, the teacher recognized the complexities and problematic nature of both classroom instruction and curriculum development.

Like her views concerning curriculum and subject matter, the teacher's instructional imagery, social imagery, and imagery of self reflected her concern about students. She rejected the transmission view of knowledge and was more student centered in her view of effective instruction. Her views about knowledge and instruction caused her some consternation in that she was required to teach a skills unit which, in her opinion, "seemed to suffer from a lack of grounding in the content of a specific discipline" (p.64). In addition, the teacher viewed herself as student centered in that she described herself as an "ally" of the students, who needed help to "survive" the experiences of school; in other words, she conceptualized school as an unfriendly place for students and teachers alike, a place of
"conflict and opposition" (p.64). Furthermore, her imagery of self reflected her affection and concern for her students. She, for example, wanted students to consider her as young and capable of communicating and empathizing with them. In brief, the teacher in Elbaz’s study had strong views about both curriculum and pedagogy. However, because the teacher’s conception of curriculum and pedagogy was not studied from the perspective of its enactment, one cannot know how the teacher would have represented subject matter during lessons.

In addition to using narrative biography to elicit teachers’ conceptions of curriculum and pedagogy, researchers have used autobiographical accounts. For example, Trumbull (1990) ruminated on and wrote about her reflections of her teaching career. Her primary concerns early in her teaching career focused on ways to delineate her expectations lucidly and to treat students in a fair way, and she initially used behavioral objectives to assist her to develop her curriculum and methods of instruction in ways that were comprehensible to students. She, however, grew dissatisfied with her structured approach because she had not exposed students to the philosophical/ethical side of science.

As she gained more knowledge of her subject matter and of questions that students typically asked, she used essay questions on tests. Unfortunately, she noted that she did
not help her students in the preparation of essay topics because she lacked the understanding of the difficulty of expository and persuasive writing; it was not until she was in a doctoral program in education and was exposed to various theories of teaching science and composition that she realized that writing is a complex process. Also, she notes that "the literature on student misconceptions and alternative framework provided a theoretical framework that gave meaning to certain of the mistakes students characteristically made" (p. 178). Consequently, it was a period of years before she was satisfied with the ways that she conceptualized and represented content.

In sum, these studies exemplify how teachers are concerned with both instructional and curriculum decision making processes. Clandinin’s (1989) study illustrates the role of personal practical knowledge in the development of a teacher’s conception of curriculum and the rhythm of the curricular calendar. Likewise, Elbaz (1981) and Trumbull (1990) found that a teacher’s conception, beliefs, and knowledge of teaching guide her practice and curricular decisions. In short, these researchers show that teachers are influential in the transformation of curriculum within the classroom context.
Teachers' Content Knowledge

Like studies on personal practical knowledge, studies of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge also explore teachers' conceptions or beliefs about curriculum and instruction. For example, Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) used Shulman's (1986) "Model of Pedagogical Reasoning" to compare and contrast one experienced and one novice social studies teacher. The researchers tape-recorded all classroom observations, which were later transcribed. In addition, data was collected (1) through pre-observation interviews during which the teachers "thought aloud" what they were going to teach and (2) through post-observation interviews that took place immediately after each class was taught.

The researchers found that the novice teacher initially exhibited difficulty transforming his content knowledge of American history, because his subject matter preparation primarily focused on cultural anthropology. When he taught content that was outside anthropology, he relied primarily on the text or on a movie topic. He was not able to create vignettes or stories about interesting historical events during class discussions unless he focused on anthropological content. He, however, improved in his ability to structure content and to tell appropriate stories, and the researchers posit that he improved in his
ability to transform content in meaningful ways because his pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of students increased.

In contrast to the novice teacher, the experienced teacher exhibited no difficulty weaving appropriate stories/vignettes into his lessons to illustrate key concepts of American history, and he used simulations to exemplify some historical concepts. The problem for the experienced teacher was not the transformation of content but the selection of appropriate topics or themes. For example, his dominate theme focused on the evaluation of American democratic processes, and one of his primary concerns was that he did not have enough time to cover various aspects of history in enough detail to preserve their historical integrity and to avoid trivializing complex and critical aspects of American history.

On the other hand, he told the researcher that he experienced difficulty teaching an anthropology class the previous year, because he did not understand the types of problems that anthropologists face nor did he understand how the discipline of anthropology developed. In other words, he did not understand what Schwab (1978) refers to as the syntactic or substantive structures of anthropology.

In a similar study, Grossman (1989) focused on examining the subject matter knowledge of beginning teachers
over a two year period, during which time she observed and interviewed two teachers: one teacher who had earned her B.A. in English and the other teacher who completed her M.A. in English. The researcher found that these two teachers had contrasting orientations for teaching English courses.

The teacher with the graduate degree approached literature with a text centered orientation, and the primary reason that she entered teaching was that she enjoyed reading and discussing literature. She chose to teach at the secondary level because the secondary level is one step away from the collegiate level where she wants to eventually teach. According to Grossman, her conception of studying literature influenced how she taught. For example, before teaching the "Stone Boy", her primary concerns were (a) to teach the story in connection to other pieces of literature read in her class and (b) to emphasize elements of the short story. Also, she planned her lessons around various activities that required students to focus on a close textual reading. In other words, she wanted to teach her students to become critical readers. Likewise, her text-centered orientation was evident in her evaluation of students' writing in that she stressed that students use precise details from the text to support their ideas.

The other teacher, in contrast, viewed teaching literature more as personal response than close textual
reading. She viewed "literature as exploration" (Rosenblatt, 1938), and she attempted to plan her lessons in consideration of students' possible personal reactions. She evaluated the appropriateness of a work of literature in terms of her knowledge of students' responses to the type of literature in question. For example, when she taught the "Stone Boy," she required students to write a page or paragraph about how the story affected them; next, she used their responses to start a classroom discussion. In contrast to her counterpart, she did not expect students to use formal literary techniques to analyze stories. Similarly, she attempted to focus on the elicitation of students' personal responses when teaching a poetry unit; however, she felt a certain amount of tension within herself because she was forced to follow the lesson plans of her cooperating teacher, who emphasized the analysis of literary techniques and close textual reading.

Similarly, Grossman (1992), studied the pedagogical content knowledge of six novice teachers. She used a case study design (Yin, 1984) "in an attempt to gather in-depth data on the content, character, and organization of an individual's knowledge for the purpose of contributing to a broader conceptualization of teacher knowledge and its use in teaching" (p. 150). Grossman contrasted two groups of student teachers: (1) three teachers who graduated from the same teacher education program and (2) three teachers who
entered teaching without formal preparation. Not surprisingly, the researcher found that the two groups of teachers differed in their purposes, goals, and beliefs about teaching subject matter.

For example, the teachers who completed teacher education programs believed that the primary purpose of teaching English is the development of students' abilities both to express themselves in writing and to relate literature to their own lives. On the other hand, two of the teachers who had not taken teacher education courses believed that the purpose of English is to teach students methods of literary criticism; in other words, the non-teacher education students focused on the close textual reading and the application of the techniques of literary criticism. They hoped that their students would be capable of analyzing literary texts after they left the class.

The two groups also differed in their views about teaching composition. For instance, both groups emphasized composition; however, the teachers without teacher education courses emphasized grammar and technical correctness more strongly than did the professionally trained teachers, who stressed the coherent expression of ideas more strongly than mechanical proficiency and who stated that a knowledge of grammatical rules made one a better writer. In short, the teacher education teachers taught writing as a process in
which students initially were required to transform ideas and then to eliminate grammatical/technical difficulties through peer editing (Flower and Hayes, 1981).

Another way that the teacher education teachers differed from the non-teacher education teachers was that the teacher education teachers were more concerned about selecting works of literature that students could relate to than were the non-teacher educated students. All of the teacher education teachers were concerned about the level of difficulty of works of literature; on the other hand, one of the non-teacher education teachers chose works of literature like Great Expectations and Gulliver’s Travels, works which they thought were the most valuable.

Another significant difference between the two groups of teachers was that the teacher education teachers were better able to anticipate students’ questions than were the non-professionally trained teachers. Although both groups of teachers reported that the majority of their knowledge of their students’ understanding of content was formed during their actual teaching experiences, the teacher education teachers’ initial conceptions of teaching strategies were more developed than were those of their counterparts. Consequently, the teacher education teachers had greater confidence in their abilities to use appropriate strategies that were neither too difficult nor too easy.
In contrast to Grossman who studied novice teachers, Gudmundsdottir (1991) conducted a case study of an experienced teacher, who taught college preparatory English. The researcher observed the teacher twenty different times and interviewed her five times. Gudmundsdottir found that the teacher emphasized a textual orientation for teaching literature, and in an interview with the researcher, the teacher stated that her model of teaching literature consists of four levels: level one, which concerns the literal meaning; level two, which emphasizes connotative meaning; level three, the interpretive level, which focuses on aspects of literary analysis such as symbolism or characterization; and the fourth level, which concerns how students relate the work to their own lives. The teacher developed her model for teaching literature during the 70's when she was teaching *Heart of Darkness* to seniors, who had difficulty following the surface level plot. She found that most of her students could not answer her detail level questions nor could they paraphrase passages from the text. Consequently, she concluded that she could teach more effectively if she initiated her literary discussions with the literal level and then focused on the interpretive level.

Gudmundsdottir found that the teacher's model resembled but did not replicate her classroom practice and that her actual model consisted of three, not four levels because
level two essentially overlaps with level one. If students are able to understand the denotative meaning of a passage, their thinking often focuses on the connotative meaning as well; or if one immediately grasps that Swift's "Modest Proposal" is not to be taken literally, then one will not concentrate merely on the denotative meaning because the significance of Swift's work lies in its connotative meaning and its purpose as a satire. Consequently, the teacher's theoretical model did not deviate significantly from her classroom practice.

Also, Gudmundsdottir found that the teacher's orientation toward teaching literature varied according to which work was studied. For example, the teacher focused more on the interpretive level than the detail level when teaching Huckleberry Finn; she often concentrated on the third level and elicited students' personal responses. On the other hand, she seldom focused on the interpretive level when teaching Moby Dick. For instance, when she taught a lesson on Ahab, she began the discussion with an extended series of level one questions before she asked questions about the significance of Ahab's actions. After she ascertained that students understood the surface plot, she moved to and remained on the interpretive level. She seldom was able to elicit personal responses from her students.

Similarly, Grant (1991) studied the teaching of an experienced secondary English teacher, Linda, who she
observed teaching literature for two weeks. From the data collected through both classroom observations and interviews, the researcher found that Linda first considered ways to represent subject matter (literature) and she considered classroom organization/management issues. Linda also noted that "literary analysis and composition, are routes on an difficult 'journey'" (p.398), and she encouraged her students to continue on this journey, which she emphasized, holds intrinsic rewards for those who persevere. Her metaphor of the "journey" represented her conception of literary analysis, and she hoped that her A.P. students learned to love literature for its own sake.

To motivate students to persevere through difficult readings, she regularly spent the beginning of lessons answering students' individual questions and providing coaching statements for the entire class. For example, she guided students' reading during her unit on The Bear with 118 different study questions, which required the use of higher-order processing skills of evaluation, synthesis or analysis. Also, during discussions Linda focused on critical thinking questions. For instance, when teaching a lesson on King Lear, she asked probing questions, requiring students to

review Kent's and Edgar's roles in the betrayal of Lear; to compare their roles to those of Edmond, Gloucester, and Lear's daughters; to analyze Albany's role in the betrayal;
to apply and understanding of Elizabethan and world order and hubris to these actions; and to formulate a coherent oral statement (p.403).

Furthermore, Grant used Doyle’s (1983) concept of task to examine Linda’s teaching, and she found that the academic tasks that Linda organized for her class conveyed her "conception of subject-matter into student performance through the organizing image of a journey" (p.403). For example, during the fall semester, she required students to write an analytical paper with an original thesis. She assisted students in the process, suggesting certain essay topics; however, by April the students were capable of developing original theses themselves. Although higher cognitive tasks were the destination of students’ academic "journey," Linda also emphasized memory or routine tasks to help students to work steadily, and students were required to take copious notes and to review their notes, so that they could report from their notes during class discussions.

In addition to studying how a teacher’s orientation influences how content is played out during instruction, Martinsson (1989), as reported by Hansson (1992), posits that teachers’ theories of subject matter affect the ways that students themselves interpret content. Martinsson examined how Swedish secondary students have analyzed literature over a 103 year period. Students in Sweden traditionally were required to pass an examination before
they left the gymnasium, so that they could qualify for a university. Students were required to write an essay in addition to taking objective tests. Because some of the essay topics focused on literature and because each student's exam was required by law to be registered and kept in the archives, Martinsson was able to study students' literary analyses from 1865 to 1968, the year that Sweden abandoned the exam.

The results of Martinsson's study indicate that three models of literary analysis were evident in the students' papers and that only one model dominated during any given era. For instance, the "IDEALISTIC approach," in which the author was described as a prophet or seer, "was the prevalent model from the late nineteenth century and was still used into the 1920's (p. 146). During the 1920's and 1930's the "HISTORICAL-EMPIRICAL approach," which "described the author as a skilled craftsman whose works depict the outer and inner world," dominated students' method of literary analysis; also, the "PSYCHOLOGICAL-SYMBOLIC approach," which presented "the author as a highly sensitive person, better equipped than others to feel and to express in words the often evil conditions of human existence," was introduced in the 1930's and eventually was highly prevalent in the 1950's (p.146). In short, Martinsson's study is significant because the methods of literary analysis that students used during the examination were the methods that
were dominant in literature departments and in handbooks of literature in Sweden during these same eras; consequently, it seems that the majority of students analyzed literature with the methods that they were taught by their public school teachers.

In sum, studies teachers' content knowledge indicate that their content knowledge/orientation affects the ways that they represent content to students. For example, even the experienced social studies teacher in Gudmundstottir and Shulman's (1987) study struggled to teach anthropology because he didn't understand the content; in contrast, he had no trouble transforming his knowledge of American history, his forte. Furthermore, a teacher's orientation toward content guides the form that the content takes (Grossman, 1990; Hansson, 1992) and the ways that academic work is presented to students (Grant, 1991).

**Knowledge Interpretation During Lessons**

In addition to studying teachers' orientations toward content, the researchers have stressed the importance of examining the complexities of knowledge production in individual lessons. Lemke (1989), for example, posits that discourse analysis can provide a tool to investigate the relationships between content and the "procedural scaffolding" of instruction, and he examined how teachers and students use or fail to use thematic and procedural
concepts in their dialogue about scientific concepts as presented in texts. He found that one of the problems of texts is that the language used does not consist of the type of language that students or even teachers use in the classroom context; consequently, the content is problematic. To build a conceptual scaffold, the observed teacher often used colloquial language to explain pertinent themes while also requiring students to explain concepts in their own words. The teacher wanted students to have the opportunity to restate the unfamiliar in more familiar terms and vice versa, helping to integrate the language of the textbook not just procedurally but also thematically into the dialogue (p.138).

Unfortunately, the students often resisted discussing the concepts in their own words and sometimes answered questions with a single word when an elaborate answer was appropriate; more importantly, they resisted the teacher's attempts to create a context that would enable them to discuss the thematic patterns of the content with colloquial dialogue.

Lemke found that some students did not view colloquial explanations of scientific terms as "real science." For example, when the teacher introduced the concept of the capacity of a cell to grow by comparing this capacity to a science fiction movie about a cell of enormous proportions, one student wondered why the teacher did not refer to scientific concepts in a "scientific" way. The researcher
posits that students who view science as unadulterated objectivity have a false conception of science. In short, these students were more concerned about that which sounded like science than with that which actually concerned scientific concepts.

Similarly, Michaels (1981) studied the narrative discourse patterns of first graders and their teacher during sharing time. She found that "when a child's discourse style matched the teacher's own literate style and expectations, collaboration was rhythmically synchronized and allowed for informal practice and instruction in the development of a literate discourse style" (p. 423). The teacher attached more importance to the structure of a sequential narrative than she did to the content of the narrative; she "was looking for a decontextualized account centering on a single topic...." (p. 447).

When students (primarily white) followed her criteria, she questioned them infrequently during their sharing time narratives. She apparently followed the child's sequential narrative on one topic. In contrast, most of the narratives of African-American students did not focus on a single concrete topic although their narratives were found to have "a thematic unity which was not explicit" (p. 447). For example, the teacher frequently interrupted one child whose narrative primarily focused on her new coat; the child mentioned her cousin, who in the teacher's mind, had nothing
to do with the coat. However, the researcher later interviewed the child and found that the cousin was significant to the narrative in that the cousin started to put his dirty hands on the child’s coat to the child’s dismay. Unfortunately, the teacher, who is considered an excellent teacher by the researcher, completely misunderstood the child’s intentions; "the child and the teacher were unable to collaborate on elaborating the topic and making these connections fully explicit" (p.439).

Similarly, Golden (1989) examined ways that texts are used during classroom processes in addition to examining the impact of the classroom context. She studied one lesson over a six day period using fieldnotes, audiotapes, and videotapes. Also, the text used in the teacher’s sixth grade class, an excerpt from Ernesto Galarza’s Bario Boy, was examined. The teacher required the students to read orally, admonishing them that the purpose of lesson was to practice their oral reading, an activity that the editors of the basal did not suggest. During the lesson the teacher evaluated the students’ reading performance according to their enunciation and variation of intonation patterns.

More importantly, the teacher focused on various interpretations of the excerpt and stressed characterization, comparing the protagonist’s reactions to those of the other characters. Also, she related these characters to students’ experiences and to her own
experiences in that she attempted to steer students toward her interpretations, which she supported when she referred to the text. The teacher was text oriented and seemed to believe that "meaning primarily resides in the text itself" (p. 88). In short, the teacher focused on some themes at the expense of other themes in the same way that she validated some and rejected other student responses.

In a similar study, Golden (1989) used reader-response criticism for ascertaining ways that teachers and students construct their own versions of a literary text, a process that Golden views as a "a dynamic interaction between text and reader" (p. 72). Golden posits that the reader is engaged in a "trial-and-error process" and that there is "tension between the reader and text as the reader attempts to create meaning during the reading of non-formulaic literature" (p. 72). Because the reading process in itself is dynamic, a gamut of acceptable interpretations exists according to Golden. In addition, she posits that context is of paramount importance to the phenomenologist critic’s view of the reader in that a person’s perception of the social and cultural context of a literary work influences his/her interpretation of the work.

Golden found that each teacher interpreted and presented the same story in different ways. For example, although both teachers concentrated on the episodic structure of the text itself during lesson presentations,
the teachers emphasized different aspects of any given episode. Teacher S concentrated more on the beginning of the story than did Teacher G, who emphasized aspects of the middle of the story. Because Teacher S and Teacher G emphasized different aspects of the story, it is not surprising the recall rates across the teachers' classes differed. For instance, Teacher G's students recalled 14 (.17) episodes in contrast to teacher S' students who recalled 7 (.08) episodes; consequently, it seems that teacher G's "instructional text" may have helped her students' to recall more elements of the story than teacher S's students.

In addition, the structure of text itself seemed to affect students' recall of episodes. For instance, episodes 1, 4, and 7- the most well formed and elaborated episodes- had the greatest number of elements recalled by students even though neither teacher stressed these episodes more than the other episode with the exception of episode 1, which is the beginning of the story. In other words, students sometimes recalled episodes in which the teacher did not develop themes; on the other hand, students did not always recall episodes in which the teacher did develop themes.

In short, Golden concludes that both the text itself and the teacher seem to affect students' recall of stories in that "both the meaning and structure of the aesthetic
work are constructed by the participants during the reading process" (p.96). Also, Golden asserts that the content of a lesson- in this case the text itself- needs to be considered during discourse analysis because social interactions are focused around the content and activity structure of the lesson structure.

From another vantage point, Heap (1985) used discourse analysis to study knowledge production in classrooms. In his study of reading lessons of six third graders, he found that the teacher used the text itself as a source of knowledge during the early stages of reading lessons because the text, according to Heap, is a "source which already contains the proposition part which the teacher seeks to elicit" (p.261). Comprehension in this instance occurs when students are able to "display from memory what was (supposedly) loaded from the text" (p.261). In contrast, during some of later episodes of the story, the teacher seemed to have a different interpretation concerning how to use the text in that the text was "treated as the basis for inferences about events, phenomena, and relations which it does not express directly or indirectly" (p.262). In such cases there are no definite wrong or right answers according to Heap, because the text itself is not the only source of knowledge.

Furthermore, Heap purports that students relied on cultural logic in addition to text-based reading strategies to interpret the text. For example, the teacher asked a
question concerning "what the bird did not do" (p.263). The students could not answer the question using only the text as a source because such a question concerned conceptions not explicitly or implicitly mentioned in the text. The students needed to determine if the non-textual event that the teacher referred to was possible within the context of the story, which concerns a bird with a broken wing in a naturalistic environment as opposed to a talking bird in a cartoon. The students had to elicit knowledge or logic from the story in terms of both their own cultural knowledge and knowledge from the text.

In sum, these studies, which examined lessons from a micro rather than from a macro perspective, illustrate that teachers and students must interpret and transform content as it is played out as curriculum events; in other words, the researchers attempted to examine both the content and processes of the enactment of the content. The framework of these studies could be adapted to a macro context, so that the teacher's interpretive theory of content as illustrated by the enacted curriculum could be studied over a longer period of time.

**Studies on Task**

Another way that teachers' theories of content are represented is through tasks, which are central to the teaching process in that they exemplify how teachers transform curriculum goals into assignments and activities
for students (Blumenfeld, Mergendoller & Swarthout, 1987). Consequently, the concept of academic tasks is a viable framework for studying the patterns of classroom management systems, activity structures, and curriculum enactment (Doyle, 1988). Academic work itself and the ways that it is introduced and managed by teachers has a profound effect on what students attend to and how they process task related information (Sanford, 1987). In other words, familiar tasks are completed relatively easily by students and are easily managed by teachers in contrast to comprehension-level or novel tasks, which are complex and often difficult to manage (Doyle, 1986).

For example, Doyle and Carter (1984) conducted a case study of academic tasks in one high-ability and two average-ability junior high English classes, which were taught by the same teacher. Before the teacher was observed, the researchers interviewed the teacher, who gave an overview of the assignments that she planned to use in her classes during the observation period, which lasted six weeks and consisted of thirty-three observations. Also, narrative records were made of all observation periods. The researchers focused their observations on the products that students were required to complete and hand in to the teacher, and they divided tasks into two groups: (1) major tasks, which constituted a large portion of each student's grade, and (2) minor tasks, which consisted of one day
assignments and quizzes. The researchers found that higher-level tasks, which focused on understanding instead of an algorithmic-like responses, were often difficult to manage even though the teacher was an effective classroom manager who explained assignments thoroughly and logically. When the teacher required students to compose a set of descriptive paragraphs, she had a much more difficult time keeping the students engaged in their work than she did when her students were working on algorithmic tasks. The task of writing descriptive paragraphs was somewhat ambiguous to the students even though she lucidly explained the assignment and answered all questions. Usually, clarity of directions is associated with high task involvement (Brophy and Good, 1986); however, the ambiguity of the writing task itself made student involvement problematic. Also, the ambiguity and the risk of the task was high because this particular writing assignment was a large portion of each student's grade and because this writing task involved higher cognitive processes (Doyle, 1986, 1988); consequently, the demands of the writing task on students affected the normally smooth routine of the classroom.

Doyle and Carter noted that the students slowed the overall pace of the class when they asked the teacher numerous questions so that she would clarify task demands. This placed additional demands on the teacher, and complex management problems resulted from an inundation of such
questions from students. Another critical problem associated with higher cognitive tasks is that not all students may be able to accomplish the work; consequently, a teacher’s management system is complicated during such tasks (Doyle, 1986). Although the teacher conscientiously and sagaciously attempted to manage her class smoothly while maintaining the task structure, the students tried to circumvent higher cognitive tasks. For example, they attempted to persuade her to reveal a formula or algorithm for the aforementioned writing assignment. However, like successful classroom managers, she oversaw activities and ushered them along, and she was an active part of the classroom work system (Weade & Evertson, 1988).

Conversely, her class ran more smoothly when students worked on grammar tasks. She gave fewer directions than she did for writing tasks, and the students asked fewer questions. These grammar assignments were familiar tasks to her students, and the fact that there were wrong and right answers decreased the ambiguity (Doyle, 1983); also, there was little cause for student alarm because the grammar assignment was only a daily grade unlike a major writing assignment, which was a considerable portion of each student’s grade.

In another study using similar methods, Sanford (1987) observed two eighth grade and two high school teachers for six consecutive weeks. She took extended fieldnotes and
concentrated on identifying and understanding the circumstances that influenced or contributed to student completion of tasks. The researcher found that it was more difficult for the teachers to manage higher-level than lower-level tasks. In an attempt to motivate their students to complete higher-level tasks, the teachers often raised the accountability level of important tasks. One teacher, for example, reminded students that certain assignments were weighted double the number of points of usual assignments, and other teachers counted some major tasks as much as 25% of the term grade. Equally important, the teachers preserved their task systems by using management strategies that provided students a "variety of safety-nets to keep students from failing" (p. 260). The safety net management strategies included ways to reduce students' risk of failure by allowing them to work in groups or to revise higher-level tasks after receiving feedback from their teacher. Also, some teachers balanced difficult or comprehension-level content with familiar or memory components on tests, so that a student's inability to understand higher level questions did not result in complete failure. In short, the teachers noted that these safety-net management strategies were designed to enable students to succeed without completely truncating the cognitive demands of the task.

Unfortunately, the safety-net management strategies significantly decreased the cognitive demands of tasks in
some cases. For example, one teacher (Teacher D) routinely allowed group or peer assistance to reduce individual students' accountability or risk of failure, but the strategy did not work very well at times because interviews with students revealed that in some cases one lab partner had an understanding of the task while his/her partner showed little or no understanding of the task. However, the teacher, who graded lab reports thoroughly, observed improvement in the lab reports as the year progressed because students realized that he demanded quality answers and that merely completing the lab was not enough.

In contrast to the teachers in Sanford's study, Mitman, Mergendoller, Packer, and Marchman (1984) found that most of the eleven seventh grade science teachers that they studied focused on a narrow range of lower-level tasks. The researchers audiotaped the lessons of each teacher for two one-month periods, and additional data was collected through the use of interviews and surveys. Teachers were interviewed prior to the school year to elicit information concerning their perceptions of teaching, and they were interviewed after each week that they were observed. Also, students were interviewed concerning their attitudes about and comprehension of classroom tasks.

The researchers found that most of the tasks assigned in science classes merely required the regurgitation of content through memorization or the application of an algorithm. The
science teachers' tasks consisted primarily of worksheets, laboratories, and exams, which seldom encouraged students to construct a conceptual understanding of scientific content, to integrate their prior knowledge, or to express their comprehension of concepts. For example, laboratories usually prescribed a set of procedures, which were followed to yield descriptive data. Encouragement to discover explanatory scientific procedures was quite rare. Unfortunately, emphases on the procedural instead of on the intellectual level of laboratories continued throughout the entire year even after students completed a number of laboratories and were familiar with typical laboratory procedures. For example, students in most classes only were required to complete their laboratory assignment worksheets or notebooks to earn complete credit; there were few if any factors in teachers' accountability systems to motivate students to strive to comprehend the concepts being taught. Also, some teachers decreased the efficacy of other tasks because they missed opportunities to check students' understanding in that they seldom graded assignments for accuracy of answers. With the exceptions of exams, few tasks were evaluated for accuracy, so students seldom received any personalized information about their performance. Perhaps students did not really understand how their teachers evaluated their work.
The researchers posit that there are several possible factors that led to teachers' over reliance on lower-cognitive tasks. For instance, the teacher may have underestimated students' abilities, or perhaps the teachers attempted to reduce student's risk of failure - to create a non-threatening learning environment. Furthermore, some of the science teachers may have avoided assigning novel tasks because such tasks inherently create problematic management situations. The teachers may have been regarded as effective managers if evaluated by Rosenshine's (1983) constructs; however, the teachers who avoided cognitively demanding tasks did so to the detriment of their students' education.

Not surprisingly, student interviews revealed that the students believed that they learned more from exams - the only tasks which most teachers made students accountable for accuracy. Many of the students viewed the tests as difficult even though the tests were of low complexity and were sometimes easier to complete than previously assigned worksheets. Unfortunately, most students confused the superficial learning of scientific facts with the kind of higher-level cognitive processes that are required for any scientific discipline.

Similarly, Mergendoller, Marchman, Mitman, and Packer (1988) examined the tasks and accountability structures of eleven seventh grade science teachers, who ranged in
experience from one to twenty-four years. The researchers observed each teacher for four to eleven days, the time it took for each teacher to cover a short unit. The researchers considered task demands to be two-dimensional in that they primarily considered the innate cognitive demands of the task in addition to ways in which a teacher held students accountable for academic work.

The researchers found that most of the assigned laboratories included specifications concerning the problem to be solved, procedures to be used, and the solution to be reached; however, these laboratories placed few cognitive demands on students. For example, one teacher not only provided students with step by step instructions but also laid out a completed worksheet with the microscopic organism to be labeled. The task demands of this lab were truncated in that the successful completion of the lab did not even require students to view the slides; they could have drawn the microscopic organism from the teacher's own answer sheet.

In contrast, another teacher conducted a laboratory assignment on the same subject, but he required students to carefully draw what they saw. However, the "laboratory assignments [of most teachers] were poorly designed, poorly organized, incoherently written, and were not always explicitly linked to topic content" (p. 257), and "no laboratory activities involved extended description or
recording of the problem, procedures, data, and conclusions - elements typically viewed as an integral part of the laboratory experience of scientific thinking" (p. 258).

In addition to laboratories, all teachers required their students to complete worksheets and take examinations. The researchers found that 96% of the exam items and 85% of the worksheet items required only a short literal response from students, who were usually not required to write paragraphs or essays to explain scientific concepts. In fact, only one teacher required students to write an essay, which was not completed by two-thirds of the students, who were not penalized.

In brief, most of the teachers' accountability structures were designed to foster student motivation to complete assignments in that most teachers rewarded students for the completion of assignments rather than for accuracy of response. Such practices lower student risk and do not require students to develop higher-level skills because students merely need to complete each assignment in a cursory or lackadaisical manner to earn full credit. Exams were the only academic task that accuracy was scrutinized by teachers as a group. The researchers speculate that one of the primary reasons that most classroom tasks focused on low level tasks is that there are managerial and conceptual difficulties inherent in using a problem-solving approach to
teaching science and that these teachers intentionally may have avoided cognitively demanding tasks.

Researchers also have identified problems with teachers’ task structure if there is a mismatch between actual task demands and teachers’ intentions. For example, Bennett and Desforges (1988) studied tasks in sixteen second-grade classes and twenty-four third-grade classes. The researchers took detailed fieldnotes, and in each class they focused on six target children: a high, average, and low attaining boy and girl. Also, the researchers focused on teachers’ task presentation, and after the target students completed tasks, the researchers interviewed students to assess both their understanding of the teachers’ requirements and their evaluations of their own work. In addition to interviewing students, the researchers conducted post-task interviews with teachers, who evaluated their students’ work and discussed their reasons for assigning the tasks.

The researchers found that the task demands did not always concur with teachers’ intentions; and in 28% of the math tasks and in 18% of the language tasks, the teachers’ intentions were not fulfilled. Sometimes the teachers’ stated intentions did not match the content of the tasks. Other common mismatches were the result of a lack of assessment of a students’ performances; for example, teachers may have intended to introduce new concepts to
students who were in fact quite familiar with them. Consequently, the teachers’ intention of introducing new concepts were in actuality a review of old material.

The researchers also found that approximately 40% of all tasks were mismatched with student’s abilities; 28% of the tasks were too difficult and 26% were too easy. High achievers were underestimated on 41% of all tasks. In contrast, low achievers were overestimated on 44% assigned tasks, and they usually were slow to begin their academic work, were exceedingly demanding of teachers’ time, and primarily focused on the surface or production aspects of the task. One reason that the capabilities of low achievers were over-estimated by teachers was that teachers usually were not aware of their difficulties because they only saw completed products of students’ work without being aware of the processes that students used to arrive at their answers.

Another problem with teachers’ assessment criteria was that it was often ill-matched with their original intentions. For example, one teacher required students to write an imaginative and exciting story, yet students’ stories were evaluated by the criteria of length, neatness, and use of proper grammar- criteria which have little to do with the teacher’s original intentions. A student’s story may have been immaculate, lengthy, and grammatically and mechanically impeccable and yet may have been as unexciting
In a follow-up study the researchers interviewed teachers prior to observing their lessons in an attempt to understand teachers' views of the tasks to be taught. Also, teachers and students were interviewed after each lesson. As in the previous study, tasks were categorized according to task demands and task match. The degree of mismatch was almost identical to that of the first study in that 60% of the assigned tasks were poorly matched, and most of the mismatches concerned the overestimation of low achievers' abilities and the underestimation of high achievers' abilities.

In the post-task interviews teachers often showed an awareness that many tasks were mismatched. Teachers often faced the dilemma of trying to sustain a positive emotional tone while maintaining the momentum of their lessons. Teachers also felt pressured to push forward in the coverage of the math curriculum to ensure equivalence of coverage in parallel class, so that continuity in the school would be maintained. They attempted to balance the demands of covering specific content with the concern for student understanding. The teachers, who faced the problematic goal of sustaining and managing an entire group of students with different aptitudes and interests, realized that they did not individualize instruction as often as they desired.
Using different constructs, Blumenfeld and Meece (1988) investigated "the effects of tasks and teacher behavior together as they relate to differing patterns of student involvement and cognitive engagement" (p. 238). Over a three month period the researchers studied the classrooms of four experienced teachers, who were observed teaching four different lessons twice. The researchers observed teachers using a variety of different organizational forms, and they focused on those lessons which required students to produce a product by the end of the period. Furthermore, after each lesson students completed a questionnaire, which was designed to measure each students' cognitive engagement and involvement, and the researchers also used a self-report checklist to assess students' learning strategies and self-regulated learning. Additional data concerning the children's motivation and understanding of tasks was obtained through interviews.

The researchers found that most students were concerned primarily with the products demanded by the teacher and with the procedures needed to generate the products; only one of the twelve students interviewed described the concepts of the lesson without being prompted to do so. However, when students specifically were questioned about what they learned from a given lesson, most of them exhibited some understanding of the point of the lesson although they
primarily were concerned with what information might be on a future test.

In most cases students focused on the surface level of assignments. For example, during a laboratory activity, the attention of students focused primarily on the procedural aspects of a lesson. Although the students displayed high on-task behavior, they used few high-level cognitive strategies and spent considerable energy eliciting teacher assistance. Although it is generally assumed that students who are on task will show more cognitive engagement, the researchers found during interviews with students that the procedural aspects of a task (e.g., the drawing a graph) are what interested or involved them; consequently, students may complete an assignment without using cognitive strategies to understand the material.

One reason that students might give an inordinate amount of attention to procedural details is that some teachers, who usually have greater difficulty managing procedurally complex tasks than simple tasks, may unwittingly focus students' attention on the procedural rather than the conceptual. For example, one teacher missed or perhaps avoided several opportunities to discuss complex ideas during a laboratory; and on several occasions during the laboratory, different students asked the teacher inferential questions, which could have been springboards for discussion. Instead, the teacher focused students on the
procedures of the lab and was concerned primarily with monitoring students' progress as he walked around the room.

In a similar study Anderson, Stevens, Prawat, and Nickerson (1988) found that teachers in highly rated classrooms taught as if they wanted students to understand why, how and when particular task related behaviors were appropriate. The researchers studied nine third-and fourth-grade classes, and students were given three measures of task-related beliefs. Also, all classrooms were observed on the first or second day of school, and at least four half-day observation were made within the first three week period of the school year. Other observations included six half-day observations during the winter and four half-day observations during the spring. The observers wrote narrative descriptions of classroom events, noting prevalent activities and teachers' references to standards, rationales, consequences, and strategies that related to learning. Highly rated classes were those classrooms with a positive emotional tone, high quality and quantity of work, and clear evidence of self-regulated student behavior.

The researchers noted that teachers in highly rated classrooms explicitly and methodically presented information that aided students to understand the demands of a task; these teachers described ways that students ought to respond to task demands. Also, teachers in highly rated classrooms created situations in which students were given the
opportunity to monitor themselves during the completion of tasks. Furthermore, work routines in highly rated classes were well developed. The researchers posit that predictability in the task environment enabled students to perceive a consistent source of control over task outcomes; students were not worried about failure because teachers provided students with clear accountability systems and adequate information about the demands of tasks in general.

Unlike the other researchers who studied the task systems of experienced teachers' classrooms, Emmer (1986) examined the types of classroom activities and tasks used by four first year middle school teachers - two science and two reading teachers, who participated in an induction program which provided (1) instruction in classroom management and (2) an experienced support teacher. The induction program, however, did not focus on "altering academic tasks or activity structures" (p.230). Narrative records focused on all classroom activities and other information relevant to task descriptions, and each lesson was audiotaped and transcribed. Also, each teacher was interviewed about her task system one or two days after each lesson. Other sources of data included students' work products and teachers' journal entries.

The researchers found differences in the activity structures and tasks used by the pair of science and English teachers. For example, the science teacher with the more
thorough academic background in science used a greater variety of activities and tasks than did the other science teacher, who reported being so overwhelmed by the content that she seldom had the time to design labs, which she, nevertheless, viewed as essential to a science curriculum. Also, the better academically prepared science teacher varied her activities, which included short recitation formats, numerous short class work assignments, teacher presentations and labs; equally important, the researchers noted that her assignments and activities were coherently integrated. In contrast, the other science teacher relied primarily on teacher presentation segments and lengthy seat work assignments, which usually consisted of worksheets focusing on factual questions. Most student work was limited to reading a chapter of a science text or some supplementary material, completing of worksheet assignments, and notetaking. Unfortunately, her assignments and activities were not coherently integrated, and she was more concerned with filling every class period with something for the students to do than with creating more cognitively demanding tasks. Also, her "accountability procedures (e.g., giving a minimum of 70 for completion of work and using a check/zero system for class work)" probably encouraged students to complete assignments with celerity and shoddiness of thought rather than with comprehension (p. 234).
Like the science teachers, the reading teachers differed in their choice of tasks and activities. For example, one reading teacher's presentations of information was limited. Class discussions of content were almost non-existent, and students seldom participated. Unfortunately, she had serious management problems, and she was afraid to have class discussions about literature lest chaos ensue. Because she only tested for vocabulary, her accountability structure for comprehension was undermined. In contrast, the other reading teacher typically held discussions with students about their interpretations of works of literature, and she frequently used a short presentation followed by recitation/seatwork cycle or a seatwork/checking seatwork activity sequence. Overall, her accountability structures were rated as "high."

In sum, task structures reflect one aspect of a teachers' theory of content in that tasks exemplify how curriculum is played out in classrooms; the type of academic work that students are required to engage in affects how students view content (Doyle, 1983; Sanford, 1987). For example, if there is an incongruence between the content and the task that follows or between the content and students' abilities, then students may develop misconceptions about the content or the academic discipline that they are studying (Bennett and Desforges, 1988). Furthermore, academic tasks profoundly influence the social structure of
classrooms; novel tasks create problematic situations in contrast to familiar tasks that are easily completed by students and that are easily managed by teachers (Doyle and Carter, 1984).

Summary

The studies that were reviewed in each of the four sections illustrate ways that content is represented and/or played out in the classroom context; consequently, these studies represent ways that teachers transform curriculum. For example, the studies on teachers' personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1989; Elbaz, 1981; Trumbull, 1990) typify how teachers form conceptions of curriculum and instruction to guide their practice. Also, the studies on teachers' content area knowledge illustrate that a teacher's knowledge of or orientation toward his/her content influences the ways that content is presented to students (Gudmundstottir and Shulman, 1987; Grant, 1991; Gudmundsdottir, 1991). Likewise, researchers such as Golden (1988, 1989) and Heap (1985) analyzed how content is played out in classrooms. For example, Golden's (1989) work illustrates teachers emphasize some themes at the expense of other themes and that they legitimize some but not all student responses. In addition, tasks are an important way that curriculum is represented and played out in classrooms (Doyle and Carter, 1984; Mitman, 1984). For instance, Mitman
(1984) found that some teachers' tasks only required students to regurgitate information without showing a real understanding of scientific concepts; consequently, students mistook the memorization of facts for the higher cognitive processes involved in scientific research. In brief, these studies are relevant to this current study because they illustrate that teachers are transformers of curriculum in a variety of ways.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Various researchers have examined the teacher’s role in the transformation of curriculum. Likewise, this study is an analysis of a teacher’s (Ruth’s) conception or theory of content as represented by three different expressions: her articulated theory of content, an analysis of two lessons, and academic tasks. A case study design was selected because my purpose is to understand the Ruth’s theory of content in depth (Merriam, 1988), and ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis allow researchers to study social interactions of informants in their own environments (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Yin, 1984).

Setting

The setting of this study is a Catholic school in the Southwest. Most of the 1300 students who attend the school are from middle class and upper middle class backgrounds. However, those students whose families cannot afford the tuition have the opportunity to apply for scholarships and/or work programs to waive or to decrease the cost of tuition. Minority students make up about one-third of the total student population. According to the school’s administration, the student population reflects all socio-economic and racial groups of its location.
Informant

The teacher of this study, who took the pseudonym of Ruth, has over twenty years experience teaching at the secondary level, and her educational background includes graduate courses in English literature, humanities, and philosophy. However, her primary interest is the humanities - especially world literature. She was chosen for this study because she has the reputation of having exemplary subject matter knowledge and because she was given the opportunity by her school to design her own curriculum. Consequently, it seemed possible to elicit her theory of curriculum in general and her theory of the specific content that she taught during the observation period. Also, she was chosen because she was willing to participate in the hope that she would gain additional insights into her teaching. She, for example, stated:

I want to learn more and more every year. We teachers can learn so much from one another. It’s a shame that we’re so isolated. [interview #1]

Data Collection

In the fall of 1992 the researcher observed Ruth for the duration of her six-week unit on the entire Odyssey. During each observation, the researcher collected fieldnote data, which focused on content representations, activities and tasks. Also, the researcher audiotaped each lesson using a tape recorder. The lessons were transcribed and
applicable parts were integrated into the fieldnotes. The use of a tape recorder can be problematic; however, Ruth's voice was always clear because she typically taught in front of her lectern where the researcher places the tape recorder. Likewise, students' voices typically were audible as well.

In addition, the researcher interviewed Ruth four times. During the first interview I focused on open-ended questions (Spradley, 1979) that elicited her views concerning (1) curriculum in general, (2) her theory of content, and (3) choice of academic tasks. During the three additional interviews, the researcher and Ruth continued to discuss her theory of content; however, they also focused on her evaluation of student products of written work.

Data Analyses

To examine Ruth's theory of content, three different constructs were employed. First, her conception of the content was examined using Schwab's (1978) syntactic and substantive structures. Second, the enacted curriculum was examined through an analysis of academic tasks (Doyle, 1983). Tasks are important because what students learn depends upon the curriculum that they are exposed to (Walker and Schaffarzick, 1974) in addition to what assignments they are required to complete. For example, if the content lends itself to higher cognitive tasks yet the teacher only
assigns familiar tasks rather than novel or higher cognitive tasks, then students will not learn to their potential. Lastly, lessons on two books of the Odyssey were examined at the microlevel using Golden's (1989) version of text analysis, which primarily concerns how a teacher and her students interact during instruction as they attempted to construct their own interpretations of texts.

Syntactic and Substantive Structures

Schwab (1978) stated that teachers ought to consider the structure of the disciplines that they teach, so that they have a thorough grasp of their content:

The skills relative to a discipline which a curriculum might impart are of three kinds. First, the most commonly sought in a curriculum are the skills by which one applies the truth learned from a discipline. Second, there are the skills of enquiry itself. In their primary use, these are the skills by which the master of a discipline contributes new knowledge to that discipline. But secondarily, they are the skills by which secondary inquiry (inquiry into inquires) is conducted...Third, there are the skills of reading and interpretation by which one discovers the meanings of statements which are embedded in a context of structure (1978, pp.236-237).

In other words, Schwab stressed that teachers should be cognizant of the structures of their discipline because each discipline operates within or upon a certain domain through what he refers to as syntactical and substantive structures. Syntactic structures concern the "logical structures" of a given discipline:
In an investigative [scientific] discipline, for example, we would look for different methods of verification and justification of conclusions and would describe these as constituting the structures of the discipline (1978, p.246).

Syntactic structures are important in that they are the foundational structures of a discipline, which exhibit the logic of the discipline itself, the "different methods of verification and justification of conclusion" (1978, p.246). A discipline's substantive structures, which are "the conceptual devices which are used for defining, bounding, and analyzing the subject matters that they investigate," determine what knowledge is investigated (p. 247). While the syntactic structures of a discipline are like the syntax of a language, the substantive structures are like the semantic clues used to determine what scholars find important to study and evaluate. For example, Schwab (1978) noted that biologists who evaluate organisms using cause/effect relationships legitimate knowledge in different ways than those biologists who use different methods.

Similarly, historians use different substantive and syntactic structures to interpret historical facts. For example, Tyack's (1974) seminal article on historical interpretations examines different ways to view compulsory education. According to Tyack one of the primary ways that compulsory education is examined is through an economic perspective; however, even those individuals whose interpretations focus primarily on economic factors often
differ with each other. Tyack, for instance, contrasts the two predominant economic views - "human-capital theory and a Marxism model":

Human-capital theorists focus on the family as a decision unit in calculating the costs and benefits of schooling. Finally, the Marxists see class struggle as the source of the dialectic that produces historical change. Each interpretation, in turn, directs attention to certain kinds of evidence which can confirm or disprove its assertion of causation: growth of new state rule and apparatus, religious differences expressed in political conflict, the rise of large organizations and related ideologies, the individual and social rates of return on schooling, and changes in the social relations of production and of schooling (p. 388).

In short, Tyack emphasizes that different scholars use different frameworks of interpretation, which results in "quite different conceptions of what drives social change and hence quite different notions of appropriate policy" (p. 388).

Likewise, Gudmundsdottir (1988) posits that a teacher's use of syntactic/substantive structures significantly influences his/her interpretation. For example,

... a history teacher who specializes in the Marxist historical tradition is teaching about revolutions. He is probably going to use conceptual devices such as freedom, economics, democracy, monarchy, anarchy, and religion in a distinctly Marxist way. A teacher who specializes in another tradition may choose the same concepts but use them in a way consistent with another school of thought (p.23).

In other words, the examination of these structures is important if one is to understand how a teacher transforms content.
If a teacher structures her literature lessons from Rosenblatt’s (1978) experiential perspective, she will transform and present the content in different ways and emphasize different syntactic structures than if she employs a more "traditional" approach that requires students to learn and apply literary conventions such as rhyme scheme, meter, and poetic form (e.g., sonnet, haiku, epic, etc.). Furthermore, even if two teachers use similar syntactic structures or have similar orientations toward literature, they, nevertheless, may view a work of literature in substantially different ways. For instance, any given group of experiential oriented teachers might stress different themes, and even if these teachers focus on the same themes, they might interpret the themes in drastically different ways, using different literary theories (e.g., Feminist, Showalter, 1985; Marxist, Eagleton, 1981; or Deconstructionist, Culler, 1981).

In this study, the teacher’s syntactic and substantive structures were analyzed in detail. After numerous readings of teacher interviews, fieldnotes and transcripts of lessons, the data was coded. Then a componental analysis of the teacher’s various knowledge structures and themes was computed (Spradley, 1980). Also, examples were selected to illustrate dominant patterns or themes.
Lesson Analysis

In addition to examining syntactic and substantive structures, Golden's (1988, 1989) method of analyzing the construction of reading lessons was employed to examine two different lessons of Ruth's *Odyssey* unit. Like Golden (1988), the researcher posits that "both text and reader contribute equally in the construction of the aesthetic work (Iser, 1978)." In other words, Golden posits that context influences a reader's interpretation. Golden, for instance, illustrates the importance of context when she refers to Iser's (1978) example that readers during Fielding's era were interested in the morality of the characters and the author himself; in contrast, modern readers might not focus on these same issues and may not consider the character Tom Jones an immoral man as did the majority of Victorian readers, who would have been scandalized if Fielding had glorified Jones' exploits. Thus, each generation interprets literary works in ways that often differ from previous or later generations in the same way that individual readers often interpret texts differently. The classroom context, however, differs from the context of the individual reader, because the reader in the classroom context is influenced by the teacher and by other students; knowledge itself is transformed and produced during lessons by both teacher and students (Heap, 1985).

In short, the purpose of the last phase of this is to
analyze two books of the *Odyssey* at the microlevel, and the following aspects of the lesson were analyzed: (1) the text itself (episodic structures and markers of the episodes); (2) the teacher's initial interpretation of the text; (3) students' interpretations; (4) the formulation of interpretations of the class as a whole, and (5) examples of certified knowledge, and (6) the teacher's use of terminology to explain technical terms of an academic discipline (e.g., Lemke, 1989).

First, the episodic or narrative structure of each of the two books was initially mapped out through the outlining of the plot, and then the plot was subdivided into episodes, which Golden defines as "having a goal, a goal attempt, an outcome and possibly, although not necessarily a reaction" (p.77). Goals, attempts, outcomes, and reactions are complex in that in any given episode these components may apply to more than one character. Second, "markers of episodes" were delineated and coded. The two lessons were initially coded by the researcher and then were coded by a second coder. All disagreements in the delineation of episodes were rectified through discussions concerning each coder's rationale for his/her decisions. After a convergence in coding was reached, the sections in question were recorded.

The next step of analysis concerned the mapping out of the types of themes discussed during the lesson in relation
to specific episodes in the text itself. The lesson also was coded in accordance to the four following types of themes used by Golden (1988):

1. Episodic-based themes: these specifically refer to information in the story labeled as episodic....
2. Text-related themes: these are related to the text in some way, yet do not signal episodic information example: "What is a thunderous crash?" (Vocabulary).
3. Extra-textual themes: these primarily center on reader based experiences which are not directly focused on the text....
4. Other themes: these do not relate to the story or to the reading of the story. Often these segments focus on maintaining discipline or the procedural aspects of the lesson....(Golden, 1988, p. 78-79).

In addition to Golden's four categories of themes, other categories were used:

5. Evolution of themes: these involve themes that evolved during the duration of a discussion; consequently, the processes of the patterns of knowledge production as referred to by Heap (1985) were examined.

6. Certified knowledge: the teacher's conceptions of certified knowledge were noted (Heap, 1985).

In sum, two lessons were analyzed in detail to illustrate how a teacher's operative theory of content is enacted at the classroom level. An analysis of lessons demonstrates how content is enacted during interactive teaching. The intention of the researcher was to provide an indepth examination of lessons, a "microframework." The studies on pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1989; Wilson and Wineburg, 1988) do not provide detailed examples of individual lessons; conversely, studies of individual
lessons (Golden, 1988/1989; Heap, 1985) do not illustrate how these lessons fit into a larger curriculum framework.

Tasks

In addition to lessons, a teacher's theory of content is represented in academic tasks. The initial analysis of data focused on the mapping out of the events of each class period and focused on identifying all academic tasks. Using Doyle's framework (1983), analyses focused on the following aspects of each task:

(a) the products students are to formulate, such as an original essay or answers to a set of test questions;
(b) the operations that are to be used to generate the production, such as memorizing a list of words or classifying examples of a concept; and (c) the "givens" or resources available to students while they are generating a product, such as a model of a finished essay supplied by the teacher or a fellow student. Academic tasks, in other words, are defined by the answers students are required to produce and the routes that can be used to obtain answers (p.178).

Furthermore, an additional analysis of each task was made from the information consolidated from the description of each academic task. For example, Ruth's instructional methods that were used to introduce and to explain the tasks were examined in addition to the influence of these strategies on the cognitive operations that students used within the context of classroom events. Also, her accountability systems were examined in terms of how she initially explained her accountability system to her students in comparison to how she actually evaluated in
terms of each product's quality. Lastly, Ruth's management strategies for activities and tasks were mapped, and particular attention was focused on comprehension or novel tasks because these tasks are inherently problematic for teachers to manage and for students to complete (Sanford, 1987; Doyle and Carter, 1984).

Summary

In sum, Strauss (1987) posits that the primary focus of the analysis of qualitative data concerns "how to capture the complexity of reality (phenomena) we study and how to make convincing sense of it" (p.10). In the attempt to understand and to exemplify some of the complexities of the context of Ruth's class, I used multiple data sources, which is one form of triangulation (Mathison, 1988). In other words, three constructs were employed to capture different expressions of Ruth's conception or theory of content.
CHAPTER 4
THE ANALYSIS

Introduction: An Overview of Ruth's Curriculum

As previously stated, the researcher attempted to examine Ruth's theory of content from three different perspectives. In addition, the researcher has provided the reader with some background information about Ruth's curriculum/pedagogy and about the Odyssey itself to ground Ruth's unit both in the larger perspective of her ninth grade English course and in the context of the content studied - the Odyssey, which the researcher summarized. The researcher assumed that his audience has studied the Odyssey sometime in the past; the purpose of the summary of the plot of the Odyssey is only to refresh the reader's memory.

Ruth began the year with a study skills unit before she taught any works of literature, the primary focus of her two semester curriculum. During the fall semester Ruth taught the Odyssey, which was respectively followed by Oedipus Rex, Antigone, and MacBeth. Her second semester units included the following works of literature in their designated order: sonnets by Petrarch and Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Dune. Ruth's Odyssey unit lasted six weeks and included a variety of tasks such as writing assignments, quizzes on the Odyssey, and vocabulary quizzes. Ruth covered all books of the Odyssey,
A Summary of the Plot

In Book I of the Odyssey, a large group of riotous suitors, who want to marry Odysseus' wife, Penelope, have turned Odysseus' home into pandemonium. Athena, disguised as Mentes, arrives in Ithaka to give Telemakhos courage to deal with the suitors. When Telemakhos confronts the suitors, they blame Penelope for their misbehavior, because she tricked them into believing that she would marry one of them when she finished weaving a funeral garment for Odysseus' father. Penelope weaves during the day but unweaves the garment at night, and the suitors eventually realize that she is misleading them (Book II).

In an attempt to find out some information about his father who has been away for twenty years, Telemakhos visits Nestor (Book III) and Menelaos (Book IV), who are heroes of the Trojan War. Telemakhos learns from both Nestor and Menelaos that he looks and acts like his father, and Menelaos also tells Telemakhos that Odysseus is living with Kalypso, a nymph.

Kalypso holds Odysseus captive and entices him to remain with her by offering him the gift of immortality, which Odysseus rejects. Kalypso finally allows Odysseus to sail for home because Hermes tells her that Zeus orders
Odysseus' release. However, Poseidon wrecks Odysseus' raft (Book V). Nevertheless, Odysseus survives and washes ashore in the land of the Phaiakians. Odysseus is naked and desperate, but Princess Nausikaa listens to his humble request for food and clothing. The Princess leads Odysseus to the court of her parents, Queen Arete and King Alkinoos (Book VII), who treat Odysseus with honor and respect even though they do not know his identity (Books VII and VIII).

When Odysseus does reveal his identity, he is asked to tell about his journey from the time that he left Troy. First, Odysseus discusses his adventure in the land of the Kikones. Odysseus and his men foolishly raid the Kikones, who do nothing to provoke the them. Consequently, Odysseus and his men are punished by Zeus for their brutality. Next, Odysseus discusses his adventure in the land of the Lotos Eaters. Some of Odysseus' men eat the lotus plant, and they lose all of their motivation to return home (Book IX). After sailing from the land of the Lotos Eaters, Odysseus visits the island of the Kyklops, Polyphemos, who is Poseidon's giant, one-eyed son. Polyphemos finds Odysseus and his men in his cave, and he places a huge stone in front of the entrance of the cave, thus preventing the escape of the Greeks. Polyphemos drinks a great amount of wine prepared by Odysseus and his men, and he falls into a deep sleep. Meanwhile the Greeks sharpen the end of a stake, which they thrust into the eye of the Kyklops, who they
blind. The next day Odysseus and his men escape from the Kyklops' cave as they hide underneath the bellies of the Kyklops' giant sheep. Unfortunately, Odysseus brags to the Kyklops that he, "Odysseus, raider of cities," is the person who blinded him.

After leaving the island of the Kyklops, Odysseus is close to ending his quest of returning home when he lands on the island of Aiolos, who gives him a bag that contains all stormy winds that could harm the Ithakans. While Odysseus sleeps, his men open the bag, and their ship is blown far away from the shores of Ithaka, which they could see in the distance (Book X), and tragedy continues to plague Odysseus when he lands on the country of the Laistrygonians, who are giant cannibals who kill and eat some of Odysseus' men (Book X).

After his unfortunate experience with the Laistrygonians, Odysseus' ship lands on the island of Kirke, who turns some of Odysseus' men into animals. Odysseus, however, is able to overcome Kirke because Hermes intervenes and gives him a plant called molu, which is an antidote to Kirke's power. Later, Odysseus and Kirke become lovers, and he and his men stay on Kirke's island for an extended period of time. Eventually, Odysseus asks Kirke to help him to return home, and she agrees to do so (Book X).

Kirke recommends to Odysseus that he must first travel to Hades to obtain information about his destiny from
Teiresias, the blind prophet of Thebes. Teiresias informs Odysseus of the trouble that awaits him at home and advises him that he and his men ought not to eat the sacred cattle of Helios. After leaving the underworld, Odysseus returns to Kirke’s island before sailing for home (Book XI).

Kirke gives Odysseus and his men additional supplies, and she warns Odysseus of the dangers of the Seirenes and Skylla and Kharybdis. Odysseus, fortunately, follows Kirke’s advice and plugs the ears of his men with beeswax so that they do not sail toward the Sirens, who sing beautifully but who devour their victims. Odysseus, however, wants to hear the song of the Seirenes so he asks his men to chain him to the mast of their ship. Odysseus is not able to resist the hypnotic song of the Seirenes, but he cannot jump into the seas to his own destruction because he cannot break the chains (Book XII). Later, they must sail by Skylla, a giant six-headed monster, to avoid Kharybdis, a giant whirlpool. As Kirke instructed, Odysseus sails by the cave of Skylla, who devours six of his men. If he had avoided Skylla, he would have lost his ship and all of his men.

Odysseus, however, does lose all of his men later. Odysseus’ ship is stranded in Helios’ island because there are no favorable winds. The men are at the point of starvation, so they eat Helios’ sacred cattle. Consequently, Zeus punishes the men and destroys their boat with a thunderbolt when they eventually do set sail. All the men
drown with the exception of Odysseus, who did not eat the sacred cattle. Odysseus helplessly drifts in the sea for several days before he again passes between Skylla and Kharybdis and later washes ashore on Kalypso’s island (Book XII).

Odysseus finishes telling his story to the Phaiakians, who give Odysseus gifts and who return him to Ithaka in their magical ship. Athena advises Odysseus to disguise himself as a beggar when he returns home (Book XIII). Odysseus follows Athena’s advice and visits Eumaios, his faithful servant, who is kind to Odysseus even though he does not know Odysseus’ true identity. Meanwhile, Telemakhos is still with Menelaos, and Athena warns him that the suitors plan to ambush and kill him when he returns. Consequently, Telemakhos secretly sails for Ithaka and goes to the cottage of Eumaios (Book XV) where he meets Odysseus who remains disguised (Book XVI).

Odysseus does not reveal himself to Telemakhos until Athena transforms Odysseus’ withered appearance into that of a strong and youthful man (Book XVI). Odysseus again disguises himself as a beggar, and he goes to the palace with Eumaios. He is taunted by the suitors; in contrast, Penelope is kind to him and chastises Telemakhos for allowing the suitors to mistreat Odysseus, who she does not recognize as her husband (Book XVIII).
After Odysseus reveals himself to Telemakhos, he meets with Penelope to test her loyalty. Odysseus finds that Penelope wants no part of the suitors, who, she notes, have consumed her home. Odysseus, still disguised as a beggar, reveals to Penelope that Odysseus is alive and will return home soon. After their conversation, Penelope asks Eurykleia, the woman who cared for Odysseus when he was a child, to wash his feet. Eurykleia does so, and she recognizes Odysseus because he has a distinct scar on one of his legs where he was bitten by a wild boar. Athena prevents Penelope from hearing Eurykleia's exclamation, "You are Odysseus" (Book XIX, 1630). Odysseus then swears Eurykleia to secrecy.

Although Penelope still has not recognized Odysseus, she unknowingly provides Odysseus with a way to defeat the suitors when she announces to the suitors that she will marry the man who can string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through a line of twelve ax-helve sockets, a seemingly impossible task (Books XX-XXI). No suitor is able to bend Odysseus' bow to string it, and Odysseus waits for the proper moment to kill the suitors with the help of Telemakhos and his loyal servants - Eumaios, the swineherder and Philoitios, the cowherder. Odysseus promises to reward these servants for their loyalty.

When Odysseus asks for the opportunity to string the bow, the suitors mock him; Penelope, however, insists that
Odysseus, who is still disguised as a beggar, should have the chance to show his skills. When Eumaios hands Odysseus the bow, he tells the nurse to retire with Penelope and the maids to the family chamber. Odysseus previously told Telemakhos to remove the suitors' weapons from the great hall where the bow contest takes place; consequently, the suitors are locked in the hall without most of their weapons (Book XXI). Odysseus easily strings the bow and shoots an arrow through the sockets of the lined axes. Next, he shoots and kills Antinous, the most arrogant of the suitors. Then he identifies himself to the other suitors, who he kills with the assistance of Telemakhos and his two loyal servants. Odysseus now reclaims his kingdom (Book XXII).

Odysseus and Penelope are reunited as husband and wife (Book XXIII), and Odysseus also reconciles himself with his father, Laertes (Book XXIV). Unfortunately, the families of the dead suitors temporarily disrupt the peace in that they seek revenge. It is only by Athena's intervention as ordered by Zeus that prevents a civil war, and the families of the suitors swear to terms of peace. Odysseus, therefore, ends his odyssey in Ithaka and is reunited with his family (Book XXIV).

A Summary of Ruth's Unit

During the first week of her Odyssey unit, Ruth provided students with background information on the Iliad
and introduced students to both epic poetry and the monomyth. Also, she covered Book I of the Odyssey and organized students into cooperative learning groups for vocabulary assignments. In short, the first week was devoted primarily to the introduction of the Odyssey.

The lessons of the next five weeks, on the other hand, focused more on the Odyssey itself. For example, during the second week Ruth discussed Books II-IV, and she quizzed students on this material. In addition, students began working on a character analysis, which continued into the third week. During the third week Ruth also quizzed students over reading assignments (Books V-VIII), and they also took a vocabulary quiz on words from Greek mythology and history. Similarly, Ruth covered and quizzed students on Books IX-XI in the fourth week, and students wrote and peer edited what Ruth referred to as a "creative insert" assignment. In addition, she introduced students to the four essay topics that she later used for students' summative in-class essay exam on the Odyssey.

During the next two weeks, Ruth covered the Odyssey at a faster pace. The class discussed and took various quizzes over Books XII-XIX during the fifth week and over Books XX-XXIII during the sixth week. In the fifth week she continued to discuss the four essay topics that she used for students' in-class essay exam. Students were required to begin preparation of a detailed outline of each topic, and they
were provided opportunities to peer edit one another's outlines. Ruth concluded her Odyssey unit with this in-class essay exam on the first day of the seventh week. In addition, Ruth showed a movie version of the Odyssey, so that students had the opportunity to compare Homer's work with that of Hollywood. In brief, Ruth's unit lasted six weeks and a day. (See Appendix I for more details.)

**Typical Days**

Ruth usually taught behind her podium, which was located at the front of her room and which she used to store her attendance slips, various papers, and her own copy of the Odyssey. She always began class as soon as the bell rang. From the moment class started and until class ended, she seemed intent on using every minute for her curricular concerns. As soon as the bell rang, she typically told students, "Take out your notebooks and date your notes. Today is ____. Turn to page ____." In short, she, like successful classroom managers, gave clear directions, developed a routine to begin class, and kept her class on-task (Doyle, 1986).

Most lessons, which were class discussions, were orderly with few call outs and were teacher-directed question and answer sessions. Students were expected to participate in discussions, and they seemed willing to do so. Ruth never used small group discussions when teaching
the *Odyssey*; she, however, used cooperative learning groups when teaching vocabulary assignments, during which her students seemed to be on-task. Another variation from the typical teacher-directed discussions concerned the peer editing sessions. Ruth required students to work quietly as they peer edited one another’s work, and she typically walked around the room and answered students’ questions. In short, the class had an academic focus, and the students were cooperative.

**An Examination of Syntactic and Substantive Structures**

**Genre**

According to Graff (1987), every English teacher has a theory of literature, and Ruth is no exception. Her theory of the *Odyssey* - as articulated in interviews and as expressed during lessons - has been influenced by several sources. Ruth has built her curriculum around the concept of genre, and she has attempted to provide her students with what she refers to as "analytical tools" and to interpret literature. Ruth has organized her two semester freshman English course around different genres. During the fall semester she first taught the epic (the *Odyssey* including some background information about the *Iliad*), which was followed by tragedy (*Oedipus Rex, Antigone*, and *MacBeth*). She began the spring semester with a continuation of tragedy (*Romeo and Juliet*) and then taught a comedy unit (*A_
Midsummer’s Night Dream), and science fiction (Dune).

Ruth believes that each genre needs to be approached differently, and she noted that students who understand the conventions of an epic will have an easier time understanding epics such as the Odyssey or Paradise Lost. She told her students that

The epic, at least according to Aristotle, is incredibly important and in importance second only to tragedy... the Renaissance critics for the most part ranked the epic as the highest honor of all. The epic is in a sense (pause) a long poem (pause) and it’s incredibly difficult for a poem to be able to sustain its narrative and poetic power throughout the entire epic. [observation #3]

In other words, she articulated her rationale for teaching the epic, seeming to stress to students that knowledge of the epic form is important.

In addition, Ruth focused on the following points when discussing characteristics of an epic: (1) the situation is of national or international significance; or in the case of Adam in Paradise Lost it has cosmic importance. Also, she noted that in the epic Gilgamesh, the character Gilgamesh has to save his great nation. (2) The main character performs superhuman deeds, or the lone character has to go through superhuman trials. The settings of epics are usually on a large scale as typified by Odysseus’ journey, which encompasses the entire Mediterranean- the entire world known by Homer. (4) Epics are usually written in a very formal or ceremonial style and are much more formal than ordinary
speech. For instance, she stressed to her students that Homer used epic similes in which the secondary subject develops much further than its main idea that is parallel to the main subject. Furthermore, she introduced swift similes, which she described as typical similes. Also, she informed her students that Homer used stock epithets, which are formulas such as "gray-eyed Athena," "bolt-hurling Zeus" or the "wine-dark sea." She emphasized that Homer used epithets to maintain the poetic meter. (5) The narrative starts *in medias res*, which she translated as (in the middle of things), and she used the concept of *in medias res* to assist students to understand that the plot of *Odyssey* is not told in chronological order. (6) The poet asks for some type of inspiration and states important themes at the beginning of the epic.

In the same way that Ruth outlined the structure of the epic, she noted that she delineates to students the structure of each genre that she teaches. For example, before her students read *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, she stated that she introduces them to the history of comedy. She typically begins her comedy unit with background lectures on the evolution of ancient Greek comedy, which she compares to both Roman and Shakespearean comedy.

In addition, she provides students with a handout on the following patterns of comedy:
1. A comedy is a serious play which deals with love and makes people laugh.

2. Comedy is the rising of an inferior character who gains respect in the end.

3. Comedy is the maneuvering of a young man toward a young woman with marriage as its end.

4. Comedy normally presents an erotic intrigue between a young man and a young woman which is blocked by some kind of opposition, usually paternal, and resolved by a twist in the plot.

5. While tragic writers tend to view man in the context of a universal condition, comic writers often take a hard look at their immediate society, satirizing its customs and institutions. (In romantic comedies such as Shakespeare's *As You Like It* or *A Midsummers Night's Dream*, the artist creates a world where the lovers escape from society and where all social restraints are removed; consequently, the characters are forced to examine society in different ways. This escape from society is described by Northrop Frye (1959) as "The Green World.") The action of the comedy begins in a world represented by the normal world, moves into "The Green World" - goes into a metamorphosis, thereby achieving the comic
resolution - and returns to the normal world again.

After introducing students to the conventions of comedy, Ruth teaches *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and applies these conventions throughout the play. Lastly, students are required to write a thematic analysis of a modern comedy (play or movie) in which they apply the conventions of comedy.

Archetypal Criticism and the Monomyth

Another aspect of Ruth's theory of literature is that she primarily uses archetypal criticism to interpret the *Odyssey*. She has stated in interviews that she has been influenced primarily by the work of Northrop Frye (1957) and by Maud Bodkin (1934), and Phillip Wheelwright (1968) to a lesser degree; in addition, she has expressed her affinity for the work of Carl Jung (1953). For example, Ruth stated:

I think that it [the *Odyssey*] is an archetypal myth. It is a quest story. Every person in a sense goes through some sort of searching for knowledge and experience...Odysseus is an enormous archetypal figure of heroic proportions. Nevertheless, (pause) each person goes through a certain amount of trials...I hope that students see that the *Odyssey* is psychologically powerful. I hope that students see something psychological in it in that they merely don’t see it as some foolish stories from the past.

[Interview #1]

Early in her *Odyssey* unit, she introduced the students to Campbell's concept of the monomyth, and she provided
students with a handout which simplifies Campbell's (1949) ideas from his famous work *A Hero With A Thousand Faces*. She, like Campbell, divided the monomyth into three primary stages: (1) "separation or departure," (2) "initiation," and (3) "return of the hero." These stages are what Ruth refers to as the "nuclear unit of the monomyth."

The separation stage is described on Ruth's handout as

A breaking away or departure from the local source or order; a separation from the world; the archetypal image of disintegration of society and the need for a quest to restore order.

Her version of the departure stage mirrors Campbell's work in that Campbell posited that the heroes of myths are usually called by the unknown to solve a problem of some sort. The departure state is a "call to adventure":

... destiny has summoned the hero and turned his fate of spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of society to resolve a norm. This faithful region of both treasure and danger may be presented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintops or profound state; but is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torment, superhuman deeds, and possible delight. The hero can go forth of his own volition to accomplish the adventure, as did Theseus when he arrived in his father's city, Athens, and heard the horrible history of the Minotaur; or he may be carried or sent abroad by some benign or malignant agent, as was Odysseus, driven about the Mediterranean by the winds of the angered god, Poseidon (Campbell, 1949, p.58).

In addition to Campbell's first stage of the monomyth, Ruth used Campbell's second stage of initiation. She defined the initiation stage as:
A long deep retreat inward and backward, a chaotic series of encounters of darkly terrifying experiences; the hero encounters a centering, fulfilling, harmonizing given courage a penetration to some source of power and finally a rebirth to life in return journey.

Also, she emphasized five main aspects of the initiation stage:

(1) the hero is a wanderer who has lost a sense of direction; (2) there are trials often concerning gods and goddesses, (3) the hero usually meets a goddess (magna mater) or the bliss of infancy is regained; also gods and goddesses with or without the hero’s knowledge aid him to undertake the proper adventure, (4) a woman often tempts the hero, and (5) the hero undergoes some sort of dying to the world; there is an interval in which the hero is a nonentity, so that he comes back as one reborn and filled with creative power.

Likewise, Campbell posits:

Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth-adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals. The hero is covertly aided by advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into the region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage (Campbell, 1949, p.97).

Lastly, Ruth summarized in four points the third stage of Campbell’s monomyth the "return stage". First, Ruth emphasized that there is a "magical flight; the crossing of the threshold of the return to the world of common day."

Second, she stressed that the hero engages in a contest to prove that he is worthy of his home, kingdom, inheritance. Third, order is restored, and there is reconciliation. Fourth, she emphasized that the hero must share with society
the goods that he received from the gods or from his adventures.

Likewise, Campbell stated:

When a heroic quest has been accomplished through the penetration to the source, or through the grace of some male or female, human or animal, personification, the adventure still must return with his life-transmuting trophy. The full round, the norm of monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the label of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece or the sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand world (Campbell, 1949, p.193).

To prepare students for her framework of the Odyssey, she exposed them briefly to Jung (1953), discussing concepts such as the collective unconscious and archetypes. Also, she discussed the concept of "myth," initially asking students themselves to define "myth." Later during her lecture, she emphasized that the word "myth" is derived from the Greek word "mythos", which originally referred to speech or "story," and she stressed that Aristotle referred to the concept of mythos in his Poetics as "plot narrative structures." Furthermore, she emphasized that myths sometimes are the traditional folklore of tribes or nations, and they can also be explanatory stories of nature, which are represented in a rational way.

Ruth’s Application of the Monomyth

The heart of Ruth’s theory of the epic is Campbell's monomyth, which she used as an overarching thematic
structure to develop important themes of the *Odyssey* such as pride, humility, respect for the gods, the necessity for soldiers to lose their warlike tendencies after wars are concluded, the importance of family, charity for strangers, and respect for a code of ethics.

**Separation**

When Ruth introduced students to Campbell's separation stage, she emphasized in her class lectures that the Greek warriors were separated from their families for ten years and that they focused on aspects of war, not on the civilized and peaceful aspects of family life. Consequently, she emphasized that Odysseus and the other warriors must learn to lose their warlike tendencies and pride. For example, she noted that Akhilleus is the greatest warrior of the *Iliad* and that he is very proud. When Akhilleus and Agamemnon argue over a slave woman, Akhilleus sulks because he does not get his way. Ruth noted that another example of the degeneration of society occurs when Akhilleus kills Hector, and he parades Hector's body outside of the walls of Troy. Akhilleus' actions, according to Ruth, show extreme disrespect because the Greeks believed that the living should show respect for the dead and should allow for their proper burial.
In Ruth's view Akhailleus' actions illustrate the extent that society has degenerated; consequently, order needs to be restored after the Trojan War:

The Iliad's an epic with the elements of tragedy...the Trojan War results in the unraveling of society...communities destroyed by war. The social laws, customs created through the cooperation and intelligence of people...destroyed...Order needs to be restored. [observation #3]

In other words, the Greeks overcame great trials and won the Trojan War, but more importantly, they must learn again how to live peacefully in a society which is governed by a different code of ethics than the military code that is typical for those involved in war. Consequently, there is the need for a heroic quest to restore order.

Ruth noted that during the separation/departure stage of the monomyth that Odysseus, like the typical hero of mythology, has lost direction and consequently has to wander through a series of trials. Through his experiences he eventually learns to lose his warlike tendencies and learns "to die to himself." Ruth reiterated throughout her Odyssey unit that Odysseus' trials are both psychological and physical trials. For example, one of Odysseus' first psychological trials occurs when he goes to the land of Lotus, which symbolizes pleasures such as drug addiction, sensuality, or the complete forgoing of responsibilities. Ruth noted during a class discussion that

This temptation is a serious one...you know...if Odysseus gives in his quest ends before it begins. The
men who ate this lotos forget their goal of returning home - they lose their identity too... You know what... Odysseus introduces himself to the Phaiakians that he mentioned his home, part of his identity. If you lose your home, you lose yourself. [observation #17]

Ruth also noted that during the departure/separation stage that Odysseus must learn a certain amount of self-discipline. For example, Odysseus imprudently falls asleep and thereby enables his men to open the bag of wind, which blows them away from Ithaka. He has to accept the consequences for not staying awake and for not explaining to his men what the bag contained. Also, she stressed that Odysseus must resist despair and the temptation to commit suicide by jumping into the rough sea; instead, he renews his quest to return home.

Also, Ruth often emphasized that Odysseus must learn to resist his warlike tendencies before he can return home to restore order and to live peacefully as a landowner. For example, Odysseus attacks the Kikones without provocation. Ruth emphasized that Odysseus and his men are ruthless, and she referred to the following passage from lines 49-60 of Book X, which she told her students to highlight:

The wind that carried left Ilion
brought me to Ismaros, on the far shore,
A strong point on the coast of the Kikones.
I stormed that place and killed the men who fought
Plunder we took and we enslaved the women,
To make division, equal shares to all.
But on the spot I told them, back them quickly, apt to see again!
My number one weakness,
Fools on stores of wine,
Sheep after sheep
They butchered by the surf and shambling cattle,
Pristine - while fugitives went inland running
to call to arms the main force of the Kikones....
So doom appear to us, darkwood of Zeus for us, our evil
days.

However, she noted that Odysseus and his men are
civilized enough to at least know that their heinous actions
ought to have been punished by Zeus; in contrast, the
Kyklopes have developed a crude civilization with virtually
no code of ethics to guide them. Ruth explained to her
students that Kyklopes are uncivilized cannibals who have
no sense of community. For example, she stated that the
Kyklopes do not have

a law to guide them ... they don't have any knowledge
of farming or cultivation. Their society is quite
primitive
... they're loners. They care nothing for others and
have no real civilization - they don't live in
families.

[observation #17]

Equally significant, the Kyklopes do not honor strangers
anymore than they have respect for any creature - not even
the gods themselves.

In addition, Ruth stressed that Odysseus is extremely
arrogant during the Kyklops episode and that he must learn
to "lose himself" and to realize that he's a "Nohbody", the
name that he calls himself when the Kyklops asks him for his
name.
Unfortunately, Odysseus boasts to the Kyklops that he himself blinded him, and his arrogance results not only in his own inability to return home but in the eventual deaths of all of his crew. Poseidon, the god of the sea and father of the Kyklops, prevents Odysseus from sailing straight home.

Another episode in which Ruth emphasized that society has degenerated is the episode about the Laistrygonians, who are giant cannibals. She noted that most animals do not devour their own kind and that cannibalism is such a heinous crime in Greek mythology that Zeus sent a terrible flood and destroyed civilization because cannibalism was prevalent. In brief, Ruth noted that during the departure or separation stage of the monomyth, Odysseus learns there is a tension between good and evil and that Odysseus has to go through more trials so that he becomes humble and values home and just societies.

Initiation

Likewise, during the "initiation" stage Odysseus continues to face trials and to learn about himself. For example, Ruth stated that Odysseus must overcome the beautifully seductive Kirke, who turns Odysseus' men into literal and symbolic swine because they give in to sensual pleasures or hedonism. Later, Odysseus is tempted to forget his quest of returning home because he has the opportunity
to live an idyllic life on the island of Kirke, who cares for him. Kirke, according to Ruth, is Odysseus’ "magma mater" in that she provides Odysseus with the means to travel to the underworld where he consults Teiresias, the blind prophet of Thebes, about his future.

It is from his experience in the underworld that Odysseus begins to "die to himself" and truly learns that he is a "Nohbody." Ruth, for example, spent considerable time discussing the significance of the following passage about Akhailleus’ view of life and death in an attempt to illustrate that home and family, not military prowess, are the most important values in life:

’But was there ever a man more blessed by fortune
Than you, Akhailleus? Can there ever be?
We ranked you with immortals in your lifetime,
we Argives did, and here your power is royal,
among the dead men’s shapes.
Think, then, Akhailleus,
you need not be so pained by death.’

To this he answered swiftly:
’Let me hear no smooth talk
of death from you, Odysseus, light of councils
Better I say, to break sod as a farmhand
for some poor country man, on iron rations,
than lord it over all the exhausted dead.
[XI, 569-581]

Ruth stressed that the Greeks viewed death as a very somber state, so much so that even Akhailleus, the greatest warrior of the Trojan War, would rather work as a peasant farmer than rule the underworld. Ruth emphasized that because Odysseus has gone through the experience of
... dying to himself, he is, in a sense reborn, into a new person who is truly capable of learning from his trials and experiences in general. [observation #19]

In addition, Odysseus learn important lessons when he faces the Seirenes and Skylla and Kharybdis. For example, the Seirenes were presented during a class discussion as symbolizing irresistible temptations of various types; the Seirenes are so irresistible that Odysseus chains himself to the ship's mast to avoid their seductive singing; he learns that he is not as psychologically as strong as he had hoped. In addition, Ruth noted that Skylla and Kharybdis represents a dilemma that Odysseus must accept and that he agonizes over this dilemma because he knows that six of his men will die no matter what decision he makes. In Ruth's view the passing through Skylla and Kharybdis is a "rite of passage" for Odysseus, who learns that martial prowess - as noted by Kirke, his magma mater - will not always solve one's problems. In this case sailing through Skylla and Kharybdis as quickly as possible without stopping to fight is the wiser option. Furthermore, during the class discussion the theme of appearance versus reality surfaced in that the bay where Skylla and Kharybdis are located seems like the perfect place for a ship to anchor, yet there is great danger.

Another theme that Ruth emphasized during the initiation stage is that of human weakness. For example, she
emphasized that Odysseus' men allow Eurylokhos to persuade them to eat the sacred cattle of Helios despite Teiresias' warnings to avoid doing so. Odysseus' men accept Eurylokhos' rationalization for eating the sacred cattle, which results in Zeus' wrath. The starving men give in to human weakness and must accept the consequences.

After Odysseus has survived the trials during his initiation stage, he has one final temptation which could have deterred him from his quest to return home. Kalypso offers him immortality if he will stay with her on her island that is so beautiful that even Hermes is overwhelmed at its beauty. However, Odysseus has learned through his trials and experiences that his family and home are more important than fame, military prowess, or in this case immortality. In short, Ruth noted that during the initiation stage, a hero is often confronted by a temptress, who has the power to keep him from completing his quest. In this case Kalypso keeps Odysseus on her island against his will and does not release him until Zeus orders her to do so. Consequently, he does not believe her when she tells him that she will allow him to return home; he only believes her when she swears a "great oath," which, according to Ruth, is binding and a serious matter to break:

... one of the codes of conduct that we learned from the Greeks is that if you take an oath before a god, then you say a great oath and the Greeks have a rule that...if you take the great oath and tell me that you are not keeping, I will believe you...because if you
say I swear to tell the truth ...that is a valid holy oath and you stand by what you say. And the Greeks had this concept, if someone said I will take such an oath, that means there is no way to break it because the gods would have a terrible thing happen to them and so he said that I will believe you if you will take the great oath. [observation #12]

In short, by the time Odysseus leaves Kalypso, he has undergone great trials and learned from his adventures. He has lost his warlike tendencies and most of his pride, and he realizes the importance of his family as revealed by his statement to Princess Nausikaa, a passage which she read to her class:

"And may the gods accomplish your desire:  
A home, and a husband, and harmonious  
Converse with him - the best thing in the world  
Being a strong house held in serenity  
Where men and wife agree.  
Woe to their enemies  
    Joy to their friends!."  
[VI, 194-199]

The theme of family harmony is important in Ruth's view because Odysseus' quest is in reality quite modest; he is not searching for wealth or magical powers - his goal is merely to return home.

Similarly, Ruth stressed the themes of the necessity of social justice and societal harmony as typified by the land of the Phaiakians, a magical or ideal society which is well-ordered and ethical. For instance, Ruth stated that the social code of civilized people as expected by the gods is that one ought to greet strangers with kindness. Ruth emphasized that civilized and honorable behavior is
exemplified by Princess Nausikaa and her parents. They honor and care for Odysseus before they realize that he is one of the great heroes from the Trojan War in the same way that Menelaos treats Telemakhos with great respect before he knows that Telemakhos is the son of Odysseus, his close friend.

Another important theme of the initiation stage, according to Ruth, is that Odysseus is "a seeker of knowledge" who, like the typical hero of the monomyth, must share his knowledge or "boon" with others. For example, she stressed the theme of sharing knowledge during a lesson on "A Gathering of Shades" in which Odysseus descends into Hades. Ruth noted that the oar, which Teiresias commands Odysseus to take so far inland that the indigenous people think that the oar is for agricultural— not nautical purposes— is a symbol of seeking knowledge. Ruth explained to her students:

The oar is an important symbol...and think who takes the oar and passes it on. If you take five steps from the Odyssey you will realize that Homer is himself a knowledge seeker and the person who is sharing his knowledge of life...and trials of life. Odysseus must take the oar in land...where people don’t know what the oar is...then he shares the knowledge of his trials. Knowledge is to be passed on....

[observation #19]

The Return Stage

During the last stage of monomyth, the "return stage," Odysseus has in Campbell’s (1949) terms "a magic flight"
after which he returns to the reality of common day," where he, according to Ruth, portrays the archetypal hero of action who must prove his right to his home. He ends the chaos at his palace and is reunited physically and psychologically with his wife, son and father. Furthermore, Ruth emphasized that Odysseus is wily but humble enough to develop a plan of action before he acts decisively and offensively. For example, during one class discussion one student stated that Odysseus could have challenged and punished the disrespectful and inhospitable shepherd in addition to the suitors who initially threaten him; however, Ruth stressed that Odysseus waits until he knows that he has the allegiance of his trusted servants and his son before he openly challenges and kills the suitors to reclaim his kingdom. In addition, Ruth compared Odysseus' concealment of his true identity to the way King Richard the Lion-Hearted disguised himself before talking to Robin Hood.

According to Ruth, it is only because Odysseus has learned humility during the initiation stage and because he no longer glories in personal fame that he is able to bear the insults of the suitors. For example, even after he, his son, and two servants kill the 100 suitors who plundered his home and who previously attempted to kill Telemakhos, he does not glorify his martial exploits; instead, he tells Eurykleia not to exult in the slaughter of the suitors. Odysseus is ready to be reunited with Penelope, who Ruth
also considers an "every person" because Penelope suffers and bears the harsh circumstances at home, undergoing an "psychological odyssey." In Ruth's view, "Penelope's odyssey is more relevant and important because

Most people don’t go on fantastic 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' types of adventures - most of us go on psychological odysseys. Hopefully, we learn from our experiences.

[observation #27]

American Formalism

Another influence in Ruth's theory of literary criticism is American formalism or New Criticism (Brooks and Warren, 1960) in that she stresses close textual reading and attempts to analyze the complex interrelations and ambiguities within a work. She often focused on the poet's careful choice of words in consideration of connotative meanings. Also, she, like the new critics, attempted to relate the images and symbols of the Odyssey around a central theme, which in this case focused on Odysseus' quest to return home and to gain knowledge. Furthermore, she emphasized literary concepts such as metaphor, simile, irony, dramatic irony, foreshadowing, and foil to provide students with common language or analytic tools to explicate and discuss literature. In brief, Ruth's affinity for New Criticism focuses on close textual reading, and she stated that she wants her students to become critical thinkers who support their ideas with key passages from the text.
She, however, disagrees with the new critics' avoidance of the interconnection between works of literature and the intellectual or cultural milieu in which they are written. She stated that one of the benefits of examining great literature is that one is exposed to various ideas from different historical epochs, and throughout the *Odyssey* she emphasized the different ways that the Greeks view life. For example, she stressed the different ways that most Greeks believed that for fate significantly determined the course of their lives:

Fate is finalized on the day you were born. This was the view that the Greek had although fatalistic, and they felt that a person could do the best that he or she could do with his fate or circumstances...One of the concerns of the Greeks is why these things happen? Why does lightning strike? And so, why do the gods cause these unjust things to happen to just people, so why do we suffer? Are the gods punishing us? It is not such a different concept from the Judeo-Christian view. What the Greeks are trying to find out is are human beings fated? The question is how much power does the human being have? Is it the gods who do everything? Is 80% of what happens to human beings is their own fault. The Greeks did believe that humans were puppets on strings to the gods.

[observation #19]

In other words, Ruth noted that the ancient Greeks believed that each person is given certain gifts and circumstances and that each person must accept the responsibility of acting nobly even when in contemporary terms "bad things happen to good people."
Summary

In sum, Ruth organized her ninth grade English course around different genres. For example, she employed Campbell's concept of the monomyth to structure her *Odyssey* unit; however, she does not use the monomyth when teaching other genres. As previously noted, she applies a different structure to comedies. In short, she believes that one way that she can teach her students to understand literature is to give them what she refers to as the "tools" to evaluate "how a genre works." In addition, American formalism has influenced her theory of literary analysis, and she emphasized close textual reading, which she believes is important for understanding any literary work regardless of the genre.

Analysis of Two Discussions

This section focuses on the examination of two different class discussions, which are also expressions of Ruth's theory of content. The first discussion focuses on Book VI of the *Odyssey*, "The Princess at the River," and the second discussion concerns Book XII, "Sea Perils and Defeat." The discussion on "The Princess at the River" was chosen because it is an early episode, which occurs before Odysseus tells about his adventures; in contrast, the lesson on "Sea Perils and Defeat" is a later lesson. At this point in Homer's epic, students have had the opportunity to
acquire background knowledge of the *Odyssey*. Consequently, I was curious whether or not Ruth's emphases or orientation of her presentation of content would change.

**Lesson I: "The Princess at the River"**

My findings indicate that Ruth's lesson on "The Princess by the River" reveals her orientation for American formalism or New Criticism (Brooks and Warren, 1960) in that she emphasized close textual reading throughout; for example, she usually read or referred to the text or surface level plot before asking questions concerning plot, characterization, or theme. Usually Ruth either asked detail level questions and then asked students to refer to the text itself to support their answers, or she read pertinent passages from the text and asked students to mark these passages in their own texts and to answer questions concerning the significance of such passages. Another salient feature of the discussion on "The Princess by the River" is that Ruth followed the chronology of Homer's narrative; consequently, Golden's (1988/89) method of analyzing the episodic structure of the text itself was helpful but not as critical of a factor had Ruth's lesson not followed Homer's chronology.

Ruth initially started the lesson by reading the following passage:
How so remiss, and yet my mother's daughter?
leaving thy clothes uncared for, Nausikaa
when soon thou must have store of marriage linen,
and put by thy minstrelsy in wedding dress!
Beauty, there, will make folk admire
and bring thy father and gentle mother joy.
Let us go washing in the shine of morning!
Beside thee I will drub, so wedding chest
will brim by evening. Maidenhood must end!
Have not the noblest born Phaiakians
paid court to thee, whose birth none can excel!
Go beg thy sovereign father even at dawn
to have a mule cart and the mules brought round
to take thy body-linen, gowns and mantles.
Thou shouldst ride, for it becomes thee more,
the washing pools are found so far from home!

[VI, 30-45]

Then Ruth began to ask her class questions:

Ruth: What does Athena try to convince Nausikaa to do?
Student 1: To wash clothes.

Ruth: Where are they going to wash clothes?
Student 2: They'll let her go down to the river where Odysseus is.

Ruth: Now, how does Athena compliment Nausikaa?
Student 3: She's beautiful. Everybody likes her....

Next, Ruth questioned her class further as she built on students' detail level responses and elicited interpretations from students:

Ruth: So, what was your first impression of the Princess? (There was a pause.) Do you think Athena favors her more or less than Penelope?

Student 3: She's kinda like a young Penelope, right? I mean she seems beautiful... Athena seems extra nice to her, seems like someone for Telemakhos.

Ruth: Good answer. Let's see if we come to the same conclusion later. Be ready to tell me your impression of the Princess and the Phaiakians after we're finished with this book.
In short, Ruth often stressed close-textual reading in that she usually read passages as exemplified by the previous dialogue. She, however, did attempt to elicit students' interpretations, some of which she legitimized. In other words, she accepted those interpretations which she believed were supported by the text, illustrating her "text centeredness" and her inclination to restrict students' interpretations to an extent. It seems as if she did not want her lesson to stray too far from her predetermined interpretation.

Ruth also followed the same pattern of questioning at the detail level, eliciting students' interpretations, and she legitimized/summarized key points when she referred to Odysseus' humble condition by reading the following passage:

He pushed aside the bushes, breaking off with his great hand a single branch of olive whose leaves might shield him in his nakedness; so came out rustling, like a mountain lion, rain-drenched, wind-buffeted, but in his might at ease with burning eyes - he prowls among the herds or flocks, or after game, his hungry belly taking him near stout homesteads for his prey. Odysseus had this look, in his rough skin advancing on the girls with pretty braids; and he was driven by hunger too, streaked with brine, and swollen he terrified them, so that they fled this way and that. Only Alkinoos' daughter stood her ground, being given a bold heart by Athena, and steady knees.

[VI, 137-151]

Ruth: How would you describe Odysseus' appearance here?

Student 1: He's weak and has stuff from the sea all over him.
Ruth: What's that stuff called?

Student 1: Brine.

Ruth: That's right. So Odysseus' appearance is frightening... remember that he doesn't have any clothes on so he grabs an olive branch. So how's he like a lion - like a mountain lion start a simile - How do we normally think of lions?

Student 1: Proud, king of the beast.

Ruth: Yes. Oftentimes in medieval times kings or noble families would have lions on their crests ... lions are supposed to be noble, a fierce animal but this is a little different and how?

Student 1: He's been at sea for a long time and he has nothing to eat. I guess he's kinda weak.

Student 2: (Seeming to almost interrupt) Lions, the young and strong ones anyways, they don't go near cities or towns or anything like that, it's just the old lions - or the weak ones will eat cows or the kinda animals that don't fight back and don't run.

Ruth: Good. Odysseus is still the great hero but he's an old lion. He's desperate. He's humble... no longer king of the beasts. He's been humbled by his journey. It's ironic that the great Odysseus like a great lion has been brought so low. What symbolizes his desperation and humility?

Student 1: Well, he's got nothing, not even any clothes.

Ruth: Excellent. So you see it's understandable why the young maids ran away when Odysseus approaches them. He's naked and his nakedness symbolizes his humility.

In short, Ruth elicited students' background knowledge concerning how a lion is considered the king of beasts, and then she contrasted this traditional image of the lion with the way that Homer uses the image. She legitimized and
expanded on the answer that emphasized the theme of humility, a theme that she stressed throughout her *Odyssey* unit. Furthermore, Ruth showed her affinity for New Criticism in that she attempted to examine the ambiguity of the lion image, and to relate this image to the *Odyssey*’s thematic unity (Brooks, 1947). In Ruth’s opinion, it is only when Odysseus loses his warlike tendencies and gains humility during his "initiation stage" that he is ready to return home; the image of the humble lion, (Odysseus, the humbled warrior), is thematically important and fits within Ruth’s framework of the monomyth.

Another salient aspect of Ruth’s literary theory is that she emphasized characterization. For example, Ruth asked her students if they thought that the Princess is wise to talk to Odysseus, and she gave students the opportunity to interpret the situation and to agree or disagree with one another. In this case some students agreed that the Princess ought to have stayed but a few dissented:

Student 1: She’s [Nausikaa] brave.

Student 2: She’s [Nausikaa] stupid to listen to some strange... dirty man.

Student 3: No, she’s brave. Greeks are good to strangers like the Spartans to Telemakhos. The Princess’s supposed to be good to strangers.

Ruth: The Greeks took the responsibility of showing kindness to strangers very seriously.
Although Ruth did not overtly reject the idea that the Princess ought not have talked to Odysseus, she emphasized that the Princess is brave, intelligent and that according to her code of ethics, she is required to show kindness to strangers. Ruth's interpretation shows her affinity for close textual reading in that she legitimized the response of the students, who focused on ancient Greek values as represented by Homer, not contemporary American values or fears.

In other words, Ruth appears to be very text-oriented in that she legitimized the more objective interpretation which coincided with the text or Homer's commentary. When I asked Ruth in an interview (interview #2) whether or not she thought that the meaning lies in the reader or the text, she stated that "Both are important." However, in the early lessons she appeared to be more "text" than "reader" oriented. At this point in the Odyssey, Ruth tried to build students' background knowledge. There is "tension" in Ruth's theory of the content in that she believes that both the reader and the text are important; however, she stressed that readers are more apt to form opinions - to interpret literature, to struggle with ideas in ways that are meaningful to them - if they first have an understanding of a work's thematic unity. In this respect, she seems to have concurred with Brooks (1947) who stated
...poetry is difficult for the reader because so few people, relatively speaking, are accustomed to reading poetry as poetry. The theory of communication throws the burden of proof upon the poet, overwhelmingly and at once. The reader says to the poet: Here I am; it's your job to "get it across" to me - when he ought to be assuming the burden of proof himself...But the difficulties are not insuperable, and most of them can be justified in principle as the natural results of the poet's employment of his characteristic methods (p. 76).

Another prevalent pattern of discussion that illustrates Ruth's text-centeredness is that she often asked students to find appropriate passages to support a generalization that she made. In the following example, Ruth built upon students' answers and asked students to find a passage which illustrates that the Princess, according to her code of ethics, ought to have helped Odysseus. One student found the following passage:

Stranger, there is no quirk or evil in you that I can see. You know Zeus metes out fortune to good and bad men as it pleases him. Hardships he sent to you, and you must bear it. But now that you have taken refuge here you shall not lack for clothing, or any other comfort due to a poor man in distress. [VI, 201-207]

Likewise, another student pointed out the following passage:

Strangers and beggars come from Zeus: a small gift, then, is friendly. Give our new quest some food and drink and take him into the river, out of the wind, to bathe. [VI, 221-224]

Ruth then reemphasized further that the theme of kindness to strangers is important in the Odyssey, admonishing students
that this theme reoccurs throughout the *Odyssey* such as in
the Kyklops episode and in the episodes about Odysseus' return home. She emphatically told students:

*You may need to refer to these quotes [the previously cited passages] later - highlight them.*

Her affinity for close textual reading is motivated by her pedagogical views; for example, Ruth stated in an interview that

*My students - I hope anyway - should be able to refer to ideas - themes - and to support those ideas with passages. Now, different students may use the same passages to support their ideas... but I want their ideas supported - anything less is irresponsible scholarship.*

After discussing the theme of the importance of showing kindness to strangers, Ruth spent considerable time on characterization, and she attempted to elicit additional student comments concerning the Princess' character. First, she referred to students' prior comments which affirmed that the Princess is "brave and kind." Then Ruth asked, "Is there anything else or any other character traits that you can identify in the princess?" Students' answers varied in minor ways, but the consensus of those students who responded was that the Princess is modest. For example, one student stated: "She [Princess Nausikaa] seems kinda quiet, doesn't put people down cause she knows bad things can happen to anybody." Ruth built upon the idea that even the best of people may face misfortune. She reinterpreted her students' ideas to some extent, weaving into her
interpretation the theme that one cannot avoid one's fate but one can and must bear one's circumstances with fortitude:

She's very smart and wise when she says in line 2, you know this is not my fortune and hardships can be sent to a good man if it pleases Zeus but that we as human beings must bear our misfortunes. That is a great line - that you must bear your circumstances as best you can - that's a great philosophy. Fate will dole out things to us that we must deal with. It's how a person deals with circumstances that will truly determine what kind of person you are. You know the Princess doesn't judge Odysseus by his circumstance...she knows that misfortune can strike anyone. She's a wise young girl who has the wisdom to understand this.

Next, Ruth returned to the generalization that the Princess is modest, and she told students to find the passages from Book VI that illustrate the Princess' modesty:

Ruth: Find where it says...implies...whatever...that she's modest. Take your time...mark the passages.

Student 1: The page and line?

Ruth: Yes, the page and line so you all can find it.

Student 2: (After about one minute.) Page 107.

Ruth: Which line now?

Student 2: Line - about 291.

Ruth: Excellent.

Ruth then read lines 291 - 307:

From these fellows I will have no salty talk, no gossip later. Plenty are insolent. And some seadog might say, after we passed: 'Who is this handsome stranger trailing Nausikaa? Where did she find him? Will he be her husband? Or is she being hospitable to some rover come off his ship from lands across the sea -
there being no lands nearer. A god, maybe?
a god from heaven, the answer to her prayer,
descending now - to make her his forever?
Better, if she’s roamed and found a husband
somewhere else: none of our own will suit her,
though many come to court her, and those the best.’
This is the way they might make light of me.
And I myself should hold it shame
for any girl to flout her own dear parents,
taking up with a man, before her marriage.

In addition, Ruth asked students to interpret Princess

Nausikaa’s motivation for not allowing Odysseus to walk
beside her when she returned home.

Student 1: She doesn’t want to embarrass her parents or
herself.

Ruth: How? In what way?

Student 2: Guys talk over nothing to make themselves look
like men.

Student 3: Yeh, guys lie a lot about being studs...they want
to impress other guys.

Then she summarized the points that she thought were
important, and it is significant that she quoted the text
even when summarizing concepts; by doing so, she
illustrates in another way that the text itself is the
central focus of the lesson:

Ruth: Relate these ideas to the Odyssey - to Nausikaa’s
circumstance - her motivation for not allowing
Odysseus to walk with her.

Student 3: The sailors’ll talk like guys do nowadays ...
somethings never change...so even if she’s just
trying to be nice to strangers, they’ll say other
things. She has to protect herself.

Ruth: Her wisdom, please note that the girl is very
wise; she says [to Odysseus] we shouldn’t go back
together because - why?
Student 1: It won't look good.

Ruth: How?

Student 1: It'll cause gossip.

Ruth: Yes, and they will say, "Oh, who is this guy that she is bringing back before her parents have even met him." She is very proper and she says that if you go by the place where they are making sails I will have no salty talk, no gossip later. Again, she is talking about plenty of insolence and some seadog might say after they passed. "Who is that handsome stranger trailing." Even her father told her she should have brought him home, but note that Odysseus said, "No, your daughter was so smart and so wise not to come walking home with me." So think of her and how she's proper, and she said, "I would hold it up a shame." Many girls flaunt their own appearance, taking up with a man before her marriage, so she's a smart girl. She respects her parents and doesn't want a scandal or rude talk. In this society girls aren't supposed to be with men they're not married to....

In addition to discussing the Princess' character, Ruth refocused her discussion on Odysseus' character. Ruth first asked the students, "How does Odysseus flatter the Princess when he first talks to her?" Several students gave answers such as "He [Odysseus] says she's beautiful, so beautiful ... she's like divine." After other students gave similar answers, Ruth then proceeded to her typical pattern of referring to the text. In this case she asked students to find the passage in which Odysseus flatters the Princess. Several students found the following passage and then Ruth read the passage:

Mistress please: are you divine or mortal?
If one of those who dwell in the wide heaven,
you are most near to Artemis, I should say -
great Zeus's daughter - in your grace and presence
If you are one of earth's inhabitants,
how blest your father, and your gentle mother,
blest all your kin. I know what happiness
must send the warm tears to their eyes, each time
they see their wondrous child go to the dancing!
But one man's destiny is more than blest -
he who prevails, and takes you as his bride.
Never have I laid eyes on equal beauty
in man or woman. I am hushed indeed.

[VI,161-173]

Ruth continued the discussion regarding whether or not

Odysseus is sincere when talking to the Princess:

Student 1: He's the kinda dude who says what he wants to
girls to get what he wants...like he did to
Kalypso.

Student 2: No, she's good-looking and Athena made her better
looking. He's saying what he really thinks.

Student 3: Yeh, Athena changed Telemakhos en Odysseus too.

Student 4: He's [Odysseus] a smooth talker alright - but
she's good looking too. He knows how to talk to
women ... like he said nice things to Kalypso.

Overall, students - not Ruth - interpreted Odysseus'
actions. Ruth, however, initially legitimized the idea
that Odysseus flatters the Princess and later emphasized
that he does so in a sincere way, an explanation that
incorporated aspects of each student's interpretation.
Consequently, although Ruth elicited student comments, she
guided them to interpret this passage.

Another important aspect of Odysseus' character
concerns his love of home and family, which is the
motivation of his quest. Ruth emphasized that Odysseus'
intentions are honorable in that from the very beginning he is wise enough to clarify to the Princess that he has no intentions of compromising her, and she asked students to find a passage to support her generalization. Her students found the following passage:

And the gods may accomplish their desire
A home, a husband, and harmonious
converse with him - stay in the world
deemed a strong house held in serenity
where man and wife agree. Woe to their enemies
joy to their friends but all this they know best.
[VI,194 - 199]

In short, Ruth frequently focused on characterization because she believes that characterization is intertwined with important themes:

Characterization is always important in my view ... It tells us so much about a character’s motivation ... her values, ideas ... and so much about human nature. I hope the students can get to know and identify with some of the characters... to experience the work. But characterization also reveals theme.... [interview #1]

Another theme that Ruth emphasized concerns the role of women in the matriarchal society of Skheria. In Phaiakian society Nausikaa’s mother is the primary ruler or decision maker. Ruth began discussing matriarchal societies with the following excerpt, in which the Princess is giving Odysseus instructions concerning how to behave himself at the palace:

As soon as you are safe inside, cross over and go straight into the megaron to find my mother. She’ll be there in firelight before a column, with her maids in shadow, spinning a wool dyed richly as the sea
My father’s great chair faces the fire, too; there like a god he sits and tastes his wine.
Go past him, cast yourself before my mother, 
embrace her knees - and you may wake up soon 
at home rejoicing, though your home be far.
On Mother's feeling much depends; if she 
looks on you kindly, you shall see your friends 
under your own roof in your father's country.  
[VI,322-324] 

After reading the above passages, Ruth asked the students a 
series of questions: 

Ruth: Who does Odysseus have to appeal to?
Student 1: To the mother.
Ruth: How's the father described?
Student 2: Well, he sits there like a god and drinks wine.
Ruth: That's right, but if he sits there like a god, 
why does Odysseus have to appeal to the mother? 
(No student responds). Note that not all 
societies are patriarchal, in other words men 
don't rule all societies, at least historically 
speaking that's not the case. But you know, both 
men and women are respected. Remember...this is 
an ideal type of society; a magical place - it's 
always summer. The weather's always nice. There's 
no terrible social problems. This is a magical 
place where everybody gets along fairly well.

Furthermore, Ruth tried to relate this episode to other 
strong female characters of the Odyssey:

Ruth: Who does Nausikaa's mother remind you of? What 
is she doing?

Several Students: Penelope.
(The Princess' mother is weaving like Penelope.)
Ruth: Is the Princess a strong character?
Students: Yeh.
Ruth: What about Penelope?
Student 1: Yeh, She put off the jerk suitors.
Student 2: Yeh, she tricks the suitors with the weaving. These typical student responses were later legitimized by Ruth, who noted that Penelope and Nausikaa are strong characters in contrast to Kalypso.

Ruth: Homer is unusual... He created strong women. The Princess will one day rule... Penelope will get the better of Odysseus later on... Kirke’s Odysseus' magna mater....

In short, Ruth emphasized throughout the Odyssey that female characters have important roles.

Furthermore, Ruth emphasized that the Phaiakians are a sea-faring people who build ships, symbolizing that they are knowledge seekers like Odysseus. Ruth pointed out to the students that the Phaiakians have a shrine in honor or Poseidon, and she read the following passage to her students:

> the agora with fieldstones benches bedded in the earth, lies either side Poseidon’s shrine - for there men are at work for pitch-black hulls and rigging cables and sails and tapering of oars The archer’s craft is not for the Phaiakians, but ship designing, modes of oaring cutters in which they love to cross the foaming sea. [VI,283-291]

Ruth related this idea to the Odyssey as a whole in that Odysseus is a knowledge seeker in contrast to many other creatures that he meets during his quest. Also, she emphasized that Odysseus has to lose his warlike tendencies during the separation and initiation stages before he returns home - that he needs to learn to live peacefully
like the Phaiakians, who build ships - not bows and arrows for war. Furthermore, to prepare students for reading the next book of the *Odyssey*, which she assigned for homework, she re-emphasized that the *Odyssey* like epics in general is told *in medias res* and that Odysseus will begin to tell the story of his adventures.

**Summary**

Ruth stressed close-textual reading, showing her affinity for American formalism. She often focused on themes or characterization and then asked students to find appropriate passages to support the given statement; or, she identified important passages and then asked students to interpret them. In other words, she often stressed the detail level before eliciting student responses. In most cases she legitimized those interpretations that she believed concurred with the text itself. For example, one student thought that the Princess ought not to have helped Odysseus; however, Ruth did not legitimize this interpretation, an interpretation that is prevalent today due to the increase of violence over the last twenty years. Instead, she legitimized the interpretation of the student who stressed that the Greek code of ethics requires the Princess to show kindness to strangers.

In addition, she shows her text-centeredness in that she taught the episodes of Book VI in chronological order,
and she read aloud key passages, which she discussed in
detail. Many students highlighted these key passages with a
yellow marker; she asked them to do so at the beginning of
her *Odyssey* unit, explaining to them that they could find
key passages more easily when they began to prepare for
their essay exams. In brief, Ruth is very text-centered at
this point, because she thinks that she needs to build
students' background knowledge of a given work of literature
before they can "interpret" texts responsibly.

**Lesson II: "Sea Perils and Defeat"**

In contrast to the lesson on "The Princess at the
River," Ruth started the lesson on "Sea Peril in Defeat" by
telling students to take a couple of minutes to review Book
XII and to consider what the Seirenes and Skylla and
Kharybdis symbolize. Then she began a discussion, focusing
on modern representations of these ancient archetypes:

Ruth: Ok, you've had time... what do the Seirenes
symbolize?

Student 1: The Seirenes represent temptation that's
irresistible.

Ruth: What types of irresistible temptations would
apply to everyday life?

Student 2: To me the Seirenes represent a temptation
overwhelming... irresistible... a normal person
couldn't even begin to resist.

Teacher: Good answers. Here's something else to consider.
What do you lose if you yield to the temptations
of the Seirenes?
Student 3: Your life.

Teacher: Very good. When you yield to the Seirenes in this respect you can lose your humanity, yourself or even your life...when a crew yields to the Seirenes it is almost as if they have an overwhelming illness that they need a lot of help with it. Once a person becomes consumed by the Seirenes it is very difficult to change...the person becomes ill or so compulsive in thinking about such and such; it's very difficult for a person to deal with these thoughts and emotions.

After Ruth elaborated on the students' explanations concerning the symbolism of the Seirenes, a student mentioned that the Seirenes represented suicide, and the discussion then led into some personal reflections on suicide:

Student 1: They could represent suicide.

Ruth: I knew a person who was - yeh, was - suicidal.

Student 2: So did I. He seemed normal - kind, sensitive ... for some reason he couldn't stop thinking about it... He was kinda like a, well he was a modest type of guy and gave no one, no one that I know of anyway, any clue of what was going on and what he was going to do. He didn't want to burn anyone but in the end he burned us all....

Student 3: My mother was sexually abused as a child... she thought about suicide...she went to therapy. She's okay now. Part of my mother's problems go back to her childhood...under the circumstances she did not feel loved and didn't have any pets. She used to be depressed all the time.

Ruth: People who have traumatic experiences in their childhood often have problems as adults.

Student 4: I read that one in three stockbrokers in New York has thoughts of suicide. They’re under a lot of pressure ... many of them can't really handle it and so many of them think of suicide as a way out.
Ruth: Yes, many people find it very difficult to deal with the pressure. It's easy to give in and think that suicide is a way out and think that they can relax and be free of problems but suicide isn't an answer. Frequently a person works out the problems; the problems may not go away but the person may learn to deal with them better... sometimes our problems aren't as serious as they seem.

In addition to suicide, students interpreted the Seirenes as symbolic of compulsive or destructive behavior such as bulimia, anorexia nervosa, or drug addiction, and the consensus of the class was that the Seirenes symbolize any type of behavior that seems to be obsessive and powerful enough to lead to self-destruction; therefore, a wide latitude of interpretations were accepted and legitimized by Ruth and the class as a whole in this exchange of ideas.

Also, the above slice of dialogue illustrates one aspect of Ruth's version of archetypal criticism in that she considers the symbol of the Seirenes an archetype for temptations, which she and her students related to modern life. Her elicitation of students' ideas reflected her belief that these symbols are archetypes which have relevant and modern counterparts. The exchanging of ideas among students and Ruth herself is one of her ultimate goals. She stated, for example, in interview #2 that she wanted her class to discuss literature - "to have conversations to exchange ideas." However, she noted that "conversations" do not usually occur until students have acquired enough background knowledge that enables them to identify thematic
patterns. After discussing the symbol of the Seirenes, Ruth focused on the symbolism of Skylla and Kharybdis. One student stated that Skylla and Kharybdis symbolize "Being between a rock and a hard place." Ruth then built on student's comments, probing the class to consider possible modern dilemmas:

Student 1: Catch-22.

Ruth: Yes?

Student 1: During some war the guy wants to get out of the army but he can't do it unless he can convince them that he's crazy but crazy people don't know what crazy really means, if he knows he's not crazy. He's in a no-win situation.

Student 2: Like Klinger in MASH.

Student 1: Exactly.

Next, Ruth continued to try to elicit examples of dilemmas from everyday life, and she again illustrated her view that many of the symbols of the Odyssey are archetypes that are relevant to contemporary society:

Ruth: Give me examples of dilemmas from everyday life.

Student 3: My aunt is debating about whether or not to go to law school. She has loans she has to pay off from college.

Ruth: And so?

Student 3: I mean (pause) if she goes to work she can pay off the money...and then maybe she could get a better job later if she went to law school and made more money, so it's a pay now or pay later situation.

Ruth: Yeh, we all must make choices.
Student 4: What if it [a difficult choice] involves other choices - like if you’re a doctor and you can only help one person and several person are banged up real bad. So you choose who you can help and others may die.

Ruth: Yeh, excellent examples. We sometimes must make terrible choices. If a president of some country has to decide whether or not to go to war, she knows that soldiers will be killed, a terrible consequence - but what if the consequence of not going to war is worse, no easy solution.

After probing students to consider modern examples of dilemmas, she focused the discussion on the dilemmas that Odysseus faced, and she returned to the text, illustrating a controlled tension between close textual reading and personal interpretations:

Ruth: What other leader agonizes over tough decisions?

Student 5: Odysseus.

Ruth: Each of you - find a passage that illustrates Odysseus’ inner turmoil about possibly lose some of his men.

After a student identified lines 119-130 from Book XII, Ruth read the passage to the class in the same way that she did during discussions on other books of the Odyssey:

The opposite point seems more a kind of land touched with a good bullish, at the middle a great wild pig, a shaggy mass of leaves grows on it, and Kharybdis worked below to swallow beyond the dark sea tide. Three times from dawn to dusk she spews it up and sucks it down again, three times, a whirling maelstrom; if you come upon her then the god who makes earthy symbols could not save you. No, hug the cliff of Skylla, take your ship through on a racing stroke. Better to mourn six men than to lose them all, and the ship too.
Ruth:  Odysseus says he doesn’t want to lose any of his crew; he wants somehow to be able to pass Kharybdis... to conquer Skylla without losing anyone. Look on page 212, lines 130 to line 132.

When Ruth read the passage and asked students detail level questions to support previously stated generalizations, most of which were developed by students, she is directing students to support their own generalizations with the text:

Only instruct me, goddess, if you will, how, if possible, can I pass Kharybdis, and fight off Skylla when she raids my crew?

Ruth:  How does he show his concern for his men?

Student 1: He wants to fight off Skylla - doesn’t want any men munched.

Another important theme discussed during this episode concerned Odysseus’ need to lose his warlike tendencies. Ruth read Kirke’s response to Odysseus, and then she focused on both the detail level and thematic levels in that she started in an attempt to guide students to the conclusion that Odysseus has not completely lost his warlike tendencies:

Must you have battle in your heart forever?
The bloody toil of combat? Old contender, will you not yield to the immortal gods?
That righteous cannot die, being eternal evil itself - horror, and pain and chaos; there is no fighting her, no power can fight her, all that avails is flight.

[VI,136-142]

Ruth:  Does Odysseus get ready to fight?

Student 1: He’s got armour.
Ruth: What else?

Student 1: Spears.

Ruth: Consequently ...? Therefore, we conclude that...?

Student 1: Odysseus forgets Kirke's advice.

Ruth: Any other conclusions?

Student 1: [Odysseus] hasn't lost his warlike tendencies.

Ruth: Good. He's learning but he still has a ways to go - he's ready to be "initiated" though. For the most part he's ready to return home - but humility is always difficult for Odysseus. Passing through Skylla and Kharybdis is a rite of passage - again in terms of the initiation stage.

In short, the necessity for soldiers - in this case Odysseus - to lose their warlike tendencies after conflicts have ended is a theme that Ruth emphasized throughout the Odyssey unit and is a theme that is an integral part of the separation and departure stages of the monomyth in that Odysseus needs to learn that family harmony and humility are more important than martial prowess.

Another salient aspect the class's discussion concerned the drawing of a picture of Skylla and Kharybdis. One student stated that he couldn't understand why Odysseus has so much difficulty avoiding both Skylla and Kharybdis. Ruth then asked two students to draw a picture of Skylla, Kharybdis and the surrounding terrain so that all students could visualize the situation. The use of visual illustrations is characteristic of Ruth's pedagogy. She, for example, in a previous lesson drew a stick figure of a
puppet on strings to illustrate fate; in addition, she drew diagrams of both paragraph and essay structures and required students to draw pictures to illustrate the concepts of vocabulary words.

After discussing the Skylla and Kharybdis episode, Ruth focused on the episode in which Odysseus and his crew land on the island of Helios, and her initial questions were on the detail level in contrast to her discussion on the Seirenes and on Skylla and Kharybdis:

Ruth: Why does Odysseus want to stop at the island?

Student 1: Well, I think Odysseus is very much concerned, maybe he’s kinda scared after going through so much.

Ruth: In what ways do the gods hinder Odysseus when they are on the island?

Student 2: Well they’re on the island a lot longer, than you know, than they really want to be."

Ruth: Why?

Student 3: The gods don’t send waves - I mean wind - and they can’t sail.

Ruth: What do the men do to feed themselves when they are at the point of starving?

Student 4: They eat the sacred cattle of Helios.

Ruth: Why is this such a foolish thing for the men to do?

Student 5: The gods aren’t so stupid. Helios knows everything that goes on.

Ruth: Yeh, and the men will be punished severely.

Furthermore, Ruth discussed the idea of the "great oath," which according to Ruth is a very serious vow that
most men would honor without question." Consequently, when Odysseus requires his men to take the "great oath" that they will not kill the sacred cattle, Ruth finds it understandable that Odysseus believes them. In this respect, Ruth exposed her students to the cultural heritage of the Greeks.

More importantly, the discussion focused on the theme of human frailty in that most people honor their oaths under normal circumstances; however, the men are starving, and they allow human weakness to control them:

Ruth: Do you think most people would keep their promise or oaths if they're starving?

Student 1: Most people's promises would be forgotten.

Student 2: Maybe some people just don't care about nothing else after that.

Ruth built on the students' comments and attempted to elicit contemporary examples from students:

Ruth: Can you think of an example in history when it seems as if many people in some situation forget their morality?

Student 1: Nazi Germany? (Pause)

Ruth: Yeh, the death camps were so brutal that many people in the West couldn't even believe the possibility that the rumors about the camps could be true. But you know - people often rise to the condition or difficulties in tragic situations they're forced to deal with. Cases of people in death's camps, cases where people act heroically, unselfishly.
Likewise, a student built on Ruth’s comment about Nazi Germany and contrasted the positive and negative sides of human nature:

Student 1: Is this kinda like the Odyssey? Odysseus doesn’t touch the cattle [Helios’ sacred cattle] but the crew’s killing the cattle.

Ruth: Excellent. Odysseus - at this point anyway - has self-discipline and won’t eat the cattle even when starving... he’s always shown respect for the gods. He’s never been arrogant that way.

Next, a student shifted the focus of the discussion when she asked Ruth how Eurylokhos convinces the other members of Odysseus’ crew to kill the sacred cattle of the sun god:

Student 1: How’d Euro - I don’t remember his name.

Ruth: Eurylokhos.

Student 1: OK, how’d he convince them to kill the cows?

Ruth: Let’s see - find the passage. Page...?

Ruth then read the following passage:

Now on the shore Eurylokhos made his insidious plea

‘Comrades’, he said,
you’ve gone through everything; listen to what I say.
All death are hateful to us, mortal wretches,
but famine is the most pitiful, the worst in many men can come to.

Will you fight it?
Come, we will cut out the noblest of these cattle for sacrifice to the gods who own the sky;
and once at home in the old country of Ithaka, if the day ever comes,
we’ll build a costly temple and adorn it with every beauty for the Lord of Noon.
But if he flares up over heifers lost, wishing our ship destroyed, and if the gods
make cause with him, why, then I say: Better
open your lungs to a big sea once for all
and waste to skin and bones on a lonely island!

[VI,435-453]

Next, Ruth asked the students a series of detail level
questions before giving a contemporary example of human
frailty:

Ruth: According to Eurylokhos what are the
alternatives?

Student 1: To make a sacrifice, eat the cattle and make a
sacrifice to the Lord of Noon, to waste away or
to get zapped by the gods.

Ruth: Why - I mean - how does Eurylokhos make sense on
the surface...?

Student 2: They’ll build a shrine at home to the gods so
it’s OK to kill the cattle.

Student 3: But not really cuz the gods won’t give them a
chance to get home.

Ruth: Yes. He tells them that they’ll make
sacrifices to the god first and then... so it
seems that what they’re doing is better than it
is... he tells him that when they get back Ithaka
they’ll make a temple... Perhaps we don’t really
understand because we’re not immersed in the
ancient Greek culture... disobedience to the gods
is blasphemy, a very, very serious offense. This
isn’t a perfect example, but perhaps isn’t it
kinda like a drug dealer who says that he’s
selling drugs to take care of his family so his
so-called concern for his family justifies his
action.

Another theme that Ruth touches on to a minor extent
concerns the respect for the dead and the great theme that
each person must have a proper burial. Ruth reminded
students that Odysseus and his crew are expected to bury
Elpenor:
Because Elpenor participated in the Trojan War, he too had to undergo many difficulties and deserves a proper burial even though he was not the most intelligent character. He's the greatest warrior or strategist but still he deserves respect as a human being. The Greeks believed in showing respect for the dead.

A student then built on Ruth's ideas and asked a question about a similar and modern example as illustrated by the following excerpt:

Student 1: What about all the bodies of thousands of soldiers in the Iraq war. Probably a lot of them didn't get buried?

Ruth: Yes, undoubtedly that happened in many events. I assume anyways, that they did not get a proper burial... and likewise in Viet Nam many were killed in jungles everyday. Bodies decayed real fast in that type of environment and identifying bodies is very difficult....

**SUMMARY**

Ruth's pattern of questioning during her lesson on Book VI initially focused primarily on characterization and text-related themes; however, she approached Book XII in different way in that she began at the symbolic/interpretative level and spent considerable time eliciting student interpretations of themes and personal experiences, which she expanded on and sometimes related to her own experiences. As previously noted, Ruth stated in interviews that she hoped that students vicariously experienced Odysseus' trials. In other words, one of her goals was to enable students to identify themes in the *Odyssey* and then to relate these themes to either their own lives or to modern society.
She wanted her students to interpret and to experience works of literature. Her theory of understanding a literary work is that students— or any reader for that matter— must read closely and must understand the interrelation between imagery, theme, narrative, and form (Brooks, 1947); in other words, she, like the American formalist theorists, places great emphasis on what Brooks called the "organic unity" of meaning and structure of a work. He warned against the bifurcation of the meaning and structure and termed such a separation as the "heresy of the paraphrases":

The essential structure of a poem (as distinguished from the rational or logical structure of the "statement" which we abstract from it) resembles that of architecture or painting: it is a pattern of resolved stresses. Or, to move closer still to poetry by considering the temporal arts, the structure of a poem resembles that of a ballet or musical composition. It is a pattern of resolutions and balances and harmonizations, developed through a temporal scheme (p. 203).

She emphasized that literature is a special type of language that is task-specific (Smith, 1989; Hillocks, 1989). Like Smith (1989) who found that teaching students to identify various clues for understanding irony improved their ability to do so when studying longer and more complicated works, Ruth stressed that students need to be taught how to interpret literature. In her opinion, an understanding of formalist methods enables readers to comprehend any literary work with more depth of understanding; in this respect, she
attempted to prepare students for a general understanding of literature.

In addition, Ruth’s affinity for archetypal criticism illustrates her intention of teaching students general strategies of what Frye (1970) refers to as "the total structure of literature" (p. 88). In other words, she has represented the *Odyssey* within the framework of the monomyth and has stressed to students that there are reoccurring plot motifs, character types, and images in imaginative literature. Ruth hopes that her students will interpret literature; however, she wants students to initially read closely to grasp the "unity" of the work before responding personally. In contrast, personal response theorists such as Rosenblatt (1980) posit that teachers should initially elicit students’ responses before engaging students in closer textual reading:

...once there has indeed been a lived-through evocation from the text, students can be led toward increasingly self-critical and sound interpretations, and enhanced capacity to relate the experience to literary, historical, or social contexts (p. 394).

Ruth, however, has stressed to students that they ought to examine literature from three levels: (1) the detail level, (2) the interpretive/thematic level, and (3) the level of personal experience in which readers relate the themes of a work of literature to their lives. Therefore, it is not surprising that she initially emphasized the first two levels to build a knowledge base about the work of
literature before she elicited personal responses from students as she did in "Lesson II," during which she encouraged students to relate the symbols of the *Odyssey* to modern life or to their own personal lives. Consequently, the textures of "Lesson I" and "Lesson II" were very different.

**Academic Tasks**

In addition to studying lessons, the construct of academic tasks was used to examine Ruth's theory of the content. Because tasks are worked on in complex activity structures within the classroom milieu, a teacher's choice of tasks and the ways that tasks are presented reveal a great deal about a teacher's theory of content as it is played out as curriculum events. In other words, tasks are a context which structures both the content itself and the activities in which the content unfolds (Doyle, 1992).

**Character Analysis**

The first writing assignment, which took three days, was a character analysis, and Ruth thoroughly and methodically explained the requirements of the assignment as she did with all writing assignments. On day one she took a half an hour to introduce the general requirements of the assignment. Then she wrote the names of characters such as Penelope, Telemakhos, Helen, Menelaos, Eurykleia or Nestor
on the board, and students were required to select one of these characters for analysis. In addition, Ruth provided students with a heuristic to assist them in composing. The heuristic, which she called an I-shaped paragraph, is a structure that begins with an attention getter and is followed by a thesis or a generalization, which is supported by at least three ideas. Furthermore, she noted that a paragraph needs a concluding statement, which restates the thesis in an exciting way, a way that differs somewhat from the thesis. Also, Ruth diagramed the I-shaped paragraph on the board because she believes that students learn better if they can visualize the concept to be learned. In short, Ruth provided students with a general strategy for composing.

Another way that Ruth attempted to clarify to students the requirements and form of the writing task was to provide them ways to analyze characters. For example, she listed on the board the following ways to understand characterization, and she encouraged students to use each of the four methods to identify a character's personality traits:

1. What the character does or how a character acts.
2. Statements by the person.
3. By what is said about the person.
4. What the character does or does not say.

In addition, she required students to use quotes to support their thesis and to write an original simile. In the same way that she diagrammed the I-shaped paragraph on the
board, she diagrammed the form of a simile: "A is like B, develop B." Furthermore, she discussed examples of similes as she done during previous lessons; consequently, her students had previous experience identifying and discussing similes.

One of the reasons that Ruth required students to include similes in their character analyses is that she believes that students need to realize that they can both write their own similes as well as comprehend the significance of Homer's images. She noted in an interview that

At first they [students] don't think that they can understand Homer's poetic language. But after a week or so of struggling - they do understand. Then they even find out that they can write good similes... can imitate Homer's beautiful poetry.

[interview #2]

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, she not only wants her students to acquire both the declarative knowledge of being able to define similes and the procedural knowledge of being able to identify a simile in the context of an epic; however, she also wants her students to illustrate their conditional knowledge of similes by composing their own (Alexander, Schallert, and Hare, 1991; Anderson, 1987).

In addition to discussing the requirements of the paragraph on the first day of the assignment, Ruth delineated the steps that the students were to take to complete their "scaffolds" to organize their ideas, and Ruth
used a student's generalization that "Helen is sly" to diagram the following scaffold on the board:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Helen (sly)} \\
\text{idea (support)} & \text{idea (support)}
\end{array}
\]

Ruth then answered student's questions about paragraph structure, and questions varied from procedural questions such as "How long is the paragraph supposed to be" to more thoughtful questions such as "Can the thesis be more than one sentence." Ruth emphasized to students that the "paragraph structure is a guide, not a structure to interfere with logical writing" (observation #10). In addition, students asked questions about similes and several students read examples of their own similes such as: "Like a young lion trying to develop into a mature lion, Telemakhos is struggling to become a mature man like his father" (observation #10).

During the next class session, Ruth asked students to peer edit one another's scaffolds, which she collected and then randomly passed out. She asked students to respond to the following questions, which she wrote on the board:

1. (a) Does the student's main concept characterize the character? (b) Give the student another possible main idea.
2. (a) Do the three supporting ideas refer to the main idea? (b) Give the student another supporting idea and use passages from the text to illustrate these ideas. Also, Ruth admonished students to help one another:
Remember, give your best effort to help someone because you may need help. If your friend's scaffold is good - fine - make it better. Save the person from worrying or having the ... jitters. [observation #11]

On the following day students' thinksheets, which were similar to detailed outlines or rough paragraphs, were due. Ruth collected all of the thinksheets and then randomly disseminated them. Ruth's instructions for peer editing the thinksheets were similar to her instructions for editing the scaffolds. She told students (1) to rewrite and improve the thesis statement, (2) to provide meaningful ways to support the thesis, (3) to edit the attention getter and concluding sentence, and (4) to comment on (a) the coherency of the paragraphs and (b) the use of connectives/transitions. Students were expected to work quietly during peer editing. No student knew who was editing his/her paper; consequently, students did not ask one another for criticism of their own work. Ruth was adamant that the students edit one another's work quietly, and she walked around the room and answered students' questions throughout the peer editing session. The researcher does not know the nature of students' questions because Ruth required the students to whisper; she, likewise, talked in a whisper. Overall, the class seemed to run smoothly during peer editing for at least two reasons. First, her directions were delineated lucidly; and second, these students are advanced and theoretically capable of
writing quite well for their grade level. The next day the
class analyzed was due.

In short, Ruth, like many researchers (Langer and
Applebee, 1986; Flower and Hayes, 1981), believes that
writing/thinking is a process, and she emphasized this
belief when she told her students:

This [writing] is a thinking process. Sometimes it
comes to you and you don’t realize all the things that
you really thought about. Now two heads are better than
one. If you use someone’s else idea to lead you to
your clear direction, Great. That’s what editing and writing
are all about.

[observation #12]

Likewise, she said that students help each other during peer
editing because

....as soon as students read someone else’s work, they
get all kinds of ideas and that alone stimulates them
and they see how other people work ....

[interview #2]

Ruth’s views of thinking and writing process are
Vygotskian (1986) in the respect that she believes that
learning is both a social and individual activity. She
stated that each individual must be accountable for his/her
own work. However, she wanted her students to assist one
another in learning, and she provided structured
opportunities for these activities to occur. Since she first
was introduced to the writing process/peer editing, she has
read many articles on the topic, and one of the reasons that
the writing process/peer editing made so much sense to her
is because she herself often learned a great deal from the
ideas of other people during discussions about a work of literature.

Ruth's Evaluation of Students' Character Analysis

Overall, Ruth noted that most of the students' character analyses were successful in that all students wrote coherently and were able to follow the paragraph form. The researcher initially asked Ruth to show him a paper, which she deemed successful or, in other words, was what she considered an "A" paper. Furthermore, he asked her to delineate what she considered the strengths of a student's paper. She showed him a paper which was a character analysis of Menelaos. Ruth began her critique with the student's title, which she thought was a strength of the paper in that the title, "Menelaos, Great King, Great Friend" reflected the idea of the student's essay. Next, she methodically focused on the attention getter, which she thought was not only creative but also congruent with the student's overall idea. She commented "Great simile!" beside the student's attention getter:

Like a tiger in the great jungle who was worshipped by all the animals, but still looks up to the great lion, so also does King Menelaos look up to the great Odysseus.

[interview #2]

Another strength of the student's paper in Ruth's estimation was that the thesis is coherent. Furthermore, Ruth noted that the student explained his supporting ideas
in detail and used appropriate quotes. For example, the student referred to a conversation between Menelaos and Helen are exchanging stories about Odysseus’s deeds in Troy. The student wove into his supporting idea the following quote (VI, 287-290) in which Menelaos responds to Helen:

> An excellent tale, mind you, and most becoming.
> In my life I have met, in many countries, foresight and wit in many first rate men, but never have I seen one like Odysseus....

[interview #2]

After citing the quote, the student explained the significance of the quote in that he noted that Menelaos’ comments show that he has what the student refers to as "high esteem" for Odysseus.

Ruth also stated that the student’s second idea and third ideas supported his thesis. The second supporting idea illustrated how Menelaos loves and respects Odysseus, and the third supporting idea dealt with how Menelaos states that he would be willing to give one of his towns to Odysseus, so that Odysseus could settle near him. Ruth was impressed that the student used quotes to support these ideas. Lastly, Ruth commented on the concluding statement which was more or less a reiteration of the thesis. She would have liked for the student’s concluding sentence to be more creative; nevertheless, she noted that the student’s paper is coherent:

> It is very organized. It does not have a single sentence that does not talk about Menelaos and the
loyalty and love he had for Odysseus ... There's no flaw with organization.

[interview #2]

In addition, Ruth and I discussed another student's paper, which Ruth thought in many respects was more creative although the student's paper had some minor mechanical problems. Ruth was particularly impressed with the creativity of the student's attention getter:

A mother deer taking care of the shaky fawn and with each year the deer grows more and more independent, growing into the fawn who is gone and becomes a buck. So is the grief of Eurykleia.

[interview #2]

Furthermore, Ruth noted that the student used quotes appropriately although Ruth noted the student needed to introduce the quotes more smoothly as did the student writer of the Menelaos paper. As illustrated in the analysis of the discussions, Ruth is text-oriented to a certain extent; likewise, she required students to support their ideas with excerpts from the text. Overall, Ruth was extremely impressed with the student's ideas. She noted that "She [the student] will improve a lot during the year." She recognized that this student is capable of developing perceptive ideas and examples to support those ideas; consequently, Ruth saw a great deal of potential in this student.

In short, Ruth had a definite criteria for evaluating essays, and she expected students to state a clear thesis and to support the thesis with elaborated ideas. In
addition, she wanted students to state their ideas in coherent sentences—not awkward sentences or fragments or run-ons. Equally important, Ruth’s evaluation of the students’ work mirrored the criteria, which she delineated to the students during class and to me prior to my observation of her classroom. She is an experienced teacher, who knows exactly what she expects of students and who is capable of lucidly articulating these expectations. Overall, this assignment was heavily weighted and worth 200 points; consequently, the risk was high. Ruth, however, decreased the ambiguity of the task with her clear instructions and with her employment of the writing process, which gave students some feedback about their ideas before Ruth evaluated their work.

Creative Insert

The second writing task that Ruth assigned is what she called a "creative insert of the Odyssey", an assignment which required students to imitate Homer. On the day that she introduced the assignment, she delineated the requirements or expectations of this creative insert, writing the following on the board:

(1) Extended simile - use images from nature.

(2) Images - sight, smell, touch (Don’t say "I smelled...")

(3) Two swift similes
(4) An example of personification

(5) Three epithets (one made up).

She explained to the students that they, like Homer, were to use descriptive language, and she referred to several examples in the Odyssey. For instance, she used the incident in which Odysseus and his men run a spike into the Kyklops' eye:

Now, by the gods, I drove my big hand spike deep in the embers, charring it again, and cheered my men along with battle talk to keep their courage up: no quitting now. That pike of olive, grew where it had been, reddened and glowed as if about to catch. I drew it from the coals and my fellows gave me a hand, lunging at leering Kyklops as more than natural force known them; strength forward they sprinted, lifting it, and rammed it deep in his crater eye, and I leaned on it turning it as a shiplike turn, a drill in planking, having men below to swing the two-handed strap that spins it in the groove. So with our brawn, we bore that great eye socket while blood ran out around the lead hot bar. Eyelid and lash were seared; the pierce ball hissed broiling, and the roots popped.

[IX, 406-423]

Then she told her students to note that Homer just doesn't tell you that the Kyklops was hurt or the smell was terrible; Homer gives us a vivid description. Remember that Homer had to do this because his audience needed great explanation so that they could visualize the incident themselves.

[observation #16]

Next, Ruth asked students to identify examples of Homer's use of description that exemplified the different senses. Students identified images such as "the pierced ball hissed broiling" as an example of the sense of hearing and
"eyelids and lash were seared" as an example of both smell and sight. Furthermore, they reviewed the concepts of extended similes and epithets, and it seemed that students gave examples without much difficulty.

Two days later students were required to bring in their roughdrafts, and they peer edited one another's work. The peer editing session ran smoothly. Ruth wrote the same requirements on the board that she did when she introduced the assignment, and she told peer editors to make sure that the student writer fulfilled each requirement. In addition, she told peer editors to give the student writers an example of each requirement. Like the peer editing session during the paragraph assignment, Ruth did not allow students to talk to one another, and she walked around the room, quietly answering students' questions. The students' inserts were due at the beginning of the period two days after the peer editing session.

Ruth's Evaluation of Students' Creative Inserts

In Ruth's view the creative inserts were successful overall, and during an interview she identified what she considered some of the more successful papers. She, for instance, especially liked one student's paper, which is an insert of the episode of the Lotos eaters:

The men, the forgetful group, hampered our progress. All three wailed constantly, just as a child crying for its mother's milk. One of the three named Eurylokhos
convincing a crewman, named Lamen, through his cries to let him free. He bewailed how the lotus flower had been lingering over the food of the gods, nectar and ambrosia. He then cried of how irresistible the flower was. Think of the lion, king of the forest, with his stomach half its normal size. He spots a succulent piece of meat and inhales its ephemeral fragrance carefully, knowing that it won't last too long. The lion's mouth is now forming and dripping in beat to his pounding heart. All this occurring while he yearns for the meat. The lion then, using his remaining energy, runs at top speed towards the meat realizing that all of his previous problems would vanish, just as the sun over the horizon disappears daily. Just so was the lotus to these men.

Ruth stated that this is an example of a "great long simile" in that the student developed a simile in considerable detail. Although she noted that some of the phrases are somewhat awkward, she thought that the student used "a good deal of descriptive detail," and she "was very pleased with his effort." Another constructive criticism that she made was that the student needed to develop the theme of the destructiveness of the lotus plant. Another reason that some of the papers were successful in Ruth's view was that the students created scenes which were congruent with those of Homer. For example, one student characterized Odysseus as a man who longed for home and family. The most successful part of the student's paper, in Ruth's estimation, is as follows:

His thoughts changed like the winter transforms into spring, leaving behind the ice-capped hills and bringing forth dozens of brilliantly colored flowers blanketing the countryside. Now his dream brought Odysseus back home to the treacherous jagged rocks of Ithaka. Nothing seemed to have changed during his 10-year absence. The boulders on shore were still sharp and rough against the soft touch of hand or foot. At home the great dreamer seemed to be at
least, beside his wife and under his own roof. He was rewarded and given feasts of plenty from his family and people. But like all good dreams, it was over as soon as it began. When dawn spread her fingertips of rose upon the sky, Lord Odysseus awoke to find the new day ahead of him and last night's dream a mere recollection from the past.

Ruth noted that the student's comparisons of winter to Odysseus' trials and spring to Odysseus being reborn at home capture the essence of the Odyssey.

In contrast, less successful papers usually had one or more problems. For example, one student's paper had several fragments such as "Crashing against the sides of the rocks, the ship with a great clamor that bellowed out within my ears." Ruth noted that although she believed that ideas take precedence over mechanics, "I still think that mechanics are very important because without the mechanics, sometimes an idea is so unclear that it's completely lost" [interview #1]. Also, some inserts either lacked development of ideas or had little use of imagery. For example, one student described the Kyklops as a "cruel cannibal" - a description congruent with the Odyssey - but he used no similes or images senses of smell or hearing. Instead, the student merely narrated Homer's account of Odysseus and his men escaping the Kyklops' cave. Another less successful paper contained similes, epithets and the imagery; however, Telemakhos was described as "hot-tempered and inhospitable to strangers" in contrast to Homer's Telemakhos, who is humble and courteous.
In short, Ruth lucidly explained to students the requirements of the assignment. In Ruth's view it is important to provide students with lucid guidelines, so that they understand the expectations of a task. Also, because she focused on both imagery and characterization to some degree during most discussions of the various episodes of the Odyssey, students were prepared for the content of the task in addition to its form. In short, it seems that Ruth's affinity for close textual reading (Brooks, Purser, and Warren, 1939) is reflected in this task in that students were expected not only to imitate Homer but also to fit their inserts within the text of the Odyssey itself. In other words, the task demands did not allow students to create variations of a scene or character as illustrated by Ruth's evaluation of the student's paper about a "hot tempered Telemakhos"; instead, students were expected to illustrate their knowledge of characterization and theme within what Ruth refers to as the "unified whole" of the work. Overall, the task was worth 200 points, the same amount as the character analysis.

Five-Paragraph In-Class Essay

The final writing assignment of the unit was an in-class five-paragraph essay, which was introduced approximately two weeks before the final exam. Ruth used a structured form to teach the five-paragraph essay. First,
she reviewed the I-shaped paragraph form. She drew a block letter "I" on the board, and wrote "Generalization" under which she wrote the "Thesis." On the vertical portion of the block "I," she wrote the numerals "1, 2, and 3," and next to each numeral she wrote the word "Support." To the right of the word "Support," she wrote "Transition." Last, she wrote "Concluding Generalization" on the bottom horizontal portion of the block letter "I." Then she compared the essay form to the I-shaped paragraph form:

In an essay, you'll have a thesis in the same way that you'll have a thesis in an I-shaped paragraph. Also, every essay needs supporting paragraphs. The supporting paragraphs focus on developing your thesis in the same way that your supporting sentences of the I-shaped paragraph supported your thesis. In the I-shaped paragraph you have a concluding sentence, which is some type of generalization in most cases. Okay, so in a five-paragraph essay you will have a concluding paragraph that will, for the most part, summarize your main points but also point to a concluding idea... an idea which the facts and examples support.

[observation #20]

In addition, Ruth elaborated further on the five-paragraph essay form as she drew on the board another block letter "I", which was about three feet wide and three feet tall. Next, Ruth wrote "attention getter" and "thesis" on the top horizontal section of the "I." Beneath "thesis" she wrote "1, 2 and 3," and she explained that the "1, 2 and 3" are the three main supporting points of the essay. On the vertical portion of the block letter "I," she wrote the Roman numeral "I," and underneath Roman numeral "I," she left spaces for each of the three supporting ideas of the
first paragraph. Likewise, she proceeded the same way for supporting paragraphs II and III. Furthermore, Ruth wrote "Concluding Paragraph" on the bottom horizontal section of the "I," and she also explained that the supporting ideas of the conclusion restate the main ideas of the essay.

As illustrated, Ruth methodically introduced the five-paragraph essay structure because she, in contrast to Emig (1971), believes that the five-paragraph essay form is an effective general strategy for structuring essays in that it provides students a framework for organizing ideas, a framework which she expands throughout the year, requiring students to compose longer essays with a minimum of seven paragraphs. For example, she stated that

I used the five paragraph essay structure/outline because it helps the students to develop a clear thesis and topic sentences.... Also, one good thing about the essay outline is that it helps students to develop their paragraph so that they elaborate on their ideas. My experience has been that many of these students haven't been taught how to write a coherent essay in the middle school.

[interview #3]

Next, she gave students the topics for the four essays that they were required to outline before the day of the essay exam. Although students planned four different essays, they only wrote on one topic, which Ruth chose. She selected a topic for each row of students, and at least one row wrote on each of the following assigned topics: (1) Odysseus, seeker of knowledge; (2) Do Penelope and Telemakhos measure up to Odysseus?; (3) How do Odysseus' trials and
tribulations reflect our own trials and tribulations?; (4) How is the *Odyssey* an example of the monomyth? These topics are expressions of Ruth's theory of the content in that these topics reflect her thematic emphases. For example, she noted on various occasions (but most notably during the episode concerning Odysseus' descent into Hades) that he is a knowledge seeker, who must share his knowledge with others as symbolized by the oar. Also, the second topic required students to compare and contrast characters, and throughout the *Odyssey* unit Ruth asked students questions that forced them to do so. In addition, Ruth prepared students for both the second and third topics because discussions focused on ways that every person goes on an odyssey during his/her life and that Penelope's and Telemakhos' odysseys are more psychological than adventurous. Likewise, her topic concerning modern trials and tribulations was discussed at various times as was illustrated in the analysis of Book XII. Furthermore, the topic on the monomyth concerns the framework that Ruth used to structure the entire unit and is another expression of her belief that the *Odyssey* is an archetypal myth.

Because the four essay topics of the summative exam concerned themes that were emphasized throughout the unit, it is not surprising that many of students' questions from the first day that the assignment was introduced focused on possible theses - on the development of ideas instead of on
mere procedural level concerns. For example, one student stated that she believed that in some ways Telemakhos and Penelope are stronger characters than Odysseus, and Ruth legitimized the student’s idea in the same way that she often legitimized students’ answers during the lesson "The Princess at the River."

In some ways Penelope and Telemakhos may be stronger characters. Their roles are not as glamorous in that they don’t go off on fantastic Raiders of the Lost Ark type of adventures... however, perhaps in some way they’re superior to Odysseus. You have to be able to support your ideas in detail - have strong ideas for evidence. [observation #20]

In contrast, another student asked:

Is it okay for a person to say that in the thesis... to support or prove that they are all pretty much equal? [observation #20]

Ruth reiterated to the students that they could develop whatever thesis they desired. However, she cautioned them that they must make sure that they support their ideas with cogent evidence. As typified in the lessons on "The Princess by the Water" and "Sea Perils and Defeat," Ruth stressed that students need to support their work with passages from the text. This is one reason that she often told students to highlight key passages in their text for future reference.

In addition to questioning Ruth about theses on the first day that she introduced the essay task, other students’ queried Ruth about supporting ideas. For example,
one student wanted to know if the theme of patience is an acceptable way to support the thesis that Telemakhos and Penelope are equal to Odysseus. Another student stated that he wanted to use the theme of loyalty to compare Odysseus, Penelope and Telemakhos. Furthermore, students continued to ask Ruth questions about their topics on various days until the day of the essay exam.

The next phase of the five-paragraph essay task concerned two peer editing sessions of the detailed outline forms. At the beginning of each peer editing session, she wrote the following instructions on the board as guidelines, which students were expected to follow while working quietly at their desks: (1) Give the student a new title, (2) write a new attention getter, (3) write a new thesis, (4) evaluate the ideas of each supporting paragraph. (Work on their weaknesses in reference to ideas, mechanics, transitions - give them quotes). During these two peer editing sessions, Ruth walked around the room and answered students’ questions. Because she and each student that she talked to whispered, I do not know the nature of these conversations. The peer editing sessions seemed to run smoothly. Ruth's class spent four days on this task. One day for introducing the assignment, two days for peer editing, and one day for the in-class essay. In brief, she spent considerable time comparing the essay structure to paragraph structure, thereby relating the essay structure to prior learning.
In addition, Ruth prepared her students for the essay topic because the essay topics exemplify the key themes of her Odyssey unit, themes which were developed during discussions within the framework of Campbell’s concept of the monomyth, illustrating that her interpretive frame of archetypal criticism has influenced her task structure. However, her pedagogical concerns also seem to have influenced her choice of topics. Because Ruth believes that writing in itself is a complex cognitive task and that the analytical mode of discourse is one of the more difficult types of writing, she thinks that it is especially important that students understand the content that they are writing about. In short, Ruth, like the English teacher in Grant’s (1991) study, believes that critical analyses and close textual reading lead to what Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) refer to as "high literacy."

Ruth’s Evaluation of Students’ Essays

This essay was worth 400 points or twice as much as the character analysis, and 50% of a student’s grade was for coherent ideas and 50% for organization/mechanics. Ruth’s reason for stressing both ideas and organization/mechanics is that mechanical competency, in her opinion, is not divorced from the development of lucid ideas:

The development of coherent ideas is extremely important, but my experience has been that if the
mechanics and organization are poor... that even the best ideas are often vague.

[interview #3]

Ruth, for example, referred to one paper that she thought was highly successful, a paper which earned an A for both ideas and organization/mechanics. She stated that the student's thesis - "Odysseus is not just a knowledge seeker but a character who strives and yearns for knowledge" is substantive and coherent. In addition, Ruth noted that the student supported her thesis using the following coherent topic sentences such as the topic sentence of her second paragraph: "First of all, because of his curious nature, Odysseus takes many risks for knowledge throughout his journey." Another strength of this student's essay in Ruth's estimation is that the student writer elaborated on and explained her ideas. Ruth noted that the student "explained her ideas in detail and often used appropriate quotes from the Odyssey to support her ideas."

The student, for example, supported her previously given topic sentence with details such as "Odysseus sent men or went himself to find out or gain knowledge of their current situation," and then she further elaborated on her ideas and used the example concerning how Odysseus investigated the island of the Kyklopes and entered into the Kyklopes' cave. Also, the student noted that Odysseus is willing to take risks to gain knowledge, and she used direct
quotes from the *Odyssey* to illustrate or support her own ideas:

I will make the crossing in my own ship with my own company and find out what the mainland natives are— for they may be wild savages, and lawless, or hospitable god-fearing men.  

[interview #3]

Furthermore, Ruth noted that this particular essay was successful in that the introduction and conclusion were developed and coherently related to the thesis and supporting ideas. For example, Ruth pointed out that the students’ attention getter or opening sentence was "very good in that she used the quote from the "Ithaka," a poem by Kavathos. The quote coherently introduced the thesis because the attention getter and the thesis stressed that it is important that one’s journey is long, so that one gains knowledge from one’s experiences. Furthermore, Ruth noted that:

Her [the student’s] conclusion worked well because in her topic sentence she referred to how Odysseus gains certain knowledge in that she refers to his experiences, trials, or meetings with strangers and the journey itself... she focused on how Odysseus continually seeks and gains knowledge so he can share his knowledge or story with others.  

[interview #3]

Furthermore, Ruth thought that the conclusion was successful because it summarizes or ties together the main ideas.

Written comments on the paper mirrored much of what Ruth stated during the interview. For example, she wrote on the paper "Well done! Clear thesis. Carefully planned,
organized - excellent examples, perceptive work"- indicating that the student's ideas were coherent and sufficiently elaborated. Furthermore, there were several comments and notations dealing with mechanics or diction. For instance, she wrote "intellect" over "knowledge" so that the student would re-evaluate her choice of words. In addition, Ruth noted minor punctuation problems, marking a circle where the student needed a comma or placing parentheses around one sentence which was somewhat awkward. In brief, the student's paper was coherent and mechanically sound; consequently, Ruth was impressed with the student's product.

In contrast to the example of a highly successful paper, Ruth noted that "if a student had difficulties, it was usually due to a lack of planning, poor elaboration, or mechanical problems" [interview #3]. For example, Ruth showed me an essay which focused on the importance of the gaining and sharing of knowledge, and she noted that the thesis has potential. However, she asserted that the students' essay was not as coherent as she would have liked in that the student strayed from his topic:

He gives good examples. He discusses how Odysseus was war-like, very brutal and war-like, and then he provides quotes to support that. He gives a good analogy of Odysseus changing like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon...how he learns to overcome his pride, the type of pride that he shows when he is on the island of the Kyklopes. However, he then gets somewhat off the subject when he discusses or makes a single statement about how the separation of Penelope and
Odysseus makes them love each other more. He does not explain this idea about Penelope and Odysseus' love in any detail. It would have been better if he had merely taken this out. [interview #3]

Also, Ruth noted that the student had several words misspelled, had two run-on sentences in addition to having minor problems in pronoun-antecedent agreement. Although these errors did not seriously impede the meaning of the student's ideas, the essay was not as polished as Ruth would have hoped.

He had some very good ideas but he needs to work on coherency... to spend more time polishing his work. This was a good effort. [interview #3]

Ruth awarded the student an "A" for ideas and a "C" for organization/mechanics.

In addition to the previous two essays, Ruth showed me an example of an essay that was what she considered "very poor." Ruth noted that this paper had some ideas which had potential but were underdeveloped:

The student has some good ideas - he referred to how Odysseus was reborn, had to lose his warlike tendencies, and shows some creative power but he doesn’t develop any of these ideas.

[interview #3]

My examination of the student’s paper concurred with Ruth’s assessment. For example, the student did refer to ways that Odysseus dies to the world and learns to have more respect for the dead; however, the student, as Ruth noted, never discussed these ideas in detail nor did he cite specific
examples from the *Odyssey* as she required. Also, Ruth stated that the student's conclusion is especially weak in that it only consists of two sentences:

Merely saying that "To end Odysseus has seen all necessary stages for separation. Odysseus died, was reborn, and shown his creative power," it is not a well-developed, coherent concluding paragraph. He should have given examples or summarized the examples he gave in the body of his paper, but he didn't give many examples in the body of his paper so I would expect him to have a weakly developed conclusion. [interview #3]

Another problem that Ruth noted in the student's paper was that he had a number of run-on sentences. She noted that his introductory paragraph is one big run-on. My examination concurs with Ruth that the student did not edit his paper carefully and that the paper is in fact sprinkled with run-on sentences, which impede the meaning.

**Summary of Writing Assignments**

In conclusion, Ruth views writing assignments as a way to foster analytical thinking. She also thinks that most students need intellectual content or an intellectual context to develop ideas. In short, she stressed that literature provides students such an intellectual context to develop higher forms of literacy. Also, she noted that it is important to expose students to a structured essay form. Since she taught her *Odyssey* unit at the beginning of the year, she methodically and at times repetitiously reviewed the general forms of paragraph and essay structures, general
forms that she believes are appropriate for most types of writing in that the forms stress the stating of a general idea, which a writer supports with evidence from the text. Also, because the writing assignments were heavily weighted, she may have thought it especially important to explain her expectations clearly.

Quizzes Over Reading Assignments

In addition to writing tasks, Ruth typically gave students what she referred to as "little quick quizzes" [interview #1]. She typically assigned one or more of the books of the Odyssey for the students to read for homework, and she usually administered quizzes before discussing assigned books. Ruth stated that she tries to ask questions about the literal surface level:

They don't have to interpret. For example, they just have to know that it was a bow contest and who won it. That gives them a sense of ease. They know that if they just keep up with their reading they can pass the quizzes....

[interview #2]

By focusing on the surface level, she lowered both the ambiguity and risk of the quizzes. However, she did not truncate the demands of the task; her intention was to make sure that the students read, so that the class discussions would be "a shared conversation."

Ruth noted that her idea to give "quick little quizzes" came from a humanities professor, who gave quizzes over
almost every reading assignment. Ruth stated that these quizzes forced her to read carefully, and she stated that the professor's "quizzes were simple just like my mine are ...." [interview #1]. She asked the professor why he gave the quizzes when she assumed that university people [students] are there because they want to learn. However, the professor told her that he sometimes felt that his students had not read the material carefully and that class discussions sometimes were not as lively as they ought to have been.

Another reason why Ruth gives quizzes is that she stresses to her students that one can not make generalizations or discuss themes unless one knows the details on which to base one's generalizations:

One of the things that we teach them in the beginning is that you can't prove anything unless you get your details straight, unless you know what happened...if you are going to back up a point that you have in an idea... They need to learn that early on; they cannot really make a statement without backing it up. Also, if they don't know the details they won't be able to see thematic patterns.

[interview #1]

In Ruth's estimation, the quizzes serve as a vehicle to motivate students to read carefully, so that they can eventually make generalizations, not only in classroom discussions, but also in their own essays. Ruth believes that clear or coherent writing requires a general thesis which is supported with the appropriate details; also, she stated that students must practice in a sense this sort of
thinking during class discussions, so that they have the appropriate skills to develop cogent arguments.

My analysis of the types of questions that Ruth asked on her quizzes revealed that she did in fact ask surface level questions. For example, Ruth asked detail level questions such as the following on Book II:

What has been going on in Odysseus' home in the last two years?

Penelope tells the minstrel to stop singing about the Trojan War because the war brings back tragic memories. How does Telemakhos respond to her?

Give me two epithets: one for Zeus and one for Athena.

Who did Telemakhos tell that he was leaving?

What has Odysseus' father, Laertes, been doing?

What does Athena try to convince Zeus to do?

As noted, these questions are surface level questions, but they are also important to the plot itself. For example, an important aspect of the plot of the Odyssey concerns how the suitors turn Odysseus' home into pandemonium as they feast on his flocks and attempt to manipulate and dominate both Penelope and Telemakhos; consequently, Ruth's question "What has been going on in Odysseus' home during the past two years?" is appropriate.

Ruth continued to quiz students on surface level questions throughout the Odyssey unit. For instance, when she quizzed students on the Lotos Eaters and Kyklops episodes, she asked the following types of questions:
Did Odysseus attempt to eat the Lotos?
Odysseus docks his ship on an island near the
Kyklopses' island. It is a wonderful island with
fruits, goats, etc... Why don't the Kyklopses use this
island?
What does Odysseus bring as a gift to the Kyklops?
What name does Odysseus call himself when the Kyklops
asks him his name, and what gift does the Kyklops give
to Odysseus?
How does Odysseus manage to get out of the cave without
the Kyklops knowing?
Who is the father of the Kyklops?

As in the aforementioned quiz, Ruth stressed surface
level questions which relate to themes. Furthermore, when
she asked the question concerning why the Kyklopses don't
use one of the islands, she used this question to build on
the idea that the Kyklopses don't build ships because they
are not "seekers of knowledge." Ruth emphasized throughout
the Odyssey that the building of ships enables the Greeks to
visit other lands and to "seek knowledge." Furthermore, the
question concerning Kyklops' father is important in that
Poseidon prevents Odysseus from returning home for many
years because Odysseus and his men blinded Polyphemos, his
son.

In addition to questions which required students to
provide short answers, Ruth gave students several quizzes
which consisted primarily of quotes. For example, the quiz on Book V consisted of six quotes, which required students to identify the speaker, the situation, and the character(s) that the speaker addressed. Ruth chose quotes which emphasized key aspects of Book V. Some of the quotes focused on characterization such as the first quote which illustrates how Odysseus, who is suspicious and sagacious by nature, usually attempts to ascertain important aspects of a situation before he makes decisions:

O damn confusion! Can this be
A ruse to trick me from the boat for
Some god's pleasure?

Likewise, she used the following quote which exemplifies Odysseus' humility and respect for the gods:

O hear me lord of the stream, how sorely I
Depend on your mercy! ... Here is your servant;
Lord have mercy on me

Ruth's second quote test focused on passages that illustrate important aspects of plot, themes, or characterization. For instance, students were required to explain the situation that is illustrated in the following quote:

She ate them as they shrieked there in
Her den in the dire grapple, reaching still for me-
and deathly pity ran me through at that site - far worse
I ever suffered, questing the passes of the strange seas

In addition, she also used quotes that related to key themes of the *Odyssey* that she stressed such as the
importance of family and the importance of a strong relationship between a husband and wife. In the following quote Agamemnon, who Ruth used as a foil to Odysseus, tells him never to trust his wife, Penelope, whom he loves, respects and misses too much to ever follow Agamemnon's advice:

Let it be a warning even to you. Indulge a woman never,
And never tell her all you know
Some things a man may tell, some he should cover up
Not that I see a risk for you, Odysseus
of death at your wife's hand. She is too wise
Too clear-eyed, sees alternatives too well...

Also, Ruth chose quotes that pertain more to characterization than to theme. For example, the following quote illustrates Odysseus' indomitable spirit:

Are you flesh and blood, Odysseus, to endure more than a man can. Do you never tire?
God, look at you, iron is what you are made of.
Here we all are, half-naked with weariness,
falling asleep over the oars, and you say
"No landing - no firm island earth where we could quiet supper...

Similarly, she used quotes in the third and last quiz, which focused on characterization and/or surface level plot. For example, the following quote concerns how Telemakhos has the humility to admit that he did not close the storeroom door as his father instructed:

It is my own fault...mine alone
The storeroom door - I left it wide open.
They were more alert than I....
Furthermore, out of the thirteen questions on the quiz, Ruth asked seven surface level questions, in which no quotes were used. Examples of such questions are as follows:

What two men are spared?

After the suitors are killed, what does Odysseus command that the 12 women servants do?

How were these women killed?

What is Penelope’s reaction to Eurykleia’s news that Odysseus is home and has killed the suitors.

How does Penelope test Odysseus?

What is done to make the people in town think that all is well.

Odysseus proves to his father that he is truly his son in what two ways?

How is peace finally reached in the end?

In sum, most of these quizzes focused primarily on the surface plot because Ruth wanted students to have a thorough knowledge of the details of the plot. She used these quizzes as motivation for students— not only to read— but to read carefully. In all probability her emphasis on what she terms "quick quizzes" is more indicative of her intention to preserve her task structure with some form of an accountability system (Sanford, 1987) than with her intention to use American formalism as a type of pedagogy. After all, students still have to read in order to be capable of discussing a work of literature whether or not their teacher adopts a new critical (Brooks, 1947) or reader response (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1980) orientation. Overall,
Ruth gave students ten quizzes and each quiz was worth 100 points for a total of over 50% of a student's total grade of the *Odyssey* unit. Consequently, these quizzes were worth more than the total points of the three writing assignments, which were worth 800 points or about 40% of a student's total grade.

**Vocabulary**

In addition to quizzes over the *Odyssey*, Ruth focused on vocabulary during her *Odyssey* unit. As required by her department, Ruth used a vocabulary text, Harold Levine's 1983 edition of *Vocabulary for the College-Bound Student*. She stated:

> All English classes at the freshman and sophomore levels are required to have a vocabulary text. And the Levine text's used during both the freshman and sophomore years for honors students. Our scores on the SAT test on vocabulary aren't as good as our principal had hoped...so we have a vocabulary text.  
> [interview #1]

Also, Ruth noted that she would rather merely take vocabulary words from the *Odyssey* itself instead of using a vocabulary text because she believes that vocabulary ought to be taught in context as do various researchers (Brown, et al., 1989; Miller and Gildea, 1987); however, she added that the chapter on "Classical Mythology and History" in the Levine text complements her unit on the *Odyssey*, because the chapter includes many contemporary words derived from Greek
mythology. For instance, the word "odyssey" itself is used in the following travel agent will gladly plan an year’s odyssey to places of interest around the world." Other vocabulary words from the chapter such as "Stygian," "Siren," "Protean," "Paean," "Flora," "Hermetic," "Elysian," "Hector," and "Aegis" are also examples of some of the words that are used in the Iliad or the Odyssey or are indirectly relevant to Homer’s works.

Ruth initially organized the students into cooperative learning groups, and she attempted to select an over-achieving, achieving, and moderately achieving student for each group. The students were required to complete the exercises in Levine’s workbook. Some of these exercises used the vocabulary words in context. For example, in the first exercise students determined whether or not the italicized vocabulary word was used correctly in sentences (e.g., "The refugee told of his ‘odyssey’ from country to country in search of a new homeland."). In addition, students were required to chose the appropriate vocabulary word within the context of sentences such as "The wrestler’s [protean] maneuvers made it difficult for his opponent to obtain a hold." In other exercises answered questions in which vocabulary words were used. A typical question is as follows: "Would you be in a jovial mood after achieving a Pyrrhic victory? Why or why not?" Ruth noted that she likes this type of exercise because students are forced to
explain how vocabulary words are used in context. Another strength of Levine's text, according to Ruth, is that analogies are used.

In the section on analogies students identified a relationship between a given pair of words such as "Siren: beauty". Students were given five choices, one which exemplified a similar relationship. In this case Levine gives the following examples: "(A) victim: trap; (B) temptress: prey; (C) hunter: bait; (D) alarm: confidence; (E) worm: fish. In this case students should have selected (C), hunter: bait," because the "Siren" is like the "hunter" and the "beauty" is like the "bait." Furthermore, Ruth noted that one of the reasons that she believes that the analogies are valuable is that students are forced to think logically and that from a pragmatic point of view the analogies serve as preparation for the SAT.

After each group of students completed the vocabulary exercises, they were required to check their work with a key that Ruth provided and were required to correct all mistakes. In addition to completing the exercises, students were expected to draw pictures of the vocabulary words. Ruth believes that drawing pictures forces students to visualize and conceptualize the meaning of a word. Some of the students were creative in their attempts to represent the vocabulary words. One student, for instance, drew a picture of a smiling angel playing a harp to represent "Elysian."
Another student drew a strong man flexing his muscles to represent "Herculean", and a different student represented "Bacchalian" with a stick figure, which held a bottle in his hands and the words "hick! hick!" were written by the stick figure. In addition, one student represented "ambrosial" with a picture of a person enjoying the aroma of pizza. In addition to drawing pictures, students wrote definitions and at least one antonym on the other side of the card. They exchanged their picture flashcards with the other members of their group two class sessions after they worked on the vocabulary exercises in their workbooks. Students made arrangements for photocopies to be made of the flashcards, so they could share their cards. Overall, the students appeared to be on task, and there seemed to be no problems with student misbehavior. Ruth circulated around the room during these vocabulary lessons as she checked on groups and answered students' questions in the same way that she did during peer editing.

Three class days after students exchanged the picture cards of the vocabulary words, Ruth gave a vocabulary test, which was divided into five sections. The first section was multiple choice, which consisted of ten words as typified by the following examples: "Thespians: a) musicians b) actors c) dancers d) loafers." In the second section a series of statements were given and then the statements were to be matched to a particular question from 15 questions. For
example, the statement "In the 1920's, Rudolph Valentino was idolized by millions, particularly women" was to be matched to the question "Who was an Adonis?" Or the statement "A man was sentenced to prison for five years for stealing a loaf of bread" was to be matched to the question "Who encountered Draconian justice?" The next section dealt with a series of ten analogies, which were taken from the exercises in the vocabulary book that the student previously had completed. The fourth section consisted of a series of sentences, and each sentence had a blank in which students were to use to fill in with the appropriate vocabulary word, which were partially listed at the bottom of the page. For example, the word "jovial" was not given in its entirety, only the letters jo_ _ al were provided for students, who were supposed to remember the word. Examples of sentences from this section of the test are as follows:

It is undemocratic for _______ (Plutocratic) candidates to finance their campaigns from their personal finances.

Rose is trying to give up cigarettes, so do not _______ (tantalize) her by smoking.

The last section of the vocabulary test consisted of five analogies which the students. For instance, one example of the analogies is "Stygian is to hell as Elysian is to _______," had five possible choices: (a) fame, (b) punishment, (c) nostalgia, (d) reward, (e) paradise. The correct answer in this case is obviously paradise in that
the previous pairs of words have a synonymous relationship and a synonymous relationship was required for the latter pair of words. On the other hand, some of the analogies dealt with antonymous relationships: "Procrustean is to flexibility as amorphous is to _______."

In sum, Ruth was required to use a vocabulary text, which was the only part of her curriculum that she did not design. Instead, she prefers to teach vocabulary in context; however, she was able to relate many of the vocabulary words to the Odyssey because the vocabulary words focused on some of the Greek myths. Also, Ruth's use cooperative learning groups, which were similar to those proposed by Slavin (1983), illustrated her conviction that learning has its social dimension. Overall, Ruth did not weigh this task heavily; the vocabulary tasks were worth only 100 points or 1/19 of a student's total grade for the Odyssey unit. Consequently, this task was low in risk and ambiguity.

Summary of Tasks

The major tasks of Ruth's unit were three writing tasks, which constituted about 40% of a student's grade. These compositions required students to transform their knowledge of the Odyssey in different ways. The first assignment focused on characterization, the second on the imitation of Homer's poetic style, and the third on theme. However, the most heavily weighted part of Ruth's task
system was the quizzes over reading assignments, which comprised over 50% of a student’s grade. These quizzes primarily focused on surface plot and required students to read the *Odyssey* carefully. In addition, less than 10% of a student’s grade focused on vocabulary exercises and a vocabulary test.
CHAPTER 5
THE CONCLUSION

Discussion of Findings

Recently curriculum scholars have begun to investigate how curriculum and pedagogy are interconnected (Weade, 1987; Cornbleth, 1988). Similarly, researchers of teaching and teacher education have stressed that teachers are "curriculum makers" or transformers of curriculum. Clandinin (1989) and Elbaz (1981, 1983), for example, have studied teachers' personal practical knowledge and conceptions of curriculum, and the pedagogical content studies have stressed the importance of teachers' knowledge of content (Shulman, 1987). This study was an attempt to build on the knowledge of those researchers whose studies illustrate that teachers have a significant role in the transformation of curriculum, and expressions of Ruth's theory of content were examined through (1) interviews, (2) lessons, and (3) academic tasks.

Ruth, an experienced teacher who has taught the Odyssey a number of years, has a definite and visible theory of the Odyssey and literary criticism. She is literally a "curriculum maker" because she was given the opportunity to create a ninth grade advanced English course, which she conceptualized as an introduction to literary genres. Like Rabinowitz (1987), Ruth stated that different genres create different demands for readers, who need task specific
knowledge. For example, she noted that she typically introduces to students the conventions of comedy when she teaches *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. According to Ruth, young lovers of romantic comedies usually are prevented from marrying, so they "escape" from society to what Frye (1957) calls "the green world" where the rules of society no longer apply. Therefore, characters are forced to re-examine both their own values and the values of society, an examination which results in a metamorphosis of self. When the characters finally return to the normal world, their previous problems (e.g., a father preventing a daughter from marrying) are resolved in one way or another. After applying these and other literary conventions of comedy to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, she often requires students to write a thematic analysis of a contemporary comedy, so that they have the opportunity to apply these literary conventions to a modern play or movie; she hopes that students realize that these conventions are applicable to numerous comedies.

Likewise, she began her *Odyssey* unit by exposing students to the conventions of the epic because she believes that knowledge of the epic form will assist students not only to understand the *Odyssey* but other epics such as *Gilgamesh* and *Paradise Lost*. In addition to the typical conventions of the epic, she used Campbell's monomyth (1949) to thematically structure her *Odyssey* unit, and she
developed various themes during each of the monomyth’s three different stages. She only employs the framework of the monomyth to the epic, therefore illustrating that she has conceptualized the epic as different from other genres.

The three stages of the monomyth framed her overall interpretation of the *Odyssey* and were an important aspect of her theory of content. For example, in the separation stage she stressed that order needs to be restored in society and that warriors like Odysseus need to lose their warlike tendencies. During both the separation and initiation stages she focused on how Odysseus overcomes many trials, and in the process of doing so, he slowly gains humility, dying to himself and becoming a "Nohbody" - the name that he gives himself when the Kyklops asks him his identity. When Odysseus has lost his warlike tendencies and gained the self-knowledge of humility is he ready to return home to reclaim his kingdom (the return stage). In brief, she represented the *Odyssey* as Odysseus’ heroic yet humble quest to return home and as a psychological journey that every person - including her own students - undergoes.

Ruth wanted her students to relate the *Odyssey* to their lives. As illustrated in the lesson on Book XII, Ruth focused the discussion on several modern examples of Odysseus’ symbolic trials. In other words, she focused on ways that the symbols of the *Odyssey* are archetypal and therefore, in her view, apply to every era. Although she
emphasized the importance of students interpreting and relating Homer's work to their lives, students' responses were voiced within the context of the overarching framework of the monomyth, which structured her own classroom presentation and which probably influenced students' interpretations to some extent.

In addition to building her interpretative framework of the *Odyssey* around the monomyth, Ruth stressed close textual reading in the tradition of American formalism (Brooks and Warren, 1960). During the early lessons on the *Odyssey*, the text itself was the central focus of her lessons as illustrated in the lesson on Book VI. Ruth constantly required students to make generalizations from the details of passages, or she herself identified themes and required students to find appropriate passages or critical details which supported these ideas; also, Ruth typically emphasized the importance of recurring images or themes within the unity of the *Odyssey*. In other words, Ruth believes that imagery, theme, narrative and form are part of the unified whole of a work of literature (Brooks, 1947). Ruth noted that during critical reading there is a controlled tension between the reader and the text; in other words, she stated that meaning is influenced by both. She stressed that students ought to read carefully before making generalizations, and she made students accountable for close reading in that she gave quizzes over reading assignments.
that were a significant portion (over 50%) of their grade.

Ruth's version of American formalism and archetypal criticism complemented each other. Her formalist approach gave her a specific vocabulary and method to explicate and discuss images and recurring themes of the *Odyssey* while emphasizing narrative to a lesser degree. On the other hand, her use of archetypal criticism in the form of the monomyth enabled her to structure the narrative of the *Odyssey* and to discuss how Odysseus' trials transform him. While formalist methods in Ruth's view provide students with "analytical tools" to explicate literature - especially poetry, she used archetypal criticism as a framework to illustrate to students that there are many reoccurring patterns in imaginative literature (Frye, 1970). In short, Ruth's version of literary criticism is a pedagogy in itself, a pedagogy that is not divorced from content.

Although Ruth stressed the importance of students' personal responses, her theory of literature was not influenced by Rosenblatt (1978, 1980), whose works Ruth had not read. Rosenblatt posits that teachers initially ought to stress aesthetic reading, which is primarily concerned with what they vicariously experience and respond to as they read a given work of literature; to a lesser degree Rosenblatt advocates that students adopt an "efferent" stance, which focuses on the extraction of information. Ruth, in contrast, attempted to build students' background
knowledge of *Odyssey* before opening up discussions as she did during the lesson on Book XII.

In addition to becoming critical readers of imaginative literature, Ruth wanted her students to become logical writers. She views reading and writing as a team of horses pulling the same chariot; consequently, it is not surprising that she used literature as the focus for all writing assignments during her *Odyssey* unit and for every writing assignment throughout the year. Furthermore, her writing assignments seemed to be expressions of her literary theory of criticism as played out during discussions.

She seemed to model her version of literary criticism during the lesson on Book VI in that she constantly referred to themes and images in the text to support generalizations. Likewise, she expected students to support their ideas with quotes from the text itself as typified by the character analysis assignment and summative in-class essay. In addition, she expected students not only to identify poetic devices during discussions, but she also required students to use swift similes, Homeric similes, epithets, and imagery in general in the character analysis and creative insert assignments. Furthermore, her essay topics for the summative essay (e.g., Do Penelope and Telemakhos measure up to Odysseus?; How do Odysseus' trials and tribulations represent our own?; How is the *Odyssey* an example of the monomyth?; How is Odysseus a knowledge seeker?) typify her
archetypal orientation. In brief, if Ruth’s pedagogy was not influenced by her theory of literary criticism, she may not have required her students to support their generalizations with quotes or to write about how the *Odyssey* is illustrative of the monomyth; instead, she may have designed writing tasks that focused more on students’ personal responses to literature (Rosenblatt, 1980).

In addition, her employment of the writing process is in a sense an extension of her class’ literary discussions in that students were to discuss (but in writing in this case) one another’s ideas and to provide one another with ideas or passages from the text. This is not to imply that Ruth used the writing process merely because she has a formalist/archetypal orientation toward literature; in all probability she would have employed the writing process regardless of her theory of literary criticism, because she, like Vygotsky (1986), has stressed that learning has its social dimensions. Overall, students seemed to have understood the task demands of the writing assignments, and perhaps this is largely because she spent considerable time explaining her expectations and also because her expectations concerning how to read literature critically were unconsciously modeled by her during literary discussions.

Her theory of literature may have influenced students not only during discussions but also in their compositions.
For example, Martinsson (1989)—as discussed by Hansson (1992)—conducted a study in which Swedish students' essays from the mandatory high school graduation exams were examined over a 103 year period, and he found that students' analyses reflected the dominant literary theory taught in Sweden's public schools during any given era.

In short, this study examined Ruth's theory of content as it was played out over an entire unit. The primary focus was the examination of how Ruth's conception or theory of content was expressed and played out in the classroom context as curriculum events. Ruth's theory of content or literary criticism was in itself pedagogical; she did not seem to separate subject matter from pedagogy. Also, there was tension in both her theory of reading literature and writing. In Ruth's view meaning is found in both the text and the reader. She stressed close textual reading, yet she wanted students to interpret texts and relate ideas or themes to their lives or to modern society in general. In addition, she taught students task specific strategies for understanding different genres (Rabinowitz, 1987) while also emphasizing general strategies for understanding literature (e.g., American formalism). Furthermore, she taught students a general form for composing paragraphs and five-paragraph essays; yet she also tried to inculturate students into what she believes is the task-specific world of literary criticism in that she showed them how to use passages and
imagery to support their ideas. Ruth emphasized that different modes of discourse place different demands on the writer.

Implications

As previously stated, one of the findings of this study is that Ruth's theory of content (literature) is in itself a pedagogy; in Ruth's case subject matter and pedagogy are intertwined, not separated. Consequently, the question concerning whether or not Shulman's (1987) category of "pedagogical content knowledge" is necessary or is - as Stengel (1992) argues - "usefully wrong" needs to be examined more thoroughly by the research community (p. 35).

Shulman (1987) posits that teachers need a knowledge of pedagogy and content in addition to what he terms "pedagogical content knowledge," which he defines as

an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult: the conception and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of the most frequently taught topics and lessons (p. 10).

On the surface it seems that his creation of the category of "pedagogical content knowledge" has united curriculum and pedagogy, but the concept of pedagogical content knowledge, as noted by McEwan and Bull (1991), ironically implies that subject matter is not pedagogic by nature. If subject matter is pedagogic by nature, there is no reason to create the
separate category of pedagogical content knowledge. McEwan and Bull note that teachers do not have different kinds of knowledge than do scholars but that teachers merely address different audiences than do scholars. Scholarship and teaching, therefore, are connected through their unity of purpose - the common aim of the communication of ideas - not divided by any formal differences... Our conclusion, then, is that scholarship is no less pedagogic in its aims than teaching. Subject matter is always an expression of a desire to communicate ideas to others, whether they happen to be members of the scholarly community, new-comers to the field, or lay people (p. 331).

Another implication of Shulman's creation of the category of pedagogical content knowledge is that teachers' knowledge is not as "scholarly" - not as intellectual as that of scholars; in Shulman's view, teachers have alternative representations to those of scholars (Wilson, Shulman, and Richert, 1987). McEwan and Bull, however, argue that the content knowledge of teachers differs in degree but not in kind. Because the Stanford Group differentiates between the knowledge of teachers and that of scholars, it is not surprising that they focused their research agenda more on how teachers represent content to students in ways that are understandable or "pedagogically powerful" than on how teachers' theories of content are expressed during lessons. Teachers' theories of content are curiously absent or at the surface level in the Stanford Groups' studies.

It must be noted that these studies are a seminal body of research because they stress the importance of subject
matter in teaching (e.g., Grossman, 1990; Wilson and Winebarg, 1988); nevertheless, these studies need to dig deeper into teachers’ theories of content. For example, Shulman (1987) refers to two experienced English teachers who have developed excellent content and pedagogical content knowledge; however, he makes no reference to their ideas concerning literary criticism or to their conceptions about how to represent any given work. He does refer to one teacher’s theoretical model for taking students from the surface level to the application and evaluation levels of literature, and he also refers to eight important themes that one of the teachers stressed in her unit on Huckleberry Finn; however, there is little mention concerning how these themes were played out in lessons. In contrast, this study illustrates that Ruth often used a similar type of model in which she started with the detail level and attempted to build upon themes, which she attempted to relate to the Odyssey’s thematic unity within the structure of the monomyth.

It would have been interesting if Shulman laconically explained how the themes were transformed because even if teachers stress the same themes, these themes will probably be played out in different ways (Golden, 1989). For example, Ralph Ellison (1968), like T. S. Eliot (1932) posited that there are recurring archetypal patterns of literature; however, Ellison, in contrast to other archetypal critics,
purported that Jim is a poor representation of African-Americans:

I use folklore in my work, not because I am a Negro, but because writers, like Eliot and Joyce, made me conscious of the literary value of my folk inheritance. My cultural background, like that of most Americans, is dual (my middle name, sadly enough, is Waldo).

I knew the trickster, Ulysses, just as early as I knew the Wily Rabbit of Negro-American lore, and I could easily imagine myself as a pint-sized Ulysses but hardly a rabbit, no matter how human and resourceful or Negro. And a little later I could imagine myself as Huck Finn (I soon nicknamed my brother) but not, because I racially identified with him, as Jim who struck me as a white man's inadequate portrait of a slave... For me at least in the discontinuous, swiftly changing and diverse American culture, the stability of the Negro-American folk tradition became as precious as a result of an act of literary discovery (pp. 112-113).

If Ellison were teaching *Huckleberry Finn*, he probably would stress (perhaps in great detail) why and how Jim’s character is an inadequate caricature of a slave. In addition, Ellison may have stressed or related some of the tales of the African-American folk tradition to *Huckleberry Finn*. In short, the transformation of content concerns more than acquiring both the knowledge of those concepts that students have difficulty grasping and the knowledge of ways to present content that are "pedagogically powerful."

Ruth’s *Odyssey* unit, for example, would have been played out much differently had she been influenced more by reader response critics than by archetypal critics because her unit would not have been shaped thematically by the structure of the monomyth. In other words, teachers do have
underlying theories of content that guide their representations of curriculum in the classroom context, and

... it is imprecise to say that the curriculum is the content. It is more accurate to say, rather, that a curriculum is a theory of the content, that is, an elaboration of the fundamental nature of content and how it is represented to children at various grade levels (Doyle, 1991, p. 13).

Instead of studying the development of beginning teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, the research agenda should build upon the pedagogical content knowledge studies and focus on teachers' theories of content and on the stories (Carter, 1993) that teachers tell about teachers and teaching itself. For example, Trumbull's (1990) autobiographical sketch of her experience as a science teacher illustrates how her conception of science, choices of academic tasks, and methods of presenting lessons changed over time. Although she taught at the collegiate, not at either the elementary or secondary levels, her "story" of teaching is significant. The development of case studies may give both beginning and experienced teachers context specific and content area specific illustrations of classrooms from the vantage point of the unity of curriculum and pedagogy, and this current study - it seems - would be much richer if Ruth's own story as teacher had provided a more elaborate explanation of her theory of content. Ruth, as teacher - as intellectual, would have had more of a voice, more of a living presence in this study.
In addition, an emphasis on teachers’ theories of content may enrich the reflective teacher education programs. These programs (e.g., Clift, Houston, and Pugach, 1990; Gimmett and Erickson, 1988; Ferguson, 1988; and Zeichner and Liston, 1987) emphasize the importance of lesson preparation and the reflection on teaching in the social contexts of schools; however, these programs do not emphasize to any great extent that student teachers ought to conceptualize and to explore their own theories of the content that they will teach. Perhaps an emphasis on eliciting beginning teachers’ theories of content may force them to study their subject matter more intensely - an important consideration in lieu of the fact sometimes student teachers sometimes do not understand the content that they are attempting to teach (Ropp, 1989).

Similarly, the examination of teachers’ theories of content may enhance teachers’ action research (Kemmis, 1989; Hopkins, 1989). Kemmis (1989), for example, advocates that teachers evaluate their teaching or "praxis," which he defines as "informed, committed actions" (p. 75). He argues that

It (praxis) orients action through the judgment and interactions of the actor, and reforms the judgement and intentions of the actor in the light of the consequences of actions... Moreover, praxis, by definition is reflective - we learn from it, and it contributes to a reinterpretation of our developing experience and history (pp. 75-76).
An emphasis on teachers’ theories of content may enhance Kemmis’ conception of action research because such a focus may enable teachers to articulate their implicit or explicit theories of content as expressed in various ways during interactive teaching, thereby providing teachers another vantage point from which to examine their teaching.

Likewise, staff development programs benefit from the consideration of teachers’ theories of content. Griffin (1989), for example, asserts that teachers are central to staff development programs and that teachers must "have a sense of mission based upon consensual agreements about what is believed important" (p. 33). Griffin, however, notes that when teachers are mentioned by staff developers, the unfortunate assumption that "'a teacher is a teacher is a teacher'" is often made (p. 33). Perhaps it is also assumed that a theory of content is just a theory or content. However, if teachers’ theories of content clash with a program proposed by staff developers, then teachers will undermine the efficacy of the program. In brief, if teachers really are a critical force in school change, then their conceptions of content ought to be considered before staff development plans are implemented.

**Concluding Remarks**

This study examined Ruth’s conception or theory of content as expressed through interviews, lessons, and tasks.
The researcher found that she has a visible theory of content that guides her presentation of subject matter, which, the researcher argues, is inherently pedagogic. Although the research community in America has neglected examining teachers' roles as "curriculum makers," a number of researcher are examining teachers' roles as transformative agents of curriculum. Hopefully, a significant amount of research will focus on teachers' theories of content, so that the research community builds a stronger knowledge base of the content of teaching.

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## APPENDIX

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