

**Reading Their Stories: Exploring the Nature, Institution, Discourse, and Affinity  
Identities of Developmental College Readers through a Narrative Lens**

by

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## Abstract

Higher education is facing a challenge with as many as 60% of entering students at community colleges testing into one or more developmental level classes each year (Bailey & Cho, 2010, p. 46). This is a crisis that impacts economics, graduation rates, and student morale. The study of students' perceptions of themselves and their educational history has been neglected in research. In fact, research on community college in general is lacking in higher education research. In order to add needed depth to this conversation, this qualitative study examined the reading identity of students placed into developmental reading at a community college in the Southeast. Tools for analysis included James Gee's (1996/2000) ideas of Discourses and his four ways to view identity through Institution, Nature, Discourse, and Affinity. The researcher interviewed six women who had completed the developmental reading course sequence to gather their stories of reading throughout their lives. The researcher then restoried these interviews into fictionalized narratives to explore the issues of power, identity, pedagogy, culture, family, and friends as those pertain to their reading identities. In the discussion of these narratives, the researcher explored concepts such as mindset, mushfake, self-efficacy, boundary crossing, and melancholy, all of which affected at least some of these women throughout their reading lives. The researcher also questioned what effective and ineffective pedagogy seemed to be influential for these readers, including student-selected texts,

reading aloud, and purposeful engagement with texts. The researcher called for a curricular change in reading.

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## **Chapter One - Introduction**

After nearly 20 years of teaching English in grades 7-12, I felt confident that I knew what my students needed to know before they went to college. I felt relatively confident that I was sending graduates out into the world ready for work or college. And it was always my goal to create life-long readers in my classroom. Then, I took a job at a community college in my vicinity. This job required me to teach developmental reading and English. Maybe I was just naïve, but I am not even sure that I knew that these classes existed as a high school teacher. What do you mean a student who passed my English 12 class may not be college ready? Ok, maybe those students who barely squeaked by with a D --- they may have a problem in college. When I realized how many students graduate high school and go straight into remedial college classes, I was a bit distraught. High school teachers, especially the English teachers with whom I spent countless hours discussing what was successful and not successful in our classrooms, work hard with their students. What was the problem? As I settled into teaching my first developmental reading classes, I looked out at the students- black, white, rich, poor, young, old- there seemed to be no rhyme or reason to my class composition. Seeing the students, I was struck with the notion that if I was upset that my students may not be college-ready readers, a term with its own load of problems, imagine how the students themselves felt about being labeled as inadequate readers, learners, thinkers, even people. This began my inquiry into my developmental students' perceptions of themselves as readers.

## **Problem Statement**

As many as 60 percent of students nationwide end up in transitional, developmental or remedial courses when they begin at a community college (Bailey & Cho, 2010, p. 46). In the case of the southeastern community college where I teach, in the fall of 2013 when the majority of my participants took developmental reading, 78% of the incoming students took at least one developmental class. These students may have been enrolled in numerous non-credit courses; so many that, in fact, they spent over a year of college taking classes that would not transfer into their major studies. Nationwide, less than 25% of these students will complete a program or earn a degree within eight years of entering college (Bailey & Cho, 2010, p. 46). One of these areas of developmental study is reading. Since reading is a foundational skill in education, this lack in students' skills was especially troublesome to me.

Also, these community college students needed to begin to count in educational research. According to Deil-Amen (2011), "the model of the ideal student is certainly no longer typical, and in fact, many non-traditional characteristics are more prevalent than traditional ones" (p. 4). She noted that 57% of first year students in 2007-2008 were enrolled in community colleges, not four-year schools, but that researchers tend to forget that other half of school settings (p. 3). She also went on to note that much research on higher education marginalizes schools and students outside of the realm of four-year universities, especially when considering diversity in higher education through the reification of the traditional college student and traditional college-going patterns. (Deil-Amen, 2011, p. 7)

With this caveat in mind, it was my hope that my research would begin to make these community college students count in academic research and give them the power to have their voices heard.

### **Statement of Purpose**

By looking into the narratives of developmental reading students' histories as readers, I hoped to see whether ultimately they identified themselves as readers as well as when and by whom they were identified as struggling readers throughout their lives. By analyzing these narratives of readers, I was looking to explore how socially situated Discourses as defined by James Gee (1996) affect the reading identity of these developmental college students and who was holding the power in creating these identities.

### **Research Questions**

Main Question: What are the stories that developmental community college readers tell about themselves as readers?

1. How do developmental reading students in the community college identify themselves as readers?
2. What do these stories say about their paths to developmental classes in college reading?
3. How does the structure of their narratives illuminate the powers in control of defining their reading identities individually, socially, academically, and/or culturally?

**Significance of Study:**

In looking at these narratives of struggling readers at the college level, I have found that their reading identities are tied to the Discourses of different situations. The participants' reading identities were often fluid, and the amount of self-efficacy, defined by Bandura (1994) as one's belief in his/her ability to effect change in certain situations, and self-empowerment, one's personal sense of power over a given event, inherent in the reading identity seemed to be an important indicator of whether the participants saw themselves as readers or not. Gathering the actual voices of these developmental students gave them agency to authentically narrate their own lives as readers as opposed to the narrative created by ABC Community College's developmental reading program.

**Theoretical Framework:**

Constructivism is a basic fundamental belief that humans "do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it" (Schwandt, 2007, p.38). As a constructivist, I felt that all realities are constructed through the experiences, interpretations, and cultural influences of the agents involved in the reality in question. In this research study, one of the essential aspects of interviewing developmental college students was to hear their stories through their own constructed realities as interpreted by my own constructed reality. Their narratives illuminated their varied identities as readers in a myriad of social situations, such as school, home, and work, which helped to emphasize that literacy is not a purely academic topic. The two theoretical structures that informed my research were narrative, as both form and research method, and identity, in particular, literacy identity.

## **Narrative**

Much of the research on narrative inquiry in fields such as education, medicine, and social sciences that I encountered focused on discussing the many faces of narrative and how they can be combined, differentiated, and explored in a narrative research project. This was definitely the case in my research; therefore, the following constructs of narrative were important to my study: Narrative as Self Identity, Narrative in the Audit Culture and as Voice for the Voiceless, and Narrative as Analysis of Typology. In order to later analyze all of these aspects of narrative theory, a brief look into the current theory in these areas was necessary.

**Narrative as Self Identity.** One of the aspects of narrative that was foundational to my research was the notion that narratives or stories are vehicles to self-identification. Cooper (2011) pointed out that “narratives create selves as individuals, unconsciously and consciously, wordlessly and verbally, connect sensations and memories, and then reflect on, revise, and extend their stories of themselves” (p. 244). She and others such as Eakin (1999) and Bruner (1991) believed that narratives end up being the reality of the self over time. Humans have an innate desire to tell stories to help define themselves and the world around them. Eakin (1999) claimed that “self and story were complementary, mutually constituting aspects of a single process of identity formation” (p. 100). Since in my research I worked to help my participants uncover the stories of how they maneuvered through their reading lives to end up with this identity as a community college-defined struggling reader, it seemed to me that because of narrative’s ability to help create identity, it was a close theoretical fit.

**Narrative in the Audit Culture and as Voice for the Voiceless.** As a former educator from the K-12 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era, I was very interested in how these struggling students fared as products of No Child Left Behind and how this legislation impacted their learning. Tom Barone (2007) discussed how narrative research meets the demands for “scientific research” that are clearly spelled out in NCLB. He claimed that when you define narrative research in his terms, it has the strength to withstand the scrutiny. He posited that education stories have an inherently political character as power issues are attended to and that narratives live in a continuum where fact can be made fiction and vice versa as opposed to the normally considered dichotomy between fact and fiction (p. 459). Therefore, because of the nature of storytelling, narratives can help identify who holds the power in creating the reading identities of my participants. Their narratives will show their perceived truths about themselves as readers, but these truths may live somewhere on a continuum of fact versus fiction. This is a close theoretical fit to my beliefs, because as a constructivist, I believe that all truths are relative to the context in which they are presented.

Another pressing issue for my particular participants is their marginalized status as having been labeled a struggling reader. Barone and others such as Carol Lee (2007) noted that in much research, the human voice has been silenced, especially that of marginalized peoples. In fact, this notion was first brought to my attention by a book written by a 17-year-old student called *One Size Does Not Fit All*. In this book, Goyal (2012) told many stories of educational practices and what was not working with them. This idea that the students’ voices should be heard in educational research was what first led me to the notion of recording the students’ stories of their reading identities. In my

research, the idea that I have given voice to the students who may have very well become disenfranchised by and let down by today's educational world seemed to be best served through a narrative construct.

**Narrative as Analysis of Typology.** Monica Fludernik (2009), in her book *An Introduction to Narratology*, explained that in narratology literary theorists dissect the format of the narrative to see how it connects with various typographies of literature. Many narrative researchers in the social sciences did this as well. There are many ways to break this down, but Burke's (1945/1954) five aspects of narrative: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose seemed to acknowledge aspects of narratives that could give hints as to Gee's (1996) sense of Discourse from which the stories are coming. In essence, Burke's (1945/1954) Dramatic Pentad allowed for a breakdown of narratives that was loaded with the knowledge of who had the power in the story. By using terms such as *agent* and *agency*, Burke was imbuing these descriptors with the power to act in any Discourse. Using Burke's Pentad, I was able to envision different reading identities for the students in different social settings or Discourses and illuminate the ways the *how* of their storytelling also passed along information about their identity as a struggling reader. In fact, Gee's (2000) Four Ways to View Identity, as explained below, became crucial in analyzing my participants' stories because they served as a way to label the powers that were enacting identities upon my participants. Another aspect of the form of the narrative that proved interesting was actually looking for what was not present in the form of the narratives. Creswell (2007) noted that sometimes a deconstructivist reading looking for the disconnects, silences, and contradictions can also tell you much about a narrative (p.56). These silences were also important in the stories of my participants.

## **Identity**

**Literacy of Situation and Discursive Identities.** The question and definition of literacy may seem integral in looking at developmental readers and their identity as a reader; however, typical notions of literacy as the ability to read and write were not the measure of this study. Instead a more complex image of literacy had to be put forth in order to tell the full story of these readers. James Paul Gee (1996) asserted that literacy is “multiple abilities to ‘read’ texts of certain types in certain ways or to certain levels” (p. 41). So, for my participants’ identities, literacy needed to be looked at as a fluid concept. It was important to note for them that texts and their readings of them were situational in that they existed within certain Discourses and were socially constructed within these Discourses. According to Gee (1996), a Discourse is a way of “behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people” (p. viii). A Discourse, as I used it in this research then, was the situationalizing, thinking, believing, contextualizing, and valuing that goes into any particular act. It might have been a school Discourse and all that is loaded into making meaning in a school setting or it may be a home Discourse or a social group Discourse, but no matter the Discourse there was always an act of constructing meanings of literacy in that situation. Therefore, the term literate in respect to a college student could have been different things in different contexts at different times. This theory of literacy was critical in exploring the many stories of the developmental readers in this study, because it allowed for my participants to acknowledge the many flexible identities that they inhabited as readers in different Discourses. However, the definition of literacy (or literacies as many new theorists see

them) was not the question at hand in this research; instead, it was the participants' identities as readers that developed in the many literacy Discourses of which they found themselves as a part. The Discourse of the community college had already deemed these students as lacking in literacy skills based on placement tests. Therefore, one aim of this research was to see if the students' stories as themselves as readers would illuminate their successes as literate members of other Discourses outside of the schoolhouse. So, a multi-faceted, social-situated understanding of literacy such as Gee proposed was necessary to hearing all of the identities of these students as readers. In order to analyze the identities that my participants revealed in their interviews, I used Gee's (2000) discursive identities framework, which views identity in four ways: Nature Identity (N-Identity), Institution Identity (I-Identity), Discourse Identity (D-Identity), and Affinity Identity (A-Identity) (p. 100). See Chapter Two for a further discussion of these identity constructs. These identities are fluid and can overlap as a person moves through the Discourses of their lives. In this research, this fluidity and connection of identities was an integral part of understanding the stories of my struggling readers. Polkinghorne (1995) differentiated between analysis of narratives -- describing themes, etc. of already existing narratives-- and narrative analysis --taking data and melding it into a narrative structure as a way of analyzing it (pp. 5-6). I think it is important to note that I did both in my research.

### **Data Collection Process**

In order to gather the stories of my students, I gave prompts that directed them to tell me a story of their earliest memories as a reader. There is an inherent concern in working with participants who have also been students of the researcher. I have addressed these concerns in Chapter 3. I then asked them, in a series of interviews, about

elementary and secondary memories of reading, failures and successes as readers, and their current reading status. These prompts served as a way for the participants to “tell me about what happened” in various times as their life as readers. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) gave many tips on how to make interviews have the most successful results possible (p.45). I, at their urging, had a briefing and debriefing at the interview to make sure the participant is comfortable and aware of what is happening. Another piece of advice was to make sure to spend some time right after the interview to reflect and record any non-verbal nuances or impressions that may be lost with time (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, pp. 128-129). With narrative interviews, they suggested to ask for a story, which I did as well. They pointed out that the role of the interviewer in a narrative interview is to stay as quiet as possible and only speak as affirmations or to encourage further details (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 155). This tied back to my earlier discussion as researcher as co-producer of the story, because any verbal or non-verbal influence from the interviewer helps produce the narrative. I did not see a problem with this; however, it was something that needed to be reflected upon in the analysis. In her study of abuse survivors, Montalbano-Phelps (2004) pointed out that there are several things that must be attended to before narratives can be successful. They include the teller’s willingness and ability to narrate a story, the context of the telling, and the teller-listener interactions, which I have already discussed (p. 11). Since my participants struggle with reading, I had to be helpful in bolstering their abilities to narrate a tale, and I had to build trust and credibility with my participants in order to ask the kinds of questions I needed to ask to understand the context of their stories, which was also crucial to later successful analysis of the narrative. Riessman (1993) said that the first stage of the research process is

attending to the participant, understanding their contexts. Then, you can get to the telling part of the narrative. After that, you get on with the transcription, which she suggested should be done roughly at first to see the nuances of what is there, but then in a more detailed fashion for the smaller chunks that will be analyzed closely (p. 10). After gathering the raw data for their stories, I used restorying to create a primarily chronological narrative of their reading lives. According to Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), “Restorying is the process of gathering stories, analyzing them for key elements of the story, and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence” (p. 332). After completing the restoried narratives and analyzing them as data, I then decided to take the richest of the restoried narratives and fictionalize them into storied narratives that would give the reader a more thorough feeling of what the student went through in each situation.

I also looked at students’ placement test data, self-described demographics, and grades as a way to provide a thick description of my participants. I administered Murray’s Motivation to Read survey to determine their motivation to read and their reading interests. All of this data was woven into their re-storied narratives of their lives as readers.

### **Data Analysis**

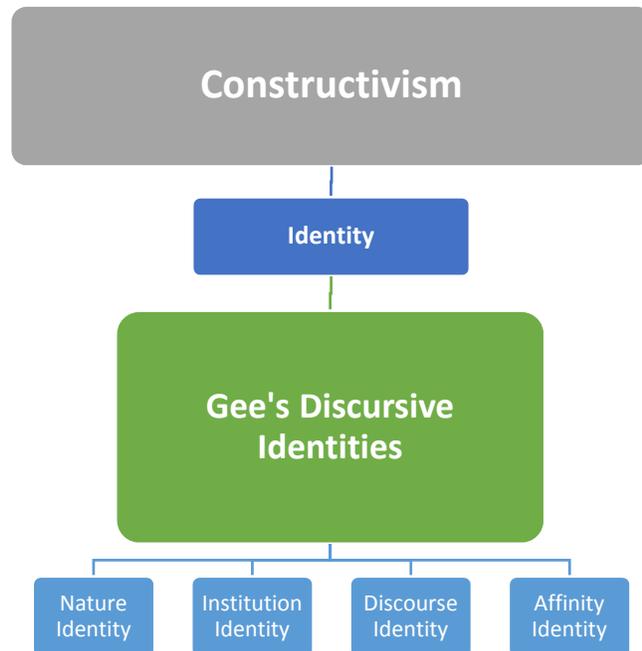
The first step in analyzing my data was taking the interview transcripts and coding them using ATLAS.ti software for elements of plot using Burke’s (1945/1954) Dramatist Pentad as well as open thematic codes that seemed salient to the research based on my experiences in the field. Then, after considering the patterns in the coding, I restoried the participants’ narratives into small narrative chunks that loosely followed

their schooling chronologically. I at times added data from my other sources, classwork, Reading and Me Survey, and college records to make the narratives coherent and full. This restorying worked as an act of analysis because it made the researcher decide what was important enough to include and how it should all go together. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) even said that some narrative analysis must be formatted into a recognizable narrative form because not all narrative come out as neat, coherent stories (p. 155). After the narratives were completed, I discussed how they fit into Gee's (2000) Discursive Identities (Four Ways to View Identities). Finally, I looked at some implications for community colleges, reading pedagogy, and developmental students that arose from my participants' narratives.

### **Concerns and Questions**

I have realized that narrative research, according to Riessman (1993), is slow and painstaking. Because of the time lapse between conducting interviews and analyzing data, many of my participants have left ABC Community College and have proven to be difficult to contact. This made it impossible to do the member checking that I would have liked to do after restorying the narratives. For that reason, I used as much actual dialogue from the interviews to create the original restories. My intention was for the reader of the research to hear and interpret the participants' voices as well as see my interpretation of their words through my analysis. There was still a sense of tension in the idea of truth and verisimilitude that I discussed earlier, but as I understood more about identity, I was more comfortable with the fluidness of one's identity over time and in many varied situations. I found this to be a refreshing concept that we can continually create who we are. In the end, I was comfortable with narrative analysis and narratives as research.

## Chapter Two - Methodology Theoretical Framework



*Note.* This chart is a graphic representation from Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 100

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), it was important when beginning to think about theories in qualitative research that one started with the researcher's own tacit belief system or, as I refer to it, paradigm (p. 125). At the paradigmatic level of my theoretical framework was Constructivism. My basic ontological belief in this research was that everything was relative to what Lincoln and Guba (2000) called "local and specific constructed realities" (p. 165). In my research, the notions of literacy that I co-created with my participants were situated in the contexts of the participants' lives both inside and outside institutional settings as well as in my decisions as the researcher of

what to reflect upon and what to include. Lincoln and Guba (2000) claimed that Constructivists are antifoundational in that they do not accept any set of truths as universal (p. 177). Instead, at best, for me truth was and is a socially negotiated agreement of what will be accepted as truth within any community or Discourse as Gee (1996) calls different settings, which will be discussed in full later in this chapter. In the end, Guba, Lincoln (2000), and I agreed that the postmodern “emphasis on the social construction of social reality, fluid as opposed to fixed identities of the self, and the partiality of all truths, will simply overtake modernist assumptions of an objective reality” (p. 178). This belief was the foundation of my research. All realities and identities were constructed within the social discourses in which they existed, and were not made concrete or real by the institutionally-identified labels as developmental readers.

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) discussed substantive theories that explained that there are phenomena that are inherent in a discrete place, time, or people (p. 134). At the substantive level of my theoretical schema for this research, there were two main concepts that need to be explored: narrative theory and identity theory. These theories were my basis for exploring the voices of my participants as struggling readers in the community college. Ultimately, I needed to break down how these narratives were constructed by using Burkes’ (1954/1945) notions of the Dramatic Pentad and what those parts of the narratives revealed about the identities of the students as readers, including the social constructs that hold power in the forming of the students’ identities. Riessman (1993) stated this of narrative: “Because the approach gives prominence to human agency and imagination, it is well suited to studies of subjectivity and identity” (p. 5). Therefore,

narrative theory in its broadest sense was an appropriate means of analysis in my research.

### **Narrative Theory**

**Narrative.** Much of the research on narrative that I explored discussed the many facets of narrative and how they could be combined, differentiated, and explored in a narrative research project. This bricolage of narrative facets was definitely the case in my research. After extensive research and reading in the fields of narrative theory, narrative methodology, narratology, and narrative inquiry in education, I developed and/or identified the following constructs of narrative that illuminated why narrative was the best theoretical and methodological fit for my study: Narrative as Self Identity, Narrative in the Audit Culture and as Voice for the Voiceless, and Narrative as Analysis of Typology. In order to understand how narrative was vital to my research, a brief look into these areas of narrative theory follows.

**Narrative as Self Identity.** One of the aspects of narrative that was foundational to my research was the notion that narratives or stories were vehicles to self-identification. Cooper (2011) pointed out that “narratives create selves as individuals, unconsciously and consciously, wordlessly and verbally, connect sensations and memories, and then reflect on, revise, and extend their stories of themselves” (p. 244). She and others such as Eakin (1999) and Bruner (1991) believed that narratives end up being the reality of the self over time. Humans have an innate desire to tell stories to help define themselves and the world around them. Eakin (1999) claimed that “self and story were complementary, mutually constituting aspects of a single process of identity formation” (p. 100). This means that without one’s stories, one cannot have a lived

identity. They are intertwined, but fluid. As, in her research study on abuse survivors, Montalbano-Phelps (2004) found when she realized that by allowing the survivors to write and rewrite the stories of their abuse, they were redefining their identities as survivors and gaining power from the act (p. 13). Although it may be a stretch to say that my participants had been abused by their imposed identities as struggling readers, these defined identities at times took the power from my participants to be agents in their own reading narratives just as abuse take power from its victims. I hoped that in letting them tell their stories, they would begin to regain some of that agency and power as well. In Nelson's (2004) research of the early "stories" of a 21-36 month old girl, she noted that even early stories are the beginning narrations of a cultural identity and that they emerge through collaboration and restorying with parents and adults. This encouraged me to ask for stories from even the pre-reading years of my participants because the pre-literate years are the origins of identity formation. Further, Theodore Sarbin, a pioneer in narrative psychology research noted that even pre-literate children create what he calls "non-verbal proto-narratives" that lead to storytelling, and hence, I would add, burgeoning self-identity (as cited in Hevern, 1999, p. 301). Since in my research, I am working to uncover the stories of how developmental college readers maneuvered through the identity of struggling reader, it seemed to me that because of narrative's ability to help readers create and re-create self-identity, it was a close theoretical fit.

**Narrative in Audit Culture and as Voice for the Voiceless.** As a former educator from the K-12 No Child Left Behind era, I was very interested in how these struggling students fared as students of No Child Left Behind and how this legislation impacted their learning. Tom Barone (2007) discussed how narrative research can stand

tall with the demands for “scientific research” that are clearly spelled out in NCLB. He claimed that when one defines narrative research in his terms, it has the strength to withstand the scrutiny. He posited that education stories have an inherently political character as power issues are attended to and that narratives live in a continuum of fact as fiction as opposed to the normally considered dichotomy (p. 459). In other words, because of the nature of storytelling, narratives can help identify who holds the power in creating the reading identities of my participants. Their narratives will show their perceived truths about themselves as readers, but these truths may live somewhere on a continuum of fact versus fiction.

Also, there can be many modes of dissemination for narratives and many intended audiences. Ladson-Billings (2009), author of *The Dream Keepers*, claimed to have used a narrative structure for her educational research to make it more accessible to a wider range of stakeholders, who may or may not find scholarly format accessible, and claimed that “story has gained credence as an appropriate methodology for transmitting the richness and complexity of cultural and social phenomena” (p. xvi). Because my research is intended for researchers and practitioners at many different levels of education, it was important to me to make it as accessible as possible.

Barone (2007) and others such as Lee (2007) and Jonathan Kozol (1991) also noted that in much research, the human voice has been silenced, especially that of marginalized peoples. It was in fact clear that today’s community college students, especially those assigned to developmental or remedial classes, are a marginalized community. According to Deil-Amen (2011) “focusing our lens on the traditional four-year sector as the norm is quite dismissive of a clear majority of our nation’s students and

the institutions that serve them. They are the relatively neglected other half of U.S. higher education” (pp. 1-2). Also important to note was the fact that there are more students coming to colleges as first year undergraduates who are not the traditional 19-year-old, full-time, dorm-living students than there are students who have these traditional characteristics (Deil-Amen, 2011, p. 4). So, although in reality, students like my participants are the majority in community colleges, and in all colleges, they are treated like marginalized students by policy-makers, colleges, and at times, professors, and their voices need to be moved to the forefront of educational research.

This notion that marginalized students need to be heard was first brought to my attention by a book written by a then 17-year-old student called *One Size Does Not Fit All*. In this book, Goyal (2012) told many stories of his and others’ educations, and what was not working for them in the educational field today. This idea that the students’ voices should be heard in educational research was what first led me to the notion of recording the students’ stories of their reading identities. In my research, the idea that I have given voice to the students who may have very well become disenfranchised by and let down by today’s educational world seemed to be best served through a narrative construct. And, although I have restoried their narratives into a co-creation between them and me, I have worked diligently to keep as much of their own voice in the narratives as possible. Appendices F-K have the entire transcript of each interview for comparison of their words and my restoryings.

**Narrative as Analysis of Typology.** Monica Fludernik (2009), in her book *An Introduction to Narratology*, explained that in narratology, literary theorists dissect the format of the narrative to see how it connects with various typographies of literature (p.

8). Many narrative researchers do this as well in order to understand what the narrative is saying about the narrator as opposed to what it is saying about the text. There are a myriad of ways to break a narrative down into its most basic pieces, but Burke's (1945/1954) five aspects of narrative: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose acknowledged aspects of narratives that could give hints as to Gee's (1996) sense of Discourse from which the stories are coming. These Discourses, as discussed further in the Identity Theory section of this research, helped me envision different reading identities for the students in different social settings and illuminated the ways the how of their storytelling also passes along information about the power issues inherent in their identities as struggling readers. Creswell (2007) also pointed out that sometimes a deconstructivist reading looking for the disconnects, silences, and contradictions can also tell you much about a narrative (p. 56). These disconnects, silences, and contradictions were also important in the stories of my participants because they helped uncover the various issues of power and self-efficacy that became integral in analyzing their narratives.

### **Burke's Dramatist Pentad**

Kenneth Burke (1945/1954) looked to five aspects of narrative to describe what motivates people in any given scenario. In his Dramatist Pentad, he asked five simple questions to get to human motivation: "what was done (*act*), when or where it was done (*scene*), who did it (*agent*), how he did it (*agency*), and why (*purpose*)" (p. x). He said that although these aspects are simple they hold strength because motives "arise out of them and terminate in them" (p. x). Burke (1945/1954) also pointed out that these aspects can and do mesh together in some narratives, but that just gives one the "alchemic

opportunity” to make new understandings about motivations (p. xiii). And this Pentad is “universal” in its uses from “rhetorical theorists, literary critics, philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, historians, and others” (Wolin, 2001, pp. 151, 153). According to Heath (1986), “His (Burke’s) theory of language offers a powerful springboard for launching an examination of human behavior and thought, not merely through the constructs discovered by philosophers and social scientists, but by studying words—their patterns and impacts” (p. vii). As Heath posited, Burke’s Dramatic Pentad allows for the study of the structure of narratives as aspects of human motivation that use but go beyond the structure of the words. Heath (1986) also stated that “behind the development of this critical approach is his (Burke’s) dream of spotting the social, economic, and political problems that are inseparable from language” (pp. 186-187). So, Burke’s *A Grammar of Motives* did in fact have a history of use as a way to analyze the political power structures revealed through narrative constructs as I did in this study.

Understanding Burke’s Dramatist Pentad and his idea of motives was key to understanding the societal roles presented in my participants’ stories. According to Rountree (2010), “the general idea that particular agents will be expected to engage in particular actions in particular scenes using particular agencies for particular purposes with particular attitudes still holds,” which leads to “accepting the universality of the grammar of motives” (paras. 14-15). As Rountree noted, as humans we expect certain people to behave in certain ways at certain times and that is part of our collective humanity. Because we have these expectations, I was able to define the agents and agencies in my participants’ narratives to try to understand the motives behind the acts

described. These motives led to the formation of literacy identities for my participants. Therefore, Rountree's analysis reified the ability of Burke's Pentad to further extend the analysis of reading narratives into identity-forming descriptions of the literacy identity of struggling readers.

Also, according to Riessman (1993), Burke's dramatism "offers another structural approach that has the potential application to a variety of types of narratives, including stories" (p. 19). She went on to explain that by analyzing this pentad of terms in relation to a narrative, the researcher can note what aspects of the pentad are emphasized, which may lead to a better understanding of the social power constructions of these narratives (Riessman, 1993, p. 19).

Burke also discussed language and identity formation in his *Rhetoric of Motives*. As Oravec (1989) concluded of his beliefs, "language can, and does, actively create meaning and hence identity... Language is Burke's ideal refuge, the organizing yet demonstrably ambiguous ground by which he strategizes the containment of identity" (pp. 183, 186). Therefore, I found using Burke's Dramatist Pentad to assist me in analyzing the fluid literacy identities of my participants to be a usage of his theory that coalesced with his beliefs about identity and language's part in its formation. Burke's Pentad helped me to identify who held the power in each narrative in conjunction with Gee's (2000) Four Ways to View Identity as discussed below, which led me to a fuller understanding of the narratives of struggling readers. (See Table 2.1 below.)

## **Identity Theory**

In order to look at literacy identity, it is important to understand the foundational definitions of identity in social inquiry. One of the forefathers of identity was George Herbert Mead (1934) who posited that can man can “enter as an object (as *I* or *me*) only on the basis of social relations and interactions, only by means of his experiential transactions with other individuals in an organized social environment" (p. 225). In other words, the self-identity that an individual has is created in concert with his/her environment, experiences, and personal histories over time. On the other hand, Erikson (1959/1980) differentiated between personal identity, “the mere fact of existence,” and ego identity, “the awareness of the fact that there is a selfsameness and continuity to the ego’s synthesizing methods and that these methods are effective in safeguarding the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others” (p. 22). Erikson differed from Mead in that he believed that identity, once synthesized, had continuity.

These theories about identity construction can be married to one’s literacy identity. Moje and Luke (2009) conducted a review of research that identified key metaphors in the discussion of literacy and identity. One of these metaphors, Identity as Self, is key to understanding the link I see between narratives, literacy, and identity. Moje and Luke (2009) claimed that literacy and identity “breathe life into each other” (p. 416). I agreed that there was a symbiotic relationship between the two that must be explored. The heart of why identity matters when discussing literacy lied in the fact that “identity labels can be used to stereotype, privilege, or marginalize readers and writers. Identity labels associated with certain kinds of literacy practices can be especially powerful in an

individual's life" (Moje and Luke, 2009, p. 416). These "powerful" identity labels were at the core of my research.

According to Moje and Luke (2009), identity had been seen as a social construct from Aristotle's early forays into exploring man's identity. Each man was distinctive based on his "attributes constituted by both nature and by experience in and with the natural world" (p. 417). So, identity was socially constructed and in fact part of the narrative of the person, whether based on self-reporting of experiences or upon "other people's recognitions of a person" and their value judgements of said person (Moje & Luke, 2009, p. 418). Luke and Moje (2009) posited that identity is "social, fluid, and recognized" (p. 419). In their found metaphor of Identity as Self, Moje and Luke (2009) looked to social psychologists such as Erik Erikson, whose theory of identity development was mostly linear and focused on the ultimate identity construction of a stable adult, to note the beginnings of literacy and identity, because "Erickson's view reflects the widely accepted societal view of identity--particularly of conflict in adolescence—and consequently has enormous implications for how literacy teaching is practiced and studied" (p. 422). Moje and Luke (2009) noted that George Herbert Mead added a social behaviorist perspective that differed from Erikson's most importantly in the fact that "Mead theorized the formation of the self as completely dependent on the interactions with others, and, as a result, as unpredictable" (p. 422). Unlike in Erikson's identity formation theory, Mead's identities were socially situated and never actualized into a stable identity. Literacy was especially important in Mead's interpretation of identity because he believed identity was a reflexive process through which one's mind reads the symbols of others through social exchanges to become "aware of their relation

to the social process as a whole and to the other individuals participating in it with them” (Moje and Luke, 2009, p. 423). Moje and Luke (2009) noted that some theorists take a stance that Identity as Self is less about the awareness and reflexivity of the self and more about the “whim of institutional structures and relations of power” as well as the habits of our lives (p. 423). It seems that Identity as Self is a metaphor in flux and that in order to capture all the vagaries of this metaphor, I needed a schema that allows for the self, society, institutions, and, in fact, nature as well, to be determining factors in developing a literacy identity.

Therefore, the theory that seems most salient to my research aims is James Paul Gee’s (2000) schema of ways to view identity. His schema is based in his theory of Discourses. “Discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people. Discourses are ways of being ‘people like us’” (Gee, 1996, p. viii). Discourses are not mutually exclusive or static. Gee (1996) noted that “each of us is a member of many Discourses, and each Discourse represents one of our ever-multiple identities” (p. ix). This Discourse theory can “empower and disempower people or groups of people” and that fact needs to be acknowledged in research (Gee, 1996, p. x). One exemplar of this importance is understanding these multiple, simultaneous life Discourses that students inhabit in their day-to-day lives. They may be a scholar student at school and live the Discourse of advanced academics, then go home to their family Discourse that may not value the same literacies or have the same languages as the school Discourse. Conversely, Gee (1996) noted that “the values of many school-based Discourses treat African-American people as ‘other’ and their social

practices as ‘deviant’ and ‘non-standard.’ In becoming a full member of school Discourses, African-American children run the risk of becoming complicit with values that denigrate and damage their home-based Discourse and identity” (p. ix). My discussion and analyses of these Discourses needed to be done in a way that acknowledged and valued the struggle and conflict inherent in the Discourses of marginalized students like my community college developmental education students.

In order to identify and help legitimize the different Discourses presented in my participants’ narratives, I found Gee’s four ways to view identity to be beneficial. Based on this Discourse theory, Gee (2000) posited that there are four interrelated ways to view one’s identity at any given moment and that these views or lenses of identity say as much about the situation or Discourse that the person finds themselves in as they do about the person herself. Although these views of identity may all be present in a person at any time, one will be the prominent identity type in any particular situation. The identities are Nature Identity (N-Identity), Institution Identity (I-Identity), Discourse Identity (D-Identity), and Affinity Identity (A-Identity) (Gee, 2000, p. 100). See Table 2.1 below.

According to Gee (2000), Nature identities (N-Identities) are reliant upon being recognized as an identifying marker either by the self or others. His example was just because a person by nature has a spleen, it does not make him or her a certain type of person; however, saying that by nature a person is a twin does bring social meanings to bear. N-Identities have to have cultural significance to be considered meaningful. “N-identities must always gain their force as identities through the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue, or affinity groups, that is, the very forces that constitute our other perspectives on identity” (p. 102). The

**Table 2.1**

Gee's Four Ways to View Identity

	Process	Power	Source of Power
1. Nature-identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
2. Institution- identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
3. Discourse-identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with "rational" individuals
4. Affinity-identity: experience	shared in	the practice	of "affinity groups"

*Note.* This chart comes from Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 100

Institutional identity (I-Identity) relates to a position a person has been given by some set of authorities at an institution. Although this position may have begun as an N-Identity, such as a medical diagnosis of ADHD, once an institution such as a school or hospital becomes involved in the treatment of it, it becomes an I-Identity as well. (Gee, 2000, p. 102). According to Gee (2006), I-identities are problematic in that sometimes the I-

identity is favorable and seen as a “calling” or “vocation;” whereas, other times they are seen as an “imposition” (p. 103). For example, being labeled as gifted academically would probably be a positive identification in the school Discourse of academics, but being labeled as ADHD may be seen as an imposition in the same Discourse.

Similarly, the Discourse or Discursive Identity (D-Identity) can be both positive and negative. D-Identities are associated with an individual trait that is not something one can be without being in dialogue with someone else and that is not defined by institutional values (Gee, 2000, p. 103). Basically, D-identities are how one is seen by other people in any particular Discourse based on their interactions. Gee (2000) noted, “Like I-Identities, D-Identities can be placed on a continuum in terms of how active or passive one is in ‘recruiting’ them, that is, in terms of how much such identities can be viewed as merely ascribed to a person versus an active achievement or accomplishment of that person” (p. 104). Also interesting is that Gee noted that I-Identities need D-Identities to “sustain” the I-Identity. For example, if no one treated or spoke to a professor as a professor, then the nature of that I-Identity would vanish or at least be altered (Gee, 2000, p. 105). The final type of identity that Gee (2000) addresses is Affinity-Identity (A-Identity) saying “What people in the group share and must share to constitute an affinity group is allegiance to, access to, and participation in specific practices that provide each of the group’s members the requisite experiences” (p. 105). Affinity groups require the active choice of “participation” and “sharing” and “focus on distinctive social practices that create and sustain group affiliations, rather than of institutions or discourse/dialogue directly” (Gee, 2000, p. 105.) In line with his schema for identities, Gee (2000) noted that

Any combination (of identities) that can get one recognized as a certain ‘kind of person’ is part of what I will call a ‘Discourse.’ And there can be complicated moment-by-moment negotiations between oneself and others as to which Discourse will be operative for interpretation at a given time and place. (p. 110)

With all this in mind, the varying Discourses of my participants were identified and analyzed using Gee’s Four Ways to View Identity.

### **Review of Empirical Literature**

In order to find what researchers had already discovered about struggling readers, identity, and the community college I conducted many searches through ERIC (EBSCO), Academic Search Premier, and Education Research Complete using keywords such as “remedial reader,” “struggling reader,” “developmental or transitional or remedial reading,” “community or junior college,” “identity”, “self-identity”, “narrative”, and “narrative research.”

I found that the germane studies to my research fell into three main categories: perceptions of developmental community college students, struggling readers and literacy identity, and narrative research in education. It was important to note that these categories were not mutually exclusive; several research studies cover multiple constructs as I did in my research. I focused on two of these areas, perceptions of developmental community college students and struggling readers and literacy identity, in my review of pertinent literature to find the holes in the research that I thought my study may help to fill. The majority of the articles on narrative research were discussed in my methodology section, with the exception of those that also fell into one of the above mentioned categories.

## **Perceptions of Developmental Community College Students**

According to the National Center for Education Statistics' 2013 *Statistics in Brief*, 26% of first-year students in open admission colleges self-report as taking at least one remedial course in college in the 2007-2008 report (p. 4). At the open admission community college at which I conducted my research, the actual number of entering students in at least one developmental (remedial) course was significantly higher. In the fall of 2013, that number was 78%, and there was no indication that Fall 2013 was unique in respect to the number of developmental classes required of students. This problem was endemic across the United States. In order to understand the identity of my participants as readers, looking at the research on developmental college students to see how they are depicted as a group in research was imperative; whether called remedial, transitional, or developmental, it was clear that according to the American college culture, these students were deficient in some area of the ill-defined notion of college readiness. What was not always evident and needed to be further explored was how these students perceived themselves and their abilities once they were deemed "unready" for college.

In their article "Defining College Readiness from the Inside Out: First Generation College Student Perspectives," Byrd and MacDonald (2005) interviewed eight first generation college students who had transferred to the university from a community college. After coding their partially structured interviews, 10 themes emerged as important to college readiness: academic skills, time management, goal focus, self-advocacy, family factors, career influences, financial concerns, college preparation, self-concept, and college system (Byrd & Mac Donald, 2005, pp 26-27). They found that academic skills, time management, goal focus, and self-advocacy were themes that were

most prevalent in their interview data (p. 28). Interesting to my research were the facts that reading was a particular skill mentioned often as an area where these students felt underprepared as related to time management and the higher level of work expected at a university as compared to high school or the community college. They also found when finding self-advocacy in students, it was seen through the stories they told (Byrd & Mac Donald, 2005, p. 29). This validates the idea that reading was a key area of identity formation for college students as well as storying being an effective way for students to describe their identities as learners in a meta-cognitive fashion. Byrd and Mac Donald (2005) also noted that important college readiness skills often seem to come more from life experiences than through academic skills according to the voices of their participants (p. 32). Through their research, I found support for my belief that other Discourses have a direct impact on academic performance. Also, Byrd and MacDonald (2005) called for research to “understand college reading skills and college-level reading courses” (p. 34). My research looked at these issues from the inside out as I took the developmental readers’ many Discourses as readers and applied them to their academic identity as a reader.

Another pertinent research study by Koch, Slate, and Moore (2012) looked more specifically at the perceptions of community college students who were currently enrolled in a developmental sequence at a community college in Texas (p. 68). The researchers noted that there is very little qualitative research on developmental education in the community college, and my searches found a similar dearth. Koch et al. (2012) designed a phenomenological case study with purposeful, criterion sampling. Their three participants, one female and two males, had graduated from an accredited Texas high

school and were currently enrolled in developmental education courses: one in writing and the other two in math (pp. 68-69). Through 30 minute structured interviews, the researchers collected data, which was analyzed using first constant comparison analysis to find emerging themes and then using content analysis for frequency monitoring of themes (Koch et al., 2012, p. 70). Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which according to Koch et al. (2012) posits that "an individual's perceived self-efficacy contributes significantly to their academic development" (p. 68), was used in this research to both construct interview questions and to analyze the data. After triangulating the data through peer reviews and member checking, Koch et al. (2012) found five meta-themes: affective perceptions, academic perceptions, behaviors, resources, and perceived benefits (p. 71).

In discussing their findings, Koch et al. (2012) presented several conclusions that will help to define relevant characteristics of some developmental students that I also saw in my participants. One reoccurring response that they noted was that there was a stigma associated with placement in developmental classes. A second pertinent finding was that as Bandura's theory of self-efficacy suggests, "participants ... became more confident as they experienced success in their developmental courses with the assistance of supportive professors and college resources" (p. 76). And a final finding was that the participants discovered what worked best for them as a learning style in the classroom and were able to articulate this and perhaps would be able to apply it to later learning experiences (Koch et al., 2012, p. 76). This research study allowed me to understand some perceptions of the developmental community college student, but as Koch et al. noted in their call for future research, a larger sample size and multiple interviews could have been more effective (p. 78). They also noted that looking at both students who have and have not persisted

through their developmental pathway may be beneficial in seeing a more complete picture of the community college student (Koch et al., 2012, p. 78). In hindsight, I did that in my sample of participants, as several have been successful in continuing their educations and others have not. In the analysis of my data these differences were explored.

A dissertation written by Ruth Brancard in 2008 also focused on the perceptions of students in a community college developmental learning community integrated reading and writing class; however, her research had the larger scale of moving beyond just the perceptions of a few students. I focused on reviewing the aspects of her research that are relevant to my research. Brancard (2008) said she was conducting an ethnographic phenomenological study in which the concept being studied is learning and identity through the phenomenon of a first semester community college student enrolled in an accelerated developmental education learning community, which served as her ethnographic group (p. 58). The research question of this study that most interested me was “How do students in two developmental education learning community classes perceive themselves in relationship to college, learning, and career goals at the beginning and end of the semester?” (Brancard, 2008, p. 57). Brancard (2008) used 27 students in her study; 21 of whom she interviewed in a one on one interview in an attempt to gather narrative data (p. 69). She also conducted 48 hours of classroom observation, did three teacher interviews, and looked at student writing about time management, career choices, and learning, and reviewed students’ activity assessment forms (Brancard, 2008, pp. 72-73). In order to analyze her data, Brancard (2008) used open coding to identify themes in her interviews; she used the other data collected as triangulation of her themes, then

presented her description and analysis as a “weaved” together whole in her findings (pp. 74-75). In this depiction of her findings, I found several determinations that were pertinent to my study because they touched on ideas of identity. Brancard (2008) stated, “For all students in this study, attending college was not an unquestioned, inevitable station on the trajectories of their lives. Attending college was a choice and sometimes a tentative one” (p. 261). This was important to be mindful of in my research as well. It seemed to be a pattern in the research that developmental college students have issues of doubt about whether or not they are collegiate material, and the stigma of being placed in a developmental class does not alleviate, but instead augments that uncertainty.

Two other findings of Brancard fit into my and Gee’s notion of social situational contexts or Discourses. Brancard (2008) noted, “Too often the voices of students go unheeded as people at colleges re-shape or resist re-shaping institutional practices. Students will need to make changes in their lives to fit in college, but if the changes they need to make require them to compromise more basic aspects of their lives, they may not choose to come to college” (p. 265). Because some developmental students could not manage the Discourse of the school, they left. They were unable to understand that “community college worlds, shaped by historic and cultural forces, include unwritten assumptions and expectations that students may not understand” (Brancard, 2008, p. 266). These social constructs were important in the analysis of my participants’ perceptions of themselves as readers. Although Brancard brought forth these ideas, she did not fully address these Discourses and how they affected the identities of these students. This was addressed in my data analysis. Brancard (2008) suggested that further research on the transition from high school to the community college is needed (p.

272). In this research, I took her charge further and explored the entire scope of schooling and transitioning to the next higher level in order to get a fuller perception of the total historical experience of these developmental learners.

A less-exemplary article, at least in respect to the areas of interest in my research, was entitled “Perceptions of Struggling Readers Enrolled in a Developmental Reading Course” by Hitchens-Smith, Ortlieb, and Cheek (2011). This case study used purposeful sampling to choose eight of 56 students enrolled in a developmental reading class to interview, although it does not clarify what the parameters of the purposeful sampling were (Hitchens-Smith et al., 2011, p. 26). They used an “open-ended approach” for their interviews and also used an inventory to gather demographic information before the interviews (Hitchens-Smith et al., 2011, p. 27). Other components of their data collection were giving the Nelson-Denny Reading Test as a pre and post-test in the class, collecting field notes, and conducting observations (Hitchens-Smith et al., 2011, p. 28); although, these other data seemed to be supplemental, they were presented and analyzed more thoroughly than the interview data. One area that was problematic was that in the discussion of their findings, Hitchens-Smith et al. (2011) neglected to share any themes that were coded from their interviews; instead, they discuss what class activities seemed to be effective and the fact that the Nelson-Denny scores went up from the beginning to the end of the semester (p. 44). This did not seem to address the purpose of the research. From this research study, I learned that in order to be able to capture the perceptions of developmental student, I would have to be careful to nurture their stories as my participants shared them in interviews. Asking simple, straightforward questions like “What were your perceptions as a learner in this course?” was not going to yield a thick

enough response to actually analyze the students' perceptions (Hitchens-Smith et al., 2011, p. 39). This article helped me develop the idea of using narratives as a way to get richer details from my participants.

Mellinee Lesley's article "Refugees from Reading: Students' Perceptions of 'Remedial' Literacy Practice" added much to the scholarship on developmental reading students. In her role as teacher researcher, Lesley (2004) asked "What happens when students enrolled in a developmental reading class reflect on their previous literacy histories and experiences?" (pp. 64-65). This question incorporated many of the same areas of interest that my research questions encapsulated. Using her class of 22 students, Lesley (2004) gathered data through student writing, field notes, class discussion, Nelson-Denny pre and post-tests, and focus groups (p. 65). Lesley analyzed all this data in a constant-comparison with other data sets and used member checking for validity and used three theoretical stances as lenses for this data: Rosenblatt's transactional reading theories, critical literacy theories, and post structural feminist theories as she conducted "examinations of systems of power and personal voice" (Lesley, 2004, p. 66). Lesley (2004) observed several descriptors of developmental students that I thought were important to my research, beginning with the idea of the marginalization of these students through remediation brought on by a one-time assessment of their reading skills. She noted that they felt their placement was "unfair" because it was "solely based on one standardized test score;" however, they also held out hope that it would help them "become better readers" (Lesley, 2004, p. 68). The students also felt marginalized by the label and tracking inherent in the developmental reading course calling themselves a

“poor reader” and saying they are “feeling dumb,” causing an “internalized belief system” which Lesley points out is not easy to shake (p. 69).

Lesley (2004) also looked at the marginalization of these students that is rooted in the poor reading pedagogy in many schools, citing practices such as encouraging fast reading, round robin reading, and static ability reading groups as problematic practices that further alienate struggling readers (p. 71). A similar area of marginalization for these students, according to Lesley (2004), was through cultural disenfranchisement as students wondered “why they had never been encouraged to read in ways that connected personal experiences with discrimination and stereotyping to literacy in their previous courses” (p. 72). Lesley (2004) noted that poor reading pedagogy performed by teachers, who see themselves as the “complete intellectual authority” as often seen in remedial reading classes, had left these students wondering why they have been subjected to rote skills as opposed to meaningful interactions with texts. This lack of seeing reading as a “transactional experience” or as “an active process as opposed to a passive process” had further damaged developmental readers’ skills (p. 73).

The final area of exploration for Lesley’s (2004) research was metacognition, the notion of “the ability to monitor awareness of one’s thinking processes” (p. 74). She found that metacognition could help develop critical literacy, help establish personal reading purposes, help transform knowledge, and help reclaim narratives and--- I would add—positive identities through these narratives (Lesley, 2004, pp. 74-77). This research study delved deeply into the perceptions and epiphanies of developmental students as they were guided through a well-developed, pedagogically thoughtful developmental reading course; however, Lesley (2004) noted that “students need to be exposed to

opportunities for reflection about their entire schooling experience” (p. 80). My research questions were designed to gather these stories, hoping to add more strong scholarship following in Lesley’s footsteps.

Two articles were written expressly to look for holes in the area of research in community colleges. Dolores Perin (2013), a well-known voice in the community college literature, called for research that hypothesize difficulties of the remedial community college learner that are grounded in theory and that find out how much “motivation, self-efficacy and other affective variables” have to do with students’ success in reading and writing at the college level” (pp. 126-127). My research fulfilled both of these calls by analyzing the narratives and the literacy identities revealed by the stories of my participants, getting to the social constructs and affective areas that may have impacted the participants’ reading abilities. The second article by Holly Hassel (2013) “Research Gaps in *Teaching in the Two-Year College*” reviewed several research areas lacking in this publication. Research on “the way that they (students) negotiate their existing literacy practices as they intersect with academic literacy” was one call that Hassel (2013) makes (p. 351). As I looked at the various Discourses and identities that my participants inhabit as readers, I examined this idea of existing literacy practices and their sometimes combative relationship with academic Discourses. Also, Hassel (2013) noted that in this journal there is a lack of articles that use a “formal research design,” but was quick to note that this does not exclude sound qualitative studies (p. 353). My research study had a sound design and met her call for such research in the field. Deil-Amen’s (2011) work also noted the need for higher education research and funding at the community college level to ensure the demarginalization of community colleges in the

theories and conceptual frameworks of academia (p. 30). My study by design was working to bring not only the marginalized community college to the forefront, but also to illuminate the even further marginalized students who come to the community college and are identified as under-prepared.

### **Struggling Readers and Literacy Identity**

Although some of the research that I found on developmental community college students' self-perceptions did focus on reading and literacy, there was a much larger data set of research on struggling readers in general and how they see themselves in terms of literacy identity. This body of work was useful to my research because although I did interview community college students, the focus was on them as readers from first learning to read to the current time. This larger scope was appropriate.

In order to discuss struggling readers, researchers need to be aware of the some of the different ways that society labels and defines the struggling reader. Donna Alvermann (2001) used McDermott and Varenne's work on the cultural construction of the notion of disabilities and applied it to the struggling reader; there are three approaches: the deprivation approach, the difference approach, and the culture-as-disability approach (p. 680). The deprivation approach, which I would note is most often used in the community college setting, indicated that a struggling reader shows a lack of performance on milestone measures that indicate that a reader does not have adequate skills to perform at a certain level (Alvermann, 2001, p. 680). There were several assumptions that go along with this approach. First, these students do have the potential to end up on-level if they are brought up to the required level through structured teaching that starts at a level below frustration for the student and moves them slowly up. Second, if they struggle with

reading it is also making them miss out on activities that grade-level students enjoy, such as playing sports or winning scholarships (Alvermann, 2001, p. 681). Students treated to this deprivation approach often receive an education that is “functional” and designed to make a student employable and biddable and that leads to “social and economic inequalities” (Alvermann, 2001, p. 681). As I noted before, this model seemed to be the underlying structure of developmental education in the community college.

According to Alvermann (2001), a second approach to defining struggling readers is the difference approach which claims that different people in different groups gain literacy through different ways and that schools should use literary activities that competently literate adults in these groups see as valuable in their cultures (p. 681). Again Alvermann (2001) noted several assumptions that come with this approach. One assumption was that reading tasks seen as important by one culture may be deemed as irrelevant by another. Another assumption was that educators will have the knowledge and materials to make reading culturally relevant for the students; however, how a teacher does that for all cultures represented in a classroom without privileging or denying any was questioned. The final problematic assumption was that using culturally relevant reading tasks so the students can be successful would translate into good educational outcomes. Since as Alvermann noted, whether right or wrong, the fact was that reading was measured in schools by the ability to “show the right skills at the right time in the right format” and by not addressing this larger cultural reality, these students may be set up for future reading failure (p. 683).

The final approach to identifying struggling readers discussed by Alvermann (2001) is the culture-as-disability approach. This approach is based on the idea that each

culture defines ways of successfully doing things and ultimately these same definitions make seemingly “stable (though arbitrary)” standards that should be met and when they are not met, remediation can occur (p. 683). Like with the other approaches, Alvermann (2001) pointed out assumptions that seem to underpin these beliefs. First, this approach does not pit one cultural group against another; instead, all minority or majority cultures fall under the pretext of the larger culture of society (p. 683). So, whether one is a good reader or struggling reader matters not. All readers are “bound up in the cultural contexts they inhabit” (Alvermann, 2001, p. 683). And this leads to the second assumption that schools force some students “to take up, or inhabit, the position of struggling reader” (Alvermann, 2001, p. 683). She noted that this leads students, who see school reading as unnecessary and disconnected to reality to disengage with school and fail, which in essence is a failure of the educational system, not the student (p. 684). The final assumption about culture-as-disability was that these ideas of culturally-defined, arbitrary notions of success in reading become an iterative cycle in the larger society and schooling. They said school reading is important but difficult, and this idea reifies the notion that schooling overall is important and will get one to success; however, this will ensure that some minority students will continue to struggle with school literacy (Alvermann, 2001, p. 684). Alvermann (2001) applied these theories to a case study on a 9<sup>th</sup> grade African American boy attending an after-school media club. She found that all of these notions of struggling readers become salient to her relationship and analysis of this reader, but in the end, culture-as-disability seemed led to the most pertinent conclusion about what researchers and teachers can do for struggling readers. She stated that there is value in seeing “how culture constructs not only *what* counts as reading

when reading really counts, but also *who* counts as a reader” (p. 689). Alvermann’s call to look at the true what and who of successful reading practice could be seen in my participants’ narratives as they struggled to identify what each particular Discourse or culture wants them to do as a successful reader and could also be seen in much of the literature on struggling readers.

Leigh Hall’s 2010 case study of struggling readers and their relationships with their teachers asked the questions “How do middle school teachers interact with struggling readers in relation to the reading task demands of their classroom?” and “How do middle school struggling readers interact with the reading task demands of their content-area classrooms?” (p. 1796). Hall (2010) formed three cases to analyze; each comprised of a female student deemed a struggling reader and a content area teacher in grades six through eight (pp. 1796-1797). In analyzing her data of biweekly observations, questionnaires, interviews, and classwork, Hall (2010) realized that identity, especially Gee’s notion of discursive identity was key to understanding how these teachers and students interacted (pp. 1795-1798). She found that all three students seemed to place more value on not appearing as a struggling reader to the various observers in her life (teachers, parents, classmates) than on actually learning how to be a better reader (Hall, 2010, p. 1808). Although all of the students self-admitted to varying levels of struggle in reading, all three also wanted to better themselves as readers, but not at the expense of their social capital. All of the girls kept to themselves when struggling with a reading assignment, not asking questions or searching for help. This seeming lack of interest in becoming a better reader was detrimental in the relationship with their teachers for two of the girls as the teachers appeared to be more likely to help the students if their perception

was that the students were trying to follow the model of the good reader as the teachers defined it. If the student did not seem to be actively striving to fit the teacher-perceived patterns of a good reader they were “marginalized” and given no individual help by the teacher (Hall, 2010, p. 1816). This identity crisis could lead to a vicious cycle perpetrating the students’ struggles with reading straight to the college classroom. In her discussion, Hall (2010) noted that both teachers and students seemed to believe that the relationship between good reading and bad reading is dichotomous: either you have it or you don’t (p. 1822).

Another troubling belief Hall (2010) found in the students was that good reading comes naturally to some people. No work has to be done for good readers to comprehend a text (p. 1822). This is an idea that is further validated for the students when they hide their lack of comprehension from classmates in an attempt to maintain a positive discursive identity as readers. Hall (2010) noted that the students were at least trying to keep some self-respect and dignity in their educational spaces (p. 1825). However, this needed to be addressed in reading classrooms so that students could maintain their dignity and improve their reading. Hall (2010) said, “The process of developing as a reader, and transforming one’s reading identity, then relies of the existence of multiple reading identities being valued within a given space and without forcing students to adopt a specific identity or be viewed as a failure” (p. 1825). By valuing other reading identities outside of the academic arena such as reading at home and with friends and through allowing my participants to story their own reading identities, I attempted to give power to such multiple literacy identities.

Furthering the idea that struggling readers need to not be viewed as failures, Grace Enriquez (2014) examined the idea of the melancholy that is imbued in the school discourses of the struggling reader. She viewed literacy as “students’ interactions with texts as reading performances, which are influenced by the power structures, discursive relations, social inequities, and emotional responses within the classroom” (p. 106). Using Gee as a model, she saw reading as a social construct and understood that labeling someone’s reading ability “relies upon assessing how one performs reading in accordance with classroom, institutional, and social values, given that all contexts are permeated by and reflective of broader social structures” (Enriquez, 2014, p. 106). It was also important to note that Enriquez viewed reading and schooling as performative, meaning that school-focused acts of teaching and learning are intricate performances between teacher and student. This also means that there can be no static definition or naming of that performance; however, through repeated performances in a school setting, students tend to take on the reading identities that “capture and regulate their possibilities for interacting with texts” (Enriquez, 2014, p. 107). This process lends itself to the labeling of strong and struggling readers through the performances that seem to exist for each type of reader, such as stumbling over words for a struggling reader or fluent reading from a proficient one. Two important theories in Enriquez’s (2014) research evolved: melancholia and performative politics (p. 107). When students feel excluded from the “idealized identity” of a strong reader, they tend to fight this identity and are unable to “mourn” this loss of normalcy which leads to melancholia, “a tacit sense of loss within the self” (Enriquez, 2014, p. 107). In an attempt to regain some sense of agency and power in their identities as readers, these struggling readers attempted acts of

performative politics, acts which mimic good readers, which were “agentive opportunities to disrupt an inscribed identity, such as that of a struggling reader” (Enriquez, 2014, p. 107). These theories presented in Enriquez’s research aligned with my study in that they all acknowledged the situationality of any constructed identity and the importance of looking at what agents were involved in labeling my participants as struggling readers.

Enriquez’s (2014) research methodology was sound and her findings were helpful for my research as well. My research questions mimicked hers of “What embodied performances did students attempt in order to disrupt their perceived identities as struggling readers?” and “How did students understand and explain their identities as struggling readers?” (p. 108). I did not focus much on performative acts in my research because I did not conduct observations of my participants as readers and since all of my data was based on the students’ perceptions of themselves as readers as told through narratives, surveys, and writing assignments. Although some instances of what Enriquez’s (2014) calls “attempts at disruption” (p. 108) were seen through my participants’ stories, such as using a dictionary to help appear more knowledgeable at all times, the fact that these performative politics were not necessarily conscious acts on the part of the participant made me suspect that these acts may not always be noted or reported by my participants, and, therefore, this was not a major focus of my research. Enriquez’s second research question was closely aligned with my research questions as well since I was looking to understand how struggling readers identified themselves as readers. In her study, Enriquez (2104) developed an ethnographic, critical case study of two eighth grade struggling readers, one male and one female. Her data set included field

notes of classroom observations, semi-structured interviews of students, teachers, and other faculty, and supplemental data such as student reading performances, school data, and student work. She used “an inductive, recursive, and reflexive process” of constant comparison analysis to find emerging themes and patterns (p. 108). Enriquez’s (2014) findings shed light on what type of performances struggling readers may enact in a reading classroom. Both of her focal students were reading below grade level and both seemed to try to avoid reading for as long as possible as noted through observation and teacher interviews and neither seemed to stick with any book for very long (p. 111). Enriquez (2014) noted that her male participant did not talk about reading identity, but instead saw reading as “actions and abilities.” In particular, they were abilities he did not have from birth, according to his father (p. 112). She found that at times both of her participants showed moments of performative politics and acted like strong readers; but, these successes as readers performed by the students were not strong enough to disrupt how others saw them as “performatively behaving in ways characteristic of a struggling reader” (Enriquez, 2014, p. 117). As these students continued to struggle with their melancholy over their reading identity, Enriquez (2014) suggested that this “constructs the illusion of a fixed identity” (p. 118). In looking at my participants’ reading identity throughout their lives, this idea of an illusion of a fixed identity as a struggling reader was looked at in my analysis and applied to Dweck’s (2006) research on mindset. Similar to Leigh Hall’s (2010) implications, Enriquez (2014) suggested that her research showed that schools must value and allow students to display varied performances of reading so that students can embody and value different types of reading identities (p. 119). By

categorizing reading identities through Gee's four ways of viewing identity, I hope my research took a step in that direction.

Dawan Coombs' (2012) article "Using Ricoeur's Mimetic Process to Examine the Identities of Struggling Adolescent Readers" served as a seminal text for my research study even though I was not aware of this research until the later stages of my study. Coombs (2012) interviewed struggling readers to gather their stories of literacy, looking at them as narratives that help inscribe identity. She agreed that identity and meaning making are tied together and help one understand his/her true self, but in "the process of co-construction" of literacy identities in studies like ours, it is important to note that other people and discourses affect how students see their own identities (pp. 84-85). She noted that studies on college struggling readers are not prevalent in today's research, and I found this to still be true as I finished my research (Coombs, 2012, p. 85). In her theoretical framework, she discussed Gee's notions of Discourse as well as Bakhtin's ideas of the dialogic self and the furthering of Bakhtin's concepts by Hermans and Kempen, which purports that the stories that we tell influence our identities over time and help delineate the things we see as significant in our lives (Coombs, 2012, p. 86). Coombs (2012) used Paul Ricoeur's idea of the mimetic process as the basis for her analysis of her case-study of self-identified struggling readers. She explained that according to Ricoeur, narrative and its understanding is a process made up of Mimesis<sub>1</sub> – plot made up of meaningful structures, symbolic resources, and temporal character – which is enacted as pre-construction of the narrative (p. 87). In Mimesis<sub>2</sub>, emplotment occurs, which means that the pre-understandings are put together in a meaningful combination of events. Finally in Mimesis<sub>3</sub>, the narrative is confronted with the meanings

that occur as each individual brings their own pre-understandings to the process of meaning making (Coombs, 2012, p. 88). Coombs (2012) used philosophical hermeneutics to conduct a repeated re-reading and re-interpretation of the data in a “continual spiral of observation, analysis, and reflection” (p. 89). Coombs’ (2012) data revealed several key points about her struggling reader discussed in this article. Teachers played an important role as agents of power in the narrative of this student. They held an important key in shaping the reading identity of the student and also in the re-shaping of said identity in later reflection of the narratives (p. 94). Tests and other standardized measures were also key agents in defining the struggling reader’s perceptions of herself. And her identity as a reader and a good student ultimately changed with success on an important standardized test (Coombs, 2012, pp. 95-96). One final aspect that Coombs (2012) found as influential in changing this student’s identity as a reader was the idea that ability is not fixed and that hard work can pay off. For this student, it took a teacher continually espousing the Growth Mindset theory of Carol Dweck to help this identity of a struggling reader morph into something else (p. 96). Coombs (2012) noted areas of focus for future research that tie directly into the purpose of my research. She said that looking at how the various stakeholders in a learner’s life ( parents, teachers, and friends) influence the creation of an identity as a struggling reader may help teachers find ways to help struggling readers (p. 99). Although I will use Burke’s five aspects of narrative to inspect my participants’ narratives as opposed to Ricoeur’s mimetic process, the end result was a similar exploration of all of varied influences of identity construction of the struggling reader.

Beach and Ward (2013) brought an interesting twist to the idea of the varied influences of literacy identity instruction through their research with four fourth grade

students, their parents, and their teachers. Using interviews with students, parents, and teachers, as well as observation and literacy activities as data, the researchers constructed three stories to illustrate each child's literate identity: the child's, the parent's and the teacher's (p. 245). Beach and Ward (2013) found that students' reading identities are created by both home and school experiences and that these identities "mediated their willingness, ability, and choice to participate in the literacy community of practice at school" (p. 250). In short, the two students who saw that the literacy practices that were valued at home were the ones that were also valued at school had little to no problem with school literacies; however, this was not the case for the two students whose literacy practices valued at home did not fit the culture of the classroom in which they found themselves (Beach & Ward, 2013, p. 251). Beach and Ward (2013) pointed out that when the literary practices valued at home and at school do not align, students lose confidence as readers, see school literacy as unimportant in their real life, and undervalue their own home literacy practices (p. 251). This lack of literacy boundary crossing added yet another dimension to the idea of struggling readers' literate identity that should be explored in my research.

## **Summary**

In the under-researched area of the community college, there were several germane points about skills or lack thereof. Reading was a particular skill mentioned often as an area where these students felt underprepared as related to college level standards and time management (Byrd & Mac Donald, 2005, p. 29). They also noted that important college readiness skills often seem to come more from life experiences than through academic skills according to the voices of their participants as recorded

through the stories they told (p. 32). Another perhaps obvious finding was that there was a stigma associated with placement in developmental classes; however, as students complete developmental classes, their sense of self-efficacy grows and they become more confident with help from the college as participants discovered what worked best for them as a learning style in the classroom and were able to articulate this and perhaps would be able to apply it to later learning experiences (Koch et al., 2012, p. 71, 76). (Koch et al., 2012, p. 76).

Another area of concern from the research on community college developmental learners was the area of affective needs. Ruth Brancard (2008) found that “for all students in this study, attending college was not an unquestioned, inevitable station on the trajectories of their lives. Attending college was a choice and sometimes a tentative one” (Brancard, 2008, p. 261). This leads to a vulnerability in these students from the onset of their college careers. Then, these students’ voices “go unheeded” as school enact policies that affect the developmental student. Not only do these students not get a voice in making these policies, they also “include unwritten assumptions and expectations that students may not understand” (Brancard, 2008, p. 266).

Synthesizing the findings on community college developmental students made it clear to me that in my research I needed to give voice to these students and that I needed to listen to the educational/reading stories of their lives. This would be the only way to ascertain what we as community college educators need to be doing to help these students succeed in college, which is my ultimate goal as an instructor and researcher in this field.

In the research on reading identity, Beach and Ward (2013) found that both home and school experiences help to create a student's literate identity and that these experiences at home and school both impact "their willingness, ability, and choice to participate in the literacy community of practice at school" (p. 250). Therefore, understanding the connections and disconnections of these literate worlds are tantamount in understanding how to help a reader struggling with academic reading. Coombs (2012) noted that "teachers, parents, peers, and discourses influence struggling reader identity construction" and an understanding of how this happens and what it means for the student would be helpful in improving the teaching of reading in schools (p. 99). In summarizing the literature on struggling readers and identity, there was a common call for looking at literacies outside of the school when seeking the identity of a struggling reader or when trying to promote a classroom environment that is healthy for all readers (Alvermann 2001, Hall 2010, Enriquez 2014, Beach & Ward, 2013). In my research, I added the voices of my participants to this call for a broader vision of literacy, especially in the community college classroom.

### **Chapter 3 - Methods**

In this chapter, I addressed the purpose, questions, rationale, process, and limitations of my research project. I examined in length the idea of fictionalizing narratives as research practice and the value of such a process for the researcher, participants, and consumers of the research.

#### **Statement of Purpose**

By looking into the narratives of developmental reading students' histories as readers, I examined how they identified themselves as readers as well as where patterns of disruption may be noted in their narratives as readers. By analyzing these narratives of readers, I sought to illuminate the power structures at play in helping to create the reading identity/identities of these developmental college students. In reflecting on the analyses that I performed, I worked to provide insights about the impact of reading identities on reading Discourses in varied school and private settings and how these insights correlated with my participants' ultimate identities as readers or non-readers in life. Ultimately, my purpose was to honor the stories of my participants by sharing them with stakeholders such as community college administrators and instructors, K-12 teachers and administrators, parents, basically anyone who could be influential in creating a better environment for all learners in literacy classes at all levels of education.

## **Research Questions**

After reviewing the literature as discussed in Chapter Two of this document, I found that there was a strong need to examine the college developmental reader from her own perspective, using her own narratives to empower her experiences as a reader. To this end, I developed the following research questions.

Main Question: What are the stories that developmental community college readers tell about themselves as readers?

1. How do developmental reading students in the community college identify themselves as readers?
2. What do these stories say about their paths to developmental classes in college reading?
3. How does the structure of their narratives illuminate the powers in control of defining their reading identities individually, socially, academically, and/or culturally?

## **Rationale**

**Qualitative Methodology.** I chose to do a qualitative research study because I am interested in the human voice. As Denzen and Lincoln (2000) stated, “qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world” (p. 3). The qualitative researcher creates a “montage” of interviews, field notes, and other data that becomes a “dialogic text” for the researcher, the researched, and the reader (Denzen & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5). Because of my constructivist belief system, qualitative research holds the most meaning for me. I believe all learning and all truth are constructed in moments of time, in certain places, by human interpretation in flux. Therefore, it was important for me to hear the stories of my participants and to see their interpretations of their reading lives and then to qualitatively analyze and share their stories as they were filtered through my ways of knowing and my readers’ memories of reading. Qualitative research allowed for this blended creation in my research.

**Narrative Credibility.** I think Tom Barone (2007) said it best when he said, “The move toward narrative research in education has resulted in part from the long overdue recognition of the sound of silence, a sudden painful awareness of the extent to which human voices have been systematically excluded from the kinds of traditional research texts” (p. 463). My research put the voices of participants at the forefront and valued their stories and to me this lent it the ultimate credibility. Creswell (2007) pointed out that narratives are best suited for a detailed, rich exploration of individuals (p. 55). Narratives create a unique research experience where the researcher becomes part of the data, whether through interview processes of agreements and prompting, through the process of restorying data into a chronological narrative, or just making sure that the researcher’s

subjectivity is clearly delineated. Ladson-Billings (2009) used narratives as a part of her research as a way to “diminish the primacy of objectivity” (p. xvii). According to my interpretation of Ladson-Billing’s words, researchers can stop searching only for the objective answers to research questions. This means that I no longer had to take up the mantle of objective researcher, which was very problematic for my constructivist, socially-situated mind; instead, I gathered data from many perspectives which were then interpreted by the diverse Discourses/contexts of the readers of this research. Because as Jerome Bruner (1991) noted, although narrative structures may delineate the facts of the stories, one cannot neglect the messiness of human interaction in the process of making meaning from any text. He said narratives can claim verisimilitude, but not truth, and they are “a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and ‘narrative necessity’ rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness” (p. 4). According to Leavy (2013), researchers strive to achieve verisimilitude for ethical reasons; “researchers have an ethical obligation to portray peoples’ lives responsibly and sensitively” (p. 39). So, in looking at narratives, we need not be worried about the factuality of the events of the data being provided by the participants’ narratives. Instead, we as qualitative researchers, need to respect the narrative construction: context, setting, characters, and plot to understand how verisimilitude was accomplished and what it says about the story being told in the context in which it is received. Riessman (1993) said that part of the value of a narrative is that it is subjective and rooted in time, place, and personal experience--- because of its “perspective ridden character” (p. 5). These perspectives gave the stories of my struggling readers the depth of meaning that allowed for careful and repeated analysis.

**Narrative Research.** My dissertation was considered a narrative study because I focused my research on the narratives of six struggling readers who tested into developmental reading classes at the community college level. I asked them to tell me stories of their memories of successes, struggles, and failures as readers throughout their lives. Some of their responses came in story form; others were fragments of stories, all of which, I had to piece together and fictionalize into a more coherent story, a process called restorying. I then took the salient narratives from each participant and pieced them into a chronological story of these individuals as readers. These narratives give authentic voice to the people most affected by No Child Left Behind and the other varied social structures that have affected their identities as readers. Although the stories may have been stories of failures and struggles at times, since these students had all successfully passed developmental reading, they all seemed to have a sense that these troubles were in some ways behind them. It is important to note that, as their former teacher in their developmental reading class, I had already validated my belief in their transition to college ready reader through the act of passing them in the class. I had built a friendly relationship with all of the participants. It was my hope that these narratives could become a platform for other teachers, students, parents, and policy makers to understand-- in a way that would remove the marginalization of this collegiate population-- the nuances of educational life for these students, how they identify themselves as readers, and possibly how they fell through the cracks of school literacy.

To accomplish this goal, I turned to narratives. According to Stephens and Breheny (2013), narrative was an appropriate format for analysis that seeks to take into account the interplay in personal stories, the dialogical relationship between narrator and

audience, and a discursive social context (p. 16). My research took into account all of the above in analyzing my participants' stories, so narrative was the most logical fit for my research. Also, Polkinghorne (1995) differentiated between analysis of narratives -- describing themes and constructs of already existing narratives-- and narrative analysis -- taking data and melding it into a narrative structure as a way of analyzing it (pp. 5-6). Readers should note that I did both in my research as I took interview stories, fictionalized, and restoried them into a reading narrative of the participants' lives, then analyzed the structures of the narratives.

### **Research Setting and Participants**

I conducted this research at a community college in the Southeast (pseudonym ABC Community College) with an enrollment of around 5,000 students at which I was a teacher of English and Developmental Reading; in fact, I was the teacher of the participants of this study. After attaining permission to use ABC Community College as a research site (Appendix A) and completing an approved proposal to the Institutional Review Board (Appendix B) for my university, I sent out an invitation for participation to all of the 120 students who had been enrolled in the lowest developmental reading class offered at ABC Community College. This class had just been reintroduced in the curriculum in the fall of 2013 and was offered through spring 2014, when once again it was dropped. The call for research participants went out in an email in the summer of 2014 and I conducted interviews through fall 2014 and into early spring 2015. See recruitment email (Appendix C).

After gauging who was interested in participating in the research and seeing that they were all women, I decided to use maximum variation sampling to get the most

diversity of participants available as far as age and race were concerned because this “increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives – an ideal in qualitative research” (Creswell, 1995, p. 126). Since one of the goals of my research was to give voice to the voiceless through narratives, in this case, the stories of developmental reading students who often find themselves marginalized on community college campuses, I felt that the more diverse the participants, the more varied voices I may hear. Therefore, I used stratified purposeful sampling in that I chose six females who were able to be paired with each other as a subgroup by age that illustrated different groups of developmental students as detailed below; also, in each pair, they were of different races. In each pairing, one was Caucasian; the other was African American. The first pairing was two females straight out of high school. They were both 19 years old and had graduated high school the spring before taking the developmental course. The second pairing was two females who were in their mid-twenties and mid-thirties. They had both been working since graduating high school and were returning to school after a brief lapse in attendance. The third pair was two females in their mid-forties. Both women had raised families, worked full-time, and decided to return to school after around 20 years of absence of formal schooling. I was the teacher of all of these students when they went through the developmental reading course. I believe that the reason that they participated in this research was because I had built a rapport with each of them, and they wanted to help me complete my research. I was no longer the teacher of any of these students when we sat down for the interviews. And because I was the instructor of these women, they may have wanted to present a narrative that they thought was indicative of their role in our relationship. For example, they could have only spoken of positive experiences in our

reading class or in the classes of other teachers out of respect for me and my career choice; however, I did not sense any holding back of negative responses to either. I am sure that my former relationship with these students impacted the narratives that they shared about their reading stories in some way; however, I believe that all stories are impacted by the relationship between the teller and receiver as well as by the teller's individual history and experiences and the receiver's as well. In fact, the positive relationship that I had already developed with my participants was helpful in allowing for more ease in gathering their narratives and explicating their reading identities because they were comfortable and at ease in my presence. According to Montalbano-Philip (2004), "The teller-listener interaction offers implications for the empathic response and evaluation of the narrative by the listener as well" (p. 13). As a listener with known empathy for struggling readers, I may have given strength to my participants to share both their pleasant and unpleasant stories as readers. Each of these participants had seen me act as an advocate for developmental students with other powers at the college. Many of them had come to me for advice and/or academic help in other classes. I believed that they knew through my actions that I valued them as people as well as students. Throughout their interviews, they at times were apologetic in manner as they relayed negative perceptions about reading and schooling. The fact that they felt comfortable enough to share these negative perceptions speaks to the strength that our relationships lent to the openness of their admissions.

### **Data Collection**

The first data set that I collected was a computer survey. I asked the students to complete this before I conducted their interviews. I used this survey with permission from

Dr. Bruce Murray. In 2009, Murray revised the Mikulecky Behavioral Reading Attitude Measure (MBRAM) to include items that were negatively worded. The MBRAM is considered a unidimensional measure of reading attitude (West, 2010, p. 83). I adjusted the wording of some questions to be age appropriate for my college-going participants. I used this survey not to gather statistical data, but to understand what reading attitudes were prevalent in my participants and to see what their personal reading motivations were. I also used these responses to fill in some of the demographic information that helped make their stories more complete. And, I used some of the survey answers to direct the questions that I asked to elicit the reading stories from my participants. The full survey is available in Appendix D.

Kvale and Brinkman (2009) noted that “the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 1). In looking for the stories of my participants’ “lived worlds” as readers, I determined that conducting interviews would best elicit their narratives. I considered asking them to write their stories so that I would have texts to analyze, but because many of these struggling readers also struggle with writing, I thought this might hinder the data I would be able to collect. Therefore, I decided that interviews fictionalized and restoried into narratives would be the best data to analyze in order to get a thick, rich description of the reading lives of my participants.

After reviewing the survey results, I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with each of my participants. I started with scripted prompts about elementary and secondary memories of reading, failures and successes as readers, and their current

reading status. These prompts served as a way for the participants to “tell me about what happened” in various times as their life as readers. (See Appendix E for the interview protocol.)

Kvale and Brinkman (2009) gave many tips on how to make interviews have the most successful results possible. In the case of my research that would mean encouraging and prompting the most detailed stories possible from my participants. I, at their urging, had a briefing and debriefing at the interview to make sure the participant was comfortable and aware of what was happening. Another piece of advice was to make sure to spend some time right after the interview to reflect and record any non-verbal nuances or impressions that may be lost with time (p. 129). With narrative interviews, they suggested to ask for a story, which I did as well. They pointed out that the role of the interviewer in a narrative interview is to stay as quiet as possible and only speak as affirmations or to encourage further details. This ties back to my earlier discussion as researcher as “co-producer” of the story, because any verbal or non-verbal influence from the interviewer helps produce the narrative (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 155). In her study of abuse survivors, Montalbano-Phelps (2004) pointed out that there are several things that must be attended to before narratives can be successful. They include the teller’s willingness and ability to narrate a story, the context of the telling, and the “teller-listener interactions” (p.11). Since my participants struggle with reading, I had to be helpful in bolstering their abilities to narrate a tale and had to build trust and credibility with my participants in order to ask the kinds of questions that may have revealed some sensitive memories or negative emotions. I asked follow up questions at times to understand the context of their stories, which was also crucial to later successful analysis

of the narrative. These interviews were originally intended to be short episodic interviews in a series of five or six interviews in order to not fatigue the participant and to let the topic simmer in their minds between sessions to perhaps elicit more stories to share. I quickly realized that getting students to show up multiple times for interviews was not likely, so the interviews were conducted in one or two sessions that in the end totaled one hour to one hour and a half each. I conducted these interviews on ABC's campus for the convenience of the students.

I also collected the participants' placement test data, self-described demographics, class assignments from the developmental reading class, and grades as a way to provide a thick description of my participants. I then wove all of this data into their restoried narratives of their lives as readers. First, I re-read through the transcripts (see Appendices F-K) to find stories that could be gleaned from the interview responses. I copied the text from the transcripts into a document and worked to rearrange the items chronologically, and to delete information that was not pertinent to the topic at hand. I then added information from the Motivation to Read survey, class assignments, and ABC Community College records to provide a description of the participant and to fill in as many gaps in the details of their stories as I could from the information I had. The first drafts of the participants' stories, also found in Appendices F-K, ended up being somewhat boring and lifeless, so I researched fictionalizing narratives as research and rewrote the pertinent narratives as fictionalized account based on the facts that the participants relayed to me. These are the final versions in Chapter Four of this document.

## Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews, I added the documents to a new Hermeneutic Unit using ATLAS.ti Software. According to Bernard and Ryan (2010), themes can come from the data being studied or from “prior theoretical understanding of whatever phenomenon we are studying” (p. 55). Therefore, using both inductive (from the data) and a priori (from prior theory) themes based on Burke’s Dramatist Pentad, I coded each participant’s interview from the transcriptions. Again, using Bernard and Ryan’s (2010) direction for finding themes in data, I looked for repetitions, metaphors, similarities and differences, and theory-related material (p. 68). See Table 3.1 below for a list of the codes used as well as their frequency of use. Because this raw data of interview transcripts was not my final unit of analysis – that would be the restoried narratives—I used the coding sessions as a way to familiarize myself with the disjointed narrative pieces that I would later be working into a fictionalized, chronological narrative.

According to Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), “Restorying is the process of gathering stories, analyzing them for key elements of the story, and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence” (p. 332). They also noted that this restorying can be analyzed both as a story and with the themes that are found within it (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p. 332). In my restoryings, I modified what Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) called the Problem-Solution Approach. See Table 3.2. This approach involves coding the interview transcripts for elements of plot structure (p. 334). Instead of using basic plot structure, I used Burke’s (1945/1954) Dramatist Pentad as previously stated. I felt that Burke’s Pentad was better suited to illustrate the power politics involved in the Discourses where my struggling readers were negotiating their reading identities,

**Table 3.1**

*Codes Used and Frequency.*

Name	Frequency
Negative Response to Reading	102
Positive Response to Reading	102
School	88
Purpose for Reading	56
Texts	54
Family	49
College	45
Comprehension	42
Elementary School	36
Home	32
High School	29
Social	25
Reading Aloud	24
Emotional Reaction	21
Middle School	16
Testing	16
Encouragement	13
Attention	12
Vocabulary	11
Ownership	6
Round Robin	6
Medication	5
Mastery	4
Movie	4
Reading Informative	4
Repeated Reading	4
Phonics	3
Work	3
Cross-Curricular Reading	2
Convenience	1
One on one	1
Sight Words	1
Time	1

because Burke's Pentad included the terminology of act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose when identifying the structure of a narrative in order to analyze the motivations inherent in creating the narrative (p. x). These motivations helped me indicate who was exerting power in labeling the reading identity of the participant in that particular context

or Discourse. In fact, by using Burke's Pentad, I have added a dimension of the second type of restorying that Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) discussed. The Three-Dimensional Space Approach uses Dewey's philosophy of experience, which "means that to understand people, one examines their personal experiences as well as their interactions with other people" which occur in a particular "place or context" (p. 339). Burke's Pentad allows for the influence of others when looking at who the agent is in each context or story. So in fact, both of Ollerenshaw and Creswell's (2002) narrative structures were at play in my restoryings. Although the restoryings were problem oriented, linear, and based on plot structure, their main purpose was to describe the experiences of my participants as readers and there was a sense of co-creation of the narratives. I, however, did not include the codes for agent, act, agency, scene, and purpose in my code table above because they were not thematic themes that I uncovered. They were instead a tool to use to investigate the power issues inherent in each narrative. After coding, Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002) suggested graphically organizing the coded transcripts and finally putting a sequence to the events (p. 335). In order to maintain the voice of the struggling readers that I interviewed, I also left as much of their actual wording in the restories that I created and fictionalized. This restorying worked as an act of analysis because it made me, the researcher, decide what was important enough to include and how it should all go together. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) said that some narrative analysis must be formatted into a recognizable narrative form because not all narratives come out as neat, coherent stories (p. 222). It is important to note that in

**Table 3.2**

*Distinctions between the Problem-Solution and the Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure*

<i>Problem-Solution Narrative Structure</i>	<i>Three-Dimensional Structure</i>
Problem oriented	Experience Oriented
Linear	Wholistic
Literary Theory and narrative thought	Personal and social
A logic to the sequence (characters, setting, problem → actions → resolution)	Many alternative logics to sequencing
Explaining experiences	Describing experiences
Teacher-researcher negotiate	Coresearchers with participants negotiate relationships, purposes, transitions, ways to be useful

*Note.* This chart taken from Ollerenshaw, J.A., & Creswell, J.W. (2002). Narrative research: comparison of two restorying data analysis approaches. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(3), 329-347.

restorying these narratives, I, as the researcher, had to make some decisions on what to include in the narratives. There is a danger that I neglected to acknowledge some of the

silences, hesitations, or emissions that can be telling in narrative research; however, by using as much directly quoted material as possible, I tried to minimize this danger.

After restorying the interviews into a chronological narrative, I broke each of the participant's restories into narrative pieces based on time frames and/or major plot events. After reading through these "stories," I realized that my fears that these students would not have the verbal dexterity to relate strong narratives was in fact a valid concern. The stories read more like a listing of events than a narrative rich in agents using their agency to act. At first I considered creating a composite student based on all of the response and stories of my participants as exemplified in Andrzejewski's (2011) research involving dance students' choreography of solos. However, because of the drastic variations in the experiences of my participants and my desire to give voice to my marginalized research participants as individuals, I could not disempower their voices through merging them into one representation of a developmental reading student.

In doing more research on narrative methodology, I came across the idea of arts based research. Barone and Eisner (2012) define arts based research as "an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable" (p. 2). In other words, arts based research allows for meanings to be uncovered by using more than just the words between people. Art based research can help us make deeper understanding of the world around us (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 3). In my case, adding the complexity of fiction to the bare bones of the stories that my participants told to me seemed to be a way to more completely illustrate the scope of their experiences.

Working through the logistics of fictionalizing the narratives of my students led me to the understanding that my role in this process had been modified a bit and this modification came with great responsibility. Coulter and Smith (2009) noted in their review of literary elements in narrative research that in one of the cases they reviewed, the researcher “functions first as the teacher of those students, then as the researcher of those experiences, and finally as the author of the students’ stories,” (p. 578). This was exactly how I now saw my role in my research process. As Coulter and Smith (2009) also noted, the writer/researcher is often caught “juxtaposing her position of societal privilege against the marginalized position of her participants” (p. 579). In order to combat this as the writer, I had to closely attend to decisions about the narrator, omniscience, and narrator reliability in order to be mindful of how the decisions I made had implications “in terms of effect on literary quality and interpretation of data” (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 583).

With this new purposefulness in mind, I turned to Leavy’s (2013) *Fiction as Research Practice* for guidance in ethical use of fiction in research. She noted that the intersection of social research and fiction can “produce meaningful, resonant, evocative, texts... that have the potential to connect the particular and universal” (p. 33). With this approach, I was able to still express the voices of my participants, but to do so in a format that allows my readers to become engaged with the characters in a fiction that is based on reality as perceived by me as a researcher interpreting my participants’ basic story outlines from our interviews. By using this approach I was also opening up the accessibility of my research to a broader audience than academia. Deciding what point of view to present my students’ stories in was the last hurdle in my decision to

fictionalize the narratives. Leavy (2013) suggested the use of first or third person narration because they “allow us to access the interior lives of characters while also providing a context or commentary for understanding their psychological processes” (p. 44). In the end, I chose to use third person narration because as Leavy (2013) noted, first person narration can be dangerous in research because readers can assume that the words spoken by a first person narrator are actual words spoken by the real participant in a study because that is how we naturally read fiction; we assume as readers that an “authentic I” is being represented (p. 46). I did try to use the actual words of my participants in the fictionalized narratives that I created when possible. I was also very careful to maintain the intention of the narrative piece, including character attitudes and actions toward reading. Barone (2009) noted that when looking at fictionalized research, texts can be read “doubly” both as literal (about the actual research participant) and metaphorical (about the character as a representation of someone like the actual participant) and when this happens “social change may be fostered both on the inside and outside (the research site)” (p. 595). This was my hope: that by fictionalizing the stories of my participants, it would create a sense of empathy in the reader that could lead to positive changes in the literacy practices in schools.

Using the original narratives, I created a chronology of each participant’s noted reading identities. I did not want to lose any of the identities they intimated in the interviews, but I also only wanted to fictionalize the strongest reading narratives for each participant. After choosing which narratives were rich enough in both content and meaning to be fictionalized, I revised some of the original narratives. I then applied Burke’s (1945/1954) Dramatist Pentad to each narrative structure, using it to analyze who

or what had the power of agency in each narrative. I finally assigned one or more of Gee's (2000) Four Views of Identity that seemed to be prominent in that particular narrative Discourse, whether the participants intimated these identities then I inferred them as the researcher and story teller or whether the participants explicitly named the

**Table 3.3**

*Gee's Four Ways to View Identity*

	Process	Power	Source of Power
1. Nature-identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
2. Institution- identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
3. Discourse-identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with "rational" individuals
4. Affinity-identity: experience	shared in	the practice	of "affinity groups"

*Note.* This chart comes from Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 100

agent who set their reading identity in the stories. See Table 3.3 for a review of Gee's (2000) Ways to View Identity. After these analyses, I drew comparisons between participants and presented some conclusions and raised some suggestions for further inquiry into reading identities of developmental community college readers.

### **Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study was the single gender the participants. Although the study was open to all genders, only women responded to the research invitation. Another limitation was the fact that all of the participants were successful in completing developmental reading at the community college level. So, in essence, they had perhaps moved past their identity as a struggling reader and this may have had some bearing on their literacy identity creation. A final limitation of this study was a lack of member checking of interviews and restoryings. However, this limitation speaks to some of the challenges of working with developmental students in the community college setting. They are transient in nature. They drop in and out of college and this proved to be a problem for conducting the planned member checking as triangulation of my data when the students were no longer enrolled at ABC Community College and no longer were on campus. This effectively made them inaccessible to me after the initial interviews because I was unable to contact them after repeated attempts. I have continued to be in contact with only one of the participants and she did not want to read "all that" to perform member checking.

Another possible limitation of the study was the extended time between beginning the research and collecting the data (interviews) and analyzing the data. Although at the time of the interviews, I made notes and put down some initial impressions from the

interviews, I did not code the transcripts or draw any conclusions until almost a year later due to a work commitments that interfered with my time. Before I came back to my data, I revisited the literature and found several new sources that proved to be instrumental in helping me form my analysis strategies, especially Combs (2012). I also found several sources that helped to inform my analysis that would have also informed my interview questions and interview goals had I had them when the interviews and coding were conducted. Some of that research would include Enriquez (2014), Leavy (2013), Attewell et al (2014), Blanchard & Muller (2014) and various works by Bandura (2004/1994/1983).

### **Bridling**

As a qualitative researcher, it was important that I identified who I am and how my identity was revealed through my interpretations as a researcher. I believe that all research is an interpretation no matter how hard we try to merely describe a phenomenon. Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2004) described the use of bridling ones “immediate and spontaneous understanding of the world” in order to respectfully control our intentionality and put “ourselves at a distance in a relation to the phenomenon” being studied (p. 272). Bridling reigns in our instincts to apply our own understandings of the world and the people in it. We have to acknowledge that there is nothing definite in research or as Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2004) claim, “we have to be careful not to make definite that which is indefinite” (p. 273).

With bridling in mind, I wanted to put forth that I was an instructor of reading to these students in a setting that presumed that they were struggling readers. I was also a K-12 teacher of language arts for almost 20 years previous to this study. I knew from the

outset that not all practices in the language arts classroom are best practices for inspiring life-long readers. As an educator, I tended to be a proponent for student choice in reading. I believed in active learning and student-centered classrooms. Some of these beliefs were reflected in my findings; however, I consciously was aware as I coded data and restoried narratives that I needed to be making meanings based on the words and stories of my participants, not based on my experiences as a classroom teacher. In order to keep my data as free of my own biased interpretations as possible, I used as many quotes and direct phrases from the participants in the restoryings. Again, I was conscious of trying to acknowledge and bridle my own interpretation of the descriptions that their stories seemed to be provided. In doing this, I hoped to increase my credibility with my readers and ensure that their trust in my ability to provide as much thick, rich description through these narratives as possible was indeed what compelled my research. After adding the element of fictionalizing the participants' narratives, I was purposeful in choosing third person narration in order to help minimize the incorrect assumptions that the narratives were direct quotes of the research participants. I was mindful of how my teaching and life experiences were popping up in the narratives, and I cross-checked the fictionalized narratives with the original barebones narratives that I had originally constructed explicitly from the words of the participants to make sure that the fictionalized characters accurately represented the feelings, personality, and events of the actual participants.

Throughout this process, I have realized that narrative research is slow and painstaking. As well as bridling my own experiences throughout this research, I found that there is a tension in the idea of truth and verisimilitude that I discussed earlier that I had to come to terms with as a qualitative researcher involved in restorying the narratives

of my former students, who were also my research participants. When thinking about validity and reliability of quantitative studies, these verisimilitudes may become problematic, but in qualitative narrative research, they just exist. Riessman (1993) said, “Informants’ stories do not mirror a world ‘out there.’ They are constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive” (p. 5). And, therein lies the strengths of stories as research data. In order to understand students struggling with reading in the community college, we must hear their voices. Will one voice represent all of the students out there? No, but every one experience paints a stroke on the canvas of the community college developmental reading phenomenon and blends in with other research of the phenomenon at hand. And perhaps these blended strokes will create a clear enough image that will help researchers, policy makers, administrators, and educators find ways to better the results for these students in school, work, and home.

## **Chapter 4 - Findings**

In this chapter, I created the stories of my participants' lives as readers by restorying interviews into narrative structures. Then after analyzing these restoryings, I created a chronological timeline of the significant events in their reading lives. I then chose to fictionalize some of the more rich narratives into stories that would help the reader see the events in my participants' reading lives as they unfolded. I attended carefully to the words, plots, and emotions described in the participants' interviews in order to create fictionalized accounts that were rich with description, but accurate to the self-perceived reality of each participants' descriptions of their reading lives. In order to show the close relation between the fictionalized narratives, the non-fictionalized narratives, and the interview transcripts, I included them in Appendices F-K for comparison. I tried to use as many direct quotes from the interviews as I could in the fictionalized narratives; however, the majority of the time, the way that my participants phrased their responses did not flow in the context of fictionalized account. Therefore, I had to rearrange and add to their words to make it coherent. In the few places where actual quotes are used, they are italicized to indicate that these are the words of the participants. I chose to do this even though there were ultimately few direct quotes because the words from the students were powerful and deserved note. I chose events to fictionalize for each participant that seemed to have significance in defining their reading identities. Finally, I broke each narrative into sections and analyzed the significant

narrative sequences in each one using Burke’s (1945/1954) Dramatic Pentad to inform Gee’s Four Ways to View Identity (2000) as reviewed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

**Table 4.1**

*Burkes’s Dramatic Pentad*

<b>ACT</b>	What was done
<b>SCENE</b>	Where or when it was done
<b>AGENT</b>	Who did it
<b>AGENCY</b>	How he did it or what tool was used
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Why it was done

*Note.* This chart was interpreted from Burke, K. (1945/1954). *A grammar of motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

The following table breaks down Gee’s (2000) Four Ways to View Identity and each identity type’s process of signifying that identity in different acts of power from different agents of power. These different views of identity allowed me to look at each participant’s stories with a differentiating lens of identity and gave me the tools to discuss different identity views within the same person and to try to illustrate how sometimes conflicting reading self-identities could exist within the same reader.

**Table 4.2**

*Gee's Four Ways to View Identity*

	Process	Power	Source of Power
1. Nature-identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
2. Institution- identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
3. Discourse-identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with "rational" individuals
4. Affinity-identity: experience	shared in	the practice	of "affinity groups"

*Note.* This chart came from Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25, 100

At the end of each participant's narratives and analysis, I wrote a summary that not only analyzed my analysis of the students' ways of identifying as readers through these narratives, but that also brought in salient research on developmental education, reading education and pedagogy, and community college students.

### **Maneta's Story**

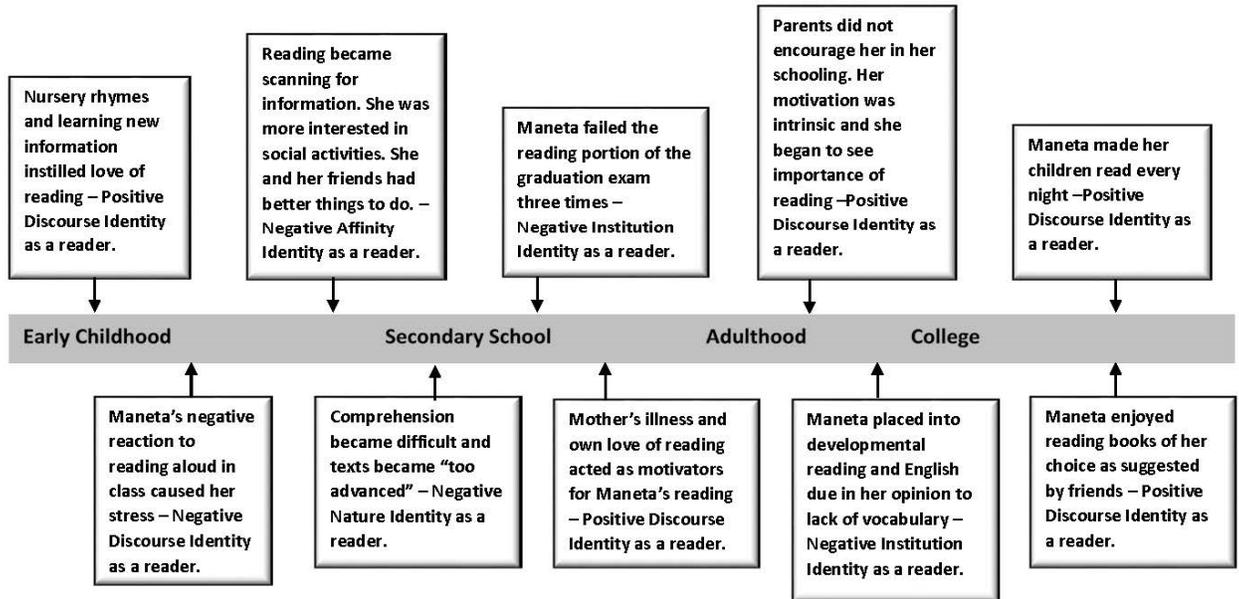
Maneta (pseudonym) was a 35-year-old African American woman returning to college after a decade or so of working and raising a family. She was raised by both of her parents until they divorced before she entered high school. She was the only sibling in her family to have graduated high school. When in school, she received free or reduced lunches, which indicates a lack of financial resources growing up. She was at the time of the interviews a divorced parent of two boys, aged six and twelve. When returning to college in 2013, she tested into developmental English, math, and reading. She had completed her developmental English sequence and had a 3.0 GPA and was still enrolled in ABC Community College at the time of analysis of data.

Her reading history is varied. In elementary school, she loved reading stories and learning through rhyming texts, but hated reading aloud. By middle school, she felt that she had learned all the skills needed to succeed as a reader and was more concerned with her peers and social life. Her skills left her distressed when she found troubles with reading comprehension. In high school, reading still brought struggles and negative feelings. By the end of high school, Maneta had found new, legitimate purpose for reading that inspired her to take reading more seriously. This new found attitude about the importance of reading followed her into parenthood and eventually back to school at ABC Community College. Maneta's timeline of reading identities is included below. (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

## Maneta’s Chronology of Reading Identities

Collected through interviews, classwork, and survey.



*Note.* This table shows the reading stories that Maneta shared with the researcher. The researcher then fictionalized six of these stories into narratives to give a rich, detailed picture of the events.

### Maneta’s Early Childhood Narrative

Maneta turned the page and continued reading to herself. ‘After James Henry Trotter had been living with his aunts for three whole years there came a morning when something rather peculiar happened to him. And this thing, which I say was only rather peculiar...’ (Dahl, 1961/2007, p. 5). Maneta became aware of something changing in the classroom, a shuffling of feet, a flutter of paper.

“All right class, put away your free reading books please and take out your *Moonbeams* reading book. We are on page 227. Everyone get out your book quickly and quietly and get to page 227,” Mrs. Baker was taking out her own larger copy of *Moonbeams* from under a stack of papers on her desk.

Maneta shook her head slightly as she raised her eyes from the pages of *James and the Giant Peach* and jumped in her seat as Joe slammed his own *Moonbeams* book on his desk next to her. Maneta sighed as she slipped her flowered bookmark into the pages. “Reading makes you bloom!” is what it said in bright yellow letters. ‘Maybe reading about James and his peculiar days does,’ she thought as she reached into her desk to find *Moonbeams*. Joe laughed and poked her. “Ha! She got you!” he said in an irritating whisper.

She looked up confused and immediately concerned. “Maneta, did you hear me?” Mrs. Baker was looking straight at her.

“M’am?” Maneta squeaked.

“You will be our third reader. After Jane and Travarius. All right class, let’s follow along in our books while our friends read to us.” Mrs. Baker shifted in her chair to settle in for some reading.

‘Man, why did she pick me?’ Maneta groaned. Her heart started racing as she flipped open *Moonbeams* to page 227. ‘Oh, gees. Which paragraph will I have to read?’ Maneta listened to Jane for a second, waiting to hear a word she would easily be able to find in the book. “Bart re... reluctantly handed the note to his teacher,” Jane stumbled along. Maneta trailed her fingers along the page searching for the long re word. There it

was in bold print. She immediately counted down two paragraphs from Jane's and started reading the paragraph to herself.

'Shoot, what is that word? Re-prim-anded? The teacher re-prim-anded Bart. Ok, you got this, Maneta,' she thought as she quickly skimmed the rest of the paragraph. Maneta had no idea what he was saying, but she noted that Travarius was reading his paragraph. Abruptly, he stopped and all eyes turned to Maneta. "The teacher re- re-primanded," she stumbled through the words as fast as she could, not really having a clue what she was saying, just hoping it sounded ok and that no one laughed at her stuttering over the words and said, "*Ugh, girl you can't read.*"

**Analysis of Maneta's Early Childhood Narrative.** First in this narrative, Maneta had a positive reading identity that could be seen as a Discourse-Identity with her favorite texts. Maneta was clearly the agent of her own reading pleasure by enjoying (the act) her favorite books. This relationship with inanimate objects such as books may not have been what Gee (2010) intended for a Discourse-Identity to encompass, but readers do interact with text, identifying with Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory of reading, and in this case, I believed that the relationships that Maneta had with certain texts such as *James and the Giant Peach*, indicated a Discourse-Identity.

Later in this narrative, however, Maneta's story of reading aloud stood out as an important indicator of her first negative identity as a reader in elementary school. Using Burke's (1945/1954) Pentad, in this case, the agent was her teacher and she had the agency to make Maneta act by reading aloud in front of others in the scene of the classroom. It is important to note here that it can be dangerous, according to Rountree and Rountree (2015), to limit agents in the role they inhabit to a stereotype of the role

itself and not to see them in the role as they seem themselves in the role as agent (p.359). In this case, however, the teacher had been given the agency by the school in the particular Discourse of school, as agent with the agency-wielding power of the school backing her. The teacher may have had a pedagogical purpose for asking for Maneta to read aloud; although, Maneta was not aware of this purpose. In this scene, although Maneta did not seem to be the agent of the problematic action of reading aloud, she did seem to be the giver of the identity of poor reader. In her interview, she noted that she “didn’t like reading out loud” and that she felt that others were probably defining her as a poor reader because of her stuttering through the reading. This indicates that her negative reading identity as seen in elementary school was a Discourse-Identity, founded in her beliefs that other students found her to be a poor reader. There is no evidence that the teacher agreed nor any evidence from this story that an Institution-Identity is involved here. In fact, the rest of the evidence from her story as an elementary school reader was positive, indicating that she did not seem to have a Nature-Identity that was hindering her reading success. Perhaps, there is some Affinity-Identity that ties into the negative reading identity of this narrative as Maneta does seem to be noting that the entire class was in the same position as commanded readers when she notes that the teacher said, “You will be our third reader. After Jane and Travarius. All right class, let’s follow along in our books while our friends read to us.” Because of finding themselves in a similar group of readers in a classroom, an Affinity-Identity could have been developed as students who hate reading aloud, but once again, Maneta offers no evidence of how the other students felt about having to read aloud themselves. However, she sees it as a personal negative response to reading.

## **Maneta's Secondary School Narrative One**

“Travarius, are you gonna be in the Seventh Grade Talent Show tomorrow?”

Maneta whispered to the light-skinned boy lounging back in the desk next to her. She peeked over the top of her Elements of Literature book to see where Mrs. Weaver was in the room. Still at her desk. ‘Does she really think we’re gonna sit here and read this?’ Maneta wondered in passing. “Yeah, I am rapping with Donnie. We’re going to win,” he was explaining.

“Mr. Brown, Maneta... are you reading?” Mrs. Weaver hadn’t even looked up from the papers she was grading. ‘How did she do that?’ Maneta wondered as she quickly looked down at the book.

“Yes, m’am,” Travarius answered for both of them. He rolled his eyes at Maneta, and slouched even lower into his seat, flipping a page in his book. Sighing, Maneta looked back at her book. ‘The words just don’t make any sense. I thought I knew how to read, but, man, what did I just read? These big words. Well, I gotta look this word up,’ Maneta thought and sighed again. ‘I just don’t like reading and not knowing the word. It’s just too hard.’ Instead of worrying over the words any longer, Maneta just turned in her seat, “So, Trav, what song are y’all doing?”

**Analysis of Maneta's Secondary School Narrative One.** In this narrative piece, Maneta once again mentioned struggles that she had as a reader in middle school. However, this time she was the agent of the conflict—reading difficult texts and comprehending—which seemed to be the desired act in this scene in middle school. The agency, which according to Burke (1945/1954) is the means that helps accomplish the act, in this case was her ability to understand what words meant, which was her purpose

(p. 275). This reading identity could be seen as a Nature-Identity because she was questioning her intelligence and physical ability to learn at a higher level. When she called her reading “too hard,” she seemed to feel she had met her intellectual ceiling. This led to frustration and a negative reading identity. However, her discussion about believing that she had “mastered” reading in elementary school exemplified that fact that reading identities change over time and within Discourses, even the same Discourse of school over time.

### **Maneta’s Secondary School Narrative Two**

The metal legs scraped across the tile as Maneta pulled her desk closer to Janiece’s desk. “Did you hear that Travarius and Keisha broke up again?” she asked Janiece as she folded into her seat and flipped open her textbook to Act II of *Macbeth*.

“No way. Again? At lunch? Lord, they’re probably already back together again. So, do you have the Act I questions done?” Maneta slid her paper over to Janiece, who started copying down the answers that, truth be told, Maneta had copied from another classmate during the previous class period.

“Who knows?” Maneta looked across the room where Travarius was sitting next to Jane looking like he wasn’t too upset. “I’ll start looking for the answers to the Act II questions while you get those.” Maneta took back her paper and glanced at question one. “What does the line ‘Macbeth doth murder sleep’ signify?” She trailed her finger over the pages as she looked for the line.

The beep of the intercom silenced the mumbling of the class. “Will the following students please come to the cafeteria to meet with your counselor...” Maneta stopped

listening and returned to *Macbeth*. Janiece poked her arm. “Girl, they called you.” Maneta squinted at her. “Are you sure?” Janiece nodded. “Leave me your paper.”

“Sure,” Maneta nodded as she slid from the desk.

Travarius was walking out the door too. “What do they want?” he asked.

“I have no idea.” Maneta shrugged as they walked up the stairs to the cafeteria. Her stomach got all sick feeling as she saw the counselor handing papers out to the students already gathered in the cafeteria. “Remember,” she was saying, “there’s still one more testing session before graduation. And the Saturday tutoring.”

The counselor smiled at Maneta as she handed her a paper. “Please, don’t give up,” she continued. Maneta couldn’t look at the paper for a second, then glanced down quickly. Reading – Did Not Pass. ‘Man, how can I pass the math and writing on the first try and fail the damned reading three times?’ Tears of frustration filled her eyes, but she swiped at them quickly and glanced around the cafeteria at the bowed heads of her classmates. ‘At least I’m not alone, I guess.’

“Please take a second, then return to your classes,” the counselor said. “Please let me know if you need any study materials or anything.” Maneta folded the paper into a small square and stuck it in the back pocket of her jeans. She walked over to where Travarius was sitting at a lunch table. “Guess we better get back to class,” she said.

He nodded. “This reading stuff is no joke. I hate it and it’s gonna make it so I can’t graduate.” He crumpled up the paper and dropped it in the garbage can at the edge of the stairwell. ‘At least I didn’t break up with someone today too,’ Maneta thought. ‘Poor guy is having a really crappy day.’

**Analysis of Maneta's Secondary School Narrative Two.** In this narrative, Maneta's struggles clearly had an Institution-Identity. She may have been the agent who failed in the act, scene, and purpose of passing the state graduation exam in reading, but it is clearly the Discourse of the state education system that had provided this identity as a struggling reader. There were also some social concerns that had impacted her reading identity as well. She had joined an affinity group that did not value reading, and she went along with that group to further identify herself as a poor reader. So, it was fair to say that in high school, Maneta was also inhabiting an Affinity-Identity as a struggling reader.

### **Maneta's Adulthood Narrative One**

The glass doors of Emory University Hospital slid shut behind Maneta. "Hope I never have to go in there again," she mumbled under her breath as she headed to the parking garage, clutching the stack of her mom's discharge instructions in her left hand. She walked for what seemed like forever, so far, that her heel had a raw spot from where her sock had slid down into her tennis shoes. Finally, she reached her mom's Ford Escort, got in, and maneuvered down the parking garage. 'Round and round, I go. Where I'll stop nobody knows.' The bright sunlight of the early Atlanta afternoon blinded her momentarily as she handed money to the lady at the parking garage exit. "Um, which way do I turn to go pick up someone who is being released?"

"Take a right. Then turn left at light. It's the place with a curved drive and a canopy. You can't miss it because there's usually a line there waiting to pull in at this time of day," she answered. Maneta turned right and quickly swerved into the far left lane. "Dang. There's the light already. And a green turn light." She smoothly turned onto the road and saw the canopy to her left about half a block up. And that's where she

stopped because all the cars in front of her had on their left turn signal waiting to turn too. “God, I wish I wasn’t doing this alone. Two older brothers and an older sister and I’m helping Mama all alone. And I have to take care of her at home too.” Maneta realized she was talking to herself and quickly looked to see if any of the cars around her had noticed. ‘Nope, they’re all in their Atlanta driving zone,’ she thought and picked up the packet of papers the nurse had handed her before she left Mama’s room. “After you read through this, let us know if you have any questions,” she had said. Maneta looked at the first page. Discharge Instructions for Osteogenic Sarcoma Chemotherapy Patients was printed across the top of the page. She skimmed over the page. ‘Swelling at port site... fever over 101.3... excessive vomiting... rashes... all of this is pretty straight forward,’ Maneta thought as she set it in the passenger seat and inched forward as a car in her lane was signaled to turn by a man in an orange traffic vest. ‘At least they have people directing traffic,’ she thought as she once again picked up the discharge packet and flipped to the next page. “Drug Counter Indications, Possible Reactions, and Dosage Information for Combination Ifosfamide and Etoposide Chemotherapy Regimen,” her voice trailed off as she skimmed down the page. ‘Gees. I’m going to have to read this and take notes. Mama’s too out of it to read it herself. Too bad, cause out of all of us, she is the reader in the family. All those bookshelves we tease her about all the time. Nope, it’s all me. No one else is going to keep her healthy and get her better. God, help me. I’m scared.’ A horn blared and Maneta looked up to see the orange-vested man waving her on to turn. She tossed the packet into the back seat as she glided to a stop under the canopy. Maneta hopped out of the car, opened the passenger door, and walked to where her mother sat in

a wheelchair. Her mother smiled up at Maneta, but she was hurting, Maneta could tell, ‘Mama looks so tired,’ she thought.

“Did you find the car ok, baby?” she asked Maneta. Maneta nodded and held her mama’s arm as the nurse behind her locked the wheels and helped her stand. Maneta guided her to the passenger side door and the nurse helped lower her into the car seat.

“Sure did, Mama. Let’s get you home, so I can take care of you. I’ve got lots of reading to do. And I’ve got to read it right. For you.”

**Analysis of Maneta’s Adulthood Narrative One.** Narrative Four for Maneta moved her into a new purpose for reading that affected her reading identity. Maneta herself was the agent of this narrative where the importance of her act of reading correctly had a serious purpose –saving her mother’s life. The agency that allowed her to achieve her purpose was “reading a lot.” The scene was no longer academic, but instead at home with family. This reading identity moved to a Discourse-Identity as it was in an important symbiotic positive reading experience in close relation to her mother and her mother’s health.

### **Maneta’s College Narrative One**

As Maneta pushed the chair away from the desk it made a screeching noise across the floor, “Um, sorry,” she said as a blonde-headed guy glanced up from one of the testing cubbies near her. He just looked back down, squinting through the glass topped desk to the monitor below. There were about five more people in the room, hunched over in the same position. Maneta walked out the class door of the testing room into the lobby.

“All righty,” the lady at the check-in desk was reaching into a printer behind her desk. “I’ve got your placement results right here, let me get one of the advisors to talk to

you a minute. Just have a seat.” She picked up the phone as Maneta turned away to the orange pleather covered seats on the far wall. As she was about to sit, a young guy dressed in khakis and an ABC Community College polo called out, “Maneta.”

“Right here,” she called as she stopped herself mid-seat and turned toward him.

“Come on in here,” he said, indicating a cubicle office to his left. “Well, Maneta, I’m Jackson, an advisor here at the school. Let’s talk a bit before we set up your schedule. So, tell me why you’re here. Who influenced you to come back to college?”

“Ummm, well, I don’t remember my mom or dad sitting down with me at the table telling me, you know, *‘Ok, well, you need to do this. You need to read, do homework, you need to study.’* Because it was already in me to say *I’m going to go home, do my homework, do what I need to do. You know, I wasn’t made, didn’t nobody push me to do, you know... anything. And I don’t remember my mom and my dad pushing. Because they are divorced now, so they never pushed me like to go to school, get a good education or said I want you to get good grades and all this other stuff. Because my sister and my brothers, they didn’t graduate. They dropped out so, I’m the only one that finished high school. And, now, I’m going back to college. This is like my second time. I want to do more than what I’m doing. I want more.* So, I guess I influenced me to come back,” she drew a breath. “Um, is that what you asked?”

He laughed, “Sure. I get it,” he typed a few things on his computer. “Hang on one second,” he got up and walked out of his office and up to the check-in desk. When he returned he had a print out in his hand. “So, how do you think you did on your placement test, the COMPASS test?”

“The math wasn’t too bad. The reading though.... I think I had it. When I started, I was just kind of worried, breathing hard, but then I thought, ‘Ok, you’ll pass this. You read.’ So, I think I did ok,” Maneta answered with some confidence.

“Well, you did pretty well in math. You’ll start in the highest level of remedial math. Just one refresher class and you’ll be on your way. So, let’s put that in the system. Um, your reading score is a bit lower and your English too. Your reading score was only a 45, so you’ll need to take our first level remedial reading class and also our first level writing class. Then next semester, you’ll have them again. Then you’ll move on to freshman composition,” he explained as he typed.

‘Man, how did I get so low on it? Gees. This is the graduation exam all over again. Only 17 years later. Man. I think it’s comprehension. Knowing what you read. I don’t know. It’s like reading is easy, but the comprehension part. I think that’s what’s it. And words. I think those are like my two problems. Big words you don’t know. I mean some people be like, ‘Ok, let me figure out what this word is. And let me go to the dictionary, or something’ and they look over it and say, ‘Oh this is what this is.’ But it’s not what that word is. So, it’s maybe like advanced words. Words I don’t know and comprehension for me. And I know that for a fact because I know I can sit there and just read and read but some stuff I just don’t understand. It’s too advanced for me.’ All these thoughts rushed into Maneta’s head, but she said nothing.

Jackson looked up from his computer. “Are you ok, Maneta?” He must have seen all those thoughts scaring her.

“I am. I’m just going to have to keep studying and studying, yeah I will have to do that. I’ll buy a whole bunch of flash cards and I’ll just write everything down. I think

it's better. *It's easier for me to learn something if I can look at it myself and write and study and study and keep going over, keep going over.* Yep. You know, you have to read. In my day and age, things are changing from back then till now. So in order to keep up, you got to read. You got to keep up with the technology. You got to keep up with the news. I'll buy all my books because you never know when you have to go back and look. *I've got a whole bunch of books,*" Maneta stopped as she realized she was rambling, but Jackson was just smiling.

"I think you'll do fine, Maneta. Just fine."

**Analysis of Maneta's College Narrative One.** Entering college made Maneta revisit an old reading identity—a negative Institutional-Identity. Once again a standardized test, required by a state department of education took the positive reading identity she walked into the test with and changed it to a negative one, stealing her ability to be her own agent, exerting her own knowledge as agency with the purpose of doing well in school in the scene of returning to college. However, once the shock of this result wore off, she regained agent status when she began to realize the importance of reading to her success in college. Her repetitious study and reading became the agency with which she planned to fulfill her purpose of doing well in classes. This positive reading identity ended up being both a Discourse and Intuitional-Identity when reviewing Maneta's college records and noting her passing grades in college level classes.

### **Maneta's College Narrative Two**

"Jase, son, come here," Maneta hollered to be heard over the TV in the living room. She stretched her back and switched her weight around in the hard backed kitchen chair she was sitting in. She glanced at the clock on the stove. 6:45. "Gees, how long

have I been sitting here reading this thing?” she mumbled as she flipped over the copy of *Uncommon* she was reading for class. “Boy, get Davis to come in here too. Now,” she hollered again.

The thumping of tennis shoes and boys bouncing off walls came closer.

“Yes, m’am?” Jase spoke for both of them.

“What do you think y’all are doing watching TV and playing games,” her eyes cut to the Gameboy in her 10-year old’s hands, “when you haven’t done your reading yet? You know it’s 30 minutes every night before any electronics. My mom and dad didn’t do this for me and I paid, boys. I paid. I’m gonna fuss at you and you’re going to read. Sit at this table right along with me,” she demanded.

“Oh, Mom! I ain’t got no book. I already took my AR test,” Jase instantly started in.

“All right then, you can grab one of mine,” Maneta pulled her history book out of her backpack and slid it down the table. “There you are.”

Jase looked at it and sighed, sliding into his chair at the table.

“I’ll go get my book, mama,” Davis sped out of the room.

Maneta looked at Jase, “Son, don’t you complain. I take you to the library sometimes. And you still didn’t break your AR goal. Boy, if you know how to read, you’re going to read a book. And if you don’t know a word, I’ll tell you. Get started.”

Maneta sat back down and picked up *Uncommon* again. ‘I really need to tell Mrs. Jones how I’m glad that that she told us to get this. Because I am into it. He is telling the truth. I mean it’s not *Fifty Shade of Gray* or anything, but it’s good,’ she opened to her marked page and started reading. “In some ways, failure feels like a dirty little secret

because people rarely want to discuss their own failures. But in reality, we're all wearing our masks to cover our shortcomings, all thinking that the feelings of self-doubt and misgivings are ours alone. Nothing could be further from the truth; failure is a part of being human" (Dungy, 2009, p. 138). 'Need to highlight that one,' Maneta reached across the table to grab her highlighter. Davis pulled out his chair and sat down.

"What are you reading, honey?" Maneta asked him. He held up his book to show her the cover. *James and the Giant Peach*. Maneta smiled, "Oh, that one is *still my favorite*. Great choice!"

**Analysis of Maneta's College Narrative Two.** Outside of the Discourse of school, Maneta had a positive reading identity that was based on Discourse-Identities with her family. In the scene of her home, she acted as the agent in working with her children, using the agency of fussing at them, with the purpose of making them stronger readers. She also became the agent of her own reading for the purpose of pleasure by choosing texts that interest her. These positive reading identities ultimately gave her the self-applied identity as a reader.

### **Summary of Analyses of Maneta's Narratives and Further Contemplation**

Maneta had a complex reading identity that bounced from positive to negative to positive over the years. Her identity as a reader ranged through all of Gee's (2000) views of identity at different times. Her Nature-identity, Institute-identity, and Affinity-identity all developed into an identity of a struggling reader; however, her Discourse-identities tended toward positive situations and attitudes about reading. There were many pedagogical implications in her stories for teachers of reading. In her early years of formal education, Maneta had a positive attitude about reading and learning to read as a

discreet skill. She fondly remembered singing to learn to read (Interview). Learning to read the words on the page seemed like her goal as a reader in early elementary school. As she aged, reading become more of a public performance through read-alouds and Round Robin reading.

By middle school Maneta felt she had mastered the skill of reading and was only scanning the texts as necessary leaving more time for her burgeoning interest in socializing. Lenters (2006) noted that this move to middle school often facilitates formally strong readers becoming “resistant readers” and that one effect of resistance to reading in the middle grades is a marginalizing effect caused by lack of facility with genres introduced in the middle grades; these students who resist school assigned texts, do not take sufficient time in school for independent reading, and do not take the time to read outside of school may indeed become struggling readers (p. 142). This could have been a factor in Maneta’s change from a self-defined strong reader to an institutionally-defined poor reader by the end of high school.

By college, Maneta had developed the realization that reading for a purpose was important, whether it was to help her mother’s health, to successfully get through her college program and all the future reading that would entail, or to help her own children learn to be strong readers themselves.

### **Rebecca's Story**

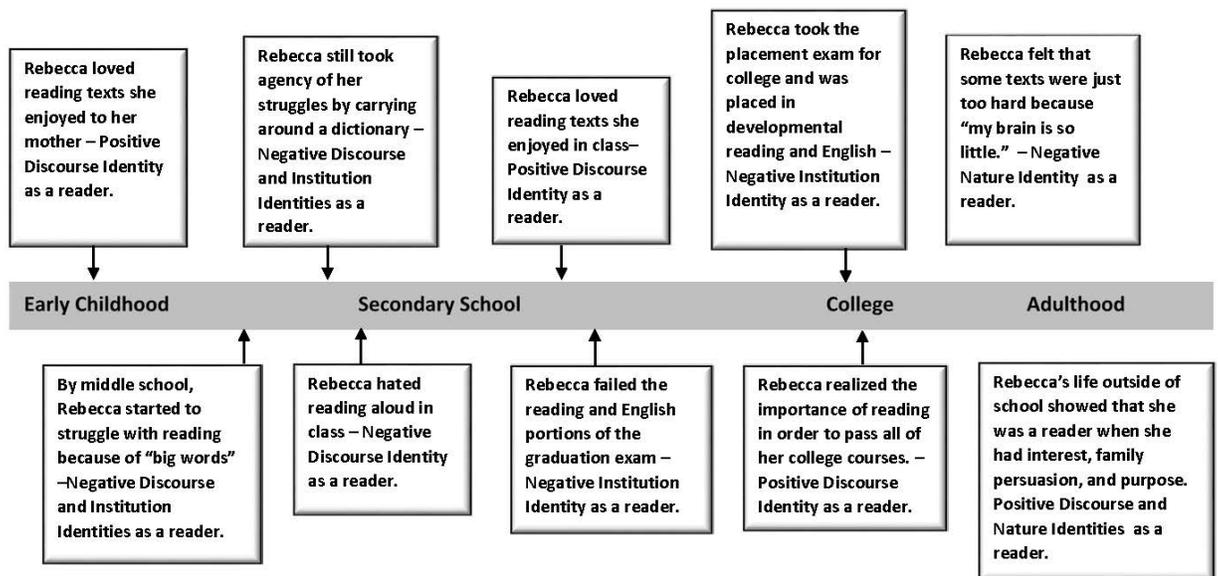
Rebecca (pseudonym) was a 24-year-old Caucasian woman returning to college after working. She was raised by both of her parents, but they divorced around her time in middle school, so, after that, she split time between two households. She did not mention any siblings in her narratives. When in school, she received free or reduced lunches, which indicates a lack of financial resources growing up. She enjoyed reading for the most part in elementary school because she found it easy. In middle school, she began to struggle with reading and developed quite a frustration from these struggles. She mentioned that her mom was helpful with school work, but her dad was more focused on the outdoor activities she loved. By high school, she had developed some coping mechanisms for reading, especially carrying a dictionary wherever she went so she would always be able to figure out what a word meant. She liked novels that piqued her interest, but struggles when texts were boring or purposeless in her opinion. She despised having to read aloud. She failed the reading graduation exam multiple times, but eventually graduated to appease her mother. By college, she was once again disappointed by her reading skills as she was placed in developmental reading. When returning to college in 2013, she tested into developmental English, math, and reading. She continued to enjoy reading when the topic interested her. She also continued to have issues with reading aloud. In her home life, she was single with no children at the time of interviews. She had some family influence to read from an aunt, but for the most part she continued to see reading as something she only did out of extreme interest in a topic or for a specified purpose, like putting together a bed frame for her dad. Eventually, she completed all of her developmental classes and began a degree program from which she was suspended for non-academic reasons. She was no longer a student at ABC Community College at

time of data analysis, even though she was eligible for re-admittance. Rebecca’s timeline of reading identities is included below.

**Table 4.4**

## Rebecca’s Chronology of Reading Identities

Collected through interviews, classwork, and survey.



*Note.* This table shows the reading stories that Rebecca shared with the researcher. The researcher then fictionalized three of these stories into narratives to give a rich, detailed picture of the events.

### Rebecca’s Early Childhood Narrative

“Momma, Momma... can I read you the fishy book?” Rebecca jumped into the bed next to her mother, clutching *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* in her hands.

“Are you all ready for bed?” her mother asked as she propped herself up on the pillow next to Rebecca to be able to see the book that the little girl was opening. She

reached out and stroked her daughter's long blonde hair. "Are you sure you want to read me this one again?"

"It's my favorite. I love fish and fishing and this book has lots of fish. See!" she pushed the open book right up to her mother's eyes.

"Yes, sweetie," her mother laughed. "I see. Are you sure you don't want to read the one in your backpack from the school library?"

"No," Rebecca frowned. "It's hard. This one!" She opened the book and started reading, "One fish two fish red fish blue fish," she turned the page. "See, this one is easy," she smiled up at her mother and snuggled back against the pillow to continue. "Black fish blue fish old fish new fish..." (Dr. Seuss, 1960, pp. 1-2).

**Analysis of Rebecca's Early Childhood Narrative.** Rebecca's earliest stories of reading had her as the agent in the act of reading, with the purpose of becoming better at it. This Discourse-Identity centered around her relationship with her mother and her successful reading of books that had "no big words or nothing like that" (interview). There seems to be no indication that the Institution of the school or the influence of a teacher had any impact on this early reading identity.

### **Rebecca's Secondary School Narrative One**

Rebecca walked into the library shortly after the last bell of the day rang. She walked over to a round table in the corner of the room.

"Hey, Miss Henry. How's it going?" She slid into the old wooden chair. "Man, you'd think they'd have chairs younger than the middle school kids that sit on them," she said as she grimaced at the hard seat that would be her spot for the next hour. 'An hour of

torture-- reading. God, I hate reading,' she thought sighing as she pulled out her *Elements of Literature* book.

Miss Henry, a college junior studying to be an English teacher glanced up from her notebook, "Oh, hey, Rebecca. I'm great. How about you?"

Rebecca frowned, "Failed another vocabulary quiz today. All the words meant like the same thing. How am I supposed to tell which one goes in the blank? And, anyways, they are all big words that I'll never need to know. The struggle is real, though."

Miss Henry laughed, "I know it is. Well, let's work on your reading assignment for tomorrow. Maybe you'll feel better about it tomorrow if we read through it today. Mr. Lester said you are reading the story on page 242. Let's get to it."

**Analysis of Rebecca's Secondary School Narrative One.** Rebecca's identity as a struggling reader became evident by middle school. She still took the active role of agent in this narrative mostly set in the scene of school. The act of reading poorly and getting frustrated seemed to be enacted through the agency of challenging texts that were the cause of her reading woes. However, she did not seem to feel that this was just the natural way of things. Instead she uses words like struggle that seem to indicate that she could have the ability to conquer this reading issue if she worked hard enough. Therefore, this negative reading identity is a Discourse-Identity because she saw herself in comparison with her expectations and her classmates as a poor reader.

## Rebecca's Secondary School Narrative Two

"I heard this book was really hard," Rebecca said to her friend Kaci, "but I kinda like it." She looked at the cover of *The Scarlet Letter* with some amazement. "Did you read last night's chapters?" she asked her friend.

"No," Kaci replied. "I had a game and fell asleep when I got home. What happened? You know she might give us a pop quiz. Help a girl out."

"There was all kind of drama. I loved it," Rebecca laughed at the face Kaci was making.

"Of course you'd like the drama. So, tell me the good bits," she said. "And hurry. We only have a few minutes before class starts."

Rebecca pulled her copy of the book from her backpack and started flipping through it to a turned down page. "Like she goes crazy on Chillingworth, the bastard. She says... let me find it. Oh, yeah, he says he pities her than she says, 'And, I thee for the hatred that has transformed a wise and just man to a fiend! Wilt thou yet purge it out of thee, and be once more human?' (Hawthorne, 1988, pp. 18-119). Purge means like get it out of him, had to look that up. Like she calls him a fiend and not a human. She's really pissed," Rebecca continued to fill her friend in on the chapter as the bell rang.

**Analysis of Rebecca's Secondary School Narrative Two.** The high school years proved to be significant for Rebecca as a reader. She noted many stories that identified varied positive and negative reading identities. In her story when talking about looking a word up, Rebecca was the agent. The act was reading and comprehending with the agency of the dictionary as a helper in the scene of "everywhere." This identity could be identified as a Discourse-Identity because Rebecca seems to be evaluating herself as a

reader in conversation with the texts she is reading and comprehending; although an Institution-Identity could be at work here as well, because she was clearly defining her success in reading in terms of school success, not in any personal connection she has to the texts or process. Other Discourse-Identities are illustrated in this narrative as well as she seems to have a positive relationship with the particular text and when discussing it with her peer.

### **Summary of Analyses of Rebecca's Narratives and Further Contemplation**

Rebecca had a strong identity as a non-reader throughout school and into the present. She sees reading as a means to an end and will use tools such as dictionaries and visuals to make the best of it. For the most part, she took agency in her reading identity, and because of this she saw herself as a good student, but not as a reader. She put strong emphasis on whether or not she liked the content of a text in order to determine if she would be successful in reading it.

For Rebecca, one aspect of her reading that repeatedly surfaced through her narratives was the idea of interest in what she was reading. For students like Rebecca, the idea of contextualized instruction could have ameliorated her reading identity throughout her years of schooling. Contextualized instruction focuses skills such as basic reading, writing, and math being taught in tandem with content and by taking students' experiences and personal learning goals into account (Rutschow & Schneider, p. 206). Rebecca needed a sense of why something she was reading was important and contextualized instruction could have provided that to her in school. She found her own purposes and enjoyments in reading in her personal life, such as reading articles about her interests in outdoor activities.

### **Carrie's Story**

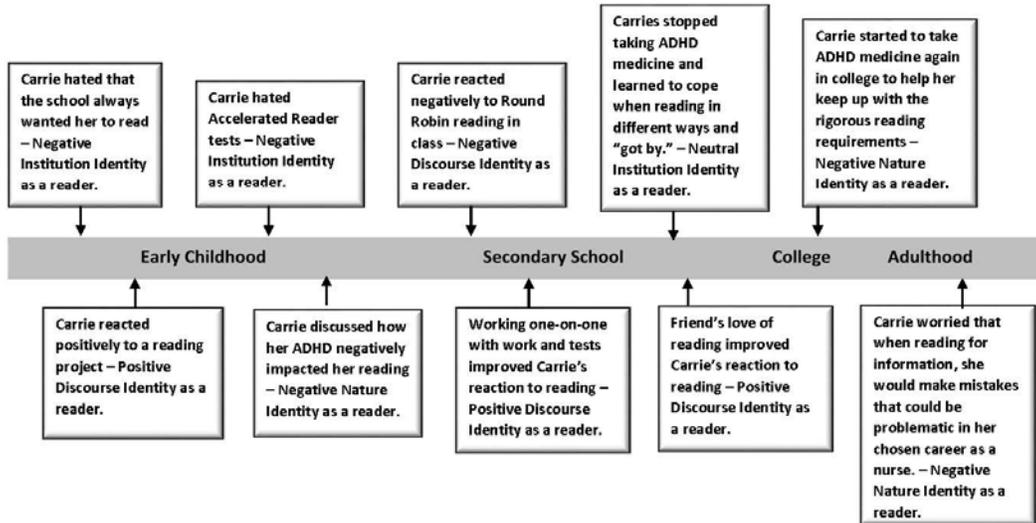
Carrie (pseudonym) was a 20-year-old Caucasian woman. Carrie came from a middle-class home and lived with both parents. Her father was a college graduate. In elementary school, reading was not a positive experience for Carrie, although there were a few moments of reading joy. She particularly disliked Accelerated Reader tests and any reading test in general. She was diagnosed with ADHS in elementary school and started taking medication for that condition, which seemed to help her academics. By middle school, her reading issues carried over into other subject areas and her frustrations grew. She was home-schooled for most of high school and graduated on time.

When she came to college, she tested into math, reading, and English developmental courses. She had completed all of her developmental courses, had a 2.9 GPA, and was working on getting into the nursing program at ABC Community College at the time of data analysis. Carrie's timeline of reading identities is included below. (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

## Carrie's Chronology of Reading Identities

Collected through interviews, classwork, and survey.



*Note.* This table shows the reading stories that Carrie shared with the researcher. The researcher then fictionalized two of these stories into narratives to give a rich, detailed picture of the events.

### Carrie's Early Childhood Narrative

'The light Helen lit still shines in the organizations she helped to start, in the countries she visited, and in the mind of everyone who remembers her story,' (Kudlinski, 1989, p. 56). Carrie set the book down and stretched her arms over her head. She'd been huddled over reading quietly to herself for the entire 15 minutes that she'd been in the car rider line.

"Carrie T. spot 5," came over the loudspeaker and Carrie jumped up, stuffing her book into her backpack and trying to zip it as she walked to the red dot painted on the

sidewalk. Number 5. Her mom's green Isuzu SUV pulled to a stop and a teacher she really didn't know opened the front car door for her.

"Have a good day," the teacher said as she closed the door as Carrie placed her backpack at her feet, settling into the car, and reaching for her seatbelt.

"How was your day, baby?" Carrie's mom asked.

A smile spread across Carrie's face. "Mom, you'll never guess what I did today!" she exclaimed.

"What's that?" her mom asked as she pulled out of the school parking lot.

"I read a whole book. Like, the entire book today. *And it wasn't too thin or anything,*" Carrie reached down to unzip her bag, grabbing the book and waving it around. "See! It's about Helen Keller. A Light for the Blind, it's called."

"All right, that's awesome!" her mom was thrilled at her daughter's excitement over a book. "I'm so proud you read all of it all alone!"

"Yep, I just finished it before you pulled up. And that's not the best part."

"Really, what else?"

"We get to dress up as our biography person and talk about them in the gym next Monday! It's going to be so cool. The whole third grade is doing it. Will you come? Can we go get my costume stuff tonight? The book has a few pictures. See what we need me to look like?" Carrie waved the book toward her mom's face.

Her mom laughed, "Back off, baby. I need to see to drive. Of course, I'll be there. Let's go home and make a plan about what you're going to wear. Then we will go. Tell me what you learned about Helen Keller in the meantime."

"Sure," Carrie answered. "I know all about her."

**Analysis of Carrie's Early Childhood Narrative.** Carrie's identity as a reader in elementary school showed her as the agent disliking the act of reading in the scene of school. Occasionally, the teacher would be an agent investing Carrie with a positive reading experience through the agency of a fun, interactive assignment that caused Carrie to take a liking to reading short term. This positive Discourse-Identity with her teacher and an assignment helped to override her problems in reading. In the end though, it seemed that Carrie had a Nature-identity when she claimed that her ADHD was the true agent in her failed purpose of comprehending her texts.

### **Carrie's Secondary School Narrative**

Carrie shook her head, trying to draw her attention back to the textbook on her desk. "What page are we on?" she whispered to Gina, who always got all A's.

"Page 145," she whispered back. "Shh!"

Carrie turned the page to 145. 'Oops,' she thought. 'I was a couple behind. I really must have spaced out. Civil War, blah, blah, blah.'

"All right, Carrie. Your turn to read," Mrs. Stone said.

Panic filled Carrie's eyes and her chest got all tight feeling. She looked down at the page in front of her.

"Second paragraph," Gina was whispering to her.

"Um..." Carrie continued to stall. Mrs. Stone shook her head and marked something in her gradebook that was always open and ready for some points to be deducted.

"Gina, will you please read, so Carrie can figure out where we are?"

Carrie groaned. ‘She’s probably going to call on me again in a minute,’ she thought. ‘*I’m just stupid*. I can’t read this stuff aloud. I told Mom I hate school. I knew this was going to be a bad day, but she made me come. Ugh,’ she put her head on her desk and closed her eyes.

**Analysis of Carrie’s Secondary School Narrative.** Carrie continued to have a Nature-identity of reading that stemmed from her feelings of a lack of agency in reading well based on her ADHD and her self-ascribed stupidity. She also in middle school developed a Discourse-identity of a struggling reader that was in part a positive reading experience when her teacher, the agent, would help individually and let her test in isolation, the agency that had a purpose of lending support to Carrie’s reading success. Negatively, teachers were also the agents in creating a negative Discourse-identity as a struggling reader when they used the agency of Round Reading pedagogy with the purpose of increasing reading fluency that instead for students like Carrie ended in decreasing comprehension and interest in reading.

### **Summary of Analyses of Carrie’s Narrative and Further Contemplation**

Clearly, Carrie’s reading identity was closely tied to her Nature-identity as a person with ADHD. In fact, research from Plourde et al (2015), suggested that there are genetic links between ADHD and poor comprehension in readers. According to their research, “inattention does not appear to ‘cause’ reading difficulties. Results indicate that a ‘shared genes’ model does provide an accurate explanation of the association between reading comprehension and inattention” (p. 1080). So, Carrie’s strong Nature-identity as a poor reader because of her ADHD can be backed up by science, since genetically the two are linked.

Interestingly enough, she never addressed the institution's responsibility to help her overcome this deficit. She seemed almost resigned to face it on her own and accepted full responsibility as a struggling reader as an innate fault in herself. When she found measured success as a reader, it was always in spite of her ADHD, which she seemed to still make the agent of her reading issues throughout her life.

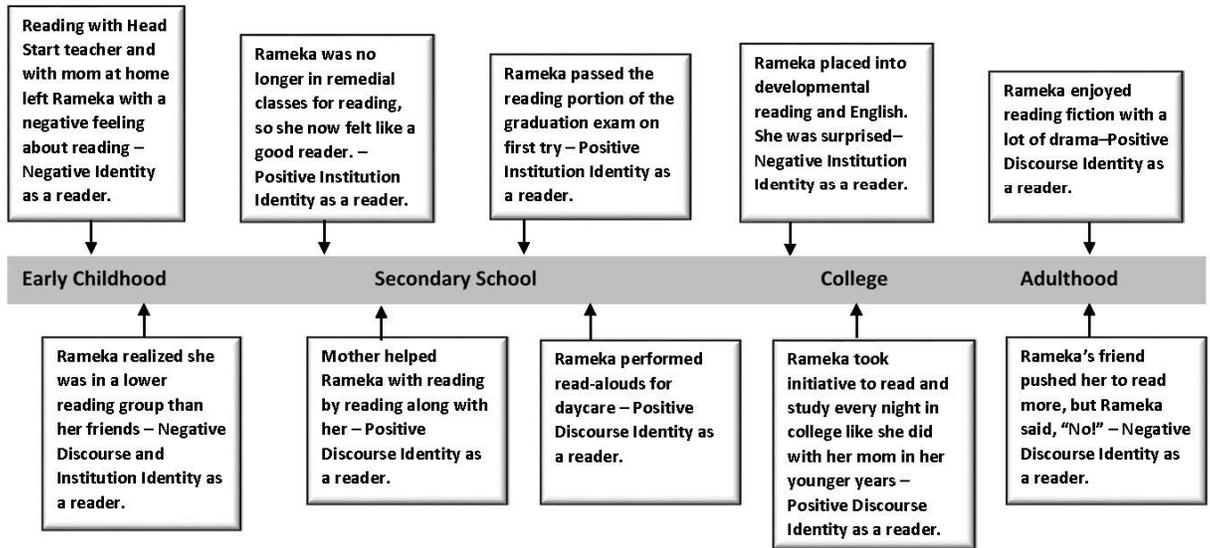
### **Rameka's Story**

Rameka (pseudonym) was a 20-year-old African-American student who successfully completed the lowest level developmental reading course at ABC Community College. She was raised by a single mother in a low income household as evidenced by her receiving free or reduced lunches in public school. She was the only participant who mentioned going to Head Start. In elementary school, she discovered that her reading skills were not on par with her classmates. By middle school her confidence in her reading was bolstered because she no longer had to go to remedial reading classes. In high school, she struggled, but maintained a positive attitude. She passed the reading graduation exam on her first try. In college, she was a traditional student in the sense that she started college directly after graduating high school the previous spring. Rameka tested into developmental reading, math, and English. By college she seemed to have a firm grasp on her strengths and weaknesses as a reader and what to do to accommodate her weaknesses. She dropped out of ABC Community College after two years of coursework with little success in college level courses. Rameka's timeline of reading identities is included below. (See Table 4.6).

Table 4.6

## Rameka’s Chronology of Reading Identities

Collected through interviews, classwork, and survey.



*Note.* This table shows the reading stories that Rameka shared with the researcher. The researcher then fictionalized two of these stories into narratives to give a rich, detailed picture of the events.

### Rameka’s Early Childhood Narrative

Rameka’s feet couldn’t quite reach the brightly colored carpet under her desk, so she liked to swing them back and forth as she sat doing seatwork in Mrs. Thomas’s class. She looked up from her paper where she had been practicing writing her spelling words five times each. Her eyes caught the new poster Mrs. Thomas had hung over the whiteboard in the front of the room. “Reading Can Take You Places” it said in big colorful letters. There was a hot air balloon, a picture of a castle, a picture of a river, and

a picture of that tower in Paris. Rameka sighed. ‘Reading never takes me anywhere, but in my kitchen to read with Mama at night,’ she thought.

“Thank you, Blue Birds. You may return to your desks,” Mrs. Thomas was so cheerful, it almost sounded like she was singing. ‘She really is a nice teacher,’ Rameka mused.

Jenny walked over from Mrs. Thomas’s small group table and sat in the desk snug against Rameka’s. They sat in pairs in the classroom and Jenny was her chair pair. Jenny said, “Hey” as she sat down dropping her book with a clatter. “Oops,” she said,

I bent over to pick up the book from the floor. It was opened when I sat it on the desk. ‘Wow, look at all those words. Look at how small they are. And there’s barely any pictures,’ she thought as she handed Jenny her book. “Here you are,” she said quietly.

Jenny smiled. “Thanks. I’m a mess. Always dropping things. Hey, Mrs. Thomas just called for the Robins. Aren’t you a Robin?” she asked.

“Yep, I am.” For the first time this thought upset her. Rameka pulled her reading book out of her desk. As she walked to the front of the room, she flipped through her book and saw pages filled with brightly colored pictures and huge words, and not many words either. ‘*Something’s not right,*’ she thought. She slid into the chair at the small group table and looked at the three boys there with her. None of her friends were Robins.

“All right, kids. Let’s look on page 18 and get started,” said Mrs. Thomas. Rameka opened her book to page 18, scrunched down in her chair, and frowned. ‘I want to be a Blue Bird,’ she thought. ‘Why can’t I be one?’

**Analysis of Rameka’s Early Childhood Narrative.** From Head Start to elementary school, Rameka’s teachers were agents in the act of pushing the importance

of reading, which through that school-empowered agency seemed to trigger a negative response about her skills as a reader in the scene of school since every time Rameka talked about reading she used the word “try.” Her mother also played a similar role in the scene of the home, acting as an agent pushing her daughter to read even though she didn’t like it. These Discourse-identities left Rameka feeling like her reading skills were problematic at an early age. School further reinforced these feelings. Ability groupings for reading, led to another negative response to reading. Rameka felt that the institution of the school, the agent, also judged her as a poor reader by the act of putting her in the lower groups. This agency or action of the school left her feeling stigmatized and knowing that “something’s not right” with her reading. This Institution-identity did seem to push her into trying harder to improve her reading skills, but as a negative reinforcement. Interestingly, Rameka indicated many times that if only she would try harder, she could be a better reader. She wanted to be the agent of her reading success, but never seemed to feel that she reached that status at this point in her life.

### **Rameka’s Secondary School Narrative**

Rameka pulled her car in a spot in front of New Horizons Day Care. “You got this,” she said to herself as she checked her hair in the mirror over the visor. She got out of her car, grabbed her tote bag, and walked to the door under the red awning. ‘I guess this is where I go,’ she thought. Going into the darker entry way blinded her for a minute as she entered.

“Can I help you?” an older lady looked up from behind a counter.

“Um, yes, m’am. I’m Rameka. I’m here from ABC High School for my internship. I’m supposed to work with Ms. Tammy.”

“Sure, dear. I’m Mrs. Lucy. Let me take you back,” Mrs. Lucy pushed a button on the wall near her computer and a door to the left clicked open. As we walked down the hallway, we passed several classrooms of small children playing on rugs and one room with several cribs, swings, and bouncers in it.

“Here you are,” she pushed open a door to a classroom on the right. She leaned her head in the door. “Ms. Tammy, this is Miss Rameka, she’ll be your intern from the high school,” she explained.

Ms. Tammy smiled, “All right class. Say hello to Miss Rameka.”

About half a dozen heads swiveled toward the door. “Hey, Hi, Hello!” various voices clamored over each other.

“Miss Rameka, you are just in time. How about you read this story to the class while I set up snacks?”

Rameka’s stomach dropped. ‘Read aloud, me?’ she thought as she smiled and stammered, “*Ehhh.*”

As Ms. Tammy passed her the book, the familiar cover of *Green Eggs and Ham* settled her stomach. “Sure,” she responded again, feeling her confidence build. “I’d be glad to.” Rameka sat in the stool that Ms. Tammy had just vacated and opened the book. “Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss,” she began. “I am Sam...” (Dr. Seuss, 1960, p. 3).

**Analysis of Rameka’s Secondary School Narrative.** High school followed the same pattern of reading for Rameka. The school was the agent of her reading identity by telling her she was a good reader because she passed the section of the graduation exam. This Institution-identity coupled with the continued Discourse-identity with her mother’s continued support of her reading, did lead Rameka to a stronger identity as a reader. She

finally showed some agency and confidence when she was asked to read to younger children as part of her intern program in high school. She eventually concluded that she enjoyed reading to the students and was better than she thought she would be.

### **Summary of Analyses of Rameka's Narratives and Further Contemplation**

Rameka seemed to be a strong believer in the intuition-identities set for her as a reader. When her schools told her she was a struggling reader by putting her in low reading groups or in college remedial reading classes, she seemed to absorb that negative reading identity. When they moved her from the remedial classes, told her she passed the reading section of the graduation exam, and asked her to read to younger students as a part of her internship in high school, she assumed the identity of a strong reader because the institution of the school told her she was one. In elementary school she seemed to crave an affinity-identity as a strong reader as evidenced by her goal of moving to a higher reading group. Hall (2009) discussed this idea of the risk students take when trying to move from one academic level to another. She noted that negotiating statuses in the classroom is a challenge that “requires teachers to understand the social world of their students, the balances they strive for, and the risks associated with obtaining what is requested of them in school” (p. 305). Teachers need to be aware of what students like Rameka are struggling with alongside their reading struggles. Rameka was particularly susceptible to absorbing the institution-identities that were presented to her, whether positive or negative. This may also been influenced by her low socio-economic, minority, single-parent status. Although this status did not indicate that Rameka would have inherent difficulties with reading, it did beg the question of whose discourse of reading success was being valued, since her reading Discourse at home did not seem to translate

to success in the Discourse of school reading in the early years. Compton-Lilly (2003) noted that this disconnect between “mainstream discourses and alternative discourses about reading” can affect students as they learn to read and value reading (p. 138). It took Rameka a long time to feel successful as a reader in the discourse of mainstream schooling; however, her reading at home and with her mother tended to a more positive successful identity. The tension between these discourses may have had an overall negative impact on Rameka’s overall identity as a non-reader. A continued presence in her reading identity was her Discourse-identity as a co-reader with her mother. Her mother took a strong role in helping her daughter as a reader in school, by reading the texts along with her daughter. I noticed that there was no mention of this continuing in college and wondered if there was any connection between this discontinued Discourse-identity and Rameka’s struggles as a reader in college that ultimately led to her dropping out of college. Another strong negative reaction came when Rameka was asked to read aloud or participate in popcorn reading, the practice of having one student read aloud then pick another student randomly to read as they finish reading. This had implications for discussion of effective reading pedagogy in that this method of reading aloud created tensions in the struggling reader that ultimately hindered comprehension and reading skills, which indicated that it was not an effective pedagogical move. In the end, Rameka did not identify as a reader.

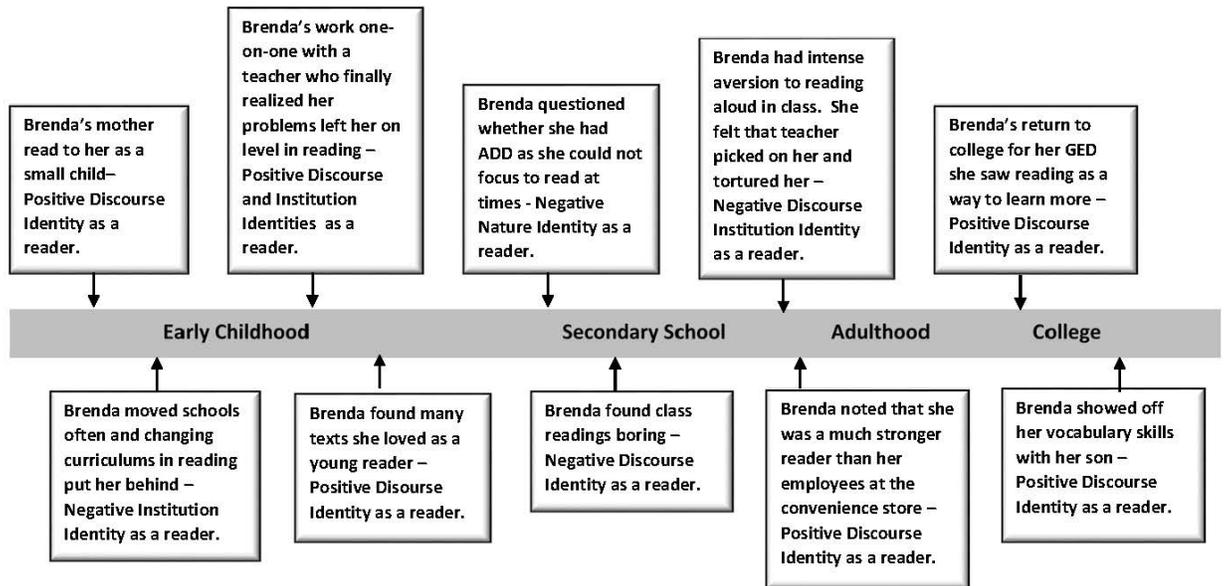
### **Brenda's Story**

Brenda (pseudonym) was a 45-year-old Caucasian woman who had recently completed her GED through the adult education program and started taking college classes at ABC Community College. She was a divorced mother of two boys. She split custody with her ex-husband. Brenda worked full time at a gas station and attended college full time as well. She was raised in household with both parents and never received free or reduced lunches. Brenda's challenges with reading started early in part because she changed schools frequently in elementary school. After being held back and getting some intensive one-on-one teaching in third grade, Brenda was finally on grade level in reading. By middle school, Brenda hated literature class because she was made to read aloud and embarrassed. She began to hate school and eventually dropped out in high school. In her 40's, Brenda came to ABC Community College's adult education program to pursue her GED. She accomplished that goal and moved on to the developmental reading, English, and math classes, where she completed the reading and English classes, but struggled with math. Brenda was put on academic probation the semester after her participation in this research and had not returned to ABC Community College at time of analysis. Brenda's timeline of reading identities is included below. (See Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

## Brenda’s Chronology of Reading Identities

Collected through interviews, classwork, and survey.



*Note.* This table shows the reading stories that Brenda shared with the researcher. The researcher then fictionalized three of these stories into narratives to give a rich, detailed picture of the events.

### Brenda’s Early Childhood Narrative

Brenda looked around the classroom at her new classmates. ‘Third school in two years,’ she thought while wondering if any of the girls still needed a best friend. ‘That girl with the long brown braids and the striped shirt looks nice,’ Brenda’s gaze travelled over posters on the wall. There were strange letters with symbols over top of them on several posters that made her nervous. She liked the posters with the math facts. They made sense to her.

“Brenda, can you come over to my desk for a little one-on-one work?” Mrs. Lindsey, her new teacher asked from the back of the room.

Brenda silently slid from her chair and walked to her desk.

“Ok, Brenda, since you’re new to my class we have to do some activities to see how your reading is, ok?”

“Sure,” Brenda mumbled and sat in the chair that Mrs. Lindsey pointed to.

“Ok, let’s look at the cover of the book. Can you read to me the phonetic sounds on the cover here? Just sound them out,” she clarified.

Brenda squinted at the letters of the front. “Or, shhh, c, h, er, um... er, and er?” she asked.

Mrs. Lindsey smiled in a kind of sad way, “Let’s try the story. Read from here, please,” she requested, pointing to a page with a lot of words.

Brenda looked at the page, “Um... I don’t know the first word.”

“That’s Kevin,” Mrs. Lindsey said.

“Ok. ‘Kevin said what can we do for fun? We can make a...’ (Dickson, 1978, p. 4). Brenda trailed off. “I don’t know that word. It wasn’t on the list at my old school,” Brenda tried to explain to her teacher.

“Your list?” She asked. “Oh, you didn’t do phonics there? I see.”

“Um, I don’t know. We learned our sight words. I know a bunch of those,” Brenda offered.

“Well, ok. We’ll get you up to speed in no time. Just head on back to your desk.”

**Analysis of Brenda’s Early Childhood Narrative.** The institution of schooling became the agent of a more negative reading identity. Brenda attributed the lack of

consistency in her early reading curriculum (agency) to a failure of her to thrive as a reader in the school (scene). Interestingly, she noted that the schools (agents) initially seemed disinterested or perhaps unaware of her reading difficulties because she was well-behaved and did her work. This Institution-identity seemed to place her in the category of non-reader.

### **Brenda's Secondary School Narrative**

"I really, really don't want to go to Lit class. Come cut with me. We can go hang out in the bathroom on the back hall until it's over," Brenda cajoled her friend Iris.

"Please...."

Iris shook her head. "No, if I get caught again, my daddy is going to kill me. Literally. Just hurry up."

They skidded into their seats in Mrs. Weathers' class just as the bell rang. She was no nonsense and started giving direction before the final echo of the bell cleared the hallway.

"Turn to page 45. We're reading 'The Lady or the Tiger.' Hurry now. No time to waste," she reprimanded as the room full of freshman groaned.

Brenda followed along quietly in the book as Mrs. Weathers called on student after student to read. The more minutes that passed in the class, the more Brenda's dread began to build. 'Oh, crap. I think we're reading all class period. There's no way the witch won't call on me,' she thought. 'I'm gonna stutter and they're going to make fun of me. I can't stand it.' Brenda could see the redness growing on her chest and arms as the hives started to emerge. 'Damn, she hasn't even called me yet and I'm freaking out.'

“Brenda. Your turn,” Mrs. Weathers called. ‘Shit, where are we?’ I panicked momentarily. “Brenda, if you don’t know where we are, stand up.”

Brenda slowly rose to her feet. The entire class snickered or at least that’s what Brenda heard.

“Hold your book up high. Read from the first full paragraph on page 47,” she instructed.

Brenda’s entire body was bright red. She could feel the heat coming off her face in waves like when you open the oven to take out the turkey on Thanksgiving Day. It was that hot. She started to read, “This was the king’s semibarbaric method of admin...” (Stockton, 2000, p.47)

“No, it’s semi-bar-bar-ic!” interjected Mrs. Weathers.

“Duh,” mumbled Beth from behind me. “Hurry up already, idiot.”

The heat burned even brighter and Brenda sped up her reading until it was almost incomprehensible even to her own ears.

“No, girl. Slow down. No one can understand that mush mouth. Enunciate,” she corrected.

Brenda wanted to sink into the floor and disappear into nothingness.

Miraculously, the bell rang. ‘She is *always picking at me*. No one else. I will not be back,’ she thought to herself. And she wasn’t.

**Analysis of Brenda’s Secondary School Narrative.** Brenda’s strongest reading identity in middle school was brought upon her by a teacher, the agent of Brenda’s developed hatred of reading aloud (act). Because of the power imbued to the teacher through the institution of the school, she could create this Institution-identity that

spawned a lasting disconnect between Brenda and schooling and reading. Brenda mentioned the shame and embarrassment that this pedagogical choice of the teacher left her feeling on a daily basis. Brenda lost her identity as a grade-level reader and ultimately left school.

### **Brenda's Adulthood Narrative**

Michael rolled his eyes at his mother and shook his head. "Why are you always complaining about that homework? It sounds easy enough."

"It isn't east to find words I don't know for this Personal Dictionary. I may not be great at grammar, but I know a lot of words. I read all the time. Well, I did before I had school and work all the time. Anyways, this assignment feels redundant," Brenda told her son.

"You even know what that means?" Michael asked.

"If I didn't know what it means, I wouldn't be using it," Brenda said. "*Redundant. Keeps getting old. Doing it over and over. I'm getting sick of it,*" she replied.

Michael walked over to the bookshelf in the corner of the dining room/study. "Redundant," he mumbled as he flipped through the pages, then paused to read. "Dang, you really do know that word."

*"Well, duh! I'm not going to say something I don't know. You know me, I've always been one, since a lot of things that have happened the past couple years, that strived on not necessarily wanting to be smart, but wanting to learn. And you know, if I say something, it's because I know what I'm saying. I'm not going sit there and be like a dummy. Talk all these words and think, hmm, I pray to God that no one asks me what*

*they mean,*” She told him walking by him and ruffling his hair. “You could learn something from your old mama,” she said.

**Analysis of Brenda’s Adulthood Narrative Three.** Brenda’s life and work experiences brought new identity as both a reader and a learner. At this point in her life, Brenda did not let the college’s (agent) putting her in remedial classes (act) to improve her reading skills (purpose) dim her view of herself as a successful reader. She felt she had the power to push through this negative Institution-identity and it did not seem to change her personal belief in herself as an able reader. In fact, she bragged that in her relationship with her son, she was the agent in correctly using large vocabulary and proving to him that she used it correctly. In this Discourse-identity, she maintained her status as a strong reader with a large vocabulary.

### **Summary of Analyses of Brenda’s Narratives and Further Contemplation**

School was not a place of positive reading identity for Brenda. Through the struggles in changing schools and reading curriculums to the humiliation of reading aloud, Brenda found school reading and, in the end, school itself to be undesirable. Similar to the students in Triplett’s (2014) study, Brenda seemed to have a context driven identity as a struggling reader. In contexts where state standards were measures, talk was not valued, reading was at frustration level, and comprehension was not taught, she was a struggling reader (p. 123). In contexts where Brenda was in control of her purpose for reading, Brenda was not a struggling reader.

Indeed, once the school house was no longer involved, Brenda was a strong agent in her own reading identity. She seemed to believe that reading was a necessary skill that she was perfectly capable of handling effectively. She bragged about her large

vocabulary and her superior skills in reading and math over her co-workers. She took her placement in college developmental reading in stride and breezed through that course with a can-do attitude. By her own admission, Brenda was a reader if she had the time to do it and an interest in the content. She touched on the question of whether earlier in life she had missed out on being labeled ADD, which would have given her a Nature-identity to help define her difficulties in staying interested and on task when presented with content that did not necessarily pique her curiosity.

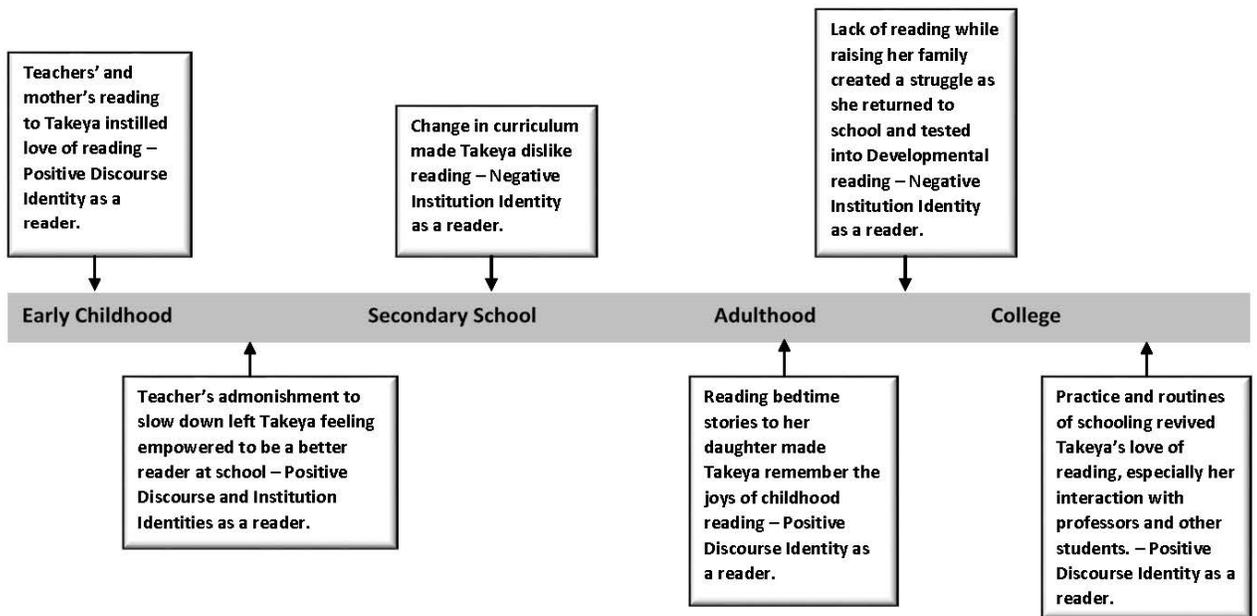
### **Takeya's Story**

Takeya (pseudonym) was a 44-year-old African American female who had returned to school after a lengthy break from formal schooling. She tested into reading, math, and English developmental classes at ABC Community College. As a child, she lived with both parents in a low income household, as evidenced by her receiving free or reduced lunches in school. In elementary school she developed a strong love of reading with the aid of her teachers and her mother. By high school, reading had become something of a challenge for her because she did not enjoy the curriculum associated with the classes; however, she always enjoyed reading novels. She had a grown child and grandchildren. As a parent, she instilled a love of reading in her daughter in much the same way that one was instilled in her by her mother. When she enrolled at ABC Community College, she was undeterred by her placement in developmental English. Takeya suffered from some health issues that at times affected her schooling in college. Takeya had the least to say about herself as a reader; therefore, her narratives and analysis are shorter than the other participants'. Takeya's timeline of reading identities is included below. (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

## Takeya’s Chronology of Reading Identities

Collected through interviews, classwork, and survey.



*Note.* This table shows the reading stories that Takeya shared with the researcher. The researcher then fictionalized two of these stories into narratives to give a rich, detailed picture of the events.

### Takeya’s Early Childhood Narrative

Takeya crossed her legs Indian style and wiggled to the left until she was totally covering the green square on the rug. “I’m in my spot, Mrs. King,” Takeya called out to her teacher.

Mrs. King smiled down at the young girl with the long braids and the joyous smile. “Good job, Takeya. All right, class. Are you ready to hear more about Ramona?” she asked.

A general sound of approval erupted through the room. “I can’t wait, Mrs. King. Hurry, hurry please,” she begged.

Mrs. King leaned over to pull a book off the shelf. Takeya bounced slightly in anticipation. Mrs. King opened the book to the page marked with puppy dog bookmark that Takeya had bought her for Christmas. “Who can remind us where we left off?” Mrs. King asked.

Takeya’s arm shot up. “Oh, I can!”

Mrs. King chuckled. “I don’t think anyone has ever loved Ramona as much as you do.”

“Oh, yes, I love Ramona, but I really love how you read it, Mrs. King. The voices. You read it like it is happening right here. Like it is real life.”

Mrs. King smiled. “Well, thank you, Takeya. So, what happened last?”

“Um, Ramona and Beezus were talking about the hole in the house for making Ramona’s room and what kind of monsters or ghosts could come under the plastic. So, will you read now?” Ramona asked.

“Sure. ‘Chapter four. The First Day of School. When the first day of school finally arrived, Ramona made her own bed so her mother would be liberated. She hid the lumps under stuffed animals. That’s cheating, said Beezus,’ (Cleary, 1975/2006, p. 48.)” read Mrs. King. Takeya giggled in delight as she heard Mrs. King’s squeaky rendition of Beezus’s voice. ‘I love this story,’ she thought as Mrs. King continued. ‘I hope it never ends.’

**Analysis of Takeya’s Early Childhood Narrative.** Takeya had a positive identity as a reader. Her mother was the agent of strong ties to reading for Takeya through her acts of reading with her child and encouraging her child. This Discourse-identity helped Takeya develop a strong identity as a reader. The teacher at school was also an agent in creating a love of reading in Takeya through her acts of read alouds and gentle admonishments in class to slow down. This Institution-identity was nourished by a strong bond between the teacher and student.

### **Takeya’s Adulthood Narrative**

“All right, honey. Climb in,” Takeya lifted the Care Bear blanket as her 6-year-old daughter, Jennae, slid into her bed. “Which one tonight?” Takeya brushed a loose hair from Jennae’s forehead.

“Um, *Cinderella*, no *Snow White*, so you can do the dwarf voices,” she giggled.

“*Snow White* again? Goodness, sweetie. That’s the 100<sup>th</sup> time this week.”

“No, it’s not! There’s only seven days in a week, silly,” she giggled again.

“Well, Hi-ho, it is,” Takeya reached down to the shelf under the bed side table and pulled a Disney storybook from the pile. She leaned over to kiss her daughter on the top of her head. “I’m just glad you love reading as much as I do, Jennae. Reading is so important,” she explained.

“Yes. It’s important for you to do Dopey’s voice. Please, mommy,” Jennae snuggled deeper under her covers. “I’m ready.”

**Analysis of Takeya’s Adulthood Narrative.** After completing high school, Takeya’s reading identity once again turned positive. She was the agent of this improved status as a reader through her reading interactions with her mother and daughter through

the acts of shared reading experiences. Her mother's actions throughout Takeya's childhood were reflected in Takeya's actions as a mother. These Discourse-identities led to a positive reading identity for not only Takeya, but also for her daughter as Takeya indicated by talking about her A's in English and reading.

### **Summary of Analyses of Takeya's Narratives and Further Contemplation**

Takeya identified as a reader from an early age. Although she hit some areas of struggle in reading in high school due to the curriculum and was placed in developmental reading in college, she maintained a confident reading identity mostly through her positive attitude about the importance of reading and hard work. Takeya's mother also seemed to instill a love of reading in her daughter mostly through example and using reading and books as rewards. I also found it interesting that Takeya talked about the sounds of reading aloud and how it made stories come alive at an early age. Kainz and Vernon-Feagans (2007) found that family reading characteristics are stronger predictors for reading success in kindergarten entry than for reading success through third grade indicating that over time this family influence is less crucial than school-related factors that become the better predictors for reading development through the years (p. 422). This research brings into question whether Takeya's later struggles with reading came from poor schooling in the lower grades. She seemed to equate "good" reading with spelling and pronouncing words correctly in elementary school; yet, by high school when the reading activities seemed to incorporate more comprehension skills and critical thinking, she stated that she struggled.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions**

In this chapter, I reflected on the salient issues discovered in the narratives of my participants. The voices of these developmental readers created a strong narrative of their reading lives that had implications beyond just one person's personal feelings about herself as a reader. It was my hope that researchers, teachers, and students would gain valuable insights from these implications.

### **Reflections on Community Colleges**

Although I did not ask my participants about their decision to attend a community college instead of a four-year school, it was apparent by looking at their cumulative records that none of them even attempted to get into a four-year school at the time they enrolled at ABC Community College because none of them had an ACT or SAT score on record. All six of these students placed in both developmental reading and English. They were clearly beneficiaries of the open-enrollment policy at ABC Community College. However, after reflecting on the fact that four of these six students did not come close to finishing their degrees at the college, I wondered if ABC Community College did enough for these students beyond improving their reading skills. Schudde and Goldrick-Rab (2014) reviewed much research on community colleges and found that “cultural capital” or “social know-how” must be present in a student in order for them to be able to successfully manage the college setting. Even though community colleges often deal with

students without these necessary skills as well as with students who are academically underprepared, they do not have policies and procedures in place to help these students “in navigating bureaucratic hurdles and dealing with conflicting demands” (p. 8). My research may have confirmed that in some cases community colleges are not doing enough outside of academics to help academically underprepared students succeed in the school setting. We need more research to look at students’ needs outside of the classroom. Deil-Amen (2011) echoed and expanded on this thought when she called for more research on how students “value, understand, and negotiate their open and broad access college contexts” (p. 26). It falls on community colleges to make sure that the college context for these students is beneficial to their long-term success. According to Deil-Amen (2011), this is not measured through “accountability systems that prioritize degree completion” (p. 24). Unfortunately for students at ABC Community College, those are the exact measures of funding and success currently being proposed by the state governing body. So, there is definitely much work to be done in research to help educate both the general population and the educational hierarchy about the best way to find success and measure it for the community college student.

### **Reflections on Developmental Education**

One thing that became clear to me through his research was that none of these developmental reading students were the same and none of them had the same reading identities throughout life, which meant to be that changes in reading pedagogy and attitudes through all levels of education could improve the reading identities of struggling students. Also, I found that my initial dismay at finding so many high school graduates placed into developmental classes was misguided at best and elitist at the worst.

According to Attewell, Lavin, Domina, and Levey (2014), the stereotype that the students who end up in developmental classes are those students who came from poor high schools with low academic preparation or are students with extremely poor academic skills themselves is not correct (179). They also noted that remedial education is not only for economically disadvantaged students and that research has found that developmental classes are “a preserve of a small group of academic incompetents who have no hope of success in higher education” (Attewell et al, p. 179). They discussed that the gap in achievement of the remedial students in their study more accurately reflected the basic skills the students were lacking from high school, not participation in remedial classes in college (Attewell et al, p. 180). In fact, passing remedial classes improved the likelihood that students with similar academic challenges would graduate from community college (Attewell et al, p. 180). So, the value of remedial or developmental classes at the community college level is clear.

In my research, although Rebecca, Carrie, and Maneta all brought their preexisting reading skills gap from high school into college and landed in developmental reading classes, their reading attitudes were not fixed. By virtue of their placement in developmental reading classes, they were not lesser students or “academic incompetents.” This research in their own voices brought this fact clearly into focus for me as a researcher and more importantly as a teacher of developmental reading.

### **Reflections on Narratives, Restorying, and Identity**

As I completed this research, I realized that I had some new understandings that I wanted to address about narratives and their importance to one’s overall identity and specifically to one’s reading identity. As Hall (2016) noted adolescents come to class

already understanding their identities as readers in school and what that identity means in relation to their label as a good or bad reader (p. 57). When I interviewed my participants, they were well beyond the label of adolescent, and the years had only cemented their internal labels as good or bad readers. One of the strengths of using their stories as readers to analyze their reading identities was that the act of telling their stories opened a space for them to reimagine and reanalyze their reading identities. Bruner (2004) posited that “when someone tells you his life...it is always a cognitive achievement rather than a through-the-clear-crystal recital of something univocally given” (p. 692). So, in sharing their life stories as readers, my participants were interpreting and therefore analyzing their lives as readers. This meta-cognitive act allowed my participants to become the stories that they told about themselves. It empowered them to define or redefine their reading identities. This could be seen when Maneta contemplated her status as a reader after sharing her narratives with me. “Am I a reader? Yeah, I would say yes, because I’m in school now and I have to read, but if I wasn’t in school, yes, I would have been read that *Fifty Shades of Grey* book.” Maneta’s identity as a reader did not stagnate with the ups and downs of her Institution-Identities as a reader and during her storytelling of her reading life, she realized that she indeed was a reader for reading’s sake, not just as a giver of information. Without the narratives and the time to reflect on her reading life, she most likely would not have identified as a reader.

Another reason that I finished this research study enamored with story as a research tool was because it filled the research with the sounds of my participants. Barone’s (2007) notion that there was a “long overdue recognition of the sound of silence, a sudden painful awareness of the extent to which human voices have been

systematically excluded from the kinds of traditional research texts” really resonated with me as I started planning this research (p. 463). As an instructor in developmental reading classes at ABC Community College, I had been struck by the fact that these students coming into college had little knowledge, recourse, or voice in their placement in these classes. They were powerless agents in their own educations. I hoped that by letting their stories be told that I would be giving voice to the voiceless. And the strength of their voices was impactful to me as a researcher. Takeya said, “I loved the way my mother pronounced the words to me. She made the stories seem like they were real.” This direct quote that when spoken was full of love and tenderness for a mother long gone could not be replicated from an answer on a survey or a statistic. Takeya’s long-standing identity as a reader was born from that tender statement and that remembered story.

### **Research Questions Revisited**

**How do developmental reading students in the community college identify themselves as readers?**

#### **Maneta**

Ultimately, Maneta identified as a reader, but through her life-long reading narrative, she vacillated between having a positive reading identity and a negative one. Her Discourse-Identities tended to be positive reading ones, especially in the early grades. By middle and high school, Maneta’s reading identity moved from one where she had the agency to be a part of a discourse that created a positive reading identity for herself to a Nature-Identity that left her feeling unable to “get it” when reading. She joined an affinity group in high school that did not value reading. Then, she had a further

blow to her self-confidence as a reader when she failed the graduation exam and the institute of the school clearly called her out as a poor reader. It was not until she found a valuable purpose in her reading, helping her mother's health, that she regained her agency as a reader and became a reader again. In returning to college, she received a setback as a reader when she was placed in developmental reading classes; however, her continued sense of purpose led her quickly back to a positive reading identity through both the institution and in discourse with instructors and college peers. Her success in college classes boosted her confidence in her reading and helped her see the importance of teaching her sons the value of reading from a young age.

### **Rebecca**

Rebecca's did not identify as a reader. Although she understood the necessity of reading and at times throughout her academic life worked hard to be a better reader, she never took on the identity of a reader. However, even in her identity as a non-reader, Rebecca took ownership of her reading by finding ways to improve when necessary. She did not let the Institute-Identities of a poor reader dissuade her from graduating from high school or eventually doing well in her first semesters of college reading. While finding reading entertaining with the right text, Rebecca still had a long list of better things to do with her time. She valued content over text and purpose over the aesthetic pleasure of reading.

### **Carrie**

Carrie had the strongest negative Nature-Identity as a reader. Her ADHD defined her as a reader as far as she was concerned. She would occasionally try to read for fun,

but after reflecting for a bit, she declared she could not call herself a reader. She seemed to feel like her ADHD diagnoses precluded her ability to identify as a reader. Her lack of reading comprehension and academic success lead to her calling herself stupid, trying to get out of going to school because it was embarrassing, and eventually becoming home-schooled to finish high school. Once in college, she continued to work to find ways to make reading work for her, but it was still an on-going struggle.

### **Rameka**

Rameka was not a reader. Not because she could not read well, but in the end, it just was not an interest for her. This was evidenced through her reading identities throughout her narratives. Rameka had a continued disconnect between her reading and her Institution-Identity as a reader. It was not that they were conflict; it was simply that Rameka only took on the identity that the school deemed appropriate at any given time. When she was in low reading groups in elementary school, she felt disappointed and defined as a poor reader. When she no longer had those classes in middle school, she must now be a good reader. This pattern of buy-in to the power of the school as definer of reading skill continued through to her developmental reading class in college. She said, “I wasn’t really surprised that I had to take remedial reading. Not really. But maybe because I thought I wasn’t going to have to take it since I passed my graduation exam reading on the first try.” There was no sense of ‘I thought I did well, but I didn’t pass it.’ Instead, she demurred to the results of the Institute’s graduation exam as a predictive indicator of her placement exam success. Rameka was a passive recipient of her reading identities.

## **Brenda**

Brenda struggled as a young reader because of moving schools in elementary school. She missed some key benchmarks in reading along the way, and by third grade she was unable to read. This negative Institution-Identity did not remain long after Brenda received one-on-one instruction from a teacher who was “damn good.” Brenda was clear to note that she no longer had reading problems after that; however, she continued to dislike school reading throughout middle and high school because of the curriculum, pedagogies, and boring texts. Her response to these negative reactions was to drop out of high school. In the years between schooling, Brenda noted that she was a stronger reader, and therefore a better worker, than many of her co-workers. When she returned to college, she also had a clear Discourse-Identity as a strong reader in comparison with her peers. Brenda noted that she was a reader on her own terms: when she could chose the text, time, and purpose for reading.

## **Takeya**

Takeya had a long love of reading. She was a reader from her early education until now. She seemed to have a love of reading for entertainment and for the aesthetic beauty of the words. She also understood the importance of reading for information. Her many positive Discourse-Identities with her family throughout the years cemented her love of reading. When returning to college many years out of practice with academic reading, her confidence in her reading identity as a strong reader flagged a bit, but was soon bolstered by more positive Discourse-Identities with peers and instructors.

## **What do these stories say about their paths to developmental classes in college reading?**

### **Maneta**

The first point that struck me about Maneta's path to developmental reading classes was her family's lack of formal education. She noted that she was the first of her siblings to graduate high school and the only to go to college. As a first generation college student, she did not have the role models to guide her into the collegiate realm. Statistically, according to U.S. Department of Education, students with parents with only a high school diploma or the equivalent were more likely to be enrolled in remedial college courses than students with parents with some college coursework (Sparks & Malkus, 2013, p.5). Maneta followed this pattern.

Maneta's purpose for and engagement with reading also presented as a path to developmental reading. When Maneta started school, she stated that she loved reading because she got to "learn more and find out information." Moving into middle school, her reading pattern changed to "get what you gotta get and move on." This coincided with her waning love of reading. It wasn't until Maneta once again had a purpose for finding information from her reading that she started liking it again. She even realized that "you can't do nothing without it in your life." So, even though no one pushed her to go to college, she wanted more for her life and went on to college. That is when she found herself in developmental reading classes, but she still had a positive attitude about reading, stating that "in order to keep up, you've got to read." So, although Maneta did not have a strong support system to push her academically and get her to college, she found her own purposes and motivation to do so.

## **Rebecca**

Rebecca's path to developmental college reading was pretty straightforward. After a positive start with reading in elementary school because "it was easy," Rebecca soon became frustrated with and negative about reading. She did not feel like she was good at it, but she found ways to get by in high school, such as carrying around a dictionary and getting help from friends. She was consistent in her assertion that she liked reading things that were of particular interest to her, but that she still did not consider herself as a reader.

By the end of high school and several failed attempts at the graduation exam, she graduated high school for her mother. She lacked internal motivation to go to college at the time, and after six wild years of work and parties, she returned to college. Not passing the placement test was a disappointment to her initially, but in hindsight she was glad that was where she was placed because it ultimately helped her get back on track academically.

## **Carrie**

Carrie's path to developmental reading in college was lined up the minute she was diagnosed with ADHD. Her intrinsic belief that she could never be a good reader set her on the path to reading struggles throughout school. Although she was motivated to do well in school and worked very hard to do so, she never gained any power in denying that Nature-Identity of a struggling reader. Although she dealt with the path she was on successfully, her reading identity remained negative and inflexible.

## **Rameka**

The path that Rameka took to developmental reading at ABC Community College was paved by the institutions that came first in her academic life. Rameka started off with a negative reading identity as early as Head Start that only worsened as her elementary school placed her in low reading groups and reiterated that negative identity. Although, Rameka's status as a reader rose in school throughout middle school and high school, she never seemed to gain a personal identity as a reader. She relied on the schoolhouse to define her reading status and when the placement test said that she was a poor reader once more, she accepted that label and moved into developmental reading at the college. Rameka's lack of intrinsic definition of herself as a reader followed her all through school and seemed to leave her powerless to see herself as a reader.

## **Brenda**

Brenda's path to developmental reading probably started as she noted that "my mother kept telling the school that I couldn't read, and because I was a quiet kid and did my work, they passed me right along." A weak base for her reading skills coupled with a strong aversion to public humiliation and a worsening attitude about school aided in Brenda's early reading woes. However, her personal views of herself as a reader soon became more positive as she compared herself to her co-workers. After returning to an adult education program to work for and obtain her GED, Brenda was placed in developmental reading. She saw this placement as a place to start her college experience as opposed to a setback in her studies. She had learned to value reading. "Years ago, it probably would intimidate me, but now, I want to learn."

## **Takeya**

Takeya's path to developmental reading in college was a time issue as opposed to an ability issue from past reading identities. Takeya was a life-long reader who was simply out of practice when she returned to college after over a 20 year break from school. She felt like "a dummy" when placed in developmental reading, but soon felt better about the placement. "I can read and there is nothing wrong with not knowing certain things. If I went to college as soon as I graduated high school, I think I would have passed all those tests."

### **How does the structure of their narratives illuminate the powers in control of defining their reading identities individually, socially, academically, and/or culturally?**

By using Burke's (1945/1954) Pentad when analyzing my participants' narratives, I was able to closely look at who was the agent with the power to confer a reading identity upon them in different Discourses in their lives, as noted through Gee's (2000) Discursive Identities. However, it was not necessarily the structures of these narrative that ended up being pertinent, but instead it was who held the power in creating the identities and how that power being wielded in each participant's life ultimately reflected upon her reading identity. Not all of my participants' narratives indicated individual, social, academic, and cultural issues that were impacted by their reading identities; and in fact, many of the narratives informed several of these areas at once. Therefore, instead of answering this question directly, I looked at patterns of concerns in the narratives and discussed them as areas to note.

## **Individual Concerns**

**Mindset.** One of the strongest reading identities that was expressed in the narratives was that of Carrie's Nature-Identity as a poor reader due to her ADHD. Another of the strongest reading identities that remained consistent through all Discourses was Takeya's strong identity as a reader. These two identities seemed to come from opposite theoretical spaces when analyzed with Carol Dweck's (2006) theory of fixed and growth mindsets. Dweck (2006) defined a fixed mindset as "believing that your qualities are carved in stone" and a growth mindset as "a belief that your basic qualities are things that you cultivate through your efforts" (pp. 6-7). Although Carrie's ADHD was not something that was going to go away, her negative reading identity that was tied so firmly to this diagnosis was not stagnant, yet that was how she viewed it. She worked very hard to be a successful reader, but never allowed her firm belief that she could never be a strong reader to waver. Although Carrie's hard work to get by in reading at school and her subsequent success in college was a positive thing, Dweck (2006) would note that this hard work was an attempt by Carrie to look smart at the expense of actually believing she could "change and grow through application and experience" as a reader in this case (p. 7). On the other hand, Takeya exemplified a growth mindset. Even in her early schooling, she noted that "my teacher told me to slow down because I was always reading ahead. I think that was good because it taught me to pronounce my words better." Takeya was able to take suggestions about her reading and see them as a way to improve, not as a value judgement of her reading identity. She realized that like Dweck (2006) noted every setback or criticism is "a learning process—not a battle between the bad you and the good you" (p. 241). Helping developmental reading students develop a growth

mindset may be a way to encourage changes in reading identities that have long lasting effects on the student's life beyond school.

**Self-Efficacy.** In my review of literature, several sources discussed Bandura's (1993) theory of self-efficacy, and I felt that it was also pertinent to some of my participants' narratives as well. Preez (2013) used narratives to look at mature-aged students as they returned to school. Preez noted that when telling stories of times when they were able to have some personal control over their learning environment and felt some self-empowerment in a situation gave the students a sense of efficacy (p. 113). By telling their stories, my participants also gained some sense of efficacy and awareness. As part of his social cognitive theory, Bandura (2004) noted the importance of self-efficacy in improving one's life. He stated four ways to build self-efficacy: mastery experiences, social modeling, social persuasion, and physical and emotional states (pp. 622-623). He noted that low self-efficacy leads to feelings of futility in challenging environments. People with high self-efficacy believe challenges are conquerable "through perseverant effort and improvement of self-management skills" (Bandura, 2004, p. 623). Koch, Slate, and Moore (2012) used Bandura's theory to determine that "a relationship exists between students beliefs about themselves, their motivation, and ultimately their behavior" (p. 76). In looking at the narratives of both Maneta and Rameka, I saw evidence of self-efficacy when they returned to college after an extended break in formal education. Maneta noted that she struggled with vocabulary when she entered college classes. Instead of letting that defeat her, she found a way to fix that problem through flashcards, studying, and repetition. She stated, "It's vocabulary words that I don't know, but, I mean, if you ask me what it is today, and I done read that chapter, I could tell you." She had used self-

efficacy to solve reading problems and improve her identity as a reader. Similarly, Takeya had a sense of self-efficacy and a non-defeatist attitude about placement in developmental reading. She seemed to have developed this efficacy based on the social modeling of her mother. “I saw Mommy reading,” she stated. Takeya also passed that experience to her daughter, who was a successful student in reading. So, when Takeya returned to college and had to relearn and struggled with reading, she had the internal fortitude to remain motivated and behave in a way that ultimately led to her successes in her developmental reading class.

### **Social Concerns**

**Melancholy.** As I already stated, many of these concerns could fall under more than one area, but I tried to place them where I saw their most pressing impact on students. Enriquez’s (2014) research study discussed the idea of the melancholia of the struggling reader, which is “one’s awareness of exclusion from an idealized or normalized identity” in this case that of a good reader (p. 107). She argued that struggling readers “embody” this idea of struggling reader because they are unable to mourn the loss of their identity as a good reader because acknowledging that loss is unacceptable in society (Enriquez, 2014, p. 107). Rameka’s narrative was fraught with melancholy in her elementary years. She mentioned, “I always was struggling in reading and I realized all my friends were reading better than me... And I was like, this is not right.” She embodied the identity of struggling reader at this point, and all through her narratives, she continued to embody the norms of what Bakhtin (1981) called authoritative discourses – those intuitional norms that we all must accept as a society, norms that students like Rameka can internalize and embody. Bakhtin (1981) noted that “the tendency to

assimilate others' discourse takes on an even deeper and more basic significance in an individual's ideological becoming" (p.572). Rameka became a non-reader based on Institutional-Identities that caused her to embody this identity and led to a life-long melancholy about her reading identity even though she had many successes along the way.

Brenda also struggled with reading early in elementary school; however, she never seemed to embrace the label or embody the identity. Instead, she used performative politics, the power of individual agency, to upset the authoritative discourse identity of a struggling reader. Enriquez (2014) noted that "moments of performative politics are agentive opportunities to disrupt an inscribed identity" (p. 107). In fact, Brenda ultimately used her agency to leave the institution of the school entirely when she dropped out. However, before that happened she experienced strong embarrassment at the hands of teachers in the name of literacy. Reading aloud was anathema to Brenda. She used words such as "hate," "scared half to death," "struggle," "torment," and "horrified" are found in her narrative about reading aloud. In fact, she had the physical reaction of breaking into hives over reading aloud. So, although Brenda did not embody a struggling reader in her lifelong narrative as a reader, she had moments such as these when that melancholy of perhaps not being the reader she should be affected her schooling in profound ways, ending it in fact.

### **Academic Concerns**

**Boundary Crossing.** An academic concern that seemed to cross into several of my participants' narratives was the disconnect between home and school literacy. Beach and Ward (2011) discussed the sometimes mismatched privileged practices and

expectations between a student's home literacy identity and their understanding of the school literacy identity causing them to be "boundary crossers" (p. 251). However, this disconnect often caused my participants to feel that school reading was purposeless and as Beach and Ward (2011) noted caused a diminished sense of competence in the area of school reading (p. 251). For example, both Rebecca and Maneta found great purpose and interest in reading outside of school. Rebecca found it in reading about outdoor activities or on social media. Maneta found great purpose in reading about her mother's medication, but cared more about "meeting a new crowd of people" at school than about the literacy the school wanted her to be involved in daily. This boundary crossing worked for both Rebecca and Maneta to an extent, since they both passed through to college level courses successfully after being placed in developmental reading in college; however, attention to this disconnect earlier in their schooling may have made them identify as a reader sooner in Maneta's case or to identify as one at all in Rebecca's case.

### **Cultural Concerns**

**Mushfake.** Since four of my six participants were from low-income families, and three of them were also African-American, discussing the cultural power of the school seemed imperative when looking at the reading identities of these participants. Looking at prevailing attitudes when some of my participants were in elementary school, Edwards (1985) discussed the debate for teachers between non-standard and standard language; he suggested that non-standard language is valid and that "children should not be penalized for using them" (p. 133). He does note that most teachers still see them as deficient. Edwards (1985) calls for a "bidialectalism that is no assault on identity" (p. 135). However, this was problematic for me and my participants who find themselves

measured and defined by tests that measure standard language and reading skills. More recently, Macedo (2006) noted that institutions cannot simply work to make linguistic-minority students skillful in the standard English language (p. 131). According to Macedo (2006), schools instead need to acknowledge the cultural experiences of these students as ways people “produce, transform, and reproduce meaning” (p. 131). This theory is also problematic for my participants as they are evaluated based on a standardized test of reading passages that may or may not resonate with cultural meaning for them. Atwell-Vasey (1998) touched on this dilemma as well when she noted that the curriculum of high school teachers trickles down from college English departments where professors have moved from acknowledging individual reader’s viewpoints to “focusing on those aspects of the text that are common to all...characterizing individual response as private and irrelevant to public life” (pp. 25-26). So, elementary and high school teachers have moved to teaching to standardized, common experiences that by nature revert to the culture in power. Gee (1996) noted how this puts “non-mainstream students and their teachers” in a hard place (p. 146). In order to master school-based Discourses, one must acquire the features of this Discourse and mainstream students are often already steeped in common features based on their home Discourses. This marks non-mainstream students as outsiders from beginning, and even when they manage to acquire some of these school-based Discourses, often without the support of their communities, they are “at best colonized by them” (Gee, 1996, p. 146).

Delpit (1992) agreed that these Discourses were at odds and that teachers must find “a place for the glorification of their students and their forebears” by making the school Discourse incorporate and honor the non-dominant Discourses of the students so

they can identify with the school Discourse (p. 301). However, in too many schools, teachers have not heeded this advice, so students have taken their own actions to survive this Discourse dilemma. Gee (1996) asserted that the non-mainstream students who manage to acquire school-based Discourses do so by using a strong sense of insight, or what I would call meta-cognition. They have to be well aware of how and why they are doing the things they are doing to be marked as complying with the school-based Discourse, and they also have to make amends with the fact that these actions are often in conflict with the beliefs of their community Discourse. In order to combat this lack of true belonging in the elite school-based, dominant discourse, non-mainstream students learn to practice what Gee (1996) calls mushfake Discourse, a prison term meaning the act of “mak(ing) do with something less when the real thing is not available” (p. 147). This mushfake Discourse is enacted through being meta-cognitively aware of strategies to enact to make sure that dominant Discourses are displayed in gatekeeping instances in life.

With all that said, many of my participants narrated great feats of mushfake as they went through school. Both Maneta and Brenda noted that when asked to participate in Round Robin reading in school, they counted the paragraphs and pre-read in order to not feel embarrassed or to be noted as a struggling reader by their peers and teachers. They also noted that they never comprehended anything they or anyone else read because they were too consumed by preventing their struggles being made public. This showed that although mushfake Discourses may help appearances of acquisition of school-based Discourses in literacy, it at times still served as a deficit in creating true comprehension and skill at reading. Another instance of mushfake that Takeya and Rebecca both

mentioned was relying on friends to help them in class when they fell behind. Alvermann (2001) noted that no matter how much struggling readers improve with this underlying belief that non-mainstream students are deprived of the dominant Discourse, they will “bear the residuals of having been a part of a group of people described by both achievement tests and school personnel as the ‘have-nots’ in terms of cultural capital through literate means” (p. 681). And, these residuals often took the form as a self-defined identity as a non-reader.

### **Implications for Teaching**

One prominent pedagogical problem in the narratives of my participants was an overwhelming aversion to round robin or popcorn reading. For these struggling readers, this pedagogical practice was hated and brought out words such as “nervous,” “stuttering,” “worried,” “torment,” and “horrified.” In my research of current best practices in reading instruction, I could not find any support for these types of read alouds in the classroom, and they were obviously not effective from the narratives my participants shared. Instead, Allington and Baker (2007) suggested struggling readers need more guided reading opportunities and more high-success independent reading (p.86). The idea of successful independent reading activities was also brought to bear in Carrie’s narrative of her success with her Helen Keller book and assignment. This was one of the few moments of joy expressed about reading in any of Carrie’s narratives.

A second suggestion was based on the lack of interest and purpose that my participants found in reading assignments in the lower grades. Both my research and others would suggest that in order to engage struggling readers, more authentic assignments need to be used. Compton-Lilly (2007) suggested that teachers reflect on

what is truly success in reading and find texts that “speak to students’ lives” (p. 121). One way to do this could be to teach students to “probe and resist popular cultural texts in the same way that we teach students to interact with canonized texts” (Lewis, 2001, p. 180). Looking at popular culture as texts, things such as magazine texts and perhaps even social media could bring reluctant readers like Rebecca to buy into school-based Discourses of reading. If this had happened, she may have learned to identify as a reader because she enjoyed these texts outside of school. Instead, she discounted these as not really reading in her narratives and lost an opportunity to identify as a reader. Beach and Ward (2011) also called for teachers to create new definitions of literacy and what constitutes literate practices both in school and out (p. 252). Perhaps if this happens, students like Rebecca will also broaden their views of literacy. This knowledge would, as Alvermann (2001) stated, “demonstrate how culture constructs not only what counts as reading when reading really counts, but also who counts as a reader” (p. 689).

My final implication for teaching reading moved to a larger audience of school administrators and policy makers. Curriculums need to change. As Takeya noted, some reading curriculums seem out of place and students do not understand their purpose. There seemed to be an overemphasis on reading and answering questions like the Accelerated Reader that Carrie disliked so much. In fact, the placement of these participants in developmental reading was enacted by a curricular mindset of standardized tests as success. This will only continue in the current state of K-12 education. According to Gallagher (2015), the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) currently in place in many states, emphasize that students look to the “four corners” of a text, which refers to only using textual evidence from within the borders of the text itself,

and ignore the personal connections that they have with what they are reading. He called this “ludicrous” and warned that if we tell students this that “we are telling them what not to think. And when we tell students what they cannot think, oppression and hegemony occur” (pp. 49-51). With all of this said, it seemed that the only people expected to succeed within the bounds of this standardized educational experience are the standard, hegemonic students. Anyone who stands out in any way will struggle to find their niche in this schooling. Susan Ohanian (1990), a vociferous opponent of standards-based teaching, claimed that “the Standardistos offer a curriculum of death to children not already on the advanced placement track to elite universities” (p. x). She said instead curriculums and schools should be echoing the needs of the students, “not shoving every kid through some distant committee’s phantasmic pipe dream of a necessary curriculum for tomorrow’s workforce” (Ohanian, 1990, p. 2). In many cases today, the community college mission has certainly become entrenched in the idea of workforce development, so this warning should be heeded.

Teachers can also act as gatekeepers to higher education. In my students’ narratives, there was evidence that when the teacher or school found favor with them as readers, they too saw themselves as good readers, especially with Rameka and Takeya, two minority students from low income families. Blanchard and Muller (2014) conducted research that found that when teachers saw students as hard working and had expectations that they would complete college, the students had higher GPAs than their counterparts regardless of their minority language status (p. 272). This is a strong indication of the power of positive reinforcement for marginalized students. If all teachers would learn to value the differences in the Discourses that their students

navigate in terms of literacy, and in fact find the strengths that all these different Discourses bring to the education of the student, then teachers could become mentors and facilitators of these students' education as opposed to gatekeepers barring their paths to collegiate success.

One way to become a facilitator is in finding a way to meet the needs of each student in today's culture, but this lends difficulty and tension to teachers. According to Pinar and Irwin (2005), teachers live in the in-between of curriculum-as-plan versus curriculum-as-lived-experience. This idea of curriculum needing to be part of the lived experience for both teacher and student correlates with the Alvermann (2001) and Lewis's (2001) claims that assignments should acknowledge main-stream and non-mainstream Discourses. One difficulty in this is that Delpit (1995) claimed only people on the inside of a culture group can create a meaningful curriculum for said culture group. "Good liberal intentions are not enough" (Delpit, 1995, p. 45). In fact, the idea of involving students in their learning and in curricular decision-making may in fact be useful. TheodoreSizer (1984) claimed that the only way teachers can make learning effective is if the student and the teacher agree on learning objectives and how to reach them (p. 159). This idea of giving voice to students as important to educational success comes back to why I felt my participants' stories were the best way to encourage curricular change. Unfortunately, when trying to empower teachers to empower students as readers, we have to consider the authoritative nature of educational policy. Smith (2004) attempted an action research project in which she tried to empower teachers to change their curriculums to empower students as readers. What she found was that because for so long so many teachers have had their curricular freedom taken away by

government interference, they have become disempowered and dependent on the government to tell them what to teach, how to teach it, and when (p. 422). Back in 1975, Dan Lortie issued the following caveat: “It is certain that large-scale intervention in schools will produce unintended consequences; if policies are not to be undermined by such outcomes, we will need close monitoring of trends coupled with sufficient flexibility to make corrections when policies go awry” (p. 214). It seems that for many of our struggling readers policies have gone far awry. It is time to exercise some flexibility and change reading curriculum to benefit all readers.

### **Suggestions for Further Research and Limitations of Study**

One of the limitations of this study was the homogeneous gender of the participants. Although the study was open to all genders, only women responded to the research invitation. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study including male participants to see what difference gender might bring into the narratives.

Another limitation was the fact that all of the participants were successful in completing developmental reading at the community college level. So, in essence, they had perhaps moved past their identity as a struggling reader. Repeating this study with students who were not successful in completing developmental reading would also bring an interesting dynamic to the narrative.

Although seen as both a strength and a weakness, one of the limitations of this study was the fictionalization of the participants’ narratives. It would have been nice if each participant told a well-developed story that would allow readers to feel like they were experiencing the reading stories firsthand, but this did not happen. In restorying and

fictionalizing the interviews, there is always going to be some bias and actual pieces of my life and experiences that color the narratives. This was an unavoidable situation that I do not think changed the overall meanings or themes of the participants' narratives, but it must be mentioned.

A final limitation of this study was a lack of member checking of interviews and restoryings. However, this limitation speaks to some of the challenges of working with developmental students in the community college setting. They are transient in nature. They drop in and out of college and this proved to be a problem for conducting the planned member checking as triangulation of my data when the students were no longer enrolled at ABC Community College and no longer were on campus. This effectively made them inaccessible to me after the initial interviews.

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## Appendix A

April 28, 2014

Institutional Review Board

c/o Office of Research Compliance

115 Ramsay Hall

Auburn University, AL 36849

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study, “Reading Their Stories: Exploring the Societal, Educational, and Personal Landscape of Developmental Readers Through a Narrative Lens,” presented by Kimberly Jones, a graduate student at Auburn University, I have granted permission for the study to be conducted at [REDACTED] Community College.

The purpose of the study is to determine what common threads can be found in the reading lives of developmental reading students at the community college level. The primary activity will be interviews. Only students over the age of 18 who registered for RDG 084 or RDG 085 are eligible to participate.

I understand that interviews may occur over Spring 2014, Summer 2014, and Fall 2014 semesters. The interviews will take place outside of the students' scheduled class times. I expect that this project will end not later than January 1, 2015. Kimberly Jones will contact and recruit the students and will collect data at [REDACTED] Community College.

I understand that Kimberly Jones will receive consent from all participants and that she has agreed to provide to my office a copy of all Auburn University IRB-approved, stamped consent documents before she recruits participants on campus. Any data collected by Kimberly Jones will be kept confidential and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in her [REDACTED] office or on a password protected computer file on her office computer. She has also agreed to provide to us a copy of the aggregate results from her study.

If the IRB has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the [REDACTED] campus at the phone number listed below.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Appendix B

### AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED

For Information or help contact THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC), 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm>

Revised 2.1.2014 Submit completed form to [IRBsubmit@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBsubmit@auburn.edu) or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: 6/15/14

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one):  FULL BOARD  EXPEDITED

SUBMISSION STATUS (Check one):  NEW  REVISIONS (to address IRB Review Comments)

2. PROJECT TITLE: Reading Their Stories: Exploring the Societal, Educational, and Personal Landscape of Transitional College Readers through a Narrative Lens

3. Kimberly Jones PhD Candidate Curriculum and Instr. ksj0008@auburn.edu  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR TITLE DEPT AU E-MAIL

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] katsma@gmail.com  
MAILING ADDRESS PHONE ALTERNATE E-MAIL

4. FUNDING SUPPORT:  N/A  Internal  External Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  Pending  Received

For federal funding, list agency and grant number (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

5a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project: \_\_\_\_\_

5b. List any other IRBs associated with this project (including Reviewed, Deferred, Determination, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

#### PROTOCOL PACKET CHECKLIST

All protocols must include the following items:

- Research Protocol Review Form (All signatures included and all sections completed)  
(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)
- CITI Training Certificates for all Key Personnel.
- Consent Form or Information Letter and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.
- Appendix A, "Reference List"
- Appendix B if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.
- Appendix C if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.
- Appendix D if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists (A referral list may be attached to the consent document).
- Appendix E if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A permission letter from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project.  
NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of IRB approval from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.
- Appendix F - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

#### FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN ORC: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ PROTOCOL # \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVAL CATEGORY: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

6A. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s):  New Data  Existing Data

Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants?  
 Yes  No

Data collection will involve the use of:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internet / Electronic |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Video                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location or Tracking Measures                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photos                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Images                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Questionnaires                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Private records or files         |
| Other: _____   |   |

6B. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the target population.  
 Males  Females  AU students

Vulnerable Populations  
 Pregnant Women/Fetuses  Prisoners  Institutionalized  
 Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)

Persons with:  
 Economic Disadvantages  Physical Disabilities  
 Educational Disadvantages  Intellectual Disabilities

Do you plan to compensate your participants?  Yes  No

6C. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coercion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deception                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                                |  |

\*Note that if the Investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6D. Corresponding Approval/Oversight

- Do you need IBC Approval for this study?  
 Yes  No  
 If yes, BUA # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you need IACUC Approval for this study?  
 Yes  No  
 If yes, PRN # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_
- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?  
 Yes  No  
 Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)  
 3T  7T  
 Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?  
 Yes  No

Signature of MRI Center Representative: \_\_\_\_\_  
Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center

Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:  
 Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center  
 Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES Reading Their Stories: Exploring the Societal, Educational, and Personal Landscape of Transitional College Readers through a Narrative Lens

**A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
  - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
  - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
  - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Kimberly Jones	Kimberly Jones	
Printed name of Principal Investigator	Principal Investigator's Signature	Date

**B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Carey Andrzejewski	Carey Andrzejewski	
Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor	Faculty Advisor's Signature	Date

**C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE**

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Kimberly Walls	Kimberly Walls	
Printed name of Department Head	Department Head's Signature	Date

8. **PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**  
(350 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

- a) **A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:**  
(Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.)
- b) **A brief description of the methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest**

The following constructs of narrative will be important to my research: narrative as self-identity, narrative in the audit culture and as voice for the voiceless, and narrative as analysis of typology. Cooper points out that "narratives create selves as individuals, unconsciously and consciously, wordlessly and verbally, connect sensations and memories, and then reflect on, revise, and extend their stories of themselves (p. 244). Barone and others such as Carol Lee also note that in much research, the human voice has been silenced, especially that of marginalized peoples. In fact, this notion was first brought to my attention by a book written by a 17 year old student called *One Size Does Not Fit All*. In this book, Goyal tells many stories of his and others' educations, and what is not working for them. This idea that the students' voices should be heard in educational research was what first led me to the notion of recording the students' stories of their successes. In typology, I will work from Burke's (as cited in Riessman) five aspects of narrative: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. In my research, I do want to analyze what is said in the stories to explore themes; however, I am also interested in what ways the how of their storytelling also passes along information about their identity as a struggling reader.

In collecting data, I will give transitional reading students prompts that will direct them to tell me a story of their earliest memories as a reader. I will then ask in a series of interviews about elementary and secondary memories of reading, failures and successes as readers, and their current reading status. These prompts will serve as a way for the participants to "tell me about what happened" in various times as their life as readers. I will also look at students' placement test data, self-described demographics, and grades as a way to provide a thick description of my participants. I may administer Murray's Motivation to Read survey. All of this data will be woven into their re-storied narratives of their lives as readers.

9. **PURPOSE.**
- a. **Clearly state the purpose of this project and all research questions, or aims.**

As many as 60 percent of students nationwide end up in transitional courses when they begin at a community college. These students may be enrolled in numerous non-credit courses; so many that, in fact, they spend over a year of college taking classes that will not transfer into their major studies. Less than 25% of these students will complete a program or earn a degree within eight years of entering college (Bailey & Cho, 2010). One area of transitional study is reading. Since reading is a foundational skill in education, this lack in students' skills is especially troublesome. By looking into the narratives of transitional reading students' histories as readers, I hope to see how they identify themselves as readers as well as where patterns of trouble may be noted in their success as readers.

1. How do transitional reading students in the community college identify themselves as readers?
2. What do these stories say about their paths to transitional classes?
3. How does the structure of their reading narratives inform their storied success individually, socially, academically, culturally?

- b. **How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

The results of this project will be used primarily for my dissertation. There will also be presentations at conferences and possible publications of my findings.

10. **KEY PERSONNEL.** Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. **CITI is required.** Be as specific as possible. (Include additional personnel in an attachment.) *All key personnel must attach CITI certificates of completion.*

Principle Investigator Kimberly Jones Title: PhD Candidate E-mail address ksj0008@auburn.edu  
 Dept / Affiliation: Curriculum and Instr.

**Roles / Responsibilities:**  
 Recruitment of participants, interviewer, data collector, data analyst.

Individual: Carey Andrzejewski Title: Associate Prof E-mail address cea0011@auburn.edu  
 Dept / Affiliation: Educational FLT

**Roles / Responsibilities:**  
 Help with data analysis; oversee research project

Individual: Brandon Sams Title: Asst. Prof. E-mail address bls0023@auburn.edu  
 Dept / Affiliation: Curriculum and Teaching

**Roles / Responsibilities:**  
 Help with data analysis; oversee research project

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

11. **LOCATION OF RESEARCH.** List all locations where data collection will take place. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E. (See sample letters at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)

\_\_\_\_\_ Community College \_\_\_\_\_ Campus - \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ buildings, various classrooms and study rooms.

12. PARTICIPANTS.

- a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project including inclusion or exclusion criteria for participant selection.

Check here if using existing data, describe the population from whom data was collected, & include the # of data files.

The students whom I will be observing and interviewing are students who have completed the developmental reading classes (RDG 084 or RDG 085) at ██████████ Community College. They are no longer my reading students. They vary in age, but are all over the age of 18. The majority of the students are African-American and have received Pell Grants to attend college. The participants will be invited to participate from the scheduled RDG 084/085 classes on the ██████████ campus and will be taken on a first come, first taken basis until data saturation has been reached. I will exclude any students who I am aware have documented special education status.

The existing data will be collection of their standardized test scores and academic records. It may also include assignments completed for their reading classes.

- b. Describe, step-by-step, in layman's terms, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. Include in *Appendix B* a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>.)

In an email, I will discuss the research and ask for participants. I will stress that participating in this research or not participating in this research will not affect any grades in any classes at ██████████. I will email the attached (Appendix B) flier to the students that outlines the compensation for participation as well as the requirements or expectations for participants. This handout will also explain how to sign up for the research project. I will consider and screen the first ten respondents. If I have not received at least six quality participants, I will send out another recruitment email as well (see Appendix B).

- c. What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? 1  
How many participants do you expect to recruit? 10  
Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study?  No  Yes – the # is 20

- d. Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

(If no compensation will be given, check here: )

Select the type of compensation:  Monetary  Incentives  
 Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)  
 Extra Credit (State the value)  
 Other

Description:

I will give each participant who completes the interview cycle a \$25 gift card to amazon.com. I will put all participants who complete the interview cycle into a drawing for an Amazon Kindle Fire, valued at less than \$175. The winner will be drawn randomly.

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

- a. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants. If a waiver is being requested, check each waiver you are requesting, describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

- Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)  
 Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)  
 Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)

Students, all of adult age, will be given a consent form before the first interview that they will read and sign. Before each interview, I will remind them that they can stop and remove consent for participation in the study with no penalties to them, besides loss of compensation.

- b. Describe the research design and methods you will use to address your purpose. Include a clear description of when, where and how you will collect all data for this project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 7 of this form.)

I will be using a mixed-methods design to conduct this research. I will use qualitative narrative interviews to gather the majority of my data. Each participant will complete six story-telling sessions/interviews of 15 to 30 minutes each. These interviews will be spaced out over a two to four week time period. The participants will receive the questions ahead of time to lessen their stress over being interviewed. The interviews will take place in either my office or a private study room at ██████████ Community College. If necessary, some interviews may be conducted at a location more convenient to the participant. The participants will be given the interview prompt and their response will be recorded on a digital video recorder. I may ask for clarification or further information during the interview.

During the last session of the interviews, I will also ask students to complete the Motivation to Read Survey through Qualtrics. This survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. This quantifiable measure will give more description to my narratives of the participants.

The past educational records and placement scores will be obtained from the Admissions Office at ██████████ ██████████. This information will also be used to provide a more thick, detailed description of these students as readers. Writing samples from the participants' time as a student in Reading 084/085 may also be collected from the student class files for the same purpose.

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS. *Continued*

- c. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C. (e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

Interview Questions  
Reading and You Survey

- d. Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.

First, I will take the story as the unit for analysis. I will look for the chronology of the events. Then I will analyze the elements of the short story, setting, plot, characters, etc. I will look to how it fits into the context of the world around it. And, finally I will look for themes. Then, I will restory the narrative. This is the act of taking all the contextual information and the stories of the participants and putting it back together into one story.

14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. *If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D.* (Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 2)

The risks that the participants may face are coercion and lack of anonymity. Because for some of the participants, the researcher is also their professor, they may feel coerced to participate. Although all names and places will be replaced with pseudonyms, it is possible that some data may reveal the participant's identity.

15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D. (Samples can be found online at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm#precautions>)

I will assure students at all steps of the data collection and research process that participation is voluntary and that they retain the right to revoke consent at any time. I will also remind them that they is no academic reward or detriment for participation or non-participation in the study.

If using the Internet or other electronic means to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.

The digital data files will be stored on a password protected cloud storage site until they are transcribed. The names will become pseudonyms during transcription. The digital files will then be deleted. All transcriptions and academic records will be stored on the password protected cloud storage site as well and identifying content will be replaced with pseudonyms.

16. **BENEFITS.**

- a. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.  
(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12d.) Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants.

- b. List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

This research will help educators understand where possible breakdowns in reading ability originate in struggling readers. It will also give a voice to the struggling reader as an important stakeholder in his/her educational path. It may augment current educational practice for the transitional college reader and educator.

17. PROTECTION OF DATA.

a. Data are collected:

- Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness of who participated in the study (Skip to e)
- Confidentially, but without a link of participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed as "anonymous") (Skip to e)
- Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information

b. If data are collected with identifiers or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers collected and how they are linked to the participant's data.

Students will be given a participant ID number to use for taking the survey. This number will be identified on the student's interview transcript and coded onto any academic data or course data, while removing their real name and any other identifiers, such as student numbers. Once the data are linked, the list of participant ID's and actual identities will be destroyed. Until such time, the list will be kept electronically on a pass-word protected cloud-storage site.

c. Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

In order to develop a complete narrative of who these students are as readers, I will need some outside data to use as descriptive background on the reader. I hope it will help me develop a more rich, thick description of my participants.

d. Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number?) Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

The code list will be kept on a password-protect cloud storage site only long enough to link the data. Any un-coded documents will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office [redacted] on the [redacted] campus of [redacted] Community College. The IRB-approved, signed consent documents will be kept in Dr. Sams' office in a locked filing cabinet in Haley Center.

e. Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security

Hard copies of any data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office at [redacted] State Community College ([redacted]). Electronic data will be stored on a password protected cloud storage site.

f. Who will have access to participants' data?

*(The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)*

Dr. Carey Andrzejewski; Dr. Brandon Sams; Kimberly Jones

g. When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained )

Summer 2016. Any hard copies will be shredded and electronic data will be permanently deleted.

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS  
REQUEST for PROJECT RENEWAL**

For Information or help completing this form, contact: THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC), 115 Ramsay Hall  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm

Revised 2.1.2014 Submit completed form to [IRBsubmit@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBsubmit@auburn.edu) or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

**Exempt Activities: Must be renewed at least every 3 years.**

**Expedited and Full Board Protocols: Must be renewed at least annually, prior to the expiration date of the protocol.**

If you do not plan to collect additional data and/or you do not have access to identifiable data (code lists, etc.), you may be able to file a "FINAL REPORT" for this project. Contact the ORC for more information.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. Protocol Number: 14-238 EP 1407
2. Original IRB Approval Dates: From: 06/28/14 To: 06/27/15
3. Requested Renewal Period (ONE YEAR MAXIMUM): From: 7/27/15 To: 7/27/16
4. PROJECT TITLE: "Reading Their Stories: Exploring the Societal, Educational, and Personal Landscape of Transitional College Readers Through a Narrative Lens"
5.

<u>Kimberly Jones</u>	<u>PhD Candidat</u>	<u>C &amp; I</u>	<u>[REDACTED]</u>	<u>ksj0008@auburn.edu</u>
<small>Digitally signed by Kimberly Jones DN: cn=Kimberly Jones, o=AU email=ksj0008@auburn.edu, c=US Date: 2015.07.28 11:13:29 -0400</small>	<small>Digitally signed by Carey Andrzejewski DN: cn=Carey Andrzejewski, o=AU email=cea0011@auburn.edu, c=US Date: 2015.07.28 11:13:29 -0400</small>			
<b>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DEPT</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>AU E-MAIL</b>
<u>Kimberly Jones</u>	<u>[REDACTED]</u>	<u>[REDACTED]</u>	<u>[REDACTED]</u>	<u>katsma@gmail.com</u>
<b>PI SIGNATURE</b>	<b>MAILING ADDRESS</b>			<b>ALTERNATE E-MAIL</b>
<u>Carey Andrzejewski</u>	<u>Carey Andrzejewski</u>	<u>EDFLT</u>	<u>334-844-3012</u>	<u>cea0011@auburn.edu</u>
<b>FACULTY ADVISOR</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DEPT</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>AU E-MAIL</b>
<b>Name of Current Department Head:</b> <u>Kimberly Walls</u>				<b>AU E-MAIL:</b> <u>wallski@auburn.edu</u>
6. Current External Funding Agency and Grant number: NA
7.
  - a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project: NA
  - b. List any other IRBs associated with this project: NA
8. Explain why you are requesting additional time to complete this research project.  
All of my interviews have been completed. I still may need to collect records and test scores for my participants, so I am renewing my protocol for this reason.

FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY			
DATE RECEIVED IN ORC:	_____ by _____	RENEWAL #	_____
DATE OF IRB REVIEW:	_____ by _____	PROTOCOL APPROVAL CATEGORY:	_____
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL:	_____ by _____	INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW :	_____
COMMENTS:	_____		

9. Briefly list (numbered or bulleted) the activities that occurred over the past year, particularly those that involved participants.

1. interviews of six participants over several months.
2. Analysis of transcriptions of interviews.

10. Do you plan to make any changes in your protocol if the renewal request is approved?

(e.g., research design, methodology, participant characteristics, authorized number of participants, etc.)

NO

YES

(If "yes", please complete and attach a "REQUEST for PROTOCOL MODIFICATION" form.)

11. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

a. How many individuals have actually participated in this research? 6  
If retrospective, how many files or records were accessed? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Were there any adverse events, unexpected difficulties or unexpected benefits with the approved procedures?

NO

YES

If YES, please describe.

d. How many participants have withdrawn from the study? 0  NA  
If participants withdrew from the study, please explain.

e. How many new participants do you plan to recruit during the renewal period? 0  NA

f. During the renewal period, will you re-contact any individual that has already participated in your research project?

NO

YES

NA

If "YES", please explain reasons for re-contacting participants. (If "YES" and the procedure to re-contact has not been previously approved, please complete and attach a "REQUEST for PROTOCOL MODIFICATION" form.)

12. PROTECTION OF DATA

a. Is the data being collected, stored and protected as previously approved by the IRB?

NO

YES

If NO, please explain.

b. Are there any changes in the "key research personnel" that have access to participants or data?

Attach CITI completion reports for all new key personnel.

NO

YES

If YES, please identify each individual and explain the reason(s) for each change.

c. What is the latest date (month and year) you now expect all identifiable data to be destroyed?

(Identifiable data includes videotapes, photographs, code lists, etc.)

DATE: 12/31/2015

Not Applicable – no identifiable data has been or will be collected.

11. Attach a copy of all "stamped" IRB-approved documents used during the previous year.  
(Information letters, Informed Consents, Parental Permissions, flyers etc.).

12. If you plan to recruit participants, or collect human subject data during the renewal period, attach a new copy of the consent document, information letter, or any flyers you will use during the extension.

(Be sure to review the ORC website for current consent document guidelines and updated contact information:  
<http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>.)

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS  
FINAL REPORT  
FULL BOARD OR EXPEDITED**

For Information or help completing this form, contact: THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC), 115 Ramsay Hall  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs>

Revised 2/1/2014 Submit completed form to [IRBsubmit@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBsubmit@auburn.edu) or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. Protocol Number: 14-238 EP 1407 2. Actual Study Dates: From: 06/28/14 To: 05/31/16

3. Project Title: Reading Their Stories: Exploring the Societal, Educational, and Personal Landscape of Developmental College Readers Through a Narrative Lens

4. Kimberly Jones PhD Candidate C & I [REDACTED] ksj0008@auburn.edu  
Principal Investigator Title Department Phone AU e-mail (primary)

5. Kimberly Jones [REDACTED] katsma@gmail.com  
PI Signature Mailing Address Alternate e-mail

Carey Andrzejewski Carey Andrzejewski EDFLT 3348443012 cea0011@auburn.edu  
Faculty Advisor FA Signature Department Phone AU e-mail

Name of Current Dept. Head: Kimberly Walls

6. Current External Funding Agency (if any): NA

7. Other Universities or IRB approvals associated with this project:  
NA

8. If this study been published and/or presented, please list where.

None at this time

9. How did your results meet your study goals? Briefly summarize your findings.

My preliminary results indicate that developmental readers at the community college level identify themselves as both readers and non-readers depending on the social discourse of their surroundings; however, many of the identities as non-readers are put upon these students by institutions and/or through discursive relationships with others. There was very little impact on these students' reading identities based on affinity groups.

10. Briefly describe how you conducted your study (recruitment, consenting, data collection, etc.)

In an email to former developmental reading students, I discussed the research and asked for participants. I stressed that participating in this research or not participating in this research will not affect any grades in any classes. I used a mixed-methods design to conduct this research. Each participant completed story-telling sessions/interviews with me. The participants received the questions ahead of time to lessen their stress over being interviewed. Prior to the interviews, I had the students complete Motivation to Read Survey through Qualtrics. I also obtained the past educational records and placement scores from the Admissions Office at Southern Union. This information was used to provide a more thick, detailed description of these students as readers. Writing samples from the participants' time as a student in Reading 084/085 were collected from the student class files for the same purpose. After transcribing the interviews, I coded the data for themes from the research. I then restored the interviews into chronological narratives. I analyzed this final form of the data using Jim Burkes' Dramatic Pentad and James Paul Gee's Four Way of Viewing Identity.

FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY		
DATE RECEIVED IN ORC:	_____ by _____	COMMENTS: _____
DATE OF REVIEW:	_____ by _____	_____
DATE OF CLOSURE	_____ by _____	_____

11. If the study used existing data, approximately how many files or records were accessed? 12  
*(If you used existing data, go to Question #15. Otherwise, the remaining questions do not apply.)*
12. How many human subjects participated in the study? 6
13. How many participants withdrew from the study? 0  
 If participants WITHDREW from the study, please explain.
14. Were there any unanticipated difficulties or adverse effects to the participants?  NO  YES  
 If YES, please describe.
15. Were there any unanticipated benefits to participants or others resulting from this study?  NO  YES  
 If YES, please describe.
16. Were identifiable data collected?  NO  YES (If no, go to Question #17)  
 a. If YES, has it been destroyed?  NO  YES (If yes, go to Question #17)  
 b. If NO (data exists), has the data been de-identified?  NO  YES (If yes, go to Question #17)  
*(Identifiable data includes names, code lists, videotapes, personally identifying information...but does not include signed consents.)*  
 c. If identifiable data is retained, please provide explanation (e.g. permission received to retain photographs for publication).  
 • If participants' and IRB's permission was given to retain identifiable data indefinitely, a final report can be used to close your file.  
 • If you retain identifiable data that will be destroyed later, a "Request for Renewal" must be submitted for this project before the expiration date. Unidentifiable data (e.g., data rendered anonymous by the destruction of written or electronic code lists) may be retained indefinitely by the investigator.
17. a. If signed Consent Forms were required, where will they be maintained until destruction?  
*(Consent forms signed by participants/parents/others providing permission or consent for participation must be kept securely on campus for 3 years after projects ends.)*  
 In Dr. Brandon Sams' office in Haley Center.
- b. By what date and by what method will signed Consent forms be destroyed?  
 They will be shredded by 5/31/2019.
18. Attach a copy of all "stamped" IRB-approved documents used during the previous year.  
*(Information letters, Informed Consents, Parental Permissions, flyers etc.).*  
*(Do not send consents actually signed by participants!)*



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has reviewed this document for your best interests. Approved on 6/12/15. Protocol # 14-238 EP No. 7

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

**INFORMED CONSENT**  
**for a Research Study entitled**  
**"Reading Their Stories: Exploring the Societal, Educational, and**  
**Personal Landscape of Transitional College Readers through a**  
**Narrative Lens"**

You are invited to participate in a research study to identify the stories of transitional college students as readers. The study is being conducted by Kimberly Jones, PhD Candidate under the direction of Cary Andrzejewski, Associate Professor and Brandon Sams, Assistant Professor in the Auburn University Department of Curriculum and Teaching. You were selected as a possible participant because you were a student in Reading 084085 in ██████████ Community College and are age 19 or older.

**What will be involved if you participate?** If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to come to ██████████ campus for six interviews of 30 minutes or less two times a week for a total of six interviews. These interviews will be digitally recorded. The recordings will be deleted after the research is completed, and will occur no later than summer 2016. You will also be asked to complete an on-line survey about your reading motivation. Your total time commitment will be approximately four hours over a three-six week time frame. Use of existing data will occur as well. By signing this consent you are also agreeing to allow Kimberly Jones to access your academic records at ██████████ Community College as well as to access assignments and grades from RDG084/RDG085.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** One risk associated with this study is the threat of coercion because some participants may feel that having a current or former instructor conducting the research makes them obligated to participate. You should not feel obligated to participate. There will be no repercussions if you choose not to participate. The other risk is that some of your data may be identifiable as yours. Pseudonyms will be used and every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, including storage of data on password protected cloud servers.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** If you participate in this study, you can expect to help increase the knowledge about transitional readers for college instructors and in turn improve classroom instruction in these areas. There will not be any direct benefit to you.

**Will you receive compensation for participating?** To thank you for your time you will be offered a \$25 Amazon gift card and will be entered into a drawing for an Amazon Kindle Fire if you complete the interview process. Your odds of winning the Kindle Fire will be lower than 1 in 10.

**If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study.** Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Curriculum and Teaching or ██████████ Community College. You will receive partial compensation if you withdraw from the study which will be created by time spent participating. If you withdraw, you will not be eligible for the drawing for the Kindle Fire.

Participant's initials \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 2



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The Auburn University Institutional  
Reviewer Board has approved this  
document for use from  
6/28/14 to 6/27/15  
Protocol # 14-238 EP 1407

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

**INFORMED CONSENT**  
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**What will be involved if you participate?** If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to come to ██████████ campus for six interviews of 30 minutes or less two times a week for a total of six interviews. These interviews will be digitally recorded. The recordings will be deleted after the research is completed, and will occur no later than summer 2016. You will also be asked to complete an on-line survey about your reading motivation. Your total time commitment will be approximately four hours over a three-six week time frame. Use of existing data will occur as well. By signing this consent you are also agreeing to allow Kimberly Jones to access you academic records at ██████████ Community College as well as to access assignments and grades from RDG084/RDG085.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** One risk associated with this study is the threat of coercion because some participants may feel that having a current or former instructor conducting the research makes them obligated to participate. You should not feel obligated to participate. There will be no repercussions if you choose not to participate. The other risk is that some of your data may be identifiable as yours. Pseudonyms will be used and every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, including storage of data on password protected cloud servers.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** If you participate in this study, you can expect to help increase the knowledge about transitional readers for college instructors and in turn improve classroom instruction in these areas. There will not be any direct benefit to you.

**Will you receive compensation for participating?** To thank you for your time you will be offered a \$25 Amazon gift card and will be entered into a drawing for an Amazon Kindle Fire if you complete the interview process. Your odds of winning the Kindle Fire will be lower than 1 in 10.

**If you change your mind about participating,** you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Curriculum and Teaching or ██████████ Community College. You will receive partial compensation if you withdraw from the study which will be prorated by time spent participating. If you withdraw, you will not be eligible for the drawing for the Kindle Fire.

Participant's initials \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 2



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Your privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting.

If you have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Kimberly Jones at [ksj0008@auburn.edu](mailto:ksj0008@auburn.edu), Brandon Sams at [bls0023@auburn.edu](mailto:bls0023@auburn.edu) or Carey Andrzejewski at [cea0011@auburn.edu](mailto:cea0011@auburn.edu). A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at [IRBAdmin@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Investigator obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### E-MAIL INVITATION FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

I am Kimberly Jones a PhD candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Auburn University and reading instructor at ABC Community College. I would like to invite you to participate in my research that aims to gather the stories of students who have taken transitional reading classes at the college level. You may participate if you took RDG 084 or RDG 085 at ABC Community College.

As a participant, you will be asked to come to ABC's campus for six interviews of 30 minutes or less two times a week for a total of six interviews. You will also be asked to complete an on-line survey about your reading motivation.

The risks involved in your participation are small. One risk associated with this study is the threat of coercion because some participants may feel that having a current or former instructor conducting the research makes them obligated to participate. You should not feel obligated to participate. There will be no repercussions if you choose not to participate. The other risk is that some of your data may be identifiable as yours. Pseudonyms will be used and every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, including storage of data on password protected cloud servers.

It is my hope that your participation will help college reading instructors understand and better teach students like you. To thank you for your time you will be offered a \$25 Amazon gift card and will be entered into a drawing for an Amazon Kindle Fire if you complete the interview process. Your odds of winning the Kindle Fire will be lower than 1 in 10. I will only need six to ten participants, so I will take participants on a first come, first served basis.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please email me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] so that we can set up a schedule for the interviews that works well for both of us. If you have questions, please contact me [REDACTED] or you may contact my advisor, Dr. [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Consideration,

Kimberly Jones

## Appendix D

### Reading and You - Final Version

Q1 The following survey will give me the chance to get to know how you feel about reading. There are no right or wrong answers. I just want your honest opinions. The first few questions will let me know a little bit about you. Then, there will be some questions about your opinions on reading. And, finally, there are a couple of questions about what you have read lately. At the bottom of each page, click the NEXT PAGE button to go to the next question. The survey will take less than 30 minutes to complete. Thank you so much for participating in my survey!

Q9 What is your participant number?

Q2 Are you male or female?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q3 How old are you?

Q51 Did you graduate high school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Did you graduate high school? No Is Selected

Q52 Did you complete your GED?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If Did you complete your GED? Yes Is Selected

Q53 How many years were there between when you left school and when you received your GED?

Q26 When you were in K-12 did you ever receive free or reduced lunches?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q27 How many schools did you attend for grades K-5?

Q31 In elementary school, were you ever pulled out of class for special help with reading?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q28 When you were a child, how would you describe your family situation?

- Lived with both parents or stepparents all or most of the time. (1)
- Lived with extended family (grandparents, cousins, etc.) (2)
- Lived in foster care or were adopted as a child. (3)
- Other. Please describe below. (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Q29 What is the highest level of education that your mother completed?

- Elementary School (1)
- Middle School (2)
- High School (3)
- Some college (4)
- Completed Bachelor's Degree (5)
- Some graduate school (6)
- Completed Graduate School (7)
- I don't know. (8)

Q30 What is the highest level of education that your father completed?

- Elementary School (4)
- Middle School (5)
- High School (6)
- Some college (7)
- Completed Bachelor's Degree (8)
- Some graduate school (9)
- Completed Graduate School (10)
- I don't know. (11)

Q5 Are you taking or did you take RDG 084 or RDG 085? Check all that apply.

- RDG 084 (1)
- RDG 085 (2)

Q6 What grades do you usually get in reading classes?

- A's (1)
- A's & B's (2)
- B's (3)
- B's & C's (4)
- C's (5)
- C's & D's (6)
- D's (7)
- D's & F's (8)
- F's (9)

Q8 The following questions will be about your opinions on reading. For each question click the circle where you feel your answer to that question would fall on the scale of "NOT LIKE ME" to JUST LIKE ME." Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. I just want your honest opinion.

Q11 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. If people ask you what's worth reading, you can't think of anything to tell them.

0 (10)

1 (9)

- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q32 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each

statement. When you run across something you don't know, it's too much trouble to look it up.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q33 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. Even when you are very busy, you always find at least a few minutes to read.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q34 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. When you are with someone younger, it's a good idea to read a story aloud.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q35 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. You remember times when you got so wrapped up in a story it seemed like you were living in the book world.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q36 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. The picture on the cover is what makes you want to buy or check out a book.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q37 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. You would be disappointed if you opened a present and it turned out to be a book.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q38 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. When shopping or on-line, you like to visit a bookseller and browse for books.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q39 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each

statement. If you're spending time with children, watching TV together makes more sense than reading aloud..

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q40 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. After you finish reading a story, you quickly forget about what happened.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q41 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each

statement. When you don't have to read anything for school, you do something besides reading.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q42 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. You don't have any good friends who like to read or talk about books.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q43 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. You have a collection of books at your house that belongs to you.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q44 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. You've just heard about a good book you don't have available for free; you'd buy it, but you've got better things to do with your money.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q45 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. To choose a book, you read something to find out what the book is about.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q46 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. You don't really need to have your own personal copies of books.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q47 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. There is always a good book near your bed.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q48 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each

statement. If people ask you what you want for your birthday, you can usually think of a book.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q49 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. If you have to read a book, you pick a short one so you can finish it.

- 0 (10)
- 1 (9)
- 2 (8)
- 3 (7)
- 4 (6)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (4)
- 7 (3)
- 8 (2)
- 9 (1)
- 10 (0)

Q50 Click the appropriate number if the statement below is "NOT LIKE ME" or "JUST LIKE ME." You can choose any number to show that's what you feel about each statement. Sometimes you find yourself so excited about a book that you try to get your friends to read it.

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

Q19 How much do you enjoy reading?

- Enjoy it a lot (1)
- Enjoy it l (2)
- Don't really have an opinion (3)
- Dislike it (4)
- Hate it (5)

Q25 Do you consider yourself a good reader?

- Yes (9)
- No (10)

Q20 List for me any books or authors that you have read independently (by yourself, not as a class) this school year.

Q21 About how many books have you read independently this school year?

Q22 How much do you enjoy reading the following types of texts? Slide the bar to your level of enjoyment. The more you move to the slider to the right, the more you like it! If you have no opinion, leave the slider in the middle.

- \_\_\_\_\_ fiction novels (1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ non-fiction stories (2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ informational texts (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ comic books (4)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Manga (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ newspapers (6)
- \_\_\_\_\_ magazines (7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ on-line articles (8)
- \_\_\_\_\_ text books (9)
- \_\_\_\_\_ poetry (10)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook posts/Tweets (11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ plays/drama (12)

Q23 This is the end of the survey! Thank you so much for taking your time to complete it and for sharing your ideas with me. **HAVE A GREAT DAY!**

## Appendix E

### Interview Protocol

Questions will be taken from this list or a modified version of listed prompts. Only one prompt will be used per interview session. Additional questions may be asked to encourage more complete stories.

1. Tell me the earliest story you can remember about reading in your life.
2. Tell me a story about reading for you in elementary school.
3. Tell me a story about reading for you in middle school.
4. Tell me a story about reading for you in high school.
5. Tell me a story about reading for you in college.
6. Tell me a story of a time when you loved reading.
7. Tell me a story of a time when reading was a struggle for you.
8. Tell me a story about your family as readers.
9. Tell me a story about yourself as a reader.
10. Tell me a story about your friends as readers.
11. Tell me the story about your favorite memory of a teacher of reading.
12. Tell me a story about reading for fun.
13. Tell me a story about reading for school.
14. Tell me a story about reading for information.
15. Tell me a story of a time when you realized reading was important in life.

## Appendix F

### Maneta Transcripts Feb 19 #101(1)

**Interviewer**: So what we are going to do.

**101**: Are we going to order?

**Interviewer**: We are going to do however you want to. So you are number 101 and I kind of what, what I am trying to do is to be able to tell the story of you as a reader through your life. And to kind of get a picture of who you were as a reader. That is what I am trying to do.

**101**: Ok

**Interviewer**: So that is why I am asking to tell me little stories. It doesn't have to be story story but you know, things about these different things. So um if you want if you had something you didn't really have anything to say about you can kind of skip. Which ones, you said you had answered some of them.

**101**: Oh no I answered all of them.

**Interviewer**: Alright. You're good. Alright, so what did you say? Like I may ask you to say a little bit more about it if you kind of tell me. It's a conversation There is not like a quiz or something. It's not like a test. But you got your answers written down. Look at you (laughter).

**101**: Yeah! (laughter)

**Interviewer**: First one says, let me make sure we can hear you, tell me the earliest story you can remember reading in your life? Just say something. Say your name and I will just leave it.

**101**: Renad Stewart

Feb 19 #101 (2)

**101**: do we get in trouble for recording a teacher?

**Interviewer**: No. I'd ask them first. But they don't usually care.

**101**: Oh, cause [REDACTED] in psychology, she goes fast. And I just

**Interviewer**: Record it

**101:** Yes! Yes!

**Interviewer:** I don't blame you

**101:** (Laughter)

**Interviewer:** I would ask them first, but most of them wouldn't care. What they don't know won't hurt. Alright, so the first one says, tell me about the first story you can remember about reading in your life.

**101:** The earliest story is from then till now, is *James and The Giant Peach*. And I, I enjoyed the movie and I enjoyed the book.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember when you first read it?

**101:** Um, (pause) I don't know. I was young. Because the movie's been out, the movie's been out a long time so it's it's, I'm 35 and it was a long time.

**Interviewer:** It was a long time.

**101:** Yeah (laughter)

**Interviewer:** And now, I don't remember it.

**101:** Yeah, I mean, I remember when it came out, I was on it.

**Interviewer:** Did you um, did you remember if you read it at home or did you read it at school? Or how, what kind of?

**101:** I remember I read it at school. So I was probably in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade or something like that. But, yeah, I can read it now over and over.

**Interviewer:** Still your favorite?

**101:** Still my favorite.

**Interviewer:** Alright. So what was reading like in elementary school? What was it like? What do you, or what to you remember reading in elementary school?

**101:** Um, (pause) reading in elementary school was my favorite subject because you you know more, you know? And you get to learn more and find out information on stuff like that. Um, when I was young, I think I enjoyed reading a lot.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember what they did in the class at all? The little groups? Or did y'all do that kind of stuff? I don't know.

**101:** Um.

**Interviewer:** Some people have good memories of elementary school. I don't have many.

**101:** Reading (pause) I don't know, maybe if. (Pause) one thing I remember we had to get in front of the class or the teacher would used to call your name and you'll take certain parts to read and I'd hate that. I didn't like reading out loud. Um (pause). Um (pause) I don't, I don't know. I don't think in elementary, I just, I like, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed reading.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember anything more about middle school or high school? What it was like? As you moved up in school.

**101:** Middle school, um, I think I start, I think I liked it until I started the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. And when we get older, we don't think about that (laughter). Where we mastered that in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grade and we are growing up so you're thinking about other stuff on your mind. You don't really think about, ok you're reading and that's the, what did you call it?

**Interviewer:** The Accelerated Reader type stuff, or whatever, or

**Interviewer:** When you read, you just scan it.

**101:** Scan it.

**Interviewer:** Scan it. (Laughter)

**101:** Just enough to get what you gotta get. And move on. That's a social, and middle school thing. I mean, you're so social, you don't have time to you be thinking about dressing, clothes, you know, boys, cell phones now. Technology be like, cell phones, everything like that. So yeah, back at that time, they didn't have cell phones but I don't know, there probably was cell phones

**Interviewer:** We didn't have cell phones, right.

**101:** So I think, what was on my mind was maybe shoes and dressing (laughter)

**Interviewer:** Exactly, and not reading. That's still typical. There is research out there where students reading (noise). What about high school? Did you feel pretty good about your English classes in high school?

**101:** High school, no. No I did not. Um, when I took my, when I passed my exit exam, my writing, I passed it. But when I took my English, I did not pass. I had to like take it three times.

**Interviewer:** The English one? Or the Reading one?

**101:** The, I think the English. Which one is, the writing is

**Interviewer:** The the English one would be grammar stuff. Like subject verb agreement and stuff. And the reading one, they had you read passages and answer questions.

**101:** Yeah, that's the one.

**Interviewer:** The reading one?

**101:** Right. Um, I think, you know, it (pause) it just, um, it went away. The older you get, in high school, you know from junior high to high school, you really don't think about that. You think about skimming. You know, read what you need to know to answer the question and the notes and then you're done. So, I think, I just really wasn't into it. I think I did it because I had to do it, I think.

**Interviewer:** So it shifted in elementary school where you loved it to

**101:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** To when you had to.

**101:** Cause you're learning, when you are young, you're learning a lot of stuff. And you be in, when you're a child, you're taking in a lot of stuff. But when you get older, you like "Oh I already know that. We've done been through that." Junior High, you're into other stuff because you've mastered what you need to master. And when you get to high school, it's all about you meeting a new crowd of people and you know, you just don't think. You think I want to be this when I grow up; I want to do this when I grow up. And you have to do a lot of stuff. You have to do what it takes to get there. And sometimes, you know, people don't think about that.

**Interviewer:** No they don't. The skills they are going to need. Even now. Even in college now, I don't think they understand that these are skills you are supposed to apply to other classes. You're not just passing this class. We are trying to teach you something you need to know. To help you do what you got to do next. And that's hard.

**101:** I just, I was just talking to someone the other day and it was saying, why do we, what, why do we, ok my major is Radiology. You know, I know how to read my pass grades, stuff like that, and it was like, "What do we need English for? Why do we need to know how to write papers for Radiology?" and stuff like that. You see what I'm saying? Like, "Why are we taking English? Why are we taking

math? Do we have to know the the meters and centimeters”, you know what I’m saying? (Laughter) Yeah, so, some people are like, I don’t know why I need this to be in this.

**Interviewer**: Then you’ll get into it and you’ll see why. But it’s too late now.

**101**: Yup exactly. Because you’ll skipped all that.

**Interviewer**: You just let it go in and out. I know, I’ve talked to the radiology office, right up here, and they do need to know how far the patient is, or whatever, to know what setting, to put things. You do, you do need to know math, you know.

**101**: Yeah, and if you don’t know it.

**Interviewer**: Yeah. You’re going to mess up something. You’re going to get in trouble. Um, so you talked a little bit about reading in college. What else? How’s reading been for you? You had to take the reading classes and stuff. How’s all that gone? How’s that? Since that’s?

**101**: Oh, in college, at this point, you know it’s important. You, I mean, it’s it’s important. You have to read, and then you know, and in my day and age, things are changing from back then till now. So in order to keep up, you got to read. You got to keep up with the technology. You got to keep up with the news. I don’t know, the TV, to look at the news. But I’ll read the newspaper. Because you’ll see, what gets my attention is pictures. I like picture books (laughter).

**Interviewer**: You’re a visual thinker.

**101**: Yes, I like picture books. Um, and I see that too in my kids. My 6 year old, if he look, if he don’t know a word, he have to look at the picture. And he’s like, “Oh, this is why you are running so fast.” He looks at the pictures, so I mean, at this point (pause) I feel like it’s important. It’s something you need to know and you really need to get into reading.

**Interviewer**: So, um, how have you done in your like, did you take History? You’ve said you’re taking psychology?

**101**: Psychology

**Interviewer**: Psychology. And she goes fast. How is reading in that text book going? Or do you have to to get by? Or

**101:** Um, she teaches through PowerPoint. And the only thing I open my book for is to write my vocabulary words (laughter)

**Interviewer:** That's fine. That's cool. I mean, she gives it to you outside of the book. So it's not really a challenge. Cause some of them, you have to read the book, and then they lecture too, so you're just same thing. It just depends, so that's good that she at least gives you what you need.

**101:** Yeah, she does and she moves fast. As far as the books, I don't even know why I bought the book. And I mean, I do my vocabulary, and I, I I'm glad I did buy the book because it does give you information on stuff like ADHD. You, like, when people say, "Oh she just, like, um, um, bipolar." Look up, read, look up the definition before you causing somebody bipolar because you don't know what that is.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, you don't know what you're saying.

**101:** (Laughter), so yeah, I'm like you know, it's good to have, you know I bought all my books because you never know when you have to go back and look.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, you see I like books.

**101:** Yeah, I do too. I got a whole bunch of books.

**Interviewer:** Me too. Me too. I got a whole shed full.

**101:** Oh my God, are you serious?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, well we are redoing the room where the books stay in my house. So they are all up in the shed right now.

**101:** My mom took my books, the Uncon

**Interviewer:** The Uncommon. Did she?

**101:** Never read it. I read that book and I'm glad that that you, um, told us to get it. Because I was like, I, I, I, we need the book for the class was going to get it for the class. But it was, it really had, I was into it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, a lot of people said that, because a lot of you were in that class and said that. Cause we don't use it now, and I'm like I wish we were doing that one now.

**101:** Yes! I mean, I was crying on some of them.

**Interviewer:** Yeah?

**101:** And I highlighted some. Because he was telling the truth. And I was like, I like to read. And if I like to read, it has to catch my attention. I want something that'll catch my attention at the beginning.

**Interviewer:** And it needs to mean something to you.

**101:** Yeah!

**Interviewer:** Um, so tell me a time when you loved reading.

**101:** Um, a time that I loved reading. (Pause) Um,

**Interviewer:** Or what it's like. When you enjoy reading, what are you doing? Where are you?

**101:** Um, I'll I'll be at home. Um, I like I like to read at home when it's quiet. I don't have my kids. If I'm real busy, I won't think about picking up a book. If I'm real busy. But I will pick up if I didn't have nothing to do, if I wasn't in school, and I was just sitting at home, I go to work, I would go home, and I would get a book. Um, and read. Um, my favorite author is Zane. (Laughter)

**Interviewer:** Those are fun books to read.

**101:** Yes! They are very bad.

**Interviewer:** Hey, reading anything is a good thing, in my opinion. I don't care what it is. The last person I came to, she said, "I probably shouldn't say this." and I'm like, "What?" and she says, "I like reading romance novels." And I'm like, "Me too! It's all good!" It's funny.

**101:** And like # 6, to say about a time where you loved reading. See, I put "Porn, when I started reading porn!" (Laughter)

**Interviewer:** There you go!

**101:** I probably shouldn't say that!

**Interviewer:** Hey, but it got your interest! It made you read! Didn't it?

**101:** Yeah!

**Interviewer:** There you go. So how about when reading was a struggle for you? When has reading been a struggle for you? Tell me a story of what that's like.

**101:** Um, comprehension. Comprehending, I think, maybe I was in junior, middle school, comprehending, going back. You know, when you are reading a story and you have to comprehend what that story is telling you, you know, what what you have

read. And sometimes, you like, “What did I read?” If it’s in big words, I’m like, “Well I can, I gotta look this word up”, but I just don’t like reading and not knowing the word. And then having to go back and try to explain it a book that’s too advance for me. So, yeah, I would say that comprehension would would be one of my struggles.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember any, well, I remember ones when I messed up in school and got really embarrassed. Do you remember any stories like that? Like “Oh, my God, this em”

**101:** Like now?

**Interviewer:** Or even now.

**101:** Um, (pause) a story that I have messed up on?

**Interviewer:** Like one of your, like when you. I’ll tell you my example, and I may have told you this in class too. But, when I was like in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they were making us read out loud and I was reading my little section of the book. The book was about the Niger River and I was reading it, but I was saying the other N word when I read it aloud. I wasn’t trying to be ugly, like I lived in Michigan. I wasn’t from the south. Maybe, I was really sheltered in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but I didn’t, I didn’t really even know what the word meant. I got, it was a Catholic school too, I got put out into the hallway, and sent to the principle who was a nun, and she washed my mouth out. And “I didn’t mean it!” because I mispronounced the word when I read, because she thought I. I didn’t know! So anyway, I remember that. And I don’t remember anything from school. But I remember that. I sure do remember that.

**101:** Man! Let me see.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember anything? Anything that sticks with you?

**101:** I don’t know, like, my friends at school, whenever we read out loud, they used to, you know when you read you be like nervous, and you stumble over words? Now, I can, I remember that. But as far as, like, you get, you freeze up when you get, read out loud. Like, “Why did she pick me? Why did she pick me to read?” and so you try to read so fast that you stumble over your words.

**Interviewer:** And they don’t understand a word that you just read.

**101:** (Laughter) But I've never, I've never been embarrassed. You know, (pause) I had to stand in front of, I can't even remember like, I know if she called us and we had to read, like, she'd say "You such and such, you read first paragraph. [REDACTED] you read the second, you know third." Something like that. You know, I tried to pre-read, so I would know what I'm reading. (Laughter) But I think that probably was the story that stick out to me, people used to probably talk about it. Like, "Ugh, you stuttering. You don't know how to read." And so I think that probably would be one thing.

**Interviewer:** What about your family, either your kids or your family? What were they like as readers? Or where they?

**101:** Um, my momma she read a lot. She reads a lot. She have one of those, real tall, about the size of the window, like maybe, I think three or four, and maybe some small ones but she have an office, and she has a lot of books. I'm talking all the way. Um, my sister, no. She didn't, she don't. I think she only reads when she has too read. Um my brothers, I think the same thing for them. They will read when they have to read something important, something like that. But my mom, she reads.

**Interviewer:** Do you, I mean did she stress at all when you were little and like, "Oh we gotta read" Did she ever take you to the library? Anything like that?

**101:** No she basically, um, I was little, my dad worked. My mom, um, she worked and then she waited till later to go back to school. And I was born later, my sister, she did everything my mom was supposed to had done before she started going back to school. She went to school and it paid off for her. She's an RN, she's a nurse, um, and she waited too late. I don't remember my mom or dad sitting down with me at the table telling me, you know, "Ok, well, you need to do this. You need to read, do homework, you need to study." Because it was already in me say I'm going to go home, do my homework, do what I need to do. That's what I was thinking about over hear. You know, I wasn't made, didn't nobody push me to do, you know, to do anything. And I don't remember my mom and my dad pushing. Because they are divorced now, so they never pushed me like to go to school, get a good education, I want you to get good grades and all this other stuff. Um,

**Interviewer:** But you expected it yourself. So, maybe they did somehow but it wasn't out there.

**101:** Cause my sister and them, they didn't graduate. They dropped out. My brother dropped, both of my brothers dropped out. So, I'm the only one that finished school. And, now, I'm going back to college. This is like my second time. I want to do more than what I'm doing. I want more.

**Interviewer:** What about with your kids? It's different now. I mean, you have to help them or they aren't going to get through, to some extent. You know?

**101:** My kids, yes. What, you know, I don't let, um, what my mom and my dad didn't do for me, tear me down to keep me from doing it to my kids. I fuss at them. They will sit at the table right along with me. Um, I take them to the library sometimes. They don't, they don't get no book to Auburn. They go to the little puppet shows, they read to them. Um,

**Interviewer:** How old are they? Did you say?

**101:** My youngest is 6 and ■■■, my oldest, he's fixing to be 12. Um, (pause) but, they they read. They even read my college books.

**Interviewer:** Do they?

**101:** Yeah, if ■■■ don't break an AR goal, they do an AR goal point thing. So, um, if they don't, if they come home and they don't have a book, and they want to play games and stuff like that, they have to read for 30 minutes. If they say, "Oh mom! I ain't got no book." I already took my test AR". "Alright, then you can grab one of mine."

**Interviewer:** Aren't you lucky! You get to read about keyboarding.

**101:** Or you can read about the body. Because they, I took medical terminology. Yeah, if he know how to read, he going to read a book. And if he don't know a word, I'll tell him.

**Interviewer:** There you go. What about your friends? You mentioned your friends, and a little bit about reading aloud and stuff. But did you have any friends that were not? Did they seem to influence what you did much in school in reading or anything?

**101:** Um, (pause). I'm sorry, my friends

**Interviewer:** On December 10, your friends influence what you did or didn't do in school. Socially? Or was that not much of a big influence on you?

**101:** Um, they wasn't at school. They wasn't a big influence, but now, my friends, people that I talk too, well I only have one friend that she's a dedicated reader. She um, she reads. I mean, she um, she crazy reads. She reads everything. I mean from calories. She will go to the store and pick up something and reads. But, um (pause) I don't know like, if if, that ain't ADHD?

**Interviewer:** I don't know what it is. Might obsessive compulsive disorder. Something!

**101:** But she reads! She reads everything. She's very work. But she she she's very dedicated to reading. I don't know why. But she loves books. But her book is Eileen Harris. She loves Eileen Harris. Um,

**Interviewer:** Does she ever try to get you to read them? Or try to get you to talk about them? Or anything? Or does she just let you be?

**101:** Yes! She, she um, she um, I can't think of the name, I don't know if he's psychology but he he um, say if you like put powder behind your ear, it'll like, his name is James Something.

**Interviewer:** Is it John Tesh?

**101:** He was saying how you gotta massage your feet. Gah,lee, but she gave them to me to read. She um, she told me gave me some books to read. You know, and I really like them. But sometime, they too deep.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. You just want something for fun?

**101:** (Laughter) Yeah, but that one was real fun. It was in psychology. In the, um, in um, gahlee, Books-A-Million. It's James, it's a yellow and blue book.

**Interviewer:** I don't know.

**101:** Oh my gah. It was something about the brain. You smells some chocolate. Oh, my gah [REDACTED]!

**Interviewer:** You'll have to let me. Now I'm curious.

**101:** It's it's a good book. I read that, but it was too deep.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. You prefer, if you pick something to read for fun, you prefer to read for fun. Fun books! Not necessarily things that make you think.

**101:** Now I, it, it, it, it has to get my attention. I read *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which I got and hadn't read it yet. Um, I will read Eileen Harris. I will read Zane, Michael Basin, um Eric Jerome Dickey. Um, um, I will, I will read as long as it's good. As long as somebody say, "Well get this book; it's a good book." I, I will read it. As long as it gets my attention. You know, different strokes for different folks.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**101:** So I don't know if if I have to read the back of it. You know, if it's going to get my attention, then yeah, I'll go ahead and get it then.

**Interviewer:** What about covers? Are you a picture person?

**101:** No.

**Interviewer:** That was just curiosity. On that survey question and I was just curious.

**101:** I don't. I don't look at the pictures.

**Interviewer:** What about # 11, a story about a favorite memory of a teacher teaching or reading or have any of those?

**101:** Um, what I like is nursery rhymes (laughter) when I was young. Maybe in second grade. Um, nursery rhymes. Um, that that's probably it.

**Interviewer:** Just things that were very rhyme-y and sing-y.

**101:** Yeah, when I was young, they had a song that was like to get you to remember your months/

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**101:** And it was like January, February, March and April, May and June. But they don't even teach the kids this. My son look at me like, "What?" (Laughter)

**Interviewer:** They probably don't even know "Conjunction Junction" either. do you remember that one? They used to have commercials on Saturday mornings. With the, um,

**101:** *School House Rock?*

**Interviewer:** Yeah. *School House Rock.*

**101:** Oh, yes yes. I love

**Interviewer:** "Conjunction Junction" was my favorite. "Conjunction Junction", what's that function?

**101:** Oh yes! I liked the, um,

**Interviewer:** And the “Bill” one is good too. I’m just a bill.

**101:** Bill! Oh my gah!

**Interviewer:** I don’t think they even know those anymore.

**101:** Yes I loved *School House Rock!* I couldn’t wait till it came on. And PBS, um, well back then we only had three channels.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, we didn’t have all these choices. And you had to watch them when they were on too! My kids to not get that at all.

**101:** They don’t? (Laughter)

**Interviewer:** “What do you mean, it’s not on?” It’s not on. “Can we DVR? Is it not on the DVR? Is it not on Netflix?” “Oh just shut”

**101:** Oh my goodness (laughter)

**Interviewer:** Um, let’s see. We talked a little bit about reading for fun. Did you have anything else down for # 12?

**101:** # 12? I put books that have a lot of humor.

**Interviewer:** Yeah?

**101:** I like, I like in movies, I like, um, I like horror and suspenseful movies. Thriller. I think, I, I like that in books too. I like, I think, now I’m kind of serious. Laugh too much, humorous, or scary or suspenseful where you are just into it. Like, “Oh just shut up. Don’t say nothing else to me.”

**Interviewer:** And they always end the chapter on a cliff hanger. And you gotta keep going.

**101:** Yeah, I’m like that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, me too. Um, reading for school. We talked a little bit about that. In college. But what is reading for school like for you? Now?

**101:** Reading for school? Now, back then, I didn’t think it was that important. As a child, you want to learn and you want to know, so you’ll do it. In middle school, like I said, it’s other things that and then when you get up in high school and then you graduate and you figure out what you want to do. Then I think that is when it’s really important. Um, for me now, I said it’s important, cause you can’t do nuthin, you can’t do nothing without it in your life. I mean, you can’t.

**Interviewer:** Not really. Not if you don’t understand it.

**101:** No.

**Interviewer:** Um, so, reading for information. What if you have to learn how to do something? Or it's # 14. Um, if you have to do something, or, um, you know, like follow directions for to build something? Or I don't know that kind of reading. What's that like for you? Or what did you write about?

**101:** Um, I, I put (pause), um, it's in like for concerns you may have or um (pause) just, I guess knowledge. Just to know.

**Interviewer:** How is it difficult or do you have a hard time if it's following steps to put it together? Or are you good with stuff like that?

**101:** (pause) sometimes, I can just look at it and do it. But if I mess up, then I'm like "Let me go back. To see what I've messed up" (laughter). Um, it's it's, like if it's a TV stand, it's not that hard. But if it's a desk or something, then yeah, you, I will go back.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, and see "Uh oh" hoping to still fix it. Um, what about tell me about a time when you realized that reading was important in life.

**101:** Um, a time when reading was important. (Pause) Um, when, I started, I mean, it's important anyway, but, um, I think it started getting very important to me when I started had my kids. And they was going to school and they started sending home homework and stuff like that. And you know, you have to raise your kids, so you have to know, you have to stay a step ahead of them. So you know, it's, it's important to know throughout your life. But when you start having kids and you're starting to go back to school yourself, then it's important. Especially with math. Because math is not my subject. When my son needed help, I ran just like Glen did on Tillman. No, I'm serious (laughter)

**Interviewer:** "Oh no! I don't know!" well, and sometimes the way they explain it too, it's crazy. It's hard to. Like the kids can't tell you what they are trying to figure out. They have all this complicated stuff.

**101:** Yes! And it's way advanced now.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it is.

**101:** I'm serious. It's so advanced. Some of the stuff that they doing, he's in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade,

**Interviewer:** it's probably the same stuff you're doing in your math lab.

**101:** it was the same stuff I was doing in [REDACTED] class. I'm like, "Why are yall doing this?"

**Interviewer:** Well, yeah, I know. I guess when he comes up to here he can just move on and do something higher. That is crazy. Um, why do you think, I got a couple questions that weren't on the thing. Why do you think, why do you think reading is a struggle for you? Or is it a struggle for you? How did you feel? Well, I guess this is kind of two different questions. When you came and took the Compass and had to take the reading class, how did you think about all that?

**101:** Ok, when I took the Compass test, I thought I had it. Like when you breathing and you take the test. I thought, "Ok, you'll pass this. You read." But, when I found out what my grade was, "Man, how did I get so low on it?" but um, for me, I think it's comprehension. You know, knowing what you read, um, I don't know, it's like, um reading is easy, but it's like typing up something after the fact. The comprehension part. I think that's what's it.

**Interviewer:** having to summarize what's after it. And have to go back and say what you read.

**101:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you read it and understand it, but going back to

**101:** And words.

**Interviewer:** Vocabulary is a problem.

**101:** Yeah. Yeah. I those are like, my two, big words you don't know. I mean, you, you some people be like, "Ok, let me figure out what this word is. And let me go to the dictionary, or something" and they look over ok and you read the whole sentence, and read it again, maybe you think, "Oh this is what this is." But it's not what that word is. So, it's it's maybe like advanced words. Words you don't know. Um, and comprehension for me. And I I know that for a fact. Cause I you know you can sit there and just read and read but some stuff you just don't understand. It's too advanced for you.

**Interviewer:** How have you found, have you found vocabulary is being an issue in any of your classes that you've taken so far? Like not knowing? Not being able to

learn the vocabulary you have to learn for the class. Has that been hard or has that been ok?

**101:** Um, I guess it'd have to be on the chapter that you into. Like Child Development in psychology. I was into that cause you want to learn about your kids and how you should do as a parent about for your kids. So if you're into it, yeah you would you would redo the vocabulary words and go back. It's, um, vocabulary words that I don't know, but, I mean, if you ask me what it is today and I done read that chapter, I could tell you. Because it's, you know, it was something I was in to. But for me to keep studying and studying, yeah I would have to do that.

**Interviewer:** What about the medical terminology? Was that hard?

**101:** Um, in order for me to learn, yes. It was. Um, in order for me to learn, that class, he he didn't teach out the book. He taught by the PowerPoint and what I did for every PowerPoint, I bought a whole bunch of flash cards and I just wrote everything down. I think it's better. It's easier for me to learn something if I can look at it myself and write and study and study and keep going over, keep going over.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Um, do you consider yourself a reader? Like if someone asked you if you were a reader, would you say yes or no?

**101:** (Pause) um, am I a reader? Yeah, I would say yes. Because I'm in school now and I have to read and do my work now. But as far as reading books, I can't say I got time for it, you know what I'm saying? But, if I wasn't in school, yes. I would have been read that *Fifty Shades of Grey* book. I had been read that that book.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**101:** And I bought it but it's just

**Interviewer:** Sitting

**101:** Sitting on my table.

**Interviewer:** So yes, you would consider yourself a reader when you have time. When you have the time and energy. Um, what do you think has had the biggest impact on you as a reader? Your whole life? What do you think would be that one thing that's either made it positive, made it negative, or had an impact on you as a reader?

**101:** Um (pause) it's, a, it's it has impacted me, you know. It goes back to knowledge. If you want to know something, if you want to do something, you're going to read. Um (pause) and I what stands out to me, stands out is that my mom had Osteogenic Sarcoma. Um, and at the time, her and my dad was divorced and she was out of it, you know. She was in [REDACTED] Hospital, I think I was like either sixteen or seventeen, um, and I think that, at that moment probably was a time that impacted me about reading. Because I had to read. I had to give her, um, her medicine. Um, to read on stuff that that rashes and stuff like that, you know. I had to read a lot. I was the only person with her during the chemo. But they had to put, um, a catheter inside her. And it's still inside her today. Um, where she was getting her chemo. Um, (pause), I just had to read a lot then. And you know, I was the only person at the house with her. So, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And it was important to read it right.

**101:** Yes. Yes. So I, um (pause) that's probably the most scary time that I had to just be up on my reading.

**Interviewer:** To make sure you were reading it write. Comprehending it right. Before you did what you needed to do. And make sure how to get the information. Um, anything else you can think about reading? We might? I don't know. Might be interesting for me to talk about in research?

**101:** Um (pause). I don't. I don't know. Maybe you know (pause) I feel like as far as \_\_\_\_\_ at school, I think they should have a little reading group up here at [REDACTED]. Um, to just help people out. In a way, you know what I'm saying? Some people may strong readers. Some may not be into reading and want to be into it but can't get into it like that. Um,

**Interviewer:** What kind of reading group do you mean?

**101:** Like to help them. If they can't read, or if they can't comprehend, something that they can't do as far as, um, just something to help them as far as English. Like I know my English is terrible.

**Interviewer:** No it's now.

**101:** You know what I'm saying? (Laughter) Um, just, just to help. You know, but it has to deal with time too. They have to have time to, to, um, to make it here, I guess to do it.

**Interviewer:** You mean like reading for fun? Like maybe have a reading group where they read a book together?

**101:** Yeah. Something like that.

**Interviewer:** So they can practice it in a way that might be enjoyable.

**101:** Or talk about it. Yeah, like a social thing for readers. I think they have it up there at, um, Books-A-Million.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, they have book clubs and reading groups.

**101:** Yeah, that's what it is! A book club!

**Interviewer:** Something like that. Actually, um, [REDACTED] was trying to do some of that with the reading class this semester. Because we are reading a novel

**101:** Really?

**Interviewer:** And she was trying to get extra times where they could just come and read the book aloud with each other as opposed to reading it at home.

**101:** Yeah, I bet that would help with your comprehension, yes! Now I didn't know that! Did she prosper?

**Interviewer:** I don't know. She is trying to do it right now.

**101:** Oh she is?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, with the kids in the class. So we will see how it works out. Um, alright. Well, I think I asked you all the questions I could possibly ask you. What I'm going to do, is um, I'm going to try to get all the interviews stuff together and see what I have. If I find holes or I find questions I want to ask everybody, I'll call you or email you, or whatever. Um, if not that, then I'm going to wait till I finish with everybody to do the drawing for the Kindle Fire. But I do have here your gift card. So you can buy more gifts. More books!

**101:** Oh really?! Thank you!

**Interviewer:** It's a \$25 one. So you can buy yourself a book online. And um, see what you want to get. I appreciate you coming up here and doing this.

### **Maneta's Story Draft One**

Maneta (pseudonym) was a 35-year-old African American woman returning to college after a decade or so of working and raising a family. She was raised by both of her parents until they divorced before she entered high school. She was the only sibling in her family to have graduated high school. When in school, she received free or reduced lunches, which indicates a lack of financial resources growing up. She was at the time of the interviews a divorced parent of two boys, aged six and twelve. When returning to college in 2013, she tested into developmental English, math, and reading. She had completed her developmental English sequence and had a 3.0 GPA and was still enrolled in ABC Community College at the time of analysis of data.

### **Maneta Narrative One**

From an early age, Maneta had a positive relationship with reading. "I like nursery rhymes. They had songs to get you to remember your months." Her journey with reading throughout elementary school was a successful one. "Reading in elementary school was my favorite subject because you get to learn more and find out information. When I was young, I think I enjoyed reading a lot." Her favorite book was *James and the Giant Peach*, which she read in school around first grade. "It's still my favorite. I can read it now, over and over." She does begin to find aspects of reading that are unpleasant in elementary school. "One thing I remember we had to get in front of the class or the teacher would call your name and you'd take certain parts to read and I'd hate that. I didn't like reading out loud. I don't know, like, my friends at school, whenever we read out loud, they used to, you know when you read you be like nervous, and you stumble over words? Now, I can, I remember that. But as far as, like, you get, you freeze up when

you get, read out loud. Like, ‘Why did she pick me? Why did she pick me to read?’ and so you try to read so fast that you stumble over your words. But I’ve never been embarrassed. I know if she called us and we had to read, like, she’d say, ‘You such and such, you read first paragraph. Maneta, you read the second, you know third.’ Something like that. You know, I tried to pre-read, so I would know what I’m reading. But I think that probably was the story that sticks out to me. People used to probably talk about it. Like, ‘Ugh, you stuttering. You don’t know how to read.’”

### **Maneta Narrative Two**

In middle school, things began to change in Maneta’s response to school and reading. “I liked reading until I started the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. When we get older, we don’t think about that (laughter). We mastered that in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and we are growing up so we’re thinking about other stuff on our minds. You don’t really think about it. Ok, you’re reading and that’s that. When you read, you just scan it. Just enough to get what you gotta get. And move on. That’s a social, and middle school thing. I mean, you’re so social, you don’t have time. You be thinking about dressing, clothes, you know, boys, cell phones now. Cause you’re learning, when you are young, you’re learning a lot of stuff. And when you’re a child, you’re taking in a lot of stuff. But when you get older, you’re like ‘Oh I already know that. We’ve done been through that.’ In Junior High, you’re into other stuff because you’ve mastered what you need to master.” During this time, other issues besides a lack of interest seemed to pop up in Maneta’s reading story. Reading comprehension became a challenge for her. “Comprehending, I think, maybe I was in junior, middle school, comprehending, going back (was a struggle). You know, when you are reading a story and you have to comprehend what that story is telling you. You know,

what you have read. And sometimes, you are like, ‘What did I read?’ If it’s in big words, I’m like, ‘Well I gotta look this word up,’ but I just don’t like reading and not knowing the word. And then having to go back and try to explain it -- a book that’s too advanced for me--. So, yeah, I would say that comprehension would be one of my struggles.”

### **Maneta Narrative Three**

In high school, reading still brought struggles and negative feelings. “The older you get, in high school, you know from junior high to high school, you really don’t think about reading. You think about skimming. You know, read what you need to know to answer the question and the notes and then you’re done. So, I think, I just really wasn’t into it. I think I did it because I had to do it, I think. And when you get to high school, it’s all about you meeting a new crowd of people and you know, you just don’t think. You think I want to be this when I grow up; I want to do this when I grow up. And you have to do a lot of stuff. You have to do what it takes to get there. And sometimes, you know, people don’t think about reading.” Maneta failed the state graduation exam for reading “like three times” even though she passed the math and writing sections on the first try. She was very frustrated with these repeated failures.

### **Maneta Narrative Four**

Maneta’s family, for the most part, were not seen by her to be readers, except for her mother. “My momma, she reads a lot. She has one of those real tall bookshelves, about the size of the window, like maybe, I think three or four, and maybe some small ones. But she has an office, and she has a lot of books. I’m talking all the way. My sister, no. She didn’t, she don’t. I think she only reads when she has too read. My brothers, I

think the same thing for them. They will read when they have to read something important, something like that. But my mom, she reads.” Maneta’s mom was also influential in reminding Maneta about the importance of reading. “Reading has impacted me, you know. It goes back to knowledge. If you want to know something, if you want to do something, you’re going to read. What stands out to me is when my mom had Osteogenic Sarcoma. At the time, her and my dad was divorced and she was out of it, you know. She was in Emory Hospital. I think I was like either sixteen or seventeen, and I think that at that moment probably was a time that impacted me about reading. Because I had to read. I had to give her medicine. I had to read stuff about rashes and stuff like that, you know. I had to read a lot. I was the only person with her during the chemo. I just had to read a lot then. And you know, I was the only person at the house with her. So, yeah, it was important to read it right. Yes. Yes. That’s probably the most scary time that I had to just be up on my reading.”

### **Maneta Narrative Five**

Returning to college brought new clarity to Maneta’s reading identity, but started off rough with her placement testing. “Now, back then, I didn’t think reading was that important. As a child, you want to learn and you want to know, so you’ll do it. In middle school, like I said, it’s other things that interest you, and then when you get up in high school and then you graduate and you figure out what you want to do. Then I think that is when it’s really important. For me now, I said it’s important, because you can’t do nothing without it in your life. I mean, you can’t.” Maneta’s family history influenced her return to college. “I don’t remember my mom or dad sitting down with me at the table telling me, you know, ‘Ok, well, you need to do this. You need to read, do homework,

you need to study.’ Because it was already in me say I’m going to go home, do my homework, do what I need to do. You know, I wasn’t made, didn’t nobody push me to do, you know, to do anything. And I don’t remember my mom and my dad pushing. Because they are divorced now, so they never pushed me like to go to school, get a good education, I want you to get good grades and all this other stuff. Because my sister and them, they didn’t graduate. They dropped out. Both of my brothers dropped out. So, I’m the only one that finished school. And, now, I’m going back to college. This is like my second time. I want to do more than what I’m doing. I want more.”

So, with this new understanding of the importance of reading and schooling, Maneta returned to college only to be stymied by the COMPASS placement test. “Ok, when I took the COMPASS test, I thought I had it. Like when you are breathing and you take the test. I thought, ‘Ok, you’ll pass this. You read.’ But, when I found out what my grade was, ‘Man, how did I get so low on it?’ but um, for me, I think it’s comprehension. You know, knowing what you read. I don’t know. It’s like reading is easy, but it’s like typing up something after the fact. The comprehension part. I think that’s what’s it. And words. I think those are like my two problems. Big words you don’t know. I mean some people be like, ‘Ok, let me figure out what this word is. And let me go to the dictionary, or something’ and they look over ok and you read the whole sentence, and read it again, maybe you think, ‘Oh this is what this is.’ But it’s not what that word is. So, it’s maybe like advanced words. Words you don’t know and comprehension for me. And I know that for a fact because I know you can sit there and just read and read but some stuff you just don’t understand. It’s too advanced for you.” Since entering college she has found ways to combat this issue of vocabulary. “You would redo the vocabulary words and go back.

It's vocabulary words that I don't know, but, I mean, if you ask me what it is today and I done read that chapter, I could tell you. Because it's, you know, it was something I was in to. But for me to keep studying and studying, yeah I would have to do that. I bought a whole bunch of flash cards and I just wrote everything down. I think it's better. It's easier for me to learn something if I can look at it myself and write and study and study and keep going over, keep going over." She seems to really understand the impact reading will have in her future. "In college, at this point, you know it's important. You have to read, and then you know, and in my day and age, things are changing from back then till now. So in order to keep up, you got to read. You got to keep up with the technology. You got to keep up with the news. I don't know, the TV, to look at the news. But I'll read the newspaper. Because you'll see what gets my attention is pictures. You know I bought all my books because you never know when you have to go back and look. I got a whole bunch of books."

### **Maneta Narrative Six**

Another huge influence on Maneta's reading life are her two sons, aged 6 and 12. "A time when reading was important, I mean, it's important anyway, but, I think it started getting very important to me when I had my kids. And they were going to school and they started sending home homework and stuff like that. And you know, you have to raise your kids, so you have to know. You have to stay a step ahead of them. So you know, it's important to know throughout your life. But when you start having kids and you're starting to go back to school yourself, then it's important. My kids, yes. I don't let what my mom and my dad didn't do for me tear me down to keep me from doing it to my kids. I fuss at them. They will sit at the table right along with me. I take them to the

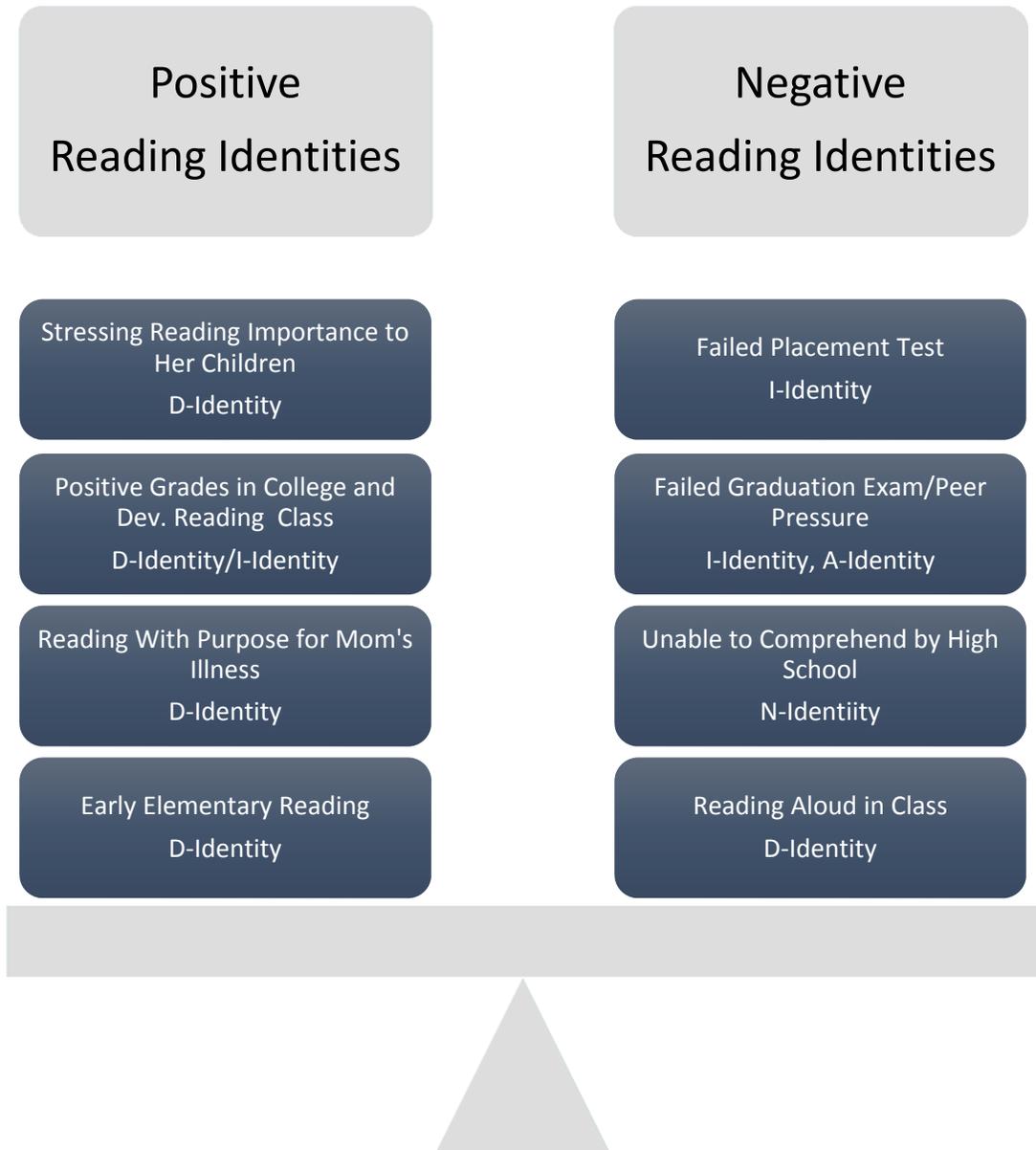
library sometimes. They don't get no book to read. They go to the little puppet shows. They read to them. But, they read. They even read my college books. If my son don't break an AR goal, they do an AR goal point thing. If they come home and they don't have a book, and they want to play games and stuff like that, they have to read for 30 minutes. If they say, 'Oh mom! I ain't got no book. I already took my AR test.' I say. 'Alright, then you can grab one of mine.' Yeah, if he knows how to read, he's going to read a book. And if he don't know a word, I'll tell him."

As a mother and full time student, Maneta's reading identity is in constant tension with her reality. "I like to read at home when it's quiet when I don't have my kids. If I'm real busy, I won't think about picking up a book. If I'm real busy. But I would pick one up if I didn't have nothing to do, if I wasn't in school, and I was just sitting at home. I would go to work. I would go home, and I would get a book and read. My favorite author is Zane. They are very bad. When you asked about a time where you loved reading. See, I put 'Porn, when I started reading porn!' I probably shouldn't say that! Then *Uncommon*, I read that book and I'm glad that that you told us to get it. Because I was like I need the book for the class and was going to get it for the class. But, I was into it. I mean, I was crying on some of them. And I highlighted some. Because he was telling the truth. And I was like, I like to read. And if I like to read, it has to catch my attention. I want something that'll catch my attention at the beginning." Friends as well as school have influenced her reading. "I only have one friend that's a dedicated reader. She reads. I mean, she crazy reads. She reads everything. I mean from calories. She will go to the store and pick up something and reads. She reads everything. She's very dedicated to reading. I don't know why. But she loves books. But her book is Eileen Harris. She loves

Eileen Harris. She gave me some books to read. You know, and I really like them. But sometime, they too deep. Now it has to get my attention. I will read *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which I got and hadn't read it yet. I will read Charlaine Harris. I will read Zane, Michael Baisden, Eric Jerome Dickey. I will read as long as it's good. As long as somebody says, 'Well get this book; it's a good book.' I will read it. As long as it gets my attention. You know, different strokes for different folks. Am I a reader? Yeah, I would say yes. Because I'm in school now and I have to read and do my work now. But as far as reading books, I can't say I got time for it, you know what I'm saying? But, if I wasn't in school, yes. I would have been read that *Fifty Shades of Grey* book. I would had been read that book."

**Table 4.3**

*Maneta's Reading Identities*



*Note.* This table indicated that the reading identities in Maneta's narratives balanced pretty closely between positive and negative throughout her life. In the end, she was a self-described reader, which indicated that the balance may have tipped over to a positive

reading identity, especially when looking at the Discourse-Identities she revealed through her stories.

## Appendix G

### Rebecca Transcripts April 14 #102

**Interviewer:** Alright, so let's make sure. Alright, so it's, what is today? April 14<sup>th</sup>. And it says 102. And so all you're going to do, all we're going to do is ask you these questions and just tell me about you as a reader in your life. There are no wrong answers. You can tell me you don't like it. It's ok. You can tell me whatever. But what I'm trying to do is put together you as a story as a reader in your life. So just tell me whatever stories you do have as I ask you. And I mean, again, I'm not saying lie, but if you can't remember exactly, tell me kind of what you remember. You know what I mean, I don't remember anything from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade either but I remember in probably 1<sup>st</sup> grade taking a book to my mom and reading to her and being really proud of myself. I don't know. And I remember it was *Goodnight Moon*. Do I remember the exact details of it? No. But I do remember, you know what I'm saying? So you can just kind of tell me what you remember and that kind of thing. So we can start. I kind of need to get, um, kind of a beginning to end, like different pieces. So, for most people, um, what do you remember about reading in elementary school, or really little and learning how to read or that kind of thing.

**102:** I remember my first book being the Dr. Seuss. I don't know the name of it but it was I remember it having three fish on it. What was it?

**Interviewer:** *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*

**102:** Yeah, that was my favorite book when I was little and that was about basically my only favorite book because I liked fish in it. And I liked fishing. So that was my one favorite book.

**Interviewer:** So it didn't matter that it wasn't about fishing. It just had fish on the cover. So that was good enough.

**102:** Yeah, I always remember carried it to my momma. Was ready to go to bed and I would read it to my momma, or as I got older and in kindergarten.

**Interviewer:** So when you went to school, you remember when you went to kindergarten, you could read pretty much, you think? Do you remember the books?

**102:** I could read a little a little bit. Like Dr. Seuss books, I could read all them because my momma read them to me. But some of the books they had, I couldn't read as good.

**Interviewer:** Me either. So when you were in elementary school, do you remember, like what reading was like in elementary school. Did you like it? Was it stressful? I mean, what was it?

**102:** I liked it in elementary school because it was easy. It wasn't like no big words or nothing like that. But it got, the more I stayed in school, I know you're going to ask this next, middle school, it started getting harder. Cause words started getting bigger and then you had same sound words that meant different things and that was my biggest problem.

**Interviewer:** And understanding which ones to use in which one. So you remember reading groups in elementary school? And stuff like that? Some people have said

they had like really strong memories of, “I was in this group, I was in that group.”

I don’t really remember. But did you have that kind of stuff?

**102:** Nah, vaguely. I just know that I was like probably the weakest one in reading when I got into more depth into reading. Because, I struggled with it, I got mad at myself because I struggled with it.

**Interviewer:** Why did you get mad? Why, I mean, do you remember being put into different groups? Or, like in middle school. Let’s say in elementary school, it wasn’t bad. Maybe 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> grade it wasn’t bad, or is that where it started getting harder?

**102:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember being pulled for extra help? Or?

**102:** I had after school attention. A little bit. Then, it started clicking with me and I got better in high school.

**Interviewer:** Did you, what kind of, how big was the elementary school you went to?

**102:** I went to [REDACTED].

**Interviewer:** Was it pretty small?

**102:** It was average.

**Interviewer:** So, like, you didn’t feel, um, did you feel like you were, I mean, if someone were to say to you in kindergarten, or not in kindergarten, in elementary school, if you were a good reader, what would you have said?

**102:** Not really.

**Interviewer:** You feel like you knew that at a young age? You feel like you were a good reader? But about the time you got to high school, you were more comfortable?

**102:** Cause then I realized that, I knew I didn't like reading. And I was struggling with reading. So,

**Interviewer:** Once you get to high school, um, a lot of people have said that, like it's not reading anymore. That it turns into English. You know what I'm saying? Towards 8<sup>th</sup> grade, you stop learning how to read, and then there is reading to understand it. How did that go? I mean, was that better? Or worse for you?

**102:** It was like in the middle cause I carried a dictionary everywhere I went. I was always a dictionary in my book, book bag or whatever.

**Interviewer:** You would just, you felt comfortable just looking up words in the dictionary? Making sure

**102:** Making sure I knew what it was. Like I thought I knew what it was but I wanted to make sure I knew what it was.

**Interviewer:** when you were in, um, school, like what kind of, once you were into the older grades, maybe middle school or high school, like. For example, some people have said, "Oh I hated it when we had to read aloud." Any kind of things like that stick out in your mind? About reading in English classes?

**102:** Well, we had to read aloud, I would get real nervous like, I'd pronounce a word and people would look at me and laugh. Because I didn't know that word, and it was a basic word, but it was a long word. And I just didn't want to, I would start like stuttering, and stuff like that. Because I was getting nervous because I didn't want to mess up.

**Interviewer:** Did you do like, read around the room, that sort of stuff? How did you handle that?

**102:** (pause) I would swallow real deep and go ahead and prepare myself for what part I had to read to make sure that it wasn't a hard word, so I wouldn't mess up.

**Interviewer:** And you probably didn't listen to anybody else's reading.

**102:** Yeah, kindof.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, you just wait till your turn. You count the paragraphs. You're like, "You can't go to the bathroom, because then they will skip you."

**102:** And now, I gotta read this paragraph

**Interviewer:** That's probably twice as long now.

**102:** Long words that I don't even know. Or I can't pronounce right.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever, I wondered about this too, and I hadn't really thought about it with anyone else, English class and the reading was kind of an issue. But then you also read your science book like that, you know what I'm saying? We did a lot of reading aloud and stuff like that in middle school. And probably even some high school class that's probably really stressful to read who didn't like reading out loud.

**102:** It was like that with every class. With science or math, I didn't have a problem with cause that's my best subject. But reading aloud, period. It didn't matter what class it was. I was still nervous.

**Interviewer:** Um, and that's the thing you don't think about much. That reading, I mean, you do it in every subject. Um, and then you get to college, eventually, and take these tests, this Compass test, to go into Remedial Reading. So what has reading been like for you in college? How did that? How did that play out?

**102:** It played out pretty good cause I had a good teacher.

**Interviewer:** But how did it make you feel in the testing center?

**102:** I was like, “Really?” because I thought I did my best. I tried to get out of taking reading, because, like I said, I didn’t want to take it. But, I’m glad I did because it helped with my English courses get back, get back, because I’ve been out of school so much, that it got me back motivated to read and do my homework.

**Interviewer:** And I imagine that’s probably why you had to take it because you’ve been out of school for a while. Did you, um, when you took the graduation exam, the reading part, do you remember how you did on those?

**102:** I think I just made enough to pass it some.

**Interviewer:** Well, as long as you pass it. A lot of people don’t pass it.

**102:** I think I had, I had to retake reading and English, but I passed all the other ones the second time I passed them.

**Interviewer:** So, um, so, tell me, at some point, can you come up with a time you didn’t like reading? Something that you read that made you think, “Oh I don’t hate reading.” Or is it any? It’s ok if you don’t. It’s ok.

**102:** (whispers)

**Interviewer:** You can say it. Let me just tell you this right now. This is probably totally inappropriate. Two people, that I’ve interviewed, both told me was probably what you’re going to, well not necessarily the book you’re reading but pretty much the same thing. I didn’t know there would be such a trend in my research.

**102:** That was the first time I didn’t want to put down the book.

**Interviewer:** The um

**102:** *Fifty Shades of Grey*. I didn’t know if I could say it.

**Interviewer:** You can say it. It's ok.

**102:** But yes, that was the first three books that I actually read that did not have pictures.

**Interviewer:** But you read the whole thing though?

**102:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Good thing it probably didn't have pictures. Cause then, it probably would have been totally X-rated. Um, it's kind of funny. I read the first one but the other two I couldn't really get into. Or whatever.

**102:** I didn't get, I didn't get into the last one.

**Interviewer:** Maybe it was the first two and maybe not the last one. I don't know. One of them I didn't read. I don't remember. But, um, something that moves fast, quick pace, interesting topic, you can get into.

**102:** That sounds bad.

**Interviewer:** No it doesn't. You're not the first person that's said that. It's funny. I've interviewed six people and you are the third person that said

**102:** That's 50%!

**Interviewer:** That's half exactly! People I've picked out of a random sample. Anyway, I don't know. I don't know what that says. But you're not the first person that's said that. Um, so, basically, reading for you is the only time you enjoy it, or the only time you ever want to enjoy it, was something that really caught your interest, something that is easy to read. They are pretty simple.

**102:** Yeah, and I like the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I liked that one. And the *Scarlet Letter*. I liked that one.

**Interviewer:** You liked that one?

**102:** Yeah, and that book that we read in reading. What was it called?

**Interviewer:** *Uncommon*

**102:** The *Uncommon*. I liked The *Uncommon*. Anything to do, with, like sports or outdoors I love to read novels and stuff like that. Not nonfiction, not really.

**Interviewer:** What about reading, like, um, like the newspapers and stuff like that? Magazines, stuff like that?

**102:** I like those. Cause they got pictures

**Interviewer:** You like those that are short? Have pictures? It's still reading though.

**102:** I like reading the newspaper. Magazines, stuff like that that I get in the mail. It was teen magazines when I was in middle school and high school to get those. And um, the Alabama Living book, I read those. Any outdoors book, I read.

**Interviewer:** Just to get knowledge and stuff. What about um, reading, like for school? Text books and stuff since you've been in college. How's that been? Reading for history? Or whatever class.

**102:** Well, psychology I didn't mind it cause I love psychology. Um, I didn't, I ain't have to take a history yet. But, for music, it was ok reading because it was learning about Beethoven and all that. (Pause) I gotta do what I gotta do, so.

**Interviewer:** So you just did it. Did you feel like you comprehend it, understood it pretty well when you read it? More than one? How much, how much of a struggle was it for you?

**102:** I remember like, I have an interest in music, so I remember most of it. And I took interest in it and I did comprehend it. It's like, if I don't really like it, I don't comprehend it. If I don't really want to read it, I don't comprehend.

**Interviewer:** Cause you probably don't pay attention? Yeah. Or maybe you kind of turn your brain. You know, what it could be. I sort of do the same thing. If you really don't want to read what you're reading, or you really don't want to pay attention to it, your mind starts to wonder and you're not really taking it in. Do you know what I'm saying?

**102:** Yeah. I'm thinking about something else, but I'm really reading it.

**Interviewer:** Right, but you're really not getting anything out of it.

**102:** Yeah, it's just

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I think that's what a lot of people do. Um, so what if you have to read, like, um instructions or recipes? Are you good, like with reading information to pull facts? I have to do this. These are the facts I need? Is that something that's easy to do, or harder to do than reading for fun or entertainment?

**102:** Like, pulling facts, like to do an essay or something?

**Interviewer:** Or any kind of, pulling, I don't know, you get a new desk and you have to put it together with instructions or a How To manual. A How To manual on how to do something, or whatever.

**102:** Yeah, I'm easy with that. But most of the time, I try to do that without the instructions because I look at the pictures.

**Interviewer:** You're very visual.

**102:** I'm visual. Like I try, I'm not saying I won't read the instructions, but I try not to read them cause I'm trying to put it together quick. Like I do have a story about that. Um, my dad got a new bed and these new frames they got for 2015 are ridiculous. It came with instructions and bolts and everything. And I couldn't. I

read the instructions and I couldn't figure it out. So I just looked at the pictures and once I looked at the pictures and read the instructions again, then I got it.

**Interviewer:** But you had to have the visual reference for it to make sense.

**102:** Because I was like, this is. You're only supposed to have two rails that connect and they didn't. They were going wish-washy and like, I just want to sit daddy's new bed up so I can get on.

**Interviewer:** It wasn't going to do.

**102:** I know. I got it put together through visual, mostly.

**Interviewer:** If you had to, like, um, let's say you had an afternoon where you could do whatever you want, and you choose to read, where would you read? What would you read? Like if that's what you chose to do. For fun. You know, you're just going to relax with a book or something.

**102:** I would probably relax by my mother-in-law's, or my boyfriend's momma's, um swimming pool with

**Interviewer:** Beer (laughter) I see that face.

**102:** With probably, um, outdoors magazine or something in that nature.

**Interviewer:** Just kind of out there. Everybody said swimming pool. Apparently everyone wants to go swimming. Um, what, let me, I guess we will, um, kind of, um, tell me a story where keeping a time where you realized reading was important in life.

**102:** College.

**Interviewer:** Why?

**102:** Because I knew I had to do a lot of reading in my major and I would have to know a lot of big words. And I would have to pay attention and grasp and comprehend a lot so I would remember the words and say the right.

**Interviewer:** You know what you needed to know. And it does. And you had a goal. You're trying to reach so you knew that you were trying to get there. Um, and I think that happens a lot of the time when we realize that it's a step to get where we want to go. Um, what about your, trying to get into your social. Were you, did your family, is anybody in your family a reader? Or not?

**102:** Yes my aunt is a reader. She has her own little library in her house. If I can think of any book, she probably has it. Like she has a whole room of nothing but books. She loves to read. And I think that skipped my generation because I called her up about when we had to have The *Uncommon* book to see if she had it. Well, I went on ahead and bought it. And she did have it.

**Interviewer:** That's funny.

**102:** And I'm like, "Where did you get it from?" "I got it from The [REDACTED]." I was like, "I could have just borrowed it." But now, I like that book. I want that book because I'll reread that book. And [REDACTED] has that book.

**Interviewer:** Really?

**102:** We read it together.

**Interviewer:** I was going to ask you, have you ever suggested books to other people? Or does your aunt suggest books to you?

**102:** She just, she suggests all kinds of books to me. I'm just not. She likes any kind of books. Like the Twilight books. I didn't like them.

**Interviewer:** I didn't like them either.

**102:** I mean, but I suggested that book to [REDACTED] and he read the back of *Uncommon*, or whatever, me and him read some of it together. But then he went off.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that ADHD kicked in. and that was it. That was done.

**102:** I think we read like five chapters.

**Interviewer:** Oh, well, that's something. What do you, in your. Well, let's start with this one. Do you consider yourself a reader? Do you think if someone asks you if you're a reader, what do you say?

**102:** No.

**Interviewer:** No. why do you say that?

**102:** (pause) cause I don't, I don't like it. I don't. I mean, I read the newspapers when I have them or my magazines. But I don't go out of my way to read .

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it wouldn't be your way, in your free time, it wouldn't be your choice. You would find something else to do.

**102:** I would go mud-riding or swimming or fishing or something.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, more physical. More active. Um, why do you think that reading has been a struggle for you?

**102:** Cause I don't like it.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's alright. Do you think that motivation has been the biggest issue?

Do you think you ever really had real deficits in understanding what you were reading? Or anything like that? Or do you think it's just a matter of what you want to do and what you don't want to do?

**102:** I think it's a matter of what I don't want to do. (Pause). I know I gotta do it to succeed and get my goal. But, that's the only reason why I'm doing it.

**Interviewer:** Do you, um, spend much time reading on the internet? Or anything like that? That kind of reading doesn't bother you as much, but it still is visual reading. I mean, usually there is pictures and

**102:** Yeah, cause it's on your phone. You stay on your phone. You get on Facebook and you see stories about somebody, some famous person getting arrested and you click on it and you read. Nelly got arrested.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. He's still coming to [REDACTED].

**102:** I was wondering about that. I read that. And just different things, I'll read stuff on Facebook. But I don't like going out of my way, I guess.

**Interviewer:** Do you, I think, I think the reason I'm asking is, I'm wondering if reading a novel or reading a book or reading a text book is different in your mind than reading a magazine or reading online. Do you not see that as reading, really?

**102:** I really don't actually. Cause when somebody says, take "Reading." I think of books and novels, not, I don't think about magazines or stuff like that on Facebook. I don't think about books.

**Interviewer:** Like academic. Like school books .

**102:** Like required books you have to read for your reading class.

**Interviewer:** I think it's interesting. You said you liked *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Scarlet Letter*, I mean, like, I like them both. But I'm a very English-y person. I could see people liking *To Kill a Mockingbird* because there is some big words and big language in it and it moves very quickly. But *Scarlet Letter*, it doesn't

move very quickly but it's got a cool, like if you really read into it, it's got some neat themes and ideas in it. So, do you think you liked that because you were read through it by a teacher? Did you actually read it? All of it? I'm not sure if I ever read all of it.

**102:** I think I made it to like, I don't think I read the end of it.

**Interviewer:** But you read a lot of it?

**102:** I read most of it. Because in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, we had to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and I think 11<sup>th</sup> grade was *Scarlet Letter*. And then in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, I think we did Shakespeare. And Shakespeare I do not like.

**Interviewer:** Really? Oh I love *Macbeth*. I still love *Macbeth*.

**102:** Well, that's what we read, *Macbeth*, in class because of the words.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. It's hard to read the language.

**102:** It is hard. The worst book I've ever seen in my life, *Macbeth*.

**Interviewer:** It's not, if you get into it the right way, it's fine. But it is hard to read. Um, it's just the way it's written. Um, so I think it's interesting you consider you like that book. So, what, I think you like, I think it's fair to say you like stories in literature if, if it's approached to you in a certain way, you can really understand and really get into. And it's fast paced and it has drama. Like, I mean, it's got something going on.

**102:** Maybe that's what it is. I like drama books. I don't like drama in my life, but I like drama books.

**Interviewer:** And you can live in somebody else's drama and not your own. It's much more fun. I agree 100%. Um, what do you think were your biggest positive or negative influences on reading for you?

**102:** (Pause). Negative influences?

**Interviewer:** Or positive. Either one.

**102:** Positive influence would be teachers, like, helping me read and saying that I can do it. (Pause) I don't really know. But negative influences would be my brain telling me that I can't do it. Like I can't read this. Like Macbeth. I thought, I can't read this. It's too hard. I'm not going to pass 12<sup>th</sup> grade English. Cause I don't know the words. Is that negative influence?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I would think so. So I think in some ways, you are your own worst, in your attitude and negative and your fears about reading and not understanding or whatever. Um,

**102:** Yeah, reading is a big fear for me.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, and having to understand something.

**102:** And comprehend it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. It's scary, if that's the only way you are going to get your information. Do you feel like, when you were in classes, um, like, if someone lectured, I'm trying to, not like English class necessarily. Like psychology, you said you liked it, how much did you have to read the textbooks to get your information? How much did they lecture or teach it to you in a way that you didn't have to get all your information from a textbook?

**102:** We had to read a lot. And in um, Psychology 100, we had to read like every page.

But it was interesting because it was about the brain and all these different, um, people who. I just liked learning about the life of people like early childhood, childhood, adulthood. Like that stuff interests me. If it don't interest me, I'm just like.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, and another thing, and I think even if something's boring, obviously it can interest you if it gets you interested. Cause the *Scarlet Letter* can become kind of boring. It just depends on how you get interested in it. So, that's cool.

**102:** Yeah, my teacher was like "We are going to read the Scarlet Letter." And I had heard people talk about the Scarlet Letter and how it was hard. And I already made my mind up of "Oh, I'm not going to understand this. I'll panic blah blah blah." But then I got to reading it and when I got to the middle, I started liking it because of all the different points it had. And unique points I ain't never heard before. So,

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I think to me, that was one of the first, one of the first books of literature that I really read where I was like, "You can really learn something. You can really learn some important things about life through reading" like I remember saying how unfair it was that she was being persecuted when that guy was just walking around doing his thing and nobody knew. Oh, that made me so mad.

**102:** Yeah, and there's a bunch of quotes from that book that you could take to your life or my life or whatever. And make it like your own thing. Or whatever.

**Interviewer:** So, when you have kids, do you think you will encourage them to be readers? Or do you think you'll be like, "Whatever you want to do".

**102:** Probably I will encourage them. I don't want them to struggle like I did. Or being self-conscious about reading in front of people.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that, um, do you think that your parents encouraged you to read and do well in school? It sounds like they wanted you to do well.

**102:** Well, I had a rough when I was in high school. When I was 12, my parents got a divorce. So it was like, my mom was always there for me in school and my dad wasn't. So it was kind of hard to say

**Interviewer:** Did you go in between houses? So one house was encouraging and the other was like, "Oh do what you want to do."

**102:** Kindof. It was like, "Oh I got you for the weekend. You'll go back to your mom's on Monday." That's how it was.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, so that's how you felt. It was definitely lot easier to

**102:** And when I was with my dad, we were doing a lot of physical stuff outside and stuff like that. And me and my mom did too, but she focused on my school. She did want me to graduate. And she made bad grades and she didn't want me to make bad grades. So she would help me as best she could. But I tried not to ask her.

**Interviewer:** How much of a college, oh I didn't mean to say college, how much of a background of schooling did they have? Did they graduate high school? Or did they go to college? Or what did they do?

**102:** My mom went to college for two, for a year. And my dad just graduated high school.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, but they at least both had high school diplomas. They wanted you to at least

**102:** At least get my high school diploma. And when I got it, I handed it to my momma.

**Interviewer:** Did you?

**102:** “Here you go!” I was like, “There you go!” and she said, “Now, ok. College.” Six years later, I started.

**Interviewer:** Now what did you do in between?

**102:** Worked. And be wild.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, but you made it through.

**102:** But now I’m responsible. I think.

**Interviewer:** Most of the time. Um, let’s see if there is anything else I need to ask you for this. (Pause). I think you’ve answered all the questions. (Pause). What about friends, when you were in high school, or when you were in school, what, did any of your peers, friends, like was reading something anybody did or was it like, oh, not cool?

**102:** They, like, knew I didn’t like reading. I was struggling with it and they would help me. Cause they were better readers than I was. Or I thought they was anyways. Smarter than me. They was smarter in reading and I was smarter in math so I would help them with their math and they would help me with my reading.

**Interviewer:** So it wasn’t ever, like a social, where your friends would be like, “Oh you don’t like to read. That’s not cool.” It wasn’t like that, kind of situation. Because some people are like that. I don’t know if that’s real, but some people perceive that.

**102:** There are some people. But I'm like, if you don't do it, then you're going to stay in high school because you'll never pass.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, you won't pass if you can't read. Do you think that, um, do you see reading be useful in your career too? Do you see where you might have to use it or do you think not? Have you thought about that?

**102:** No I haven't thought about that. Like when I was an EMT, I was like, I'm going to have to read all this and comprehend it. Where I know how to take care of the situation I'm in.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, and I think that's learning on the job. You can't learn everything from a book.

**102:** See and I'm like more a hands on person. I'm not really a

**Interviewer:** And I'm trying to think in nursing and health care, you kind of have to keep up with change. Cause medicine does not stay the same. There is always something new. And some of that, I think, you learn from word of mouth and training and stuff like that. And stuff like that, some of it is reading articles.

**102:** And reading your text book.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And when you're in school and such. I'm trying to think about other reading you have to do. But to me, it seems like the biggest place where reading would be important. I mean, you have to read charts and that kind of reading is never been problematic for you. Like everyday stuff, it's just the idea of getting a textbook and being told to read it is what stresses you out. Or a book or a novel.

**102:** Or a book I ain't never seen or heard before in my life and you're like, "Read it." I'm like, "Do what?" and now I gotta be tested on it and I'm freaked out or

comprehend it. And then again, I don't want to do it and it's hard for me to comprehend.

**Interviewer:** If you know you don't want to do. It's almost that you are threatened by the books that they have so much information that you

**102:** My brain is so little.

**Interviewer:** Your brain is not little. That's funny though. But it is, because you're the first person, well maybe you're not, that's thought of books as almost afraid because they have so much knowledge that you know you have to get.

**102:** And I used to read them while I was reading here. And I would have to read out loud, I would get like, nervous and my hands would get clammy. So I didn't want to, like, mess up and it be a common word and I'm like "Well I know that word since you said it."

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I didn't make you read a lot, well,

**102:** That's why I sit in the back in the corner.

**Interviewer:** Try to hide? It doesn't work. We know you are hiding back there. Um, so what about, I know you said you wouldn't say that you are a reader, but would you say that you are a good student?

**102:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Why do you say that? What characteristics make you a good student?

**102:** Because I want to succeed in life. Be good at this. Get through and listen and do what I gotta do to get to my goal.

**Interviewer:** And you have a pretty good work ethic and you do all the stuff you're supposed to do on time and all that kind of stuff.

**102:** I try to be.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, don't we all? So I think, um, I'm trying to think if there is anything else. (Pause) I can't think of anything else. Anything else about reading you think might be important to describe who you are as a reader?

**102:** (Pause) No, not that I can think of. But, no.

**Interviewer:** No? Ok. Well, thank you. We can turn that off.

### **Rebecca's Story Draft One**

Rebecca (pseudonym) was a 24-year-old Caucasian woman returning to college after working. She was raised by both of her parents, but they divorced around her time in middle school, so, after that, she split time between two households. She did not mention any siblings in her narratives. When in school, she received free or reduced lunches, which indicates a lack of financial resources growing up. She was single with no children at the time of interviews. When returning to college in 2013, she tested into developmental English, math, and reading. She completed all of her developmental classes and began a degree program from which she was suspended for non-academic reasons. She was no longer a student at ABC Community College at time of data analysis, even though she was eligible for re-admittance.

### **Rebecca's Narrative One**

Rebecca's earliest stories of reading were positive. "I remember my first book being Dr. Seuss. I don't know the name of it, but I remember it having three fish on it. Yeah, *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* was my favorite book when I was little and that was about basically my only favorite book because I liked fish in it. And I liked fishing. So that was my one favorite book. I always remember I carried it to my momma when I was ready to go to bed and I would read it to my momma as I got older and in kindergarten." Entering kindergarten gave Rebecca her first negative feelings toward reading, although, in general, it was a pleasant experience for her. "I could read a little bit. Like Dr. Seuss books, I could read all them because my momma read them to me. But some of the books they had, I couldn't read as good. I liked it in elementary school because it was easy. It wasn't like no big words or nothing like that."

### **Rebecca's Narrative Two**

This positive reaction to reading didn't last long. Once Rebecca hit middle school, reading became a frustration for her. "It started getting harder because words started getting bigger and then you had same sound words that meant different things. That was my biggest problem. I just know that I was like probably the weakest one in reading when I got into more depth into reading. Because I struggled with it, I got mad at myself. I had after school attention a little bit. When I was 12, my parents got a divorce. So it was like, my mom was always there for me in school and my dad wasn't. When I was with my dad, we were doing a lot of physical stuff outside and stuff like that. And me and my mom did too, but she focused on my school. She did want me to graduate. And she made bad grades and she didn't want me to make bad grades. So she would help me as best she could, but I tried not to ask her."

### **Rebecca's Narrative Three**

This afterschool tutoring and a sense of identity as a struggling reader in high school actually helped her do better in school-type reading. "It started clicking with me and I got better in high school. Because then I realized that I knew I didn't like reading. And I was struggling with reading, so I carried a dictionary everywhere I went. There was always a dictionary in my book bag or whatever. Making sure I knew what it (the word) was. Like I thought I knew what it was, but I wanted to make sure I knew what it was." This feeling of control of her reading ability was lost when the idea of reading aloud was broached. "When we had to read aloud, I would get real nervous like. I'd pronounce a word and people would look at me and laugh. Because I didn't know that word, and it was a basic word, but it was a long word. And I just didn't want to, I would

start like stuttering, and stuff like that because I was getting nervous because I didn't want to mess up. I would swallow real deep and go ahead and prepare myself for what part I had to read to make sure that it wasn't a hard word, so I wouldn't mess up. And now, I gotta read this paragraph long words that I don't even know. Or I can't pronounce right. It was like that with every class. With science or math, I didn't have a problem with cause that's my best subject. But reading aloud, period --- it didn't matter what class it was--- I was still nervous.”

Some of the novels that Rebecca read in high school remained in her mind as favorites. “In 10<sup>th</sup> grade, we had to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and I think 11<sup>th</sup> grade was *Scarlet Letter*. I like the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I liked that one. And the *Scarlet Letter*. I liked that one. I like drama books. I don't like drama in my life, but I like drama books. Yeah, my teacher was like, ‘We are going to read the *Scarlet Letter*.’ And I had heard people talk about the *Scarlet Letter* and how it was hard. And I already made my mind up of ‘Oh, I'm not going to understand this. I'll panic blah blah blah.’ But then I got to reading it and when I got to the middle, I started liking it because of all the different points it had. And unique points I ain't never heard before. So, there's a bunch of quotes from that book that you could take to your life or my life or whatever. And make it like your own thing. And then in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, I think we did Shakespeare. And Shakespeare I do not like because of the words. It is hard. The worst book I've ever seen in my life, *Macbeth*. I thought, I can't read this. It's too hard. I'm not going to pass 12<sup>th</sup> grade English, because I don't know the words.”

Friends did not seem to have much impact on Rebecca's view of reading. “They knew I didn't like reading. I was struggling with it and they would help me because they

were better readers than I was. Or I thought they were anyways. Smarter than me. They were smarter in reading and I was smarter in math, so I would help them with their math and they would help me with my reading. But I'm like, if you don't do it, then you're going to stay in high school because you'll never pass." The state graduation exam also caused problems for Rebecca. "I had to retake reading and English, but I passed all the other ones. The second time I passed reading and English." Rebecca's family expectations pushed her to complete high school. "My mom went to college for a year and my dad just graduated high school. They wanted me to at least get my high school diploma. And when I got it, I handed it to my momma. 'Here you go!' I was like, 'There you go!' and she said, 'Now, ok. College.' Six years later, I started. In between I worked and was wild. But now I'm responsible. I think."

#### **Rebecca's Narrative Four**

Testing continued her negative image of reading in her return to schooling. After taking the COMPASS test, she found out she had to take the lowest level developmental English class. "I was like, 'Really?' because I thought I did my best. I tried to get out of taking reading, because, like I said, I didn't want to take it. But, I'm glad I did because it helped with my English courses to get back because I've been out of school so much that it got me back motivated to read and do my homework." Some classes were easier to read for than others in college for Rebecca. "Psychology I didn't mind reading because I love psychology. We had to read a lot. And in Psychology 100, we had to read like every page. But it was interesting because it was about the brain and all these different people. I just liked learning about the life of people like early childhood, childhood, adulthood.

Like that stuff interests me. If it don't interest me, I'm just like whatever. But, for music, it was ok reading because it was learning about Beethoven and all that. I gotta do what I gotta do. I remember like, I have an interest in music, so I remember most of it. And I took interest in it and I did comprehend it. It's like, if I don't really like it, I don't comprehend it. If I don't really want to read it, I don't comprehend. I'm thinking about something else, but I'm really reading it." Comprehension seems to be a consistent worry for Rebecca. "In college, there's a book I ain't never seen or heard before in my life and you're like, 'Read it.' I'm like, 'Do what?' and now I gotta be tested on it and I'm too freaked out to comprehend it. And then again, I don't want to do it and it's hard for me to comprehend. My brain is so little. I used to read while I was in reading here. And I would have to read out loud, I would get like, nervous and my hands would get clammy. So I didn't want to, like, mess up and it be a common word and I'm like 'Well I know that word since you said it.' That's why I sit in the back in the corner. But, I am a good student because I want to succeed in life. Be good at this. Get through and listen and do what I gotta do to get to my goal. College was when I realized reading was important in life because I knew I had to do a lot of reading in my major and I would have to know a lot of big words. And I would have to pay attention and grasp and comprehend a lot, so I would remember the words and say them right."

### **Rebecca's Narrative Five**

Rebecca's home reading life does not fall far from her school reading life. "*Fifty Shades of Grey*. That was the first time I didn't want to put down the book. That was the first three books that I actually read that did not have pictures. And that book that we read in reading. *Uncommon*. I liked *Uncommon*. Anything to do, with, like sports or outdoors I

love to read novels and stuff like that. But now, I like that book. I want that book because I'll reread that book. And my boyfriend has that book. We read it together. I also like newspapers and magazines because they've got pictures. I like reading the newspaper. Magazines, stuff like that that I get in the mail. It was teen magazines when I was in middle school and high school. And the *Outside Living* book, I read those. Any outdoors book, I read.

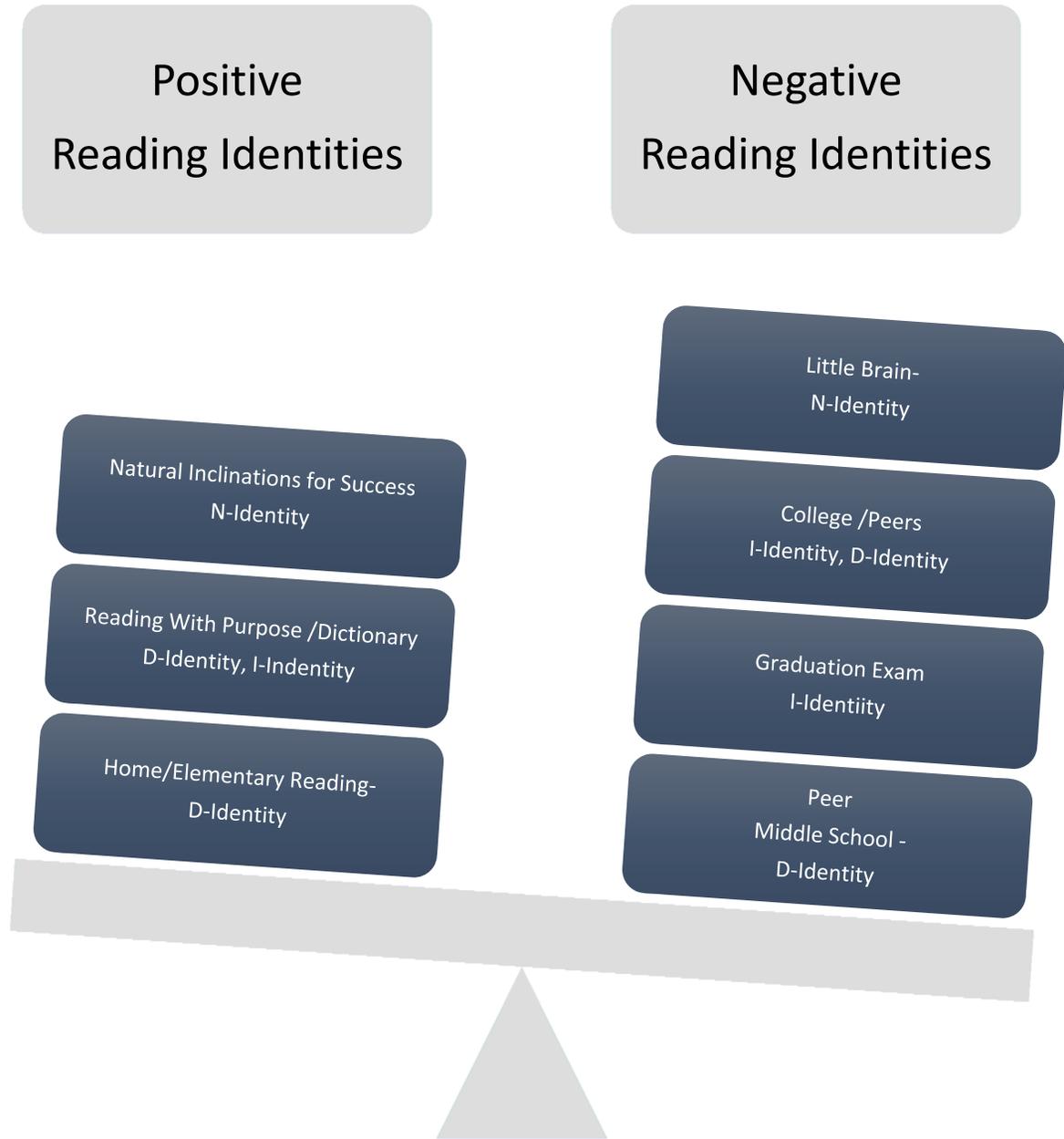
I don't read manuals most of the time. Most of the time, I try to do that without the instructions because I look at the pictures. I'm visual. Like I try, I'm not saying I won't read the instructions, but I try not to read them cause I'm trying to put it together quick. I do have a story about that. My dad got a new bed and these new frames they got for 2015 are ridiculous. It came with instructions and bolts and everything. And I couldn't. I read the instructions and I couldn't figure it out. So I just looked at the pictures and once I looked at the pictures and read the instructions again, then I got it. Because I was like, this is stupid. You're only supposed to have two rails that connect and they didn't. They were going wish-washy and like, I just want to sit daddy's new bed up so I could get on. I got it put together through visuals, mostly."

Although most of Rebecca's family seems to have a similar outlook on reading as she does, her aunt was different. "My aunt is a reader. She has her own little library in her house. If I can think of any book, she probably has it. Like she has a whole room of nothing but books. She loves to read. And I think that skipped my generation because I called her up about when we had to have The *Uncommon* book to see if she had it. Well, I went on ahead and bought it. And she did have it. She suggests all kinds of books to me. She likes any kind of books. Like the *Twilight* books. I didn't like them." Overall,

Rebecca does not have a positive reading identity. “No, I do not consider myself a reader. I don’t like it. I don’t. I mean, I read the newspapers when I have them or my magazines. But I don’t go out of my way to read in my spare time. I would go mud-riding or swimming or fishing or something. Reading has been a struggle for me because I don’t like it. I think it’s a matter of what I don’t want to do. I know I gotta do it to succeed and get my goal. But, that’s the only reason why I’m doing it. I mean, you stay on your phone. You get on Facebook and you see stories about somebody, some famous person getting arrested and you click on it and you read. And just different things, I’ll read stuff on Facebook. But I don’t like going out of my way, I guess. I really don’t actually see that as reading though. Cause when somebody says ‘Reading.’ I think of books and novels. I don’t think about magazines or stuff like that on Facebook. I think about books. When I have kids, I probably will encourage them to read. I don’t want them to struggle like I did or them being self-conscious about reading in front of people.”

Table 4.4

*Rebecca's Reading Identities*



*Note.* This table indicated that the reading identities in Rebecca's narratives balanced in favor of a negative reading identity. In the end, she was a self-described non-reader, which fit this image.

## Appendix H

### Carrie Transcript Nov 20 #201-1

**Interviewer**: So, um, what we are going to do is, what I'm going to do overall, is what I am doing overall is, I'm going to try to ask you several of these questions over the next couple weeks whenever we can meet and um, what I am trying to do is get the story of you as a reader by you telling me these little stories and what I'm going to do, at the end, is take all your little stories you tell me, and try to put them together into like one big story of what you were like as a reader all through your life. What we are doing that for, what my point, what I'm trying to figure out, is to see if you had some of the same experiences as someone else who was in a reading class or who was different or whatever. Just to see common things or different things, and what kind of experiences you had that put you into the reading class we had. So I am going to let you tell me where you want to start. We will do things different, and we don't have to have them be exactly like this but these were just some prompts I thought of. Um, and, when it gets toward the end I may say, "oh I really haven't heard anything about when you were little," so I may ask you one specific one but right now, is there one that you might have thought of that you might want to start out with?

**201**: Probably the one when I was little.

**Interviewer**: Ok.

**201**: Like the one that I actually liked when I was reading.

**Interviewer**: Ok. So which one was that?

**201**: I guess it would be

**Interviewer**: Your favorite memory of what was it? We got the one about the early story you can remember about reading in your life or a story about elementary school or a time when you loved reading

**201**: I guess elementary

**Interviewer**: Ok, let me make sure we can both hear it

Nov 20 #201-2

**Interviewer**: Ok. So we are going to do a “Tell me a story” about reading for you in elementary school and you are number 201. So I don’t have to have names on here. So 201, the story of reading for you in elementary school and I’m going to make it like a story, so you can tell me like a story, so you can, whatever (mumbles). So tell me about you reading in elementary school.

**201**: I just remember when it was fun probably when I had to do a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade project on a bibliography. I had to read about, I think it was, yeah, Helen Keller. Yeah, I got done with that book in one day. I don’t even know why! It was interesting. And then we had to dress up. Um (pause) as that person. That was real fun, so I guess that made it really fun in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Um (pause)

**Interviewer**: So when, obviously, that’s different than how you normally feel about reading for it to stand out in your mind that much. What was normal reading class like? Do you remember why that stands out in your mind as being so much fun?

**201**: I guess cause like (pause). I remember in 1<sup>st</sup> grade they always wanted you to read and all that and I didn't want to read. I guess reading that Helen Keller made me want to read more.

**Interviewer**: And what kind of book was it? Was it pretty short?

**201**: Yeah, it was short. Um, I'm trying to think, it was probably, maybe, it wasn't too thin. Cause I was proud of myself (giggles)

**Interviewer**: Right, right.

**201**: So

**Interviewer**: Ok, so one and um, do you remember like, how, like, what you did anyone come watch you? I mean anything like that like if we were going to tell a story about that event? Like what kind of happened when it happened?

**201**: When we dressed up we went into the gym. Everybody was dressed up. And I guess just told who we were so I was kindof cool. We would dress up and all.

**Interviewer**: And so everyone came in and told who they were and why they were famous or whatever? So you even had to do public speaking?

**201**: Yes

**Interviewer**: So you tied a lot of things together. Do you remember ever in elementary school feeling, like how did you ever compare yourself as a reader to everyone else as a reader and wonder about yourself as a reader when in elementary school? Or did it not ever? Did you? How did you feel about yourself when you were reading in elementary school? Obviously you didn't like it.

**201**: I didn't understand a lot of it.

**Interviewer**: You didn't understand a lot of it?

**201**: No. Like words and stuff

**Interviewer**: Yeah, did you not understand you're, did you not understand what the word was? Like, you see that word and you're not sure what it was? Or you saw the word and could understand what it was but you just didn't know what it meant? How would you describe the frustration?

**201**: I would read but I couldn't comprehend anything.

**Interviewer**: You have ADHD right? We've talked about that before? So a lot of times it was the focus and you would write and it and it would go right out the window. How have you fixed that? Or have you tried to fix that? You are doing pretty well in college, so how have you fixed that? Or what have you done?

**201**: Um (pause) put myself in a room and basically, I can't look at my phone. I do that a lot to not get

**Interviewer**: distracted

**201**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: You have to shut yourself off from the whole world.

**201**: Ok. Yeah. Good. That will be all for this time. See that was only like all five minutes or something.

Feb 4 #201

**Interviewer**: Most of them don't. Most of the people here are pretty ok.

**201**: Yeah, Auburn wouldn't make me nervous.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, I really do it here for sure. When do you get to transfer over?

**201**: Oh, I'm not going to transfer over.

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah, that's right. You're going to do the nursing stuff. I knew that. So, alright, so I looked back over um (pause) some of the things and I think there is some of the like three different. There is a couple of areas that we didn't talk about. Like two much, like high school and college and reading in high school and college. We haven't talked much about that. We haven't talked a lot about your social like family and friends and if they were readers or not. And trying to get an idea of the social idea you had about reading.

**201:** Ok

**Interviewer:** And I also just came about some questions that aren't really about "Tell me a story" but are questions that might fill in the gaps or some of the other

**201:** That's fine.

**Interviewer:** So what do you feel like talking about today? The questions or do you feel like talking about you want to think about reading in high school and college and whatever or your family and friends and

**201:** Um

**Interviewer:** stuff you feel comfortable with. Or the other questions are just kind of like

**201:** High school I really wasn't into reading that much.

**Interviewer:** No.

**201:** Um (pause) Then I had well (pause) My friend in freshman (pause) she a (pause) She read a lot. And she's really smart. So, you know, now we are really good friends anyway. She got me into reading cause she told me that she read a lot and she would be like, "You need to read this book and this book," and I can't

remember what they were. And there were some Nicholas Sparks too though.

Um, so (pause)

**Interviewer**: So why would she want you to read them? So you could talk about them?

**201**: Yeah. So, yeah. She buys me books too. I actually, I try to read them but

**Interviewer**: No?

**201**: Don't have the time.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, that's funny.

**201**: But yeah, she is probably the only one, but well (pause) I had another friend too, another friend, she read too. Not as much as [REDACTED] She reads like my goodness she reads. She had three books done in a week. I'm telling you.

**Interviewer**: Oh really?

**201**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: So she would kind of encourage you to read things so that you could discuss them, and have that that same. My daughter does that too with her friends.

**201**: Yeah and share books.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, my daughter is all into whatever and Percy Jackson type stuff. She keeps saying, "I keep telling [REDACTED] she's got to read it so we can talk about this and we can talk about that. Because she really won't know what I'm talking about."

**201**: And I really don't have a lot of people in my family that read either.

**Interviewer**: No?

**201**: Yeah. Only my mom. She will read sometimes. Well, my grandmother does too.

**Interviewer**: So the women in your family are maybe a little bit

**201**: Yeah my sister don't. She hates it.

**Interviewer**: How old is your sister? Is she younger than you? Older than you?

**201**: She's older. We are twelve years apart.

**Interviewer**: Oh wow. So she hates it too? It wasn't like you were growing up together and saying you hated it together. She was like

**201**: Yeah

**Interviewer**: grown up much by the time you left.

**201**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Ok, so, um, you said before that your mom would try to help you and encourage you to read, like in your younger years, so your mom was pretty encouraging and pretty worried you to read and all that. Um, and then your friends in high school, encouraged you to read because they liked it and they wanted you to do it too. Um, so I guess we will go to these three questions and then think if we can think of anything else. Um, why do you think reading is a struggle for you? In your opinion, why do you think that you were put in Reading OD4 or Reading OD5 and then why do you feel that personally why do you struggle with it?

**201**: (long pause) Cause I get really aggravated when I read a sentence and I will be thinking about other things too though. And I'll be like, "Uh what did I just read?" and I'll have to read it again. It's constantly having to read over and over again. So it's really annoying.

**Interviewer**: So it's really annoying? Frustrating?

**201**: Yeah, cause I guess I don't comprehend it.

**Interviewer**: I wonder how much you feel it's comprehension and how much of it is, you feel it is, being distracted or whatever.

**201**: (long pause) like how do I feel about that?

**Interviewer**: Yeah. I mean how much of it where you read it and you don't comprehend it or that you aren't paying attention when you read it?

**201**: sometimes it's not paying attention but I had literally put down my phone away and sit in my room, close my door, and read it. And not think of anything else. And I do that in class too though, thinking of other things I gotta do.

**Interviewer**: So the next thing you know is, "whoa"

**201**: "What in the world?" but yeah, I'll be even. I can even read and be thinking of other things. And just keep reading. And I'll be like "Uh oh."

**Interviewer**: And then you have to start back over. Do you think that's more of a problem for like when you are reading for fun or that you are reading hard, difficult texts?

**201**: (long pause) It's definitely for the hard but sometimes, even for fun.

**Interviewer**: So a lot of the times, it's comprehension for you, but other times it's lack of concentration a lot of times. You really have to find a place where you can be totally focused.

**201**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Um, do you think that reading itself, you can, I don't remember you having problems with reading the words and knowing what they are.

**201**: Yeah

**Interviewer**: So it's not recalling the words and sounding the words out or anything like that. And really, your vocabulary is good too for the most part. I mean, you've read some and you've got a decent vocabulary but it's just a matter to reading and taking it in and processing it.

**201**: Yes.

**Interviewer**: And it goes right out the window. Um, so this is a question, if someone said to you, "Are you a reader?" would you identify yourself as a reader? Or not? Or sometimes you are? Sometimes you're not?

**201**: Sometimes I am, sometimes I'm not.

**Interviewer**: And when you say, "Yes, I'm a reader," who and when would that be?

**201**: (pause) Like (pause) this break, I kindof did read. I actually, cause I was in the car on the way to Tennessee. I was bored, so I read. But (I mean) I don't know if I should call myself a reader.

**Interviewer**: Even though you do read sometimes, you don't identify yourself as a reader?

**201**: No.

**Interviewer**: Ok. Um, that's fine. Which, it kindof does explain like what would you, how would you

**201**: "When was the last time you finished that book?" I couldn't even finished it

**Interviewer**: Cause you were reading in the car?

**201**: Yes

**Interviewer:** What about, how would you describe yourself as, like how do you like to entertain or be entertained with information or whatever? What would you prefer besides reading?

**201:** (pause)

**Interviewer:** Whether it's for fun or whatever.

**201:** (long pause) I don't know. When they explain it or like explain the characters I could do it. Especially when my mom would read to me, I could imagine it better.

**Interviewer:** So you are better at hearing it and taking it in as opposed to having to read it and then take it in and process it. So do you do better in class when you listen to lectures as opposed to reading the book too?

**201:** (pause)

**Interviewer:** Like if you had a class and the guy or whatever, let's say it's anatomy, or whatever, and they lectured to you with maybe a PowerPoint and some information, do you get more from that than when you just read the chapter?

**201:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**201:** If I read the chapter, then I'm definitely like lost.

**Interviewer:** So if someone is walking and talking you through it, you comprehend a lot better auditor-ally.

**201:** But it's very hard for me to take notes at the same time.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**201:** I notice that.

**Interviewer:** Do you ever record like a lecture?

**201:** No I haven't tried that yet.

**Interviewer:** You may have to as it gets harder. You may record it so you can listen to it and take it all in and then go back and listen to it again as you take notes of where you misunderstood it. And then if you listen to it again and take notes or wherever to study, that might be. Because you are listening to it, you may not have to study. Unless they start testing you on stuff that might be in the book that they didn't talk about. It might be better for you to do that. Um, so whether it's a positive or negative impact on you as a reader? Just in general, what do you think?

**201:** positive?

**Interviewer:** Or negative

**201:** Hmm, (pause) Reading takes a lot of time. (laughter). So I think of that. Um (pause) I think the positive is I think it helps me with I don't know, everything. And that don't makes no sense. On how to explain it. But just helps me in general. To understand even, like, not just school and when people talk or whatever. I'm like "What are you talking about?"

**Interviewer:** So comprehension? So the more you read, the more you practice it.

**201:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** So basically, the biggest impact reading has on you works on comprehension skills and it forces you to do it. Because when you are reading, you have to do it. Um, if you had to look back at your schooling, all through those years or whatever, like from early early, I can't remember if you were young, anyways, but from as early as you can remember, what would you? Say you were

in first grade, second grade, and really young elementary school, and what do you? Do you remember anything about reading in elementary school?

**201**: I don't really

**Interviewer**: I know you talked about the project you did in third grade or something.

**201**: Yeah, if maybe in first grade where you read that thing in the book and you would take the quiz and get graded on.

**Interviewer**: The Accelerated Reader on the computer?

**201**: Yes! I hated it!

**Interviewer**: Why did you hate it?

**201**: Cause I can't! Just! I don't know! I hated reading! I don't know why!

**Interviewer**: So did you hate the reading? Or did you hate the fact that you had to take the test?

**201**: Yes that test too!

**Interviewer**: Like I just read this and I don't know the answers!

**201**: Yeah, I did that a lot too.

**Interviewer**: I think a lot of times those tests are really picky too. On some things like if you understood the general story, you could still get those tests wrong. That used to irritate me when I was teaching. Like I just read this book and I don't remember how many days they were in the cave. I just knew or whatever. Stuff like that drove me nuts too. So you remember Accelerated Reader. What other things to do remember with school and reading? That either have a positive? Or any kind of memory?

**201:** (pause) Um (pause) what was it? (pause) I think I liked reading the History in third grade, but I did not like the Civil War and all that in sixth grade. That was very hard for me. I do not know why that was hard for me; it was very hard for me to read that book than the third grade one. The third grade one was a lot funner. But it had like presidents that was, you know, more interesting to me. I guess. But the Civil War, the year, and blah blah blah. I just don't like it, you know! Just not my thing.

**Interviewer:** So, I think (pause) I don't know. Cause when you talked about the presidents, you probably needed to memorize about when and maybe, I don't know. Cause with the Civil War, I can think, "I don't want to remember of all the battles and times and all that too, but we want more of the story than just the facts."

**201:** Yeah just I was thinking it was world history.

**Interviewer:** Um, I don't think we talked about this more but like reading for information. Like you have to read something, let's say you're reading how to put something together. Or you are reading something like how to do your taxes and follow steps. How do you feel about that kind of reading?

**201:** Makes me nervous! (laughter)

**Interviewer:** Why does it make you nervous?

**201:** Because I'm scared I'm going to miss something. Because that makes me nervous to read it over and over again. To make sure I know exactly

**Interviewer:** What it was saying.

**201:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: And make sure you're not missing those key words. And stuff like that.

**201**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: That makes sense. So I think for you, I mean, obviously, comprehension is your big like drawback. Like making sure you comprehend everything you read, and you know it's an issue, so it makes you nervous, about making sure you comprehend everything you read. Um, I'm trying to think if there is anything else. I mean I wonder how much of that

**201**: I mean, memorization is hard for me.

**Interviewer**: Yeah

**201**: Like remembering stuff from the book. Like, even though I read that, I'm like, "I don't remember this person. Where did this person come from" I don't think about it. It's weird.

**Interviewer**: Um, what about memorizing lists? Like the states and the capitals? Can you do that kind of memorization easier? Where literally this and this go together, like matching.

**201**: Um, (pause) a little bit. I probably could. I remember I could do the states. But, I'm trying to think (pause) listing stuff, yeah I'm pretty good at that.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, I would say that's more, cause you are just memorizing it. Like forgetting a character in a novel, that person is not something that's important to you. As you read it, it kind of just slips right out. Where that person really wasn't important person so I just let it go.

**201**: Yeah

**Interviewer:** Um, how much do you, I think that, don't know. Do you think that the reading and the ADHD problems really have tied together for you?

**201:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** is there a big difference when you are on the medication when you work? Because you said you take it sometimes and you don't take it sometimes.

**201:** Um, I took Adderall in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and it definitely, I went from an F student to like Bs and As. And so but she did help me. Um, actually. This is the weirdest thing. When I took tests, flunk it. But when she would get my flash cards out and asked me, I would know every one of them. I don't understand that. I do not understand that, but that it's weird. I like, I don't know, I know I'm studying my flashcards and studying and I don't know why I forget it on the test. And she would keep me after just to see.

**Interviewer:** If you really knew it?

**201:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** I wonder if it is literally the process of having to sit down and put it onto paper and you know read.

**201:** Yeah because I could put it on the board and a math problem right on the board. But do it totally wrong on the paper.

**Interviewer:** Um

**201:** It's weird.

**Interviewer:** I think if you got tested, there is a lot to do.

**201:** But my math, it's gotten better. I mean, it has gotten better.

**Interviewer:** did you struggle in math too?

**201:** No, I'm doing well in math now. But well (pause) right now, anatomy.

Memorization is pretty hard for me, right now.

**Interviewer:** My only like, connection. My daughter was ADD. When she was in second grade, we didn't have her medicine, she was diagnosed in first grade, but in second grade, her reading level was tanking. Saying she could not focus long enough to read a book. So when we put her on the medicine, she went, I don't know, below level to fifth grade level in the second grade. Because she, if she, once she would read it, she got it. She didn't have any problems comprehending, but she could not focus. So I wonder, if you not being able to focus, might be related to some of your comprehension problems later. You know what I'm saying? It kind of all ties together. But you took medicine in third grade. Did you take medicine the rest of the time, or did you not?

**201:** Ok, I stopped taking the Adderall because I started having dreams with it, so I just stopped taking it. And (pause) I took it here and there and I mostly was doing well in school when I took it. But I stopped taking it in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. And I made it through, you know. Like I think the first year here I didn't take it. And then I was like, yeah, starting to tell comprehending thing. I said I think it's time. So, they have newer medicine now than they did back then. So, now I'm taking the Vyvanse. Now, the Vyvanse (pause) I feel like I don't take it. Is that weird? My body has got so used to it.

**Interviewer:** You can't tell if you are taking it?

**201:** No (laughter)

**Interviewer:** So can you not concentrate again?

**201**: I'm getting to where I notice I'm not concentrating again. When I'm studying at home, I'm like, "Oh my goodness!" You know? Trying to concentrate. And I'm like, maybe I need a higher dose. Because I was on a higher dose of Adderall when I was younger, so I'm wondering if it's just like, whatever.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, probably. And I mean my, I mean, she is the only person I talk to about it, but she can tell when her medicine's not working. My daughter, she's 11. My medicine, she went through this phase where she was like, "My medicine doesn't work anymore Mom." And I was like, "What do you mean your medicine's not working? It worked fine last week." She had, we had to up her dose, and she was 11 and hormones are just (noise). And so we did. But she was crazy that week. When she was. Cause she was like "no you just don't feel good. No you don't want to be doing whatever it is you're supposed to be doing." But anyways, and then she had a meltdown. And we were like, "Ok, let's up your medicine." And she was normal again.

**201**: See here is the thing

**Interviewer**: It's weird.

**201**: I'm totally different when I'm on.

**Interviewer**: Yeah?

**201**: Like I remember when I was on the Adderall I would sit there, and I'd study. I mean, it is weird. I'm like a zombie though.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, I don't want that either.

**201**: It is weird. That's the only thing. My mom hated me on it. She could not stand me being on that medicine. The Vyvanse, yeah. I mean, it's helped me but I get tired of it now (sigh).

**Interviewer**: Yeah. And you have to go get that. It's interesting though.

**201**: It's weird.

**Interviewer**: Well, no. It's pretty normal. But it's interesting to see how it all ties into the reading stuff. Because I think it does. Because you have to concentrate. You have to. And if you can't focus. I mean, I do that too. And I think ADHD is somewhat, um, genetic.

**201**: And I thought when I was young, I thought I was just stupid. You know?

**Interviewer**: Right

**201**: When I was young, I was like, Ma I don't want to go to school. I'm just stupid. I never wanted to go to school because I was kind of just embarrassed. You know a teacher calls on you and you're like, "Uhh?"

**Interviewer**: "I don't even know where I am"

**201**: "I don't know. I have no idea." I hated teacher calling on me too at school. Hated it.

**Interviewer**: How about reading aloud?

**201**: Hated that too.

**Interviewer**: What would you do in class where if they did Round Robin and or whatever when they go around the room

**201**: I can't stand that! I would get so nervous! I would start reading like where I probably would be reading like where I probably would be reading. I wasn't paying attention to what I was reading cause I was too worried about that.

**Interviewer**: What you were going to be saying or what

**201**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Yeah that does work but we do it all the time. Um, what about what would you do when you would listen to other students in the class? Like in elementary school or middle school?

**201**: Nah, that didn't help me.

**Interviewer**: No?

**201**: No. I don't know why, but it didn't.

**Interviewer**: You just really needed, have you ever tried books on tape? A book? Does that work better for you? Do you enjoy it?

**201**: It would help me, but I would probably get bored. After a certain amount of time. I just get, I don't know, I just get bored and my mind (noise).

**Interviewer**: You need action! You need movement!

**201**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, but you're doing. I can't think of anything else. Can you think of anything else about reading we haven't talked about? I'm trying to think of other things. Did you ever do special reading groups in elementary school or anything like that?

**201**: I did have a um, (pause) teacher that would help me. I always had one on one. I'm so glad! Even though I didn't want to do it, because I didn't like other people knowing I had problems in school. But she really did help me. She would actually take my tests in there instead of having other people around. I did the classical

music while taking the tests. I did that for taking the test with the iPod. And the gum. Those don't help me. None at all.

**Interviewer**: To distract you?

**201**: I just need a quiet room.

**Interviewer**: Right with absolutely

**201**: Yeah, and even now when people are getting done with their anatomy tests or something or getting up, I'm like "Oh my goodness." I start freaking out. Because I think my time is limited. So, I get nervous.

**Interviewer**: You need to; you need to go to Accommodations for these harder classes. You need to go see Dean [REDACTED] and get a 504 Plan if you need to take the test in the testing center to get extra time if you need it. Even if you don't need it, that way if you ever do need it, you'll have it on record that they have to do it. You probably should do that for yourself. Especially if you get, like, if that flips you out when they start moving around when people get done

**201**: I can't stand it!

**Interviewer**: And it gets you so distracted.

**201**: Like I had a test Monday, at Speech. I mean, I know this stuff, she said, "You know this stuff." And I was like, "I know!" Like I was the last one there. Oh gosh and everyone is moving and I can't

**Interviewer**: Focus anymore.

**201**: Nope

**Interviewer**: And you're the classic person who needs a quiet place to go somewhere quiet in order to be able to focus. So you should really talk to them. And before

you get into these classes that are going to be really challenging. Because, even in nursing, they have a testing center for people who need it and they go in there to take the tests.

**201:** I don't know if it's anxiety. I don't know.

**Interviewer:** Regardless of what it is, it could be the ADHD though. Any kind of distractions distract you. That's what it is. I don't know. Caterina, my daughter, she like, she gets mad. She doesn't always want to take her medicine; this is what she is telling me lately.

**201:** I used to do that too.

**Interviewer:** She doesn't want to take her medicine because she can't daydream in class. When she gets bored. "When I get bored Mom, my mind can't wonder and it makes me so mad." And I'm like, "Well the whole point is to pay attention." And you know, she's smart and she can do the work

**201:** That's funny though (laughter)

**Interviewer:** She told me, "I want to try to not take my medicine." And I'm like, "Why? Because you don't think it's helping anymore?" Because she said, "Because I can't not concentrate." "Well, duh! That's what the medicine's for [REDACTED]!" But um, I don't know. I don't know she. I don't know what we are going to do. Because she is starting to get to the point where she's like, "I don't need it." "Well if you don't need that, that's cool."

**201:** Yeah, I did that too. Where I said I didn't need it. I wasn't going to try it no more. So I did. I stopped. As long as you're passing your classes. I passed, but I could have done better.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, so but anyways, she says the same thing. she gets mad because, everybody in the class is so loud, so instead of getting distracted, she goes into like her own little world. Like she

**201**: Yeah, me too.

**Interviewer**: So she will do her work for the most part.

**201**: I don't socialize when I'm on my medicine.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, she doesn't socialize much. She does some, but not too much. Um, so it's just weird.

**201**: Cause I had friends tell me, "You need to get off this medicine. You're just not yourself. You're not fun!" Yeah, I can't be both.

**Interviewer**: You can't be both! Sorry!

**201**: Yeah, it's weird.

**Interviewer**: It is. And it's hard too

**201**: Well the Vyvanse is supposed to level it out. Maybe that is what it's doing now. But I feel like I'm not.

**Interviewer**: Well maybe because you're so used to when it works too to be so super "Ugh" and when it's calmer, you don't feel that it's working. I don't know. Cause then [REDACTED]

**201**: and then I become worried about upening my medicine.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, because you don't want to be a total zombie and you don't want to be

**201**: No, so

**Interviewer**: Do you not eat on it? Does it affect your eating at all?

**201:** The Adderall made me really skinny. The Vyvanse, I'll eat. I mean, sometimes I'm not as hungry. But I'll still eat on it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah ■■■ didn't have any problems at all

**201:** But Adderall

**Interviewer:** Like she won't eat much during the day, but at dinner she will start to eat when it wears off

**201:** Yeah, me too. That's weird! I eat a lot at dinner time. But the Adderall, my mom be like, "Have you ate?" and I'd be like, "No, I'm fine." "You need to eat!" (laughter) and I wouldn't eat. I remember one time I went a day without eating. Just couldn't. I mean, it's terrible!

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I think it's the different medicines do different things. But ■■■ took the Vyvanse once and she was crazy. So it probably wasn't the right dose, but it scared us, so we took her off it. And that was our, when she was in first grade, and we started trying, we tried her on that

**201:** Which one is she on now?

**Interviewer:** Concerta. She was

**201:** There was another one I was on and I was like "Oh no!" I did not like that one.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, Concerta is. I don't know if we need to readjust too. But the Vyvanse, and granted, she took one. She stayed up from the morning, like 4 o'clock in the morning running around like a little top.

**201:** Oh no

**Interviewer:** And she didn't stop talking the whole time.

**201:** Did she clean?

**Interviewer**: Yeah! She was cleaning too!

**201**: Oh, yeah, I clean a lot too when I'm on the medicine.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, she would clean. And she isn't a cleaner. She does not clean

**201**: Oh me either!

**Interviewer**: She doesn't clean on the medicine now. But she was like, "I want to do this.

And I want to do this." And we were like, "Ok. Go for it!" And then she was chewing on her lips and her tongue and that was freaking me out. I mean, and she was just like cracked up. That's the best way I can explain it. "Yeah we are taking you off this medicine!"

**201**: Yeah, I don't know about the Adderall, but on the Vyvanse, I clean around the house all the time.

**Interviewer**: That's awesome! Maybe I need to try Vyvanse for [REDACTED] again. She is such a slob. She's like, "I hate cleaning. Cleaning is not important, mom!" And I'm like, "Ok, when they come and take you away because you can't walk through your room. And these kids on TV, like these people, these kids are living through this much traffic. I'm like, it's her room, I'm not going to do anything about it." But anyway, we did clean her room. She was like happy for like a day. "It was good. And I can throw that wrapper right there." I'm like "No you can't, [REDACTED]." But anyways. Well I can't think of anything else. If I do, I'll let you know. I appreciate you doing this and helping me out.

**201**: You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: And if you need anything, you let me know. But I do think you should try to get, do you know who Dean [REDACTED] is?

**201**: I've heard of people.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, he is in the same office as Dr. [REDACTED] is.

**201**: Do you have to talk to a doctor?

**Interviewer**: You'll have to have something. You should be able to get it. You might just have to talk to them and see what kind of documentation you have. I mean, you have ADHD and you take medicine. But testing is the big thing where you get distracted and maybe they can tell you what you need.

**201**: Yeah and I don't know how I'm going to do because I got a lab test Wednesday.

And I hope people aren't going to be sitting in chairs getting up! Cause we had to go to each station to see what tissue it is and all this and I'm like, "Oh Lord"

**Interviewer**: Yeah. I mean, that kind of stuff is serious. Kind of be the thing you are going to need to figure out and deal with so I would definitely go talk to them. To see. I mean, it can't hurt. Especially if, I mean, the lab test, there may not be any better way to do it because the way its set up. But when you are in a classroom or at least the other kind of tests. I mean, you should at least get to go sit in a study room or whatever and take your test. It seems so much better for you and it's not a big deal to anyone.

**201**: But it's when people can tell when I take my vyvanse. They say I'm mean.

**Interviewer**: It's like I'm sorry!

**201**: I know

**Interviewer**: It's probably because you're not as social, like you said,

**201**: Yep, yeah.

**Interviewer:** [REDACTED] is mean. I don't know if you can tell a difference (laughter). But it's a chemical thing. That's what [REDACTED] was upset about taking the medicine or whatever and not stopping. And I was like, "But [REDACTED] if it helps you do better in school and it doesn't make you feel bad. If you were diabetic, I would give you insulin. I mean, it's a brain thing. It's not that you need it because you're not smart, you're not whatever. There is something, It's a chemical imbalance in your brain that you need to balance out so you can do what you need to do. And you know, people go, "oh back in the day, people didn't take medicine." Well, no back in the day people didn't take medicine but people didn't also sit. It wasn't the same type of education system we have now.

**201:** And they probably didn't make it!

**Interviewer:** And they probably went out and got a perfectly good job doing something back then and go out and get a job being a mechanic and make a good living for your family, you know what I'm saying. Or whatever

**201:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** But now, you have to have a degree to do almost all of those things. Because it is all so technical now.

**201:** Yeah, I told my mom. Well, even my mom told me, that I don't need a job where I just sit in an office because I don't think I could do that

**Interviewer:** No you don't. You need something where you are going in a doing stuff. Yeah.

**201:** Yeah, cause I might go crazy.

**Interviewer:** You definitely need something where you are kind of hands on and doing something where things are different. Yeah, are you creative?

**201:** No I'm not creative. My mom is so creative! She does flower arrangements. The burlap door all that stuff. She does all that stuff.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. [REDACTED] thinks she's creative. Saying she wants to be an artist or a fashion designer. But she doesn't really have the talent, but she likes to be creative. Maybe the talent will come later. But I was curious

**201:** But my dad can draw. And my sister can draw.

**Interviewer:** So you just missed that one too.

**201:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah I have no talent either.

**201:** Yeah me either.

**Interviewer:** I can write. Like I can write stories. But I don't have the time to do that. It takes too much time. Alright well I appreciate you [REDACTED]. Let me know if you need anything. And if I need anything I'll holla and let you know.

**201:** Sounds good.

**Interviewer:** Thank you thank you.

## **Carrie's Story**

Carrie (pseudonym) was a 20-year-old Caucasian woman. She was home-schooled for most of high school and graduated on time. Carrie came from a middle-class home and lived with both parents. Her father was a college graduate. When she came to college, she tested into math, reading, and English developmental courses. She had completed all of her developmental courses, had a 2.9 GPA, and was working on getting into the nursing program at ABC Community College at the time of data analysis.

### **Carrie's Narrative One**

In elementary school, reading was not a positive experience for Carrie, although there were a few moments of reading joy. "I remember in first grade they always wanted you to read and all that, and I didn't want to read. I just remember when it was fun probably when I had to do a third grade project on a biography. I had to read about, I think it was, yeah, Helen Keller. Yeah, I got done with that book in one day. I don't even know why! It was interesting. And then we had to dress up as that person. That was real fun, so I guess that made it really fun in third grade. I guess reading that Helen Keller made me want to read more. It wasn't too thin because I was proud of myself for finishing it! We dressed up and we went into the gym. Everybody was dressed up. And I guess we just told who we were so I was kind of cool. We would dress up and all." This positive experience did not have a lasting impact on Carrie's overall view of reading. "I didn't understand a lot of it. Like words and stuff. I would read but I couldn't comprehend anything. Then, maybe in first grade where you read that thing in the book and you would take the quiz and get graded on. Accelerated Reader. I hated it! I can't! Just! I don't know! I hated reading! I don't know why! And I hated that test too. Like I

just read this and I don't know the answers. I have ADHD, and I took Adderall in third grade, and it definitely helped. I went from an F student to like B's and A's. But, my teacher, she did help me. Actually, this is the weirdest thing. When I took tests, I'd flunk them. But when she would get my flash cards out and asked me, I would know every one of them. I don't understand that. I do not understand that, but I know that it's weird. I know I'm studying my flashcards and studying, and I don't know why I forget it on the test. And she would keep me after just to see if I really knew it. I stopped taking the Adderall because I started having dreams with it, so I just stopped taking it. But, I took it here and there and I mostly was doing well in school when I took it."

### **Carrie's Narrative Two**

Going into middle school, reading in the other content areas was not successful for Carrie all the time either. "I think I liked reading the history in third grade, but I did not like the Civil War and all that in sixth grade. That was very hard for me. I do not know why that was hard for me; it was very hard for me to read that book more than the third grade one. The third grade one was a lot funner. But it had like presidents that were more interesting to me. I guess. But the Civil War, the year, and blah blah blah. I just don't like it, you know! Just not my thing. I have ADHD, and I get really aggravated when I read a sentence and I will be thinking about other things too though. And I'll be like, 'Uh what did I just read?' and I'll have to read it again. It's constantly having to read over and over again. So it's really annoying, because I guess I don't comprehend it."

Carrie's reading issues had deep impact on her self-esteem. When I was young, I was like, 'Ma I don't want to go to school. I'm just stupid.' I never wanted to go to school because I was kind of just embarrassed. You know a teacher calls on you and you're like,

‘Uhh? I don’t even know where I am. I don’t know. I have no idea.’ I hated teacher calling on me too at school. Hated it. I hated reading aloud too. If they did Round Robin and or whatever when they go around the room, I can’t stand that! I would get so nervous! I would start reading like where I probably should be reading like, but I wasn’t paying attention to what I was reading because I was too worried about reading aloud. But, when they explain it or like explain the characters I could do it. Especially when my mom would read to me, I could imagine it better. I did have teacher that would help me. I always had one on one. I’m so glad! Even though I didn’t want to do it, because I didn’t like other people knowing I had problems in school. But she really did help me. She would actually take my tests in there instead of having other people around. I did the classical music while taking the tests. I did that for taking the test with the iPod. And the gum. Those don’t help me. None at all. I just need a quiet room.”

### **Carrie’s Narrative Three**

In high school, the ADHD continued to be an issue that affected her reading. “I stopped taking ADHD meds in ninth grade. And I made it through, you know. I remember when I was on the Adderall I would sit there, and I’d study. I mean, it is weird. I was like a zombie though. It is weird. That’s the only thing. I don’t socialize when I’m on my medicine, because I had friends tell me, ‘You need to get off this medicine. You’re just not yourself. You’re not fun!’ Yeah, I can’t be both. And, my mom hated me on it. She could not stand me being on that medicine. I said I didn’t need it. I wasn’t going to try it any more. So I did. I stopped. ‘As long as you’re passing your classes,’ my mom said. I passed, but I could have done better.”

Eventually, Carrie found some positive reactions to reading through her friends. “In high school, I really wasn’t into reading that much. Then I had my friend in freshman year, she read a lot. And she’s really smart. So, you know, now we are really good friends anyway. She got me into reading because she told me that she read a lot and she would be like, ‘You need to read this book and this book,’ and I can’t remember what they were. And there were some Nicholas Sparks too though. So, yeah, so we could talk about them. She buys me books too. I actually, I try to read them but don’t have the time. She is probably the only one, but well, I had another friend too, another friend, she read too. Not as much as Shelly. She reads like my goodness she reads. She had three books done in a week. I’m telling you. So she would kind of encourage me to read things so that we could discuss them and share books.”

#### **Carrie’s Narrative Four**

By the time she began college, Carrie had learned some coping skills for her ADHD; however, it still hindered her learning. “I think the first year here I didn’t take medicine. And then I was like, yeah, starting to tell the comprehending thing was not there, so I said I think it’s time. They have newer medicine now than they did back then. So, now I’m taking the Vyvanse, but I feel like I don’t take it. Is that weird? My body has gotten so used to it. I’m getting to where I notice I’m not concentrating again. When I’m studying at home, I’m like, ‘Oh my goodness!’ You know? Trying to concentrate. And I’m like, maybe I need a higher dose. Because I was on a higher dose of Adderall when I was younger, so I’m wondering if it’s just like, whatever. See here is the thing. I’m totally different when I’m on it. The Vyvanse, yeah. I mean, it’s helped me but I get tired of it now. Now, I put myself in a room and basically, I can’t look at my phone. I do that a

lot to not get distracted. Sometimes when I don't comprehend, it's not paying attention, so I had literally put down my phone and sit in my room, close my door, and read it. And not think of anything else. And I do that in class too though, thinking of other things I've got to do. So the next thing you know is, 'Whoa, what in the world?'" but yeah, I can even read and be thinking of other things. And just keep reading. And I'll be like "Uh oh."

When they lectured to you with maybe a PowerPoint I get more from that than when I just read the chapter. If I read the chapter, then I'm definitely like lost, but it's very hard for me to take notes at the same time as I listen. Reading takes a lot of time. So I think of that positive is that reading helps me with I don't know, everything. It just helps me in general. To understand even, like, not just school, but also when people talk or whatever. I'm like 'What are you talking about?' Yeah, and even now when people are getting done with their anatomy tests or something or getting up, I'm like 'Oh my goodness.' I start freaking out. Because I think my time is limited. So, I get nervous. I can't stand it! Like I had a test Monday, at Speech. I mean, I know this stuff, she said, 'You know this stuff.' And I was like, 'I know!' Like I was the last one there. Oh gosh and everyone is moving and I can't. I don't know if it's anxiety. I don't know. Yeah and I don't know how I'm going to do because I got a lab test Wednesday. And I hope people aren't going to be sitting in chairs getting up! Cause we had to go to each station to see what tissue it is and all this and I'm like, 'Oh Lord.'"

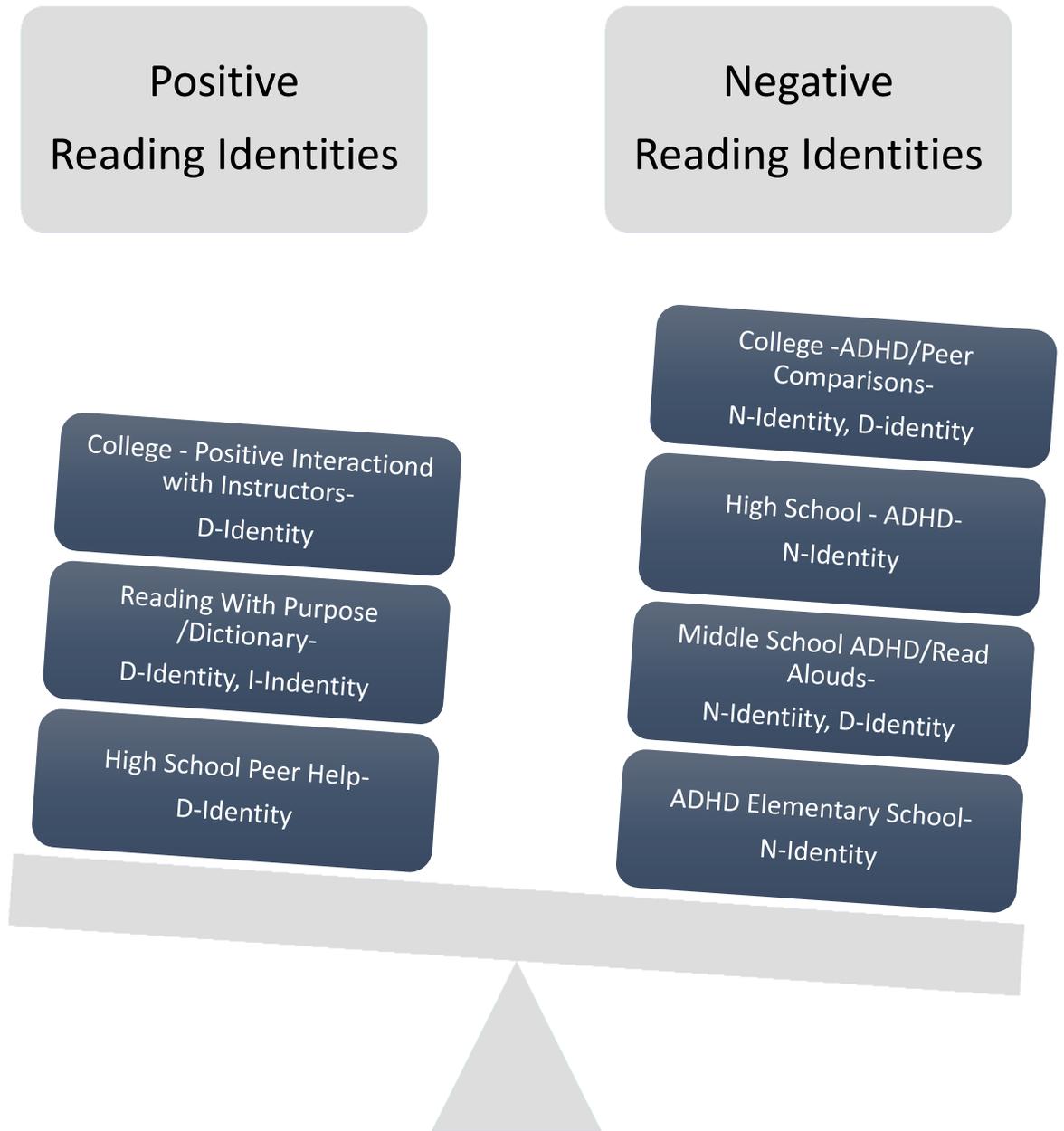
### **Carrie's Narrative Five**

At home, Carrie read occasionally for fun, but still struggled with her attention issues. "Reading is definitely hard sometimes, even for fun. I'd say sometimes I'm a reader and sometimes, I am not. Like this break, I kind of did read. I actually, cause I was

in the car on the way to Tennessee. I was bored, so I read. But I mean I don't know if I should call myself a reader. Like, 'When was the last time you finished a book?' I couldn't even finish it. And reading for information, like instructions or something, makes me nervous! Because I'm scared I'm going to miss something. Because that makes me nervous to read it over and over again. To make sure I know exactly what it was saying. Even memorization is hard for me. Like remembering stuff from the book. Like, even though I read that, I'm like, 'I don't remember this person. Where did this person come from?' I don't think about it. It's weird. I remember I could do the states. Listing stuff, I'm pretty good at that."

**Table 4.5**

*Carrie's Reading Identities*



*Note.* This table indicated that the reading identities in Carrie's narratives balanced in favor of a negative reading identity. In the end, she self-described as sometimes a reader and sometimes a non-reader.

## Appendix I

### Rameka Transcripts Nov 20 #202

**Interviewer**: Ok. Let me get (scratching) because I talk with this on. Alright. So you want to do the story, do you remember what story I told you you were? Are you 102?

**202**: I think so.

**Interviewer**: It doesn't really matter, but that way I can keep it straight without having to use names because they don't want you to use names. Ok, let me get here real quick. I think you are, you're 202. Ok, so you are number 202.

**202**: 202

**Interviewer**: And I want you to tell me story on when you realized reading was important in life.

**202**: Um (paused). When I start growing up in school, like, well, really elementary school. Because I always was struggling in reading and I realized that all my friends

**202**: Was reading better than me.

**202**: So that pushed me more to go home, read a book. Even something with a sign, you know. Go in the kitchen help my momma do stuff read stuff, on the back of, you know when you're cooking. Then I got in middle school I got better at reading and you to pay attention in math problems if you read it wrong or. Then, you know, I had something, in high school, it was the reading part of the graduation exam and I had to realize that, well, you gotta pass dis in order to graduate from

high school. So, reading gotta be important if you gotta pass dis in order to graduate. And (pause) I studied, but I did pass it on my first try.

**Interviewer**: Good

**202**: And den, basically that's when I realized, well, you're going to need reading every day in your life, and when you don't know how to read den it's going to be really hard.

**Interviewer**: So let's go back to when you said you were in elementary school and like your other friends were, you knew you weren't. Can you tell me a story of how you knew you weren't doing as well as they did? Can you remember a specific incidence?

**202**: Yeah, because like, back then, you had like red books, blue books, and green books, and they always be in, I think the blues was the highest? Or maybe red? I can't remember but I was always in the green one which was the lowest. And I was like, this is not right. (laughter) If I'm going green, an all my friends is in the red, then I wanna move up to the blue then to the red, so.

**Interviewer**: So it was just a reading group? So you can obviously tell? the different groups?

**202**: Yeah, we knew.

**Interviewer**: Do they teach you differently?

**202**: Yeah, like our words was bigger.

**Interviewer**: The print was bigger?

**202**: Yeah, I would look in their books and they had longer stories and their print was smaller.

**Interviewer:** So yeah. You were like, something

**202:** Somethings not right.

**Interviewer:** And then you talked about work with you mom and stuff. How did your? I mean, did you ever tell your mom, did you say, “Oh I need to work on my reading”? or did you kind of just think about it on your own?

**202:** Yeah, I told my momma. And she was just like, “Maybe you should just read something every night” or “start off little, and then you know, don’t worry about just because they are in this group, then you should be in that group. If you work hard and you read and keep reading, you will be able to get in that group one day too.”

**Interviewer:** Did she read a lot herself? Was she much of a reader? I’m not like, could she but did she like to read novels or anything like that? Or did you ever see her sitting around reading?

**202:** No, but she said in high school she liked reading. But she didn’t no read.

**Interviewer:** So she didn’t read outside of school?

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think that? Time or?

**202:** Yeah probably time. I don’t know.

**Interviewer:** You don’t know. Ok. You don’t know. There is one other thing I gotta ask, you said in middle school, you started to get better. How could you tell or why did you think you were getting better or starting to get better by middle school? What could you tell? Did you have any?

**202**: Because in English we, if you like, in middle school, like, when you was in English class/ sometin, I can't remember the name of it. But I didn't go in that class and it was for reading with the English and I didn't go in that class, so I was like, ok I'm getting better.

**Interviewer**: Cause you didn't have to go in the class which was to help

**202**: to help people reading, yeah.

**Interviewer**: Good.

**202**: So I was like, I did in 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, but my 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade year I didn't have to go in the class no more. So I was like, well, I'm getting better.

**Interviewer**: Good. So, obviously, there was some kind of program where they must have tested you at some point, you looked at your test scores or scored or something and said, oh, you need to be in this extra reading class

**202**: Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Ok good. We will do that one for today. And think about which other one

**202**: another one

Feb 10 #202

**Interviewer**: Let me make sure that. Alright. So you are 202 and it's February 10<sup>th</sup>. So I know for my records. Um, so let's start real quick. Let's talk about school. Just because I'm curious. You're taking, you said, Ethics, History no, and Biology?

**202**: Yeah

**Interviewer**: How is the reading going? Because those are all pretty heavy reading, aren't they? How's it going?

**202:** Um (pauses) I just have to read every night. Especially History and Bio. I have to read the book every night. The chapter every night.

**Interviewer:** How hard, are you having a hard time understanding what you're reading?

**202:** Yeah sometimes. I do.

**Interviewer:** Sometimes? What do you do when you do?

**202:** They got us this website and you go on the website and look up stuff.

**Interviewer:** Is it sometimes vocabulary that's the problem?

**202:** Yeah it's vocabulary. What does what.

**Interviewer:** And understanding to, in Biology, understanding the processes and all that stuff. Processes. Um, for History, it probably not is, which one do you think, what's most difficult to read? Out of all the stuff you have to read?

**202:** Remembering the dates

**Interviewer:** The dates and stuff about History. So that's not really understanding what you read as so much as memorizing all that stuff. What about Ethics? What's that like? I've never

**202:** Ethics? It's. It's alright.

**Interviewer:** Is it a lot of reading too? Or not so much?

**202:** It's not. It's not a lot of reading. It's just a lot of memory stuff. And what happened when. It's something like History.

**Interviewer:** It's a lot like History

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Alright. Cool. Ok, let's see, so um, how about if we talk about. Either tell me a story about reading for fun or a time when you loved reading. Can you think of one? Like a positive memory of reading? Maybe? Or do you have one?

**202:** When I used to intern I used to like reading to the. I liked reading to the elementary schools. When I would go to them I would read to them. I used to like reading for them.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Tell me about it. Like tell me a story or give me an example of one time you did that for them.

**202:** I was interning and I went to the day care and they had books and a teacher was like, "can you read the book?" and at first I was like, "Ehhh" and then I ended up doing it and it was better than what I thought it was going to be.

**Interviewer:** do you remember what book you read them? Or what it was like?

**202:** It was one of the Dr. Seuss books. I can't think of the name. The big orange book. Something fell off the tree.

**Interviewer:** I'm not sure. We will have to think about that one.

**202:** It's a common book. When Jay fell off the tree. It's a real common book.

**Interviewer:** So did you read it to them aloud? Show them the pictures?

**202:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Talk to them about it and everything?

**202:** Yeah. It's the ABC's with that one.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So you enjoy reading to kids. What do you think. Do you remember when you were younger, did people read to you a lot?

**202:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Ok. Give me some examples of that.

**202:** My mom always read to me because I would be difficult understanding. Like if I read it, it just be I be reading it. I'm not going to remember it. So when someone else reads it to me I can remember it better. So my mom always used to read to me and then would make me go behind her and read it to try to get me better.

**Interviewer:** So would she do that, not just when you were really little, but would she do that through school to try to get through stuff.

**202:** Yeah. She used to read with me through high school too.

**Interviewer:** If you had to read a novel, would she read it with you?

**202:** Yeah, she did.

**Interviewer:** What books? Can you give me an example of one of those that you read together?

**202:** We read *Dante's Peak*. We read *The Bully*. We read the mop? Not *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Um, something. The Mulberry? It's something like that. And we read the one. With the. It's a movie. What was the name of that book. Um.

**Interviewer:** What was it about?

**202:** When the girl kept cheating on the man.

**Interviewer:** The Great Gatsby?

**202:** The Great Gatsby. That's what it is.

**Interviewer:** So would you just take time at night to read stories?

**202:** Yeah. She would read certain chapters and she would ask. "Did you read such and such" and I would be like, "Yeah." And she would tell me about what I learned.

**Interviewer:** That's good. so did she read to you or did you both read it and talk about it, like a book talk kind of thing.

**202:** In high school, she would read some and then I would read it. And then we would talk about it. But in middle school, she would read it.

**Interviewer:** Read it aloud together?

**202:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** That's cool. That's good that she would do that for you and try to help you out. You told me earlier that she liked to read in high school but she doesn't read much anymore. She's doesn't have the time. But obviously, she still kind of enjoys that or she wouldn't have taken the time to do that with you.

**202:** Yeah she just started teaching in January.

**Interviewer:** Yeah? That's good. where?

**202:** [REDACTED] in high school

**Interviewer:** Good for her. Good. good. that's great. What is she teaching?

**202:** A reading class for, it's not a graduation exam no more. But they have to pass a test at the end of the courses

**Interviewer:** The remediation help

**202:** Yeah, that's it.

**Interviewer:** That's great.

**202:** So she doing that little class.

**Interviewer:** That's good. good for her. So, you are better definitely when you hear something read than when you read it yourself.

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Do you ever try books on tape or stuff like that? Does that work for you? Like if you listen to a cd or something?

**202:** Yeah, that's what we do in biology. Like he will read it and point stuff out. It's like a recording. I really do learn it that way

**Interviewer:** You are much more auditory.

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. That's good. Tell me a time when. Well let me ask you this question. So, why do you think reading is a struggle for you when you do read it? What is it that makes it difficult for you?

**202:** It's because I would be trying to read too fast. And I be so concentrated on trying to understand what's going on, then, you know, just trying to read and take my time.

**Interviewer:** Is there a difference for you when you are trying to read for a Biology text and there's all this information

**202:** Yes

**Interviewer:** And reading something like *The Great Gatsby*.

**202:** Yes, there's a big difference.

**Interviewer:** What's different about it? Like what do you think is different about it?

**202:** It's like I can relate to stuff. Sort of like in *The Great Gatsby*. It's more, you know, common. But then when I read stuff like Biology, I'm like, "What?"

**Interviewer:** You just don't have the knowledge to make it make sense. Or the personal connection to it.

**202:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** It's more of the personal connection to it.

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Which do you prefer to do? Which kind of reading would you rather be doing?

**202:** Stuff like *The Great Gatsby*.

**Interviewer:** Novels and fun stuff, just for entertainment?

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you probably prefer reading for entertainment over reading to learn.

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** If you have to learn something, you would much rather someone tell you and explain it than opposed to having to read it for yourself. That's good. So that's good information. That's good to know. So basically you think you just go too fast or you focus on reading that you don't take it in. like you read it but you on't really get that.

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so it's not so much as you don't understand it when you read it, it's like, I mean, you can understand the ideas, but when you are reading it, you can't take it all in at the same time. Ok. If someone asked you, "are you a reader?", what would you say? Would you say, "Yes I'm a reader" or "No, I'm not a reader"? Or what do you think? Do you consider yourself a reader?

**202:** No.

**Interviewer:** No. Why not? Why don't you consider yourself a reader?

**202:** Because I really don't read a lot. I'm just being honest I really don't. I'll read for school but for reading reading, I just don't.

**Interviewer:** Reading for fun, you're not going to do it. So if, you had to imagine yourself, you are done with school and you have a job, you're probably not going to be picking up a book for fun. Maybe you will when you don't have the stress of school.

**202:** Actually when I was in the library, I see this book and I start reading it. Maybe because I was bored, and I just start reading it. I'm still reading it.

**Interviewer:** So if something catches your eye

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you might become a reader if you didn't have to read so much for school.

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What do you think has had the biggest impact on you as a reader? Either negative or positive? What do you think shaped you to "Yes I'm a reader" or "No I'm not a reader"? what do you think had the biggest influence or impact of your problems with reading or when you do like reading? It could be anything. When you think of reading, what do you think? Like good or bad?

**202:** Like ugh. But sometimes you need to read to know stuff or instead of someone just telling you stuff, you have to read it for yourself.

**Interviewer:** So I know when we talked earlier and you being in elementary school and being in all the groups, it being like ugh.

**202:** Yeah, ugh.

**Interviewer:** Does that stuff stick with you now? Do you still think, "Oh reading, I'm not going to be good at it."

**202:** Oh, no.

**Interviewer:** You don't have that baggage with you. Like, "oh no, school reading was so terrible so I just don't."

**202:** No.

**Interviewer:** That's good. How about your friends? Tell me a story about, or do you have any friends through school or whatever that, would push you to read?

**202:** Yeah, one of my friends. She really really likes to read. She says, "You should read it." And I'm like "Emmm, no"

**Interviewer:** Do you remember any of the things she would try to get you to read?

**202:** She likes reading a lot of fiction books.

**Interviewer:** So she wanted you to read them. Why do you think she wanted you to read them?

**202:** Maybe so I can get better at reading.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**202:** Or to help me out in school or something

**Interviewer:** You said that you liked reading *The Bully*. Did you like reading Buford books?

**202:** Yeah, I liked reading that. *The Bully*. *The Gun*. *Dangerous New Love*. I have the whole case.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think you like those better rather than some of things you've read?

**202:** Because it interests me.

**Interviewer:** Because they are real fast.

**202:** They is! And then you be “It’s drama.” And you be keep reading to see what’s going on. Like if someone shot him, you be like, “Oooh, who shot him?” and keep reading. Yeah, that’s what it is.

**Interviewer:** So I know we talked about elementary school and a little bit of middle school, and how your mom helped you in high school to get through. What was, in your school, what was it like when you read out loud in class? What did you feel?

**202:** I was like, “I know I’m going to get called. I know I’m going to get called. I know I’m going to get called.” And I did.

**Interviewer:** And how did you feel about it? Were you like, “Hey I hate reading in class”?

**202:** I was like, “Ok. I just do it”

**Interviewer:** You just do it. What kind of things like. How did your teachers present reading? Or in high school. Give me a typical day. How did reading happen in your English classes? Or what can you remember?

**202:** Well, you get the big text book and we would read the story together and turn on the tape thing. And then she would say, “██████, you read from this point to this point.” Or sometimes we would do “Popcorn Reading” where you got to pick someone yourself.

**Interviewer:** How did you feel about that?

**202:** Oh I know I was going to get picked. Just go on ahead and pick me.

**Interviewer:** Just go on ahead and do it. Did it stress you out? You don't seem like you weren't stressed about it. Did you have to do AR in high school? Accelerated Reader? Or could you not get your grade or...How did you do it?

**202:** AR? I did pretty good. Better than I thought I was. And then in elementary school, you get like a 4 point stuff and a 6 point.

**Interviewer:** So in high school or in middle school, were ok with Accelerated Reader. That wasn't the part that you didn't like. Did you like to pick your own books?

**202:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you got to pick what you wanted to read. And it's interesting. And you got to find something with a little drama. You're good at reading, it's just the stuff people make you read. Did you like *The Great Gatsby* when you read it?

**202:** Yes. I liked it.

**Interviewer:** Because it's got drama too.

**202:** Yes, it do.

**Interviewer:** Did you read *To Kill A Mockingbird*? You started to mention it. That has drama too.

**202:** That was about, I knew it had "bird" or something. What was that one about?

**Interviewer:** That is about Scout, the little girl, and the black man.

**202:** Yeah, in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade

**Interviewer:** Yeah, the black man, I can't remember his name, Tom Robinson, who gets trialed for raping Mayella Ewell even though he didn't do it. He just went over to her house.

**202:** Oh, yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's a good story.

**202:** Yeah we read that.

**Interviewer:** Did your mom read that one with you too?

**202:** No. Just *The Great Gatsby*. We were able to read both of them at school. I couldn't remember that it's *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

**Interviewer:** And for *The Great Gatsby*, did your teacher make you read more of it at home?

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And that's not necessarily an easy book to read.

**202:** Yeah, but after we read it, we watched the movie. Some of it was different.

**Interviewer:** Yeah they are always different. There is a newer one out. Have you seen it?

**202:** No.

**Interviewer:** With Leonardo DiCaprio

**202:** I've seen the previews.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it's in Redbox now. It's pretty old. But it was pretty good. Do you have any favorite, like when you were in elementary school, did you have any teachers that made you focus on reading and make you think it was more fun than others? Any stories of that, that you can tell me? Or remember anybody that was particularly a teacher of reading? Or was interesting? Or helped you understand more or whatever?

**202:** No. I mean, all my teachers in elementary school, they would just say, take this home and let your mom, or your guardian, read to you. That's all.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, spend more time reading. I know we talked about all that. We talked about reading in your classes now. So I guess one question, how did you feel about when you took your Compass test and they said you had to go to a remedial reading class. How did that, or did that surprise you, that you had to go into the lower level reading class? Or how did you feel about that?

**202:** Not really. But maybe because I thought I wasn't going to have to take it. Because I passed my graduation exam. Reading on the first try. I thought I was like, maybe I passed reading, maybe I didn't. I thought I passed all of them but reading on the first try, but I passed all of them but History on the first try.

**Interviewer:** Good.

**202:** But I passed History on the second try.

**Interviewer:** So that surprised you that you passed it on your graduation exam with no problem but then when you got here

**202:** Yeah I thought I was going to pass it too.

**Interviewer:** Did you take 092 and 093 too? Did you take the Writing 092?

**202:** No.

**Interviewer:** You took the 093 right?

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so writing was a lot harder. Ok. What about that math? What did you place in math? Just curious?

**202:** 100

**Interviewer:** So you passed out of most of them.

**202:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Good. I'm trying to think if there is anything else. We talked about all of it.

I think what I'm going to do is go back and try to listen to everything and see if I have any more questions.

**202:** Ok.

**Interviewer:** To be totally done with you. But I still have tons of other people that I need to talk to. Like you and [REDACTED] are the only two I'm pretty much done with. So I'm not going to do the drawing on the Kindle until I get done with everyone. But I think I still have a gift card. I'm going to give you yours while I'm thinking about it. Here is your Amazon gift card for \$25 for helping me out. And like I said, I'll email you or call you if I have something or like, fill in the blank questions later. And I'll let you know when I get to have the other people in here and we get to do the thing. Alright. I really appreciate you getting to help me and spend your time here.

**202:** Thank you!

**Interviewer:** Let me know if you need any help with anything. I appreciate it.

### **Rameka's Story Draft One**

Rameka was a 20-year-old African-American student who successfully completed the lowest level developmental reading course at ABC Community College. She was raised by a single mother in a low income household as evidenced by her receiving free or reduced lunches in public school. She was a traditional student in the sense that she started college directly after graduating high school the previous spring. Rameka tested into developmental reading, math, and English. She dropped out of ABC Community College after two years of coursework with little success in college level courses.

### **Rameka Narrative One**

Rameka has an overall unpleasant memory of reading at an early age. “My earliest memory of reading is reading in Head Start along with my classmates. Mrs. West, my kindergarten teacher, would always tell me learning how to read is very important. Growing up my mom would read *The Three Little Pigs* to me, and I would always try to read it back. I would always try to read to every night even though I didn't like it. My mom made me.” Elementary school was an important time in developing Rameka's attitudes about reading. “When I started growing up in school, well, really elementary school, I realized reading was important because I always was struggling in reading and I realized that all my friend were reading better than me, so that pushed me more to go home, read a book. Even something with a sign, you know? Go in the kitchen and help my momma do stuff, read stuff, on the back of, you know when you're cooking?” School reading groups cemented the idea of reading struggles in Rameka's mind. “Like, back then, you had like red books, blue books, and green books, and they always were in, I think the blues was the highest? Or maybe red? I can't remember, but I was always in

the green one which was the lowest. And I was like this is not right. If I'm going green, and all my friends are in the red, then I want to move up to the blue then to the red, because we knew they were different because our words were bigger. I would look in their books, and they had longer stories and their print was smaller. It thought, 'Something's not right.' I mean, all my teachers in elementary school, they would just say, take this home and let your mom, or your guardian, read to you. That's all. So, I told my momma. And she was just like, 'Maybe you should just read something every night' or 'start off little, and then you know, don't worry about just because they are in this group, then you should be in that group. If you work hard and you read and keep reading, you will be able to get in that group one day too.'"

### **Rameka's Narrative Two**

By middle school, Rameka felt that she had a successful grasp on how to handle reading and its various purposes. "When I got in middle school, I got better at reading and you had to pay attention in math problems so you didn't read it wrong. Plus, because in English in middle school, I didn't go in that class that was for reading, so I was like, ok I'm getting better. I did in 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, but my 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade year I didn't have to go in the class no more. So I was like, well, I'm getting better." Some of that success seems to be based upon Rameka's mother's help. "My mom always read to me because I would have difficulty understanding. Like if I read it, it just be reading it. I'm not going to remember it. When someone else reads it to me, I can remember it better. So my mom always used to read to me and then would make me go behind her and read it to try to get me better. In middle school, she would read it. Well, we would read it aloud together." By middle school, Rameka had a resigned attitude about reading, especially when faced

with reading aloud in class. “I was like, ‘I know I’m going to get called. I know I’m going to get called. I know I’m going to get called.’ And I did. I was like, ‘Ok. Just do it.’ We would get the big text book and we would read the story together and turn on the tape thing. And then the teacher would say, ‘Rameka, you read from this point to this point.’ Or sometimes we would do Popcorn Reading where you got to pick someone yourself. I knew I was going to get picked. So, just go on ahead and pick me.”

### **Rameka’s Narrative Three**

High school saw a similar pattern in reading for Rameka, but the high stakes of reading success became most evident to her. “In high school, there was the reading part of the graduation exam and I realized that, well, you gotta pass this in order to graduate from high school. So, reading has to be important if you gotta pass this in order to graduate. And I studied, but I did pass it on my first try. And then, basically that’s when I realized, well, you’re going to need reading every day in your life, and when you don’t know how to read then it’s going to be really hard.” Rameka’s mom continued to be a part of her success. “My mom used to read with me through high school too. If I had to read a novel, she would read it too. We read *Dante’s Peak*. We read *The Bully*. We read the one with the movie. What was the name of that book? It about when the girl kept cheating on the man. *The Great Gatsby*. That’s what it is. She would read certain chapters and she would ask, ‘Did you read such and such?’ and I would be like, ‘Yeah.’ And she would ask me about what I learned. Yeah, she would read some and then I would read it. And then we would talk about it.” This reading aloud with her mother seems to have led her to more enjoyment of reading during her high school experiences. “When I used to

intern I high school, I used to like reading to the elementary schools. When I would go to them I would read to them. I used to like reading for them. Also, I was interning and I went to the day care and they had books and a teacher was like, 'Can you read the book?' and at first I was like, 'Ehhh,' and then I ended up doing it. It was better than what I thought it was going to be. It was one of the Dr. Seuss books. I can't think of the name. It's a real common book. I read it to them aloud and showed them the pictures."

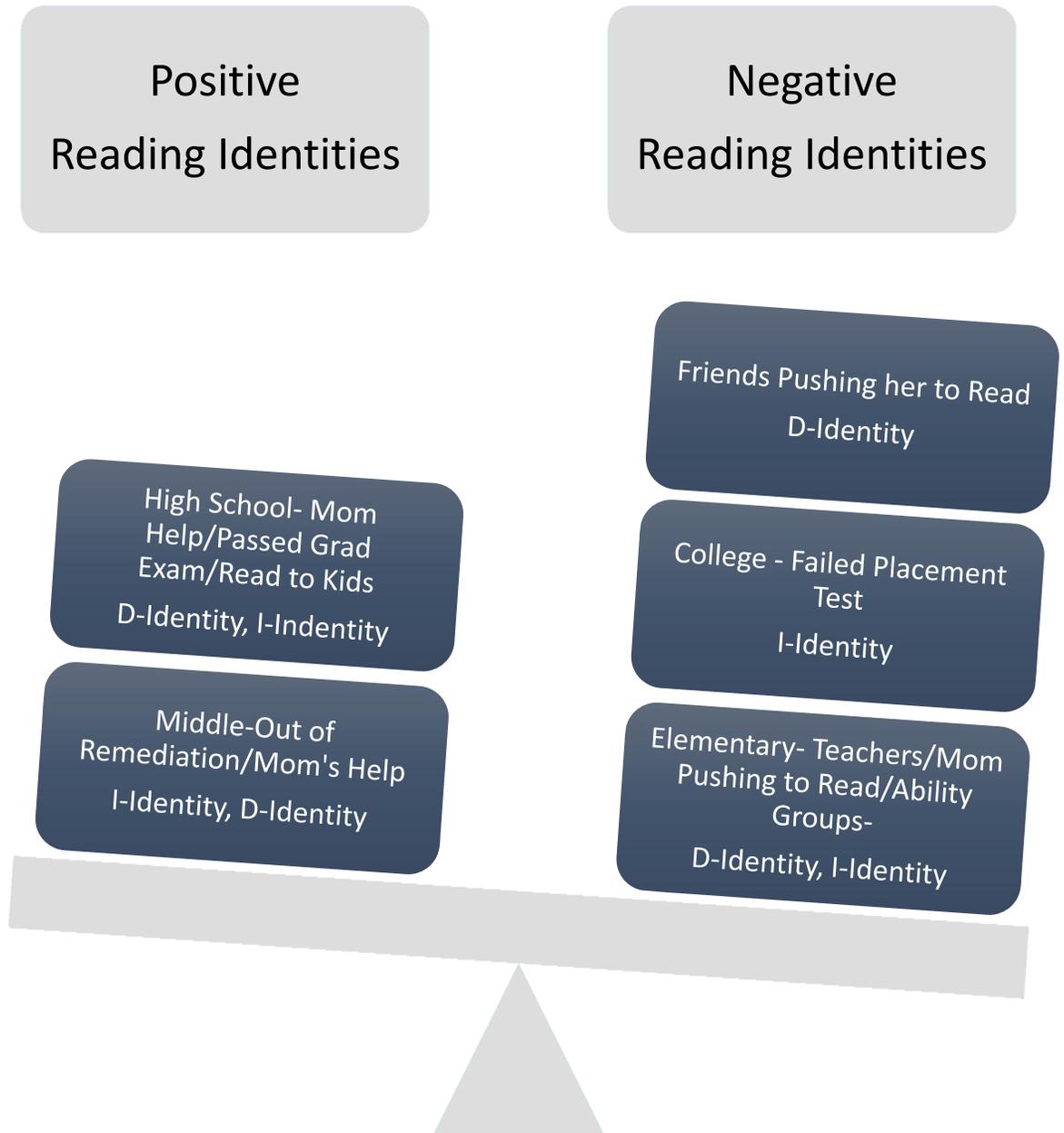
### **Rameka's Narrative Four**

By college, Rameka was relatively comfortable with her reading skills, but the placement test set her back. "I wasn't really surprised that I had to take remedial reading. Not really. But maybe because I thought I wasn't going to have to take it since I passed my graduation exam reading on the first try. When I took the Graduation Exam, I thought I was like, maybe I passed reading; maybe I didn't. I thought I passed all of them but reading on the first try, but I passed all of them but History on the first try. I passed History on the second try. So, I thought I was going to pass the placement test too. Now in college, I just have to read every night. Especially History and Bio. I have to read the book every night. The chapter every night. Sometimes. I have a hard time understanding what I am reading, but they got us this website and you go on the website and look up stuff. Like, it's vocabulary. And sometimes we use CDs. I learn better when I hear things read. Yeah, that's what we do in biology. Like he will read it and point stuff out. It's like a recording. I really do learn it that way. Because I would be trying to read too fast. And I be so concentrated on trying to understand what's going on instead of, you know, just trying to read and take my time. And, there's a big difference between reading for biology and like *The Great Gatsby*. It's like I can relate to stuff. Sort of like in *The Great*

*Gatsby*. It's more, you know, common. But then when I read stuff like Biology, I'm like, 'What?' I guess I don't have the knowledge to make it make sense. Or the personal connection to it. I prefer stuff like *The Great Gatsby*. I also liked reading the Bluford books. *The Bully*. *The Gun*. *Dangerous New Love*. I have the whole case. Because it interests me. They are real fast. And then you be like 'It's drama.' And you be keep reading to see what's going on. Like if someone shot him, you be like, 'Oooh, who shot him?' and keep reading. Yeah, that's what it is." Overall, Rameka does not see herself as a reader. "I really don't read a lot. I'm just being honest I really don't. I'll read for school but for reading reading, I just don't. Well, actually when I was in the library, I saw this book and I started reading it. Maybe because I was bored, and I just start reading it. I'm still reading it. And sometimes you need to read to know stuff or instead of someone just telling you stuff, you have to read it for yourself. I do have one of my friends. She really, really likes to read. She says, 'You should read it.' And I'm like, 'Emmm, no.' She likes reading a lot of fiction books and she wanted me to read them. Maybe so I can get better at reading. Or to help me out in school or something."

**Table 4.6.**

*Rameka's Reading Identities*



*Note.* This table indicated that the reading identities in Rameka's narratives balanced in favor of a negative reading identity. In the end, these identities matched her self-described identity as a non-reader.

## Appendix J

### Brenda Transcripts Feb 23 #301

**Interviewer:** You or know whatever. If you don't have an answer, you don't have an answer. I mean, these are like, tell the story. Because I'm going to try to put the answers into like a story of your life as a reader but

**301:** Good luck

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Well, that's what, I mean, you know, or non-reader. How's that?

**301:** If it's smut, I'll read.

**Interviewer:** Huh you're the third person that's told me that. That's funny.

**301:** I mean, I mean, I'm being honest.

**Interviewer:** That's fine. I don't mind honesty. That's, you're the third, well second really, kind of third. Anyways, so tell me then the earliest thing you can remember about reading in school or reading when you were little and learning to read.

**301:** Well, um, well, I, the first things I can remember that I actually read and that I loved was either *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*. And then the second one I was probably in the fourth or fifth grade, *How to Eat Fried Worms*. Cause those are the two earliest ones I can remember.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think you liked them? When did you read them? You said 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**301:** Because they intrigued me. Especially *How to Eat Fried Worms*, I thought that was the most disgusting thing but it was funny (coughs) because the kid had a bet. And they bet him he could eat so many of them. He fired them. He ate them as hot

dogs. Put ketchup and mustard on them. These are things I can remember as a child. And still to this day, I'm in my 40s and I think it's the stupidest thing a person could of done.

**Interviewer:** But it entertained you.

**301:** But it entertained me.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember learning to read when you were little with your parents or before school even?

**301:** Um, to be honest with you. I mean when I first started first grade, I was in Georgia and they had what they called Sight Reading. I don't know if you know what that is. Then we moved and went to Florida and I did Phonics. Didn't know what the heck they were talking about. So, by the time I was in the third grade, I had a teacher that realized that I could not read. So I think that's one of my problems. I read fine now. But back when I was younger, I struggled.

**Interviewer:** Question?

**(Another person):** Yeah, the ones that you told me to do.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, (mumbles) Anyways, so Sight Reading, so basically from changing schools in elementary. Sight Reading, you just look at the words and you know them, they make you memorize them. Then, you get to Phonics and are like "What the heck is this?"

**301:** Right. I didn't know how sounding things out and like I said, I went from 1<sup>st</sup> until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and I had a teacher realize I couldn't read. You know, my mother kept telling the school that I couldn't read. And because I was a quiet kid and did my work,

**Interviewer:** They didn't worry about it.

**301:** They passed me right along.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember what that teacher did to help you in third grade?

**301:** Oh she was one-on-one. She would sit down with me one-on-one and we went through the alphabet. Sounding things out. And putting things together. And within a year's time, I went from having a first grade level, because I ended up failing the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, she held me back. To when I went into 4<sup>th</sup>, I was right where I should be. I was lucky. I'm not saying all teachers are there for a paycheck, but she was there to teach. And she was a damn good teacher. You know.

**Interviewer:** And she caught what needed to be caught.

**301:** Yeah, and help me get caught up. Exactly.

**Interviewer:** Um, so that was in elementary school. After that, you pretty much were on task?

**301:** I was on task.

**Interviewer:** Did you struggle at all? Or was it?

**301:** Reading to me was boring. Especially if it was something that I had to do. You should know that.

**Interviewer:** I know. I mean, a lot of us are like that.

**301:** But (cough) if it intrigued me, if it interested me, I'd read. And I would make good grades or whatever, but if it was something that didn't appeal to me, I would make a passing grade.

**Interviewer:** I noticed on your survey, when I looked to see if you did it, you said you don't like reading novels. You prefer reading non-fiction, or magazines, or news and stuff like that.

**301:** Yeah. Well, I can't say I don't like not reading novels, like, I liked reading *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *The Girl with a Dragon Tattoo*, things like that.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**301:** It interests me.

**Interviewer:** Right

**301:** You know, there was, um, I can't think of it. Things like the gentleman wrote, *The Firm*,

**Interviewer:** John Grisham

**301:** I love his books.

**Interviewer:** Me too.

**301:** Because it intrigues you from Point A to Point B. Um, but if I got to read something, *History*.

**Interviewer:** Sure, or a classic novel.

**301:** Yeah, it does not pertain to me. It's like pulling teeth. I don't want to do it.

**Interviewer:** So um, what about, let's kind of get into middle school and high school.

But so, do you remember in middle school and high school about the reading and English classes there?

**301:** Middle school I had to take literature and I hated literature. Oh because all of my literature teachers, I was a shy individual and they wanted you to read out loud and I hated it. Hated it with a passion. Hated it. You know, because I was such a

shy and timid kid, that I felt that if I read out loud, that people would make fun of me if I stuttered or something you know. Cause kids are cruel.

**Interviewer:** I'm sorry. Um, so you didn't like reading out loud because

**301:** I was very shy. Very very shy.

**Interviewer:** Did you, when you had to, like what was your strategy to get through it?

**301:** Read really fast.

**Interviewer:** Get it over with as quick as possible? Um, so you didn't really like the literature. Um, and I guess that kind of went through high school too I guess.

**301:** Well, I quit high school.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, you stopped. You hated it so much, you just quit. I quit. When you quit, what did you do? Did you do? I mean what did you go do to get a job? You weren't married right away?

**301:** No, I went and got a job. I worked. Now that the ironic thing is, even though I hate to read, I do read some every day because it intrigues me. I can read the same things fifty times, and still get different and that's *The Bible*. And still get a different viewpoint every time I read it. And people look at me like I'm crazy, and I say let's sit down and read it.

**Interviewer:** You're the second person that's told me that.

**301:** I mean, you are going to get something different every time. Cause you think about it different.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And it applies to what is going on in your life. Alright, let's move to college. So how has reading been for you in college? Or tell me a story about reading in college, now that you have been back.

**301:** Well, now when I was in your class, I loved the (pause) *Uncommon*. I loved the I even went and got more books at the library. That I do because it's a man talking about his day to day life. You know, even he's a spiritual man, it's still, he puts what's happening in the real world and contact with the spiritual world and it makes a lot of sense. That, you know, like I said, being in your class when we had to read that, it intrigued me to read stuff like that. But other than that, no.

**Interviewer:** How about your, how are you doing, I mean, have you taken History yet? What else have you taken that might be a lot a reading, academic. Anything else with a lot of reading so far here?

**301:** My business class.

**Interviewer:** Does it have a lot of reading?

**301:** Well, she does discussions. She's like you. (Laughter). She doesn't want me to skim through it. (Coughs) I mean, it's ten points, I think the highest I got is an eight. And I just didn't want, most recently, I got a six on it. Because I didn't discuss enough. So, I mean, you know, I mean, it's the same thing as reading. We had to do these little things off of YouTube and discuss business wise and we have to discuss you know about. The last one I did was, which I don't plan on owning a business, but take something that we love to do and make a business out of it. What would be our business ethics on it. What would be, how would we get started and on and on. Well, I wrote about how I would do it but, like I said, it wasn't enough detail for her.

**Interviewer:** You probably didn't go back to the text book and pull

**301:** No I did everything that she wants. She wants, she don't want a paragraph. She wants a full discussion, viewpoints, what we think about it. How would we change it. What would become of all the changes. And all you know what I mean. I mean, I work 3<sup>rd</sup> shift. With two classes in the morning on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Interviewer:** After you've been up all night.

**301:** Yeah, I don't sleep much during the week and you know, when I get online and start discussing this stuff, I go to sleep. It's not that it's boring. It's that I'm sitting still, and it's just hard, like I said with my work schedule I start to fall asleep.

**Interviewer:** But the reading itself in that class hasn't been too challenging?

**301:** No no no nothing at all. Cause classes I have this year are very easy. I have computer class, math class, business class, and economics.

**Interviewer:** And you enjoyed economics?

**301:** Oh I I I I , I'm having a hard time with it because we are getting to the formulas and stuff like that but I enjoy because he is a wonderful teacher. Um, you might, his name is Mr. [REDACTED] He works at [REDACTED]. He has a bachelor's degree in Economics. He's, he, I like him for that fact that he gives wonderful lectures and notes because the book is 300 something dollars. And it's the first thing he'll tell you

**Interviewer:** You don't have to buy it.

**301:** No you don't have to buy it.

**Interviewer:** That's good for economics too

**301:** Yeah (laughter). Now that, that, interests me, the money system and how that works in the world. That does intrigue me because you know because I didn't realize how much the government controls a lot of things. And it's like "Huh, Huh"

**Interviewer:** Alright, can you tell me about a story where you loved reading? Maybe an incidence where you were like, reading is ok after all. And kind of give me some examples of, anything else that you can think of.

**301:** Well, like I said, back in my early, those two books, I mean, like I said I'm 45 years old, I still remember everything about them because they intrigued me. Um, like they made this movie, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, and we all know movies and books are two different things. Cause it's like, I laugh because people ask me why I don't read as much as I do, because I have a very vivid imagination. So, as I joke (laughter) I like to read smut. Because my my my dirty mind, but then again, I loved to read the books in your class. Because actually, some of the stuff I could relate to in my personal life.

**Interviewer:** How to get through it.

**301:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What about you, when reading was a struggle for you, the phonics and the whole language, I mean the whole language with the Sight Words and stuff, um, and talking about reading out loud and not liking that. Is there anything else that a time where reading was a struggle for you? Can you think of an incident or a story that you might could

**301:** Just back when I said back when I was in middle school the literature part. You know. I used to be scared half to death to read aloud. So I guess that was a

struggle for me. I would break out in hives having to think about going to this class, knowing what we were going to do Shakespeare today. And the teacher I had, I had two girls that sat in front of me and they were straight A students and then I sat behind them. I was just barely a C in that class and if you got anything wrong, she would correct you in front of everybody in class. I used to I used to torment me. Because I would start reading real fast, and I would start stuttering, and she's like "You need to slow down." And I'm like "I ain't slowing down."

**Interviewer:** "I just want to get done." Did she go around the room and people would have to read a paragraph? Or did she call on people randomly?

**301:** We would go down the row. And

**Interviewer:** Did you count ahead and see what you would have to read? And all that kind of stuff?

**301:** Yes ma'am. And when it came to my turn, she would make us stand up.

**Interviewer:** Ah geez.

**301:** Yeah. (Coughs) I'd put my book up in front of me. "Put your book down." And I'd put my book down and start reading d d d, "You're going too fast. Slow down." And then she would make me start the paragraph over. It was just it was just torment. I actually felt that this teacher was picking at me. You know, and hopefully hopefully she wasn't. Because I was the only person she does that too. There were kids that refused to read, and she would just give them a 0 for the day. I'm like, and looking back on it now, I'm thinking, "Did you ever stop and think that maybe it horrified the child to get up and do something like that?"

**Interviewer:** Did you, um, ever, I mean a couple people have said, when things like that were going on, they had to read and practice it, so they didn't hear anything else that was being read. They didn't take in anything else in the class period.

**301:** Yeah. You didn't comprehend nuthin. I was in such fear of doing that. That I wanted to get my paragraph over and done with and then you know move on like you said. We would do um, maybe a chapter in class, and have to read out loud. And I knew what paragraph I had to read. And which ones I had to do. I would go ahead and mark them.

**Interviewer:** All the way through.

**301:** All the way through. Cause she was routine. She didn't change up. She didn't pick.

**Interviewer:** You knew how it was going to be. Ok, um, what about your family as readers? Not you kids, but your parents at first.

**301:** Um, my mom my mom she reads all the time. She still reads. She's 74 years old and she still reads.

**Interviewer:** And she didn't go to a lot of school either, did she?

**301:** No.

**Interviewer:** But she was a reader? You knew when you were young, she was a reader?

**301:** She used to to read to me all the time as a child. Now, as I got older, she would try to get me to read.

**Interviewer:** That's probably how she noticed you couldn't read.

**301:** Yeah, how she noticed.

**Interviewer:** What about your dad? Was he?

**301:** My dad was, if it had to do with politics. He was one of these people that used to watch CSPAN all the time. All I could remember was seeing CSPAN. He would watch it, whenever he was home, that's all that would be on.

**Interviewer:** That's fun.

**301:** Yeah, but he was a very very smart man. Very intelligent. He was, besides, well I'm the second person in my family to go to college. He went to college. So, but he always read the newspaper faithfully every day. And it wasn't the sports section. It was always the business section. And then, like I said, watched CSPAN. But him reading books, no.

**Interviewer:** What did he do for a living?

**301:** Oh, he did a many of many things. Um, he used to be an air traffic controller.

**Interviewer:** Oh, wow.

**301:** He did that for years. (Pause) Cause cause, me and my brother are ten years apart. Most of most of my childhood, he, what I can remember is that, he, um, that he got up in age, he was a security guard. And that's basically, well, before that, he worked in plants. But I do remember him doing traffic controller doing air traffic controller because what I thought was so fascinating, because people don't realize, that you're doing, you're listening to one, you're looking at one, and you are writing directions for another. You're doing three things at once.

**Interviewer:** oh, wow.

**301:** This man, football season (laughter), when you listen to a game, watching a game, and watching another game. And can tell you exactly what is going on in all three of them.

**Interviewer:** Oh, wow. That's pretty incredible.

**301:** That's the reason why I always said he he didn't get into his calling, and would have been a wonderful sports announcer but

**Interviewer:** What about your kids? What have you done with your kids to try to make sure that?

**301:** My little one?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**301:** He reads.

**Interviewer:** Does he?

**301:** I'm not saying it because he's my kid. I went to one of his parent teacher conferences in kindergarten, he's in kindergarten, and it blew my mind. She told me and my ex-husband that she has to pull him back from saying things the other kids can have a chance. Because every day that she writes a new word up on the board, he comes up in the class, he'll look it, he'll say it out loud. She says she had never had a kid, of that age, his smart in her class.

**Interviewer:** That's cool.

**301:** It's very cool because, looking at him and looking at my older one, who struggles, my older one, he won't read. I bought him the Harry Potter Potter movies; he won't even touch the books. I buy my little one books all the time, that's the first thing he does. He'll start reading them. And now, it's so funny, even on his reading level, in first and second, even on first and second grade reading level as much as I could, he finds he he's, I hate to say it, he's just like his momma. He, it

doesn't interest him. You know, you know, where I struggled in certain things in school, he's doing the same thing.

**Interviewer:** He's ADHD too, right?

**301:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** I think that has something to do with it. I, um, I think ADHD kids either love reading and it and it and it takes them somewhere where they want to focus if it's something they want to read.

**301:** Right.

**Interviewer:** Or they hate it. There is pretty much not an in-between.

**301:** Well, I told you, I swear that I was as a kid. That I wasn't hyper, I just had problems focusing, you know. And he's the same way. Now that he has gotten older, it's not the hyperactivity, it's just that he doesn't focus. He gets it in his mind if he ain't doing it, he ain't doing it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that too. Little stubbornness in there. Um, what about when you were in school, did you have friends, or even now, do you have friends that are readers that got to push you, where they are like, "Oh you got to read this" or was your social group more anti-school. Anti

**301:** I had family. I had family members that were (cough) try to get me to read. My cousin, whom I am very close with, she's an English major. So she reads all the time. And she'll tell me, you know, she'll put these quotes on Facebook. And I'll comment on them and she's like, "Well, you know, you outta read the whole article instead of just reading the quote." And I did read the whole article, thank you very much. You know, but she she she always, cause, you know, well, it's

like I told you back at 19 she pushed me to finish my education. And you know, back when I was taking (cough) when I was taking English, I was struggling with it because I hadn't took it in so long. And she's just like, she explained everything to me; it was just like (snap, snap, snap).

**Interviewer:** It was just clicking.

**301:** That's what she told me. If you would just read more,

**Interviewer:** It's true. She's right.

**301:** She is.

**Interviewer:** Um, you already told me about your teacher that helped you in third grade, so we will skip that one. Um, so when you, we've talked about you reading for fun and reading for school, how about when you have to read for information, like how to do stuff or something. Whether it be for work or for

**301:** That don't bother me. (Pause) Cause I mean, like, um, well there's not a lot of things I have to do, but there are certain things that I have to do on my job, you know, and once I learn it, I'm fine. It doesn't, it doesn't, years ago it probably would intimidate me. But now, I want to learn. You know, it's like I tell my kids that "Knowledge is best. The more you know, the better it is." You know, so, twenty years ago,

**Interviewer:** So some of it comes with maturity and perspective too.

**301:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Um, tell me about a time, a story, a time where you realized reading was important in your life.

**301:** When I went back to college (coughs). Because that's all we do! Yeah, no, probably before college, but at college, that is all, that's all there was, reading reading more reading more reading more reading. You know, either I had to accept it, or I was going to struggle with it. And I accepted it.

**Interviewer:** Um, and like you tell your kids that reading is best. Reading is everything.

**301:** Right.

**Interviewer:** Right, if you can read, you can get your knowledge.

**301:** Exactly! Yeah, you know, because I have grown adults, like I said, I own a little store, I have grown adults, and I know for a fact that they can barely count money. If you can barely count money, I know you are going to struggle having reading problems, things like that. And it's sad. Because these are older people, you know, and I'm thinking, "You know that could have been me." If I were to give it up, but I don't want to give it up. It's like I said, now that I'm back in college (coughs) it is harder for me, because, you know, I've been out for so long. But once I've learned something, I've accomplished it. I want to learn more. So,

**Interviewer:** And it sticks too.

**301:** Yes!

**Interviewer:** I feel that if you learn something now, it sticks with you and I think that you've got the value of why you are learning it down. So, it makes it more important to you.

**301:** Or the younger people who, you know, they are young. They are like, "Oh I got my whole life", I'm like, "No you don't!"

**Interviewer:** It goes by really fast!!

**301:** I'm telling you!

**Interviewer:** It really does! Blink! Um, so, overall, if someone came up to you as a reader, would you say yes or no? And why?

**301:** (pause) Well, that's kind of hard Ms. Jones, because I, I mean, I do read. I'll read a newspaper online. Um, if it has to do with schoolwork, I'll read. But I guess, you say reading for enjoyment? No. I'm not a reader for enjoyment. Quite truthfully, I don't have time now.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**301:** With my schedule. But but me not wanting to read, no. I do like to read when I do have time to read. But I guess you, I guess you, I, I, I, could say I do enjoy reading when I have time. And if it interests me. Not because I have to read something for school, but or for anything else. But if it's something that I want to read, then yes. I guess you could say I do enjoy reading. When I have the time.

**Interviewer:** When you have the time. And it's what you want to read. What do you think the biggest positive or negative influence you've had on reading?

**301:** I guess the negative part was whenever I was young, I couldn't read. And the positive thing is that now that I'm back in school, I don't struggle. I I am at college level. I mean, even if I'm in my 40's, I'm still at college level. Which, you know, you have some kids that are graduating high school that are not on college level,

**Interviewer:** Right.

**301:** And I'm not picking at them. It just amazes me that you just graduated from high school and you are in college, but you're not in college level.

**301:** Yeah, your vocabulary was always good. You got the vocabulary for the most part.

**301:** Yeah, but you know, thank God for spell check.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, well that's nothing new.

**301:** And my grammar, I'm working on my grammar. I'm still working on that, but, I mean, it's just there's a lot of things like I told you. We had that vocabulary list, I'm like, well, there's not too many things I don't understand. I grasp a lot. It's just, trying to find the things that fit in, you know. Because, I laugh, when I be talking to my kids and I'll be telling them, "This is becoming redundant." And my oldest one is like, "You even know what that means?" and I say "If I didn't know what it means, I wouldn't be using it." I said "Redundant." I said, "Keeps getting old. Doing it over and over. I'm getting sick of it." So he goes and looks it up and he's like, "You really know that word." "Well, duh! I'm not going to say something I don't know."

**Interviewer:** Well some people do.

**301:** Well, no, but I mean, I've always been one, since a lot of things that have happened the past couple years, that I strived on not necessarily wanting to wanting to be smart, but wanting to learn. And if you know, if I say something, it's because I know what I'm saying. I'm not going sit there and be like a dummy. Talk all these words and think, hmm, I pray to God that no one asks me what they mean (laughter).

**Interviewer:** So, you kind of already answered this I think but the last question I ask everyone is why do you think reading is a struggle for you? We leave in a couple of minutes. No you're fine.

**301:** It's it's just something that (pause) I think if I enjoy it, if I don't enjoy it, if I enjoyed it more, it wouldn't be a struggle. It's just, it's just something right now, it's something I have to do. Like you know, if you gave me, if you gave me a novel, *War and Peace*, and told me that I didn't have to do a report on it, I could take as long as I could to read it, I would read it.

**Interviewer:** And you would probably enjoy it more.

**301:** I probably would enjoy it. If you give it to me now, you got, you got two weeks to do a report on it. I want a thousand word essay on it, blah blah blah, I'll put it off. I'll keep putting it off. Until two days before the report's due, and then I'm stressing. It's just, that's just me. Because it's not something that I want to do. If that makes any sense.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, and I think, I think there's a lot of difference between having to do, doing something you want to or doing something you want to learn from it. But when there are requirements, and time restrictions, and limits it stresses you out. It stresses me out. It stresses anyone out.

**301:** Yeah, because you give me this four inch book, due in two weeks, I'm lucky if I might read three or four pages before I start getting bored with it.

**Interviewer:** and stressed out about it. One more, um, so last thing I was going to ask you. So when you, when it came to come to school, and they told you you had to take the remedial reading and the remedial English classes, how did, what did, what was that? Did that strike you? Did it surprise you? Irritate you?

**301:** No! Because I knew that when I took my Compass test, I was taking my GED classes, my teacher told me that I was ready to take the test. I was ready to go

ahead and take my GED test blah blah blah. I didn't think I was. She knew I was. And when I came to take my Compass test, you know, she even told me that, you know, if I don't score high enough, it's not a disappointment. You got to start; you got to take baby steps in order to go up. You know, and I I I knew I wasn't going to score, like on the reading part, the remedial, I was one point from getting into, what was it

**Interviewer:** An 85

**301:** an 85, I was one point away.

**Interviewer:** Yeah you were one point away. And 84.

**301:** Yeah, that's what I'm saying. I was one point away from getting into it. You retested us, and still (coughs) but it didn't discourage me. I kind of knew I had to start somewhere. You know, now if we were talking about math, that's a totally different situation. But um, I was ok with it. I kind of knew I had to start somewhere. And once I got into the classes, you know, I got into the reading, the first English class I took, I did better than what I thought I was going to do. You know, and then, you know, once I passed 84, I passed 85 and went straight to English. I had you for what, English 101?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**301:** You know, and I had Ms. [REDACTED] for English 093. I had her for two years, two semesters of English. I don't have to take English classes no more, thank you sweet Jesus.

**Interviewer:** Are you done?

**301:** My English is done. You know, like I said, honey I'm taking math 98. Elementary Algebra. This is the third time I'm taking it.

**Interviewer:** Is it because of the time it needs? Because you've been so stressed

**301:** It's, it's, it's just because I'm just now starting to comprehend it.

**Interviewer:** Well, that's good though.

**301:** Yeah! Because if I don't pass this time, I gotta pay out of my own pocket! Yeah, but I mean, I'm getting it.

**Interviewer:** Good.

**301:** It's just that it's, it's just like I try to explain to people, when I was in high school, algebra was an elective. We didn't have to take it. So of course, I didn't take it. I took regular math. You can throw numbers at me all day and I'm fine. But when you start throwing numbers with formulas in it, I'm lost.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**301:** You know, it's just like, um, this semester, Chapter 1, I breezed right through it. No problem. We are on Chapter 2, which is due March 1<sup>st</sup>, I'm struggling, but I understand it. Now, when we get to the harder stuff, I have a problem with it. That's what my math teacher said. It blew her mind, things that I should, things that I shouldn't have problems with, I'm having problems. Things that I should have a problem with, I get it like that. I told her that my brain is wired wrong. I don't know what to tell you. I'm weird, so there (laughter). I don't, I don't understand it. Because the harder it is, I comprehend it. Simple stuff, I think I think because it's simple, I stress over it too much.

**Interviewer:** You overthink it.

**301:** I overthink it and I second guess myself. That's the problem I'm having. Even even my cousin, who I said was English major, she said the same thing when she was helping me with my English. She said, "Why are you second guessing yourself? You had it right the first time. Why are you? Why are you doing it?" She said, "You are making more work for yourself." That's just me.

**Interviewer:** Your brain is probably wired differently. It's gotta be.

**301 and Interviewer:** Mumbles

**Interviewer:** Alright, so what I'm going to do is take all these interviews and kind of go through them, listen back through them and see if there is any holes. So I may contact you again, and to get um, to get um,

**301:** How many have you done?

**Interviewer:** Five of the six. You're my fifth. I got one more to do. But the last one, I'm having a hard time getting ahold of. So what I'm going to do is see if I've got enough information or I feel like, if I see there is something I want to ask more questions about, I'll call you back. And get you to come back. And when everybody, once I get that last person, I want to do the drawing for the Amazon Fire that has been sitting on my dresser for like six months, so. There is your \$25 gift card for doing this part of it. And um

**301:** Thank you!

**Interviewer:** You're welcome! And um, like I said, I'll call you or text you if I need you to come back or if I need. I may do it in writing. I may email you some questions, something like that.

**301:** You got my phone number?

**Interviewer:** I got your phone number. Yeah.

**301:** That's the easiest

### **Brenda's Story Draft One**

Brenda was a 45-year-old Caucasian woman who had recently completed her GED through the adult education program and started taking college classes at ABC Community College. She was a divorced mother of two boys. She split custody with her ex-husband. Brenda worked full time at a gas station and attended college full time as well. She was raised in household with both parents and never received free or reduced lunches. However, she did change schools frequently in elementary school. Brenda was put on academic probation the semester after her participation in this research and has not returned to ABC Community College.

#### **Brenda Narrative One**

Brenda doesn't note many early memories of reading before elementary school, except to say that her mother read to her. "She used to read to me all the time as a child. Now, as I got older, she would try to get me to read. That's how she noticed that I could not read. When she hit elementary school, reading became a problem in her life. "When I first started first grade, I was in Georgia and they had what they called Sight Reading. I don't know if you know what that is. Then we moved and went to Florida and I did Phonics. I didn't know what the heck they were talking about. So, by the time I was in the third grade, I had a teacher that realized that I could not read. So I think that's one of my problems. I read fine now. But back when I was younger, I struggled. I didn't know how to sound things out, and like I said, I went from 1<sup>st</sup> until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade until I had a teacher realize I couldn't read. You know, my mother kept telling the school that I couldn't read. And because I was a quiet kid and did my work, they passed me right along." Brenda remembers how the third grade teacher made a significant difference in

her reading life. “She was one-on-one. She would sit down with me one-on-one and we went through the alphabet, sounding things out and putting things together. And within a year’s time, I went from having a first grade level, because I ended up failing the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, she held me back. To when I went into 4<sup>th</sup>, I was right where I should be. I was lucky. I’m not saying all teachers are there for a paycheck, but she was there to teach. And she was a damn good teacher. You know. And she caught what needed to be caught and helped me get caught up.” After her reading improvement, Brenda remembers some favorite texts from her childhood. “The first things I can remember that I actually read and that I loved was either *Are You There God? It’s Me Margaret*. And then the second one I was probably in the fourth or fifth grade, *How to Eat Fried Worms*. Beause those are the two earliest ones I can remember, because they intrigued me. Especially *How to Eat Fried Worms*, I thought that was the most disgusting thing but it was funny because the kid had a bet. And they bet him he could eat so many of them. He fried them. He ate them as hot dogs. Put ketchup and mustard on them. These are things I can remember as a child. And still to this day, I’m in my 40s and I think it’s the stupidest thing a person could have done.” Brenda also wonders if she had other academic problems that may have affected her reading. “I swear that I was ADD as a kid, but I wasn’t hyper. I just had problems focusing, you know?”

### **Brenda Narrative Two**

By middle school, reading had begun to be a more negative aspect of her schooling due to a lack of interest and her teachers. “Reading to me was boring. Especially if it was something that I had to do. You should know that. If it intrigued me, if it interested me, I’d read. And I would make good grades or whatever, but if it was

something that didn't appeal to me, I would make a passing grade." This slightly negative response to reading was intensified by a teacher's actions. "In middle school I had to take literature and I hated literature because all of my literature teachers. I was a shy individual and they wanted you to read out loud and I hated it. Hated it with a passion. Hated it. You know, because I was such a shy and timid kid that I felt that if I read out loud, people would make fun of me if I stuttered or something you know. Kids are cruel. I was very shy. Very, very shy. So to get through it, I read really fast. I used to be scared half to death to read aloud, so I guess that was a struggle for me. I would break out in hives having to think about going to this class, knowing that we were going to do Shakespeare today. And the teacher I had, I had two girls that sat in front of me and they were straight A students and then I sat behind them. I was just barely a C in that class and if you got anything wrong, she would correct you in front of everybody in class. That used to torment me, because I would start reading real fast, and I would start stuttering, and she's like 'You need to slow down.' And I'm like 'I ain't slowing down.' We would go down the row. And I would count ahead to see what I would have to read. And when it came to our turn, she would make us stand up. I'd put my book up in front of me. 'Put your book down.' And I'd put my book down and start reading d d d, 'You're going too fast. Slow down.' And then she would make me start the paragraph over. It was just it was just torment. I actually felt that this teacher was picking at me. You know, and hopefully, hopefully, she wasn't, because I was the only person she did that to. There were kids that refused to read, and she would just give them a zero for the day. Looking back on it now, I'm thinking, 'Did you ever stop and think that maybe it horrified the child to get up and do something like that?' And I didn't comprehend nuthin. I was in

such fear of doing that. That I wanted to get my paragraph over and done with and then you know move on. We would do um, maybe a chapter in class, and have to read out loud. And I knew what paragraph I had to read. And which ones I had to do. I would go ahead a mark them all the way through, because she was routine. She didn't change up."

### **Brenda Narrative Three**

After quitting high school, Brenda worked for a while then married and had children. By the time she returned to school, she had a new perspective about reading. "When I went back to college, I realized the importance of reading, because that's all we do! Yeah, no, probably before college, but at college, that is all, that's all there was, reading, reading, more reading, more reading, more reading. You know, either I had to accept it, or I was going to struggle with it. And I accepted it. Yeah, because I have grown adults, like I said, I run a little store, I have grown adults, and I know for a fact that they can barely count money. If you can barely count money, I know you are going to struggle having reading problems, things like that. And it's sad. Because these are older people, you know, and I'm thinking, 'You know that could have been me.' If I were to give it up, but I don't want to give it up. It's like I said, now that I'm back in college, it is harder for me, because I've been out for so long, but once I've learned something, I've accomplished it. I want to learn more. The younger people who, you know, they are young. They are like, 'Oh I got my whole life', and I'm like, 'No you don't! It goes by really fast!! I'm telling you!' The positive thing is that now that I'm back in school, I don't struggle. I am at college level. I mean, even if I'm in my 40's, I'm still at college level. Which, you know, you have some kids that are graduating high school that are not on college level. And I'm not picking at them. It just amazes me that you just graduated

from high school and you are in college, but you're not in college level. I mean, I'm working on my grammar. I'm still working on that, but, I mean, it's just there's a lot of things like I told you. We had that vocabulary list, I'm like, well, there's not too many things I don't understand. I grasp a lot. It's just, trying to find the things that fit in, you know. Because, I laugh, when I be talking to my kids, and I'll be telling them, 'This is becoming redundant.' And my oldest one is like, 'You even know what that means?' and I say, 'If I didn't know what it means, I wouldn't be using it.' I said, 'Redundant. Keeps getting old. Doing it over and over. I'm getting sick of it.' So he goes and looks it up and he's like, 'You really know that word.' 'Well, duh! I'm not going to say something I don't know.' I've always been one, since a lot of things that have happened the past couple years, that I strived on not necessarily wanting to be smart, but wanting to learn. And if you know, if I say something, it's because I know what I'm saying. I'm not going sit there and be like a dummy. Talk all these words and think, hmm, I pray to God that no one asks me what they mean." Brenda took her placement in developmental reading courses in stride. "I was taking my GED classes, my teacher told me that I was ready to take the test. I was ready to go ahead and take my GED test blah blah blah. I didn't think I was. She knew I was. And when I came to take my Compass test, you know, she even told me that, you know, if I don't score high enough, it's not a disappointment. You got to start; you got to take baby steps in order to go up. You know, and I knew I wasn't going to score, like on the reading part, the remedial, I was one point from getting into the highest reading class. You retested us, and still, I didn't test out, but it didn't discourage me. I kind of knew I had to start somewhere. You know, now if we were talking about math, that's a totally different situation. But um, I was ok with it. I kind of

knew I had to start somewhere. And once I got into the classes, you know, I got into the reading, the first English class I took, I did better than what I thought I was going to do. You know, and then, you know, once I passed 84, I passed through 85 and went straight to English.” In college, Brenda had outside help from family members and had positive experiences with instructors. “I had family members that would try to get me to read. My cousin, whom I am very close with, she’s an English major, so she reads all the time. And she’ll tell me, you know, she’ll put these quotes on Facebook. And I’ll comment on them and she’s like, ‘Well, you know, you ought to read the whole article instead of just reading the quote.’ And I did read the whole article, thank you very much. You know, but she always pushed me to finish my education. And you know, back when I was taking when I was taking English, I was struggling with it because I hadn’t took it in so long. And she’s just like, she explained everything to me; it was just like (snap, snap, snap). It was just clicking. That’s what she told me. If you would just read more... and she’s right. Sometimes, when I read, I overthink it and I second guess myself. That’s the problem I’m having. Even my cousin, who I said was English major, she said the same thing when she was helping me with my English. She said, ‘Why are you second guessing yourself? You had it right the first time. Why are you? Why are you doing it? You are making more work for yourself.’ That’s just me.”

#### **Brenda Narrative Four**

In her personal life, Brenda realizes that importance of reading, but still struggles with identifying herself as a reader. “Well, I can’t say I don’t like not reading novels, like, I liked reading *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *The Girl with a Dragon Tattoo*, things like that.

If it's smut, I'll read. I mean, I'm being honest. It entertained me. It interests me. I have a very vivid imagination. So, as I joke, I like to read smut, because my dirty mind. But then again, I loved to read the books in your class. Because actually, some of the stuff I could relate to in my personal life. And, *The Firm*, John Grisham, I love his books, because it intrigues you from Point A to Point B. But if I got to read something, like history. Something that does not pertain to me. It's like pulling teeth. I don't want to do it. Now that the ironic thing is, even though I hate to read, I do read some every day because it intrigues me. One thing I can read *The Bible* fifty times, and still get a different viewpoint every time I read it. And people look at me like I'm crazy, and I say let's sit down and read it. I mean, you are going to get something different every time, because you think about it different. When I was in your class, I loved *Uncommon*. I loved that. I even went and got more books at the library. That I love because it's a man talking about his day to day life. You know, even though he's a spiritual man, he still puts what's happening in the real world in context with the spiritual world and it makes a lot of sense. That, you know, like I said, being in your class when we had to read that, it intrigued me to read stuff like that. But other than that, no, I am not a reader. I mean, I do read. I'll read a newspaper online. Um, and if it has to do with schoolwork, I'll read. But I guess, you say reading for enjoyment? No. I'm not a reader for enjoyment. Quite truthfully, I don't have time now. I mean, I work 3<sup>rd</sup> shift. With two classes in the morning on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I don't sleep much during the week and you know, when I get online and start discussing this stuff, I go to sleep. It's not that it's boring. It's that I'm sitting still, and it's just hard, like I said with my work schedule I start to fall asleep. It's hard with my schedule. But me not wanting to read, no. I do like to read when I do have time to read.

But I guess you could say I do enjoy reading when I have time. And if it interests me. Not because I have to read something for school, but or for anything else. But if it's something that I want to read, then yes. I guess you could say I do enjoy reading, when I have the time. It's just something that I think if I enjoy it, if I don't enjoy it, if I enjoyed it more, it wouldn't be a struggle. It's just, it's just something right now, and it's something I have to do. Like you know, if you gave me a novel, *War and Peace*, and told me that I didn't have to do a report on it, I could take as long as I could to read it, I would read it. I probably would enjoy it. If you give it to me now, and say you got two weeks to do a report on it. I want a thousand word essay on it, blah blah blah, I'll put it off. I'll keep putting it off. Until two days before the report's due, and then I'm stressing. It's just, that's just me. Because it's not something that I want to do. If that makes any sense? Because you give me this four inch book, due in two weeks, I'm lucky if I might read three or four pages before I start getting bored with it. But, reading for information is ok. I mean, well there's not a lot of things I have to do, but there are certain things that I have to do on my job, you know, and once I learn it, I'm fine. Years ago it probably would intimidate me, but now, I want to learn. You know, it's like I tell my kids, 'Knowledge is best. The more you know, the better it is.'"

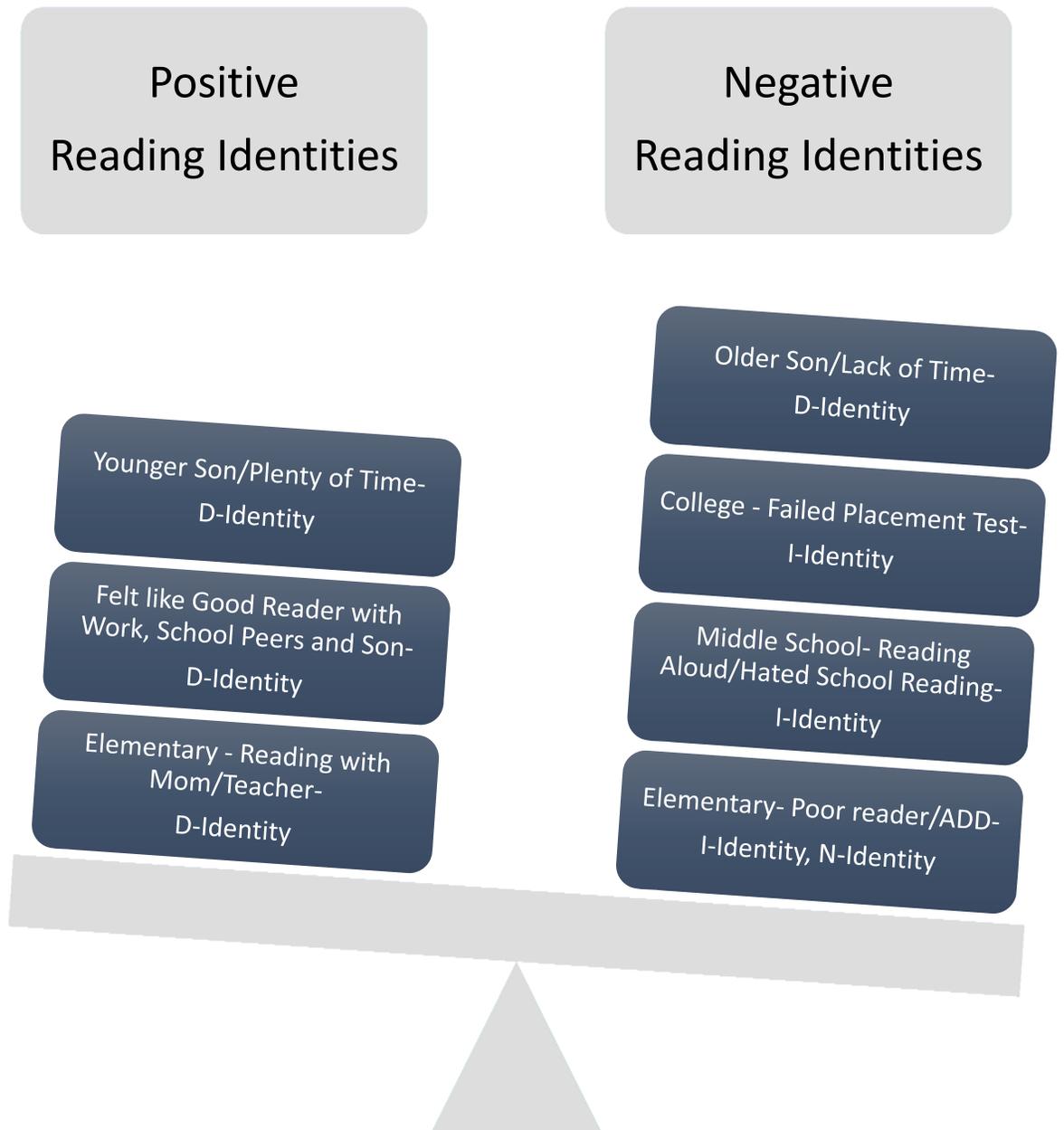
### **Brenda's Narrative Five**

Brenda did not seem to have much social influence on her reading habits, but her family's influence was important in her past and remains so today. "My mom my mom she reads all the time. She still reads. She's 74 years old and she still reads. My dad was a reader if it had to do with politics. He was one of these people that used to watch C-Span all the time. All I could remember was seeing C-Span. He would watch it, whenever he

was home, that's all that would be on. He was a very smart man. Very intelligent. He was, besides, well I'm the second person in my family to go to college. He went to college. He always read the newspaper faithfully every day. And it wasn't the sports section. It was always the business section. And then, like I said, watched C-Span. But him reading books, no." This reading family trait seems to have passed to one of her children. "My little one, he's a reader. I'm not saying it because he's my kid. I went to one of his parent teacher conferences in kindergarten. He's in kindergarten, and it blew my mind. She told me and my ex-husband that she has to pull him back from saying things so the other kids can have a chance. Because every day that she writes a new word up on the board, he comes up in the class, he'll look it, he'll say it out loud. She says she had never had a kid, of that age, be that smart in her class. It's very cool because, looking at him and looking at my older one, who struggles, my older one, he won't read. I bought him the *Harry Potter* movies; he won't even touch the books. I buy my little one books all the time, that's the first thing he does. He'll start reading them. The other one, it's so funny, I hate to say it, he's just like his momma. It doesn't interest him. You know, you know, where I struggled in certain things in school, he's doing the same thing. He has ADD. And he's the same way. Now that he has gotten older, it's not the hyperactivity, it's just that he doesn't focus. He gets it in his mind if he ain't doing it, he ain't doing it.

**Table 4.7**

*Brenda's Reading Identities*



*Note.* This table indicated that the reading identities in Brenda's narratives balanced in favor of a negative reading identity. In the end, these identities made Brenda a vacillating

reader. She was unable to define herself as a reader all of the time. There were too many variables to measure.

## Appendix K

### Takeya Transcripts Feb 17 #302

**Interviewer:** Ok so you are 302 and its Feb 17<sup>th</sup>. Just cause I have to type this up. So do you want to talk about your earliest memory or about school? Which one? Or elementary school? Or whatever. What do you remember about reading and school from when you were like in elementary school and stuff like that?

**302:** (Pause) Um, I like when um when my teacher read to us. Because she read it in a tone where it made the story interesting. And she read it like it was happening and

**Interviewer:** She brought it to life? Kind of? The way she read it?

**302:** Yeah, realization.

**Interviewer:** Did you um, do you remember when you learned to read or anything like that? Or when you learned to read?

**302:** Um, I learned to read when I was in kindergarten. And I like the way my mother, when I would get home from school, my mother would teach me different words that I didn't know. I loved the way my mother pronounced the words to me. And it gave me a better idea of how to keep the spelling of the words in my mind.

**Interviewer:** What do you think, your mom, kind of combine that with your family, obviously, your mom thought reading was important if she was working with you at home?

**302:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** Was she a big reader? Why? What do you think she would say about reading? If you were to ask her

**302:** My mother always told me that reading was good and that it helps you to, um, it was always good for subjects to learn to read and math.

**Interviewer:** Was she a reader? Did you ever see her reading much? Or not?

**302:** Yeah, my mom, she read a lot.

**Interviewer:** Did she?

**302:** And she made the stories seem like they were real.

**Interviewer:** What did she? If she were reading, what stuff did she read? If you see her reading on her own?

**302:** Um, most of the time, I saw Mommy reading love stories. To be honest.

**Interviewer:** That's cool. I read them too in my spare time.

**302:** Romance books

**Interviewer:** Romance novels. Good. Um, did she work?

**302:** No

**Interviewer:** She was a stay at home?

**302:** Yeah, she was a stay at home mom.

**Interviewer:** So she sat around, when she had time she could sit around and read romances. That's good. Can you remember what, besides elementary school just learning to read. Do you know how they would sometimes put you in groups for reading, or doing any of that kind of stuff? Do you remember what reading was like in middle school or high school and stuff?

**302:** Well, in high school, when we had reading, I didn't too much like it because we were put in groups and we had to do these different posters and things and you

had to make a graph and I didn't really know how to set it up. So that was a little too hard for me.

**Interviewer:** Little frustrating?

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Um, do you, um, did you, did you struggle did you get good grades in English in high school? Or did you ever remember reading and struggling with reading throughout your early schools?

**302:** Yes, when I got back in college.

**Interviewer:** Yeah?

**302:** Because after I finished high school, I didn't read as much as I did in elementary and high school because I was trying to raise a family. And I didn't do much reading. So when I got back in college, a lot of stuff I didn't remember. I had to relearn.

**Interviewer:** So that's a good point.

**302:** Big words.

**Interviewer:** Big words. So, if someone asked you, would you consider yourself a reader? Like in high school and school you said you read a lot. And you had your family and you were so busy, I can understand that 100% you didn't read as much, but now, if asked if you were a reader, what would you say? Yes? No? Maybe?

**302:** Now I'm more of a reader. Because now, once I started back college, reading became more interesting, it came back to me. That it is to read always.

**Interviewer:** Do you read stuff for fun? Or is it just you don't have time because you are still in school?

**302:** To be honest

**Interviewer:** Yeah, to be honest, definitely.

**302:** Now, I read a lot of romance books. (Laughter)

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that's good. There is nothing wrong with that at all. So you are reading for fun a lot.

**302:** Yeah, I love reading those books.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I do too. There's nothing wrong with that at all. So, you would consider yourself a reader. You do enjoy reading for fun.

**302:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Um, what about you talked a little bit about, you talked a little bit about them putting you into groups and charts and stuff like that. Was that kind of reading not as fun? Like it wasn't a novel, it was a text or technical kind of reading.

**302:** Yes it was more entertaining to paragraphs and stuff like that. And we would have to take words and make it into a graph. You had to get the main ideas

**Interviewer:** And try to break it down and it was technical reading. It wasn't just for fun. So did you enjoy reading, even if it was in school, you would enjoy reading a novel in English class or something like that than having to read.

**302:** Yes, I enjoyed the novels much better.

**Interviewer:** Because it was fun. Just more entertaining.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Um, let's see. Um, so we talked a little bit about reading for more information, and so what, let's say when you have to read something you're computer textbook, Old Testament, stuff like that you are reading for school, and you are reading for specific information, how, does that feel like a struggle? Does that feel like you can do? How does that feel for you right now?

**302:** Right now for, to be honest, it's; not really a struggle right now. Because it's interesting and it's things that up, I didn't know, and it makes me feel good because I'm learning things I didn't know.

**Interviewer:** So, um, you are getting to pick what you are getting to read about because you picked your classes and you picked your major so there is some choice there.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Ok, let's see. Tell me um, when you were in school, or even now, do your friends influence your reading? Did you have friends that influenced your reading? Where they were readers, or not. Was that the cool thing to do? Or not? How do you feel about that? What do you remember about reading as a social kind of thing?

**302:** Well, now I have a friend in my English class and she encourages me a lot to read because I always try to skip over or just read the middle or introduction or the back of the book to try to get the answers real fast. She always tell me read it from the beginning to the ending.

**Interviewer:** So you have people trying to give you advice about reading.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Ok, um, let's see. So tell me a story of a time where you realized reading was important in life. There was a time where you were like, oh yeah, this is important.

**302:** Um (pause) reading *The Bible* in my Old Testament, I found out why we were reading *The Bible*. I found out that things that I didn't know were real and I found out that they weren't just on TV, that they do happen today and they did happen in *The Bible* day. And it made me feel that it's good to read *The Bible*. You know it's good to read the newspaper or your English work. It made me feel good that, like in math, I thought that you don't have to know how to read in math, but you do. And it made me feel that the word problems always has an answer to them too.

**Interviewer:** Let's go back to your point about *The Bible*. So you said when you read that, it made you realize somethings like that you didn't know.

**302:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that reading something for yourself gives you knowledge than being told by someone else?

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** How so? What do you mean? Give me something or an example of that maybe.

**302:** Um (pause). Like when I hear it from somebody else, I will always debate on whether or not it's true. But when I read *The Bible*, it gave me a key answer, it was true. It really was like a confirmation.

**Interviewer:** Ok. And you could prove it to yourself, because you read it to yourself.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So reading can be powerful because it can give you information yourself that you can kind of take in.

**302:** And use.

**Interviewer:** And use. And validate what you know. Um, so what about, we talked about, how about the story of the time you loved reading. You can tell me a story of what it's like for you when you enjoy reading.

**302:** Um, really I enjoy reading when I'm sick. And mostly, I read *The Bible*. Just being honest. Because it feels like, I get a healing from it. It makes me feel better.

**Interviewer:** So maybe, the feeling of comfort and the knowledge you're getting in, makes you feel you're physically better too, not just emotionally.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** What about, what's reading like? Let's back up just a bit. What when you had to back to college and get into the reading classes, what did that feel like? Was that a surprise to you? Did you feel that you should already know this? How did going into those reading classes make you feel?

**302:** Um, at first, to be honest, I felt like a dummy. (Laughter). But once my instructor encouraged me on certain things that I didn't know, that it was ok, because I was there to learn, then I felt better about being in the reading class. And I felt that, you know, I can read and there is nothing wrong with not knowing certain things. Like big words.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, vocabulary is a big problem for a lot of people. Um, so you knew you could read. But when you got in there, you realized it was different kind of reading

**302:** How to pronounce

**Interviewer:** And learning how to um understand different kinds of readings and stuff like that.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Um, oh what was I going to say, I was going to say (pause). What was I going to say. Oh! Um, (pause) the test. (pause) ok what we are trying to figure out, or one of the kind of things I am trying to figure out is what happens to people graduating from high school and then having to go into these reading classes. Because when you graduate from high school, you should, in theory, be able to pass that test. For you, it was a long long time, well because we are so old, there is a time that pass and you already know that. But do you feel that, like, if you had walked out of high school and you had gone into that, been prepared? Or what do you think?

**302:** If I went to college as soon as I graduated high school, I think I would have passed all those tests and went straight on into my major. Because it would have still been fresh on my mind.

**Interviewer:** Do you feel a lot of its

**302:** Because I didn't go straight into it. I would encourage people when they graduate from high school to go straight into college. Even if you really don't know what

you want to do, it's best to do it in that manner because the basic courses would be still fresh in your mind.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that big gap. What about, let's see (pause). So you have kids?

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Tell me what reading was like as a parent? What did you do to encourage reading as a parent?

**302:** Um, my daughter, she loved for me to read stories to her every night. And sometimes I didn't want to, but once I started reading the stories, they got interesting to me too. So I would really want for her to want me to come so I can read the stories to her. Because they got interesting to me and I liked them too.

**Interviewer:** What kind of books? Do you remember any particular books? What kind of books would you read to her?

**302:** My daughter loved it. *Cinderella*. And *Snow White*.

**Interviewer:** All the princesses?

**302:** Yes. And, sometimes, I didn't want to reread them. But that was my daughter. So, in a sense, for no reason, *Snow White* would make her go to sleep faster.

**Interviewer:** Did she um, was she a strong student? Was she a good English student when she went through school?

**302:** Yes. My daughter was an A student in English and reading. She loves to read.

**Interviewer:** What does she do now?

**302:** Read.

**Interviewer:** Did she go to college?

**302:** She went for a little while and then she stopped.

**Interviewer:** Are you going to beat her up? Get her back in school. Tell her now.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Tell her not to waste time. Alright, so that's good. You would consider your family readers then.

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** What about your husband. Does he read?

**302:** Newspaper.

**Interviewer:** Well, that's reading.

**302:** Newspaper. My husband loves to read the newspaper.

**Interviewer:** And that's still reading. And that's a good example for kids to see.

**302:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Let's see if there is anything else to see if we can add. So we talked a little bit about elementary school and high school, we didn't really talk about middle school, but you know, I barely remember yesterday. So you don't have to talk about that. We talked a little bit about struggles for you, trying to do those charts. We talked about your family. And we talked about what you liked to read. So um, you said that you had a teacher in kindergarten that loved to read and the way she used her voice and told those stories. Would you say that in your house, or in your parents' house growing up, were there books around? A lot of books there? Or not?

**302:** Yes, when we were growing up, my mom kept a lot of books around. And now she keeps a lot of books around. And my mom now she loves to, she always tell us to

always take the children to the library. When our children were growing up, she always told us, “I was going to check out books from the library. Without you.”

**Interviewer:** Did she do that too when you were little growing up?

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you spent a lot of time in the library, huh?

**302:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** That’s good though. So you, you’re probably, your biggest problem with reading, when you came back to college, was just the time, you didn’t struggle when you were younger, or anything else.

**302:** No

**Interviewer:** That was not ever an issue.

**302:** No, no.

**Interviewer:** That’s good. That’s good to know. Um, I’m trying to think of anything else.

What else did I ask them? What, this is the last one I think I have. What was, or had, the biggest impact on you as a reader? Overall? If you look back over your life of reading or not reading, good or bad impact, what do you think was the biggest impact on you as a reader? Or what? Or who? Or whatever?

**302:** (Pause) To be honest?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**302:** The big impact on me was when I came back to college and I thought that it was certain questions that I wanted to ask in my reading class, I would hold them back because I thought they was stupid questions. So I didn’t ask them and that had an

effect on me because when I came back the next quarter, I really didn't understand the English for the next course of English.

**Interviewer:** So you learned to ask better questions?

**302:** Yes, even if my questions are stupid. I learned that in this English class, I should still ask them regardless.

**Interviewer:** Sure. To make sure you figure out what to do and how to do it. Definitely. Alright. I guess that's it. Let me get the um. Do you have anything else about reading? What else should we say about reading?

**302:** Um, I would encourage the students that, young people that, when you are in college and they have reading tutors, go to the reading tutors because they help out a lot too.

**Interviewer:** Alright.

### **Takeya's Story Draft One**

Takeya was a 44-year-old African American female who had returned to school after a lengthy break from formal schooling. She tested into reading, math, and English developmental classes at ABC Community College. As a child, she lived with both parents in a low income household, as evidenced by her receiving free or reduced lunches in school. She has a grown child and grandchildren. Takeya suffered from some health issues that at times affected her schooling.

### **Takeya's Narrative One**

Takeya enjoyed reading from a young age with positive experiences both at home and at school. "I liked when my teacher read to us because she read it in a tone where it made the story interesting. And she read it like it was happening and she brought it to life. I learned to read when I was in kindergarten. And I liked the way my mother, when I would get home from school, my mother would teach me different words that I didn't know. I loved the way my mother pronounced the words to me. She made the stories seem like they were real. And it gave me a better idea of how to keep the spelling of the words in my mind. My mother always told me that reading was good and that it helps you to, um, it was always good for subjects to learn to read and math. Also, I remember when I was in the 4th grade and my teacher told me to slow down because I was always reading ahead. I think that was good because it taught me to pronounce my words better. I also learned that I would be able to remember what I read. I am happy now because when I read I can remember a little of I read. It is important to read more accurately, and it makes what I write or tell someone else more clear."

### **Takeya's Narrative Two**

Although reading was not quite as easy in high school, Takeya did not seem to have too much trouble with it. “ Well, in high school, when we had reading, I didn't too much like it because we were put in groups and we had to do these different posters and things and you had to make a graph and I didn't really know how to set it up, so that was a little too hard for me. It was a little frustrating. It was more pertaining to paragraphs and stuff like that. And we would have to take words and make it into a graph. You had to get the main ideas and try to break it down and it was technical reading. I enjoyed the novels much better, because it was fun. Just more entertaining.”

### **Takeya's Narrative Three**

In the years between high school and college, Takeya still had a relationship with reading made stronger by family. “My daughter, she loved for me to read stories to her every night. And sometimes I didn't want to, but once I started reading the stories, they got interesting to me too. So I would really want for her to want me to come, so I could read the stories to her, because they got interesting to me and I liked them too. My daughter loved *Cinderella* and *Snow White*. Sometimes, I didn't want to reread them, but that was my daughter. And for no reason, *Snow White* would make her go to sleep faster. I think it was good because my daughter was an A student in English and reading. She loves to read. And, my mom, she read a lot. When we were growing up, my mom kept a lot of books around. And now she keeps a lot of books around. And my mom now she loves to and always tells us to take the children to the library. When our children were growing up, she always told us, ‘I was going to check out books from the library. Without you.’ That would be a threat to make us behave. Most of the time, I saw

Mommy reading love stories. To be honest, romance books. Now, I read a lot of romance books. I love reading those books. And really I enjoy reading when I'm sick. Then mostly, I read *The Bible*, because it feels like I get a healing from it. It makes me feel better. My husband loves to read the newspaper.

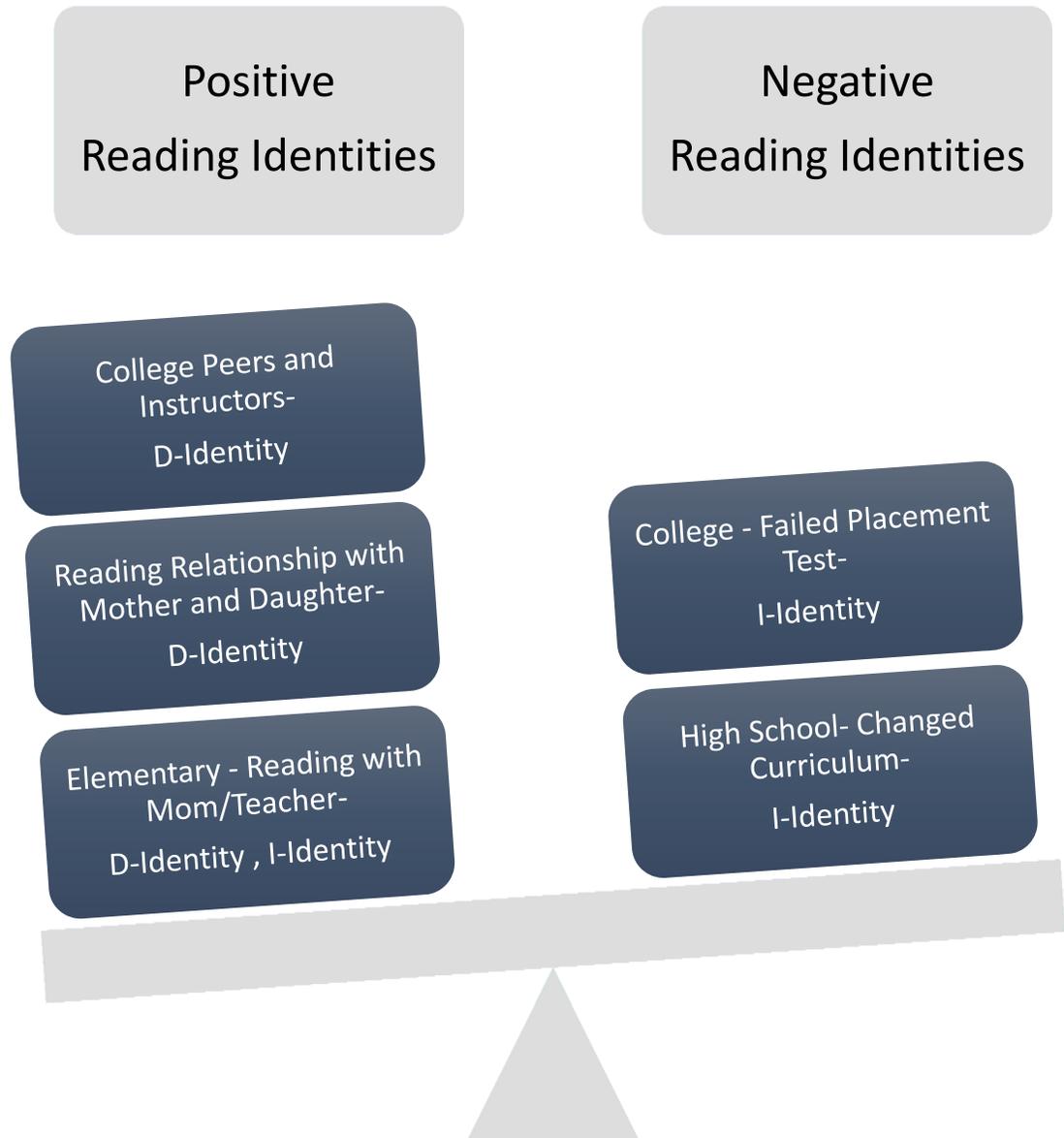
#### **Takeya's Narrative Four**

Takeya contributes the majority of her current reading struggles in college to the long break between her schooling. "After I finished high school, I didn't read as much as I did in elementary and high school because I was trying to raise a family. And I didn't do much reading, so when I got back in college, a lot of stuff I didn't remember. I had to relearn. I struggled with reading – the big words—when I got back in college. But, honestly, now I'm more of a reader. Because now, once I started back college, reading became more interesting. It came back to me. That it is to read always. So, right now, to be honest, it's not really a struggle, because it's interesting, and it's things that I didn't know. It makes me feel good because I'm learning things I didn't know. Like when reading *The Bible* in my Old Testament class, I found out why we were reading *The Bible*. I found out that things that I didn't know were real and I found out that they weren't just on TV, that they do happen today and they did happen in *The Bible* day. And it made me feel that it's good to read *The Bible*. Like when I hear it from somebody else, I will always debate on whether or not it's true. But when I read *The Bible*, it gave me a key answer, it was true. It really was like a confirmation. And, you know it's good to read the newspaper or your English work. It made me feel good that, like in math, I thought that you don't have to know how to read in math, but you do. And it made me feel that the word problems always has an answer to them too." Takeya was not surprised to be

put in remedial reading classes once she returned to college. “At first, to be honest, I felt like a dummy. But once my instructor encouraged me on certain things that I didn’t know, that it was ok, because I was there to learn, then I felt better about being in the reading class. And I felt that, you know, I can read and there is nothing wrong with not knowing certain things, like how to pronounce big words. If I went to college as soon as I graduated high school, I think I would have passed all those tests and went straight on into my major, because it would have still been fresh on my mind. But it was a problem because I didn’t go straight into it. I would encourage people when they graduate from high school to go straight into college. Even if you really don’t know what you want to do, it’s best to do it in that manner because the basic courses would be still fresh in your mind. Also, another big impact on me was when I came back to college and I thought that there were certain questions that I wanted to ask in my reading class, but I would hold them back because I thought they were stupid questions. So I didn’t ask them and that had an effect on me because when I came back the next quarter, I really didn’t understand the English for the next course of English. Even if my questions are stupid, I learned that in this English class, I should still ask them regardless. I would encourage the students that when you are in college and they have reading tutors, go to the reading tutors because they help out a lot too. Plus, I have a friend in my English class and she encourages me a lot to read because I always try to skip over or just read the middle or introduction or the back of the book to try to get the answers real fast. She always tells me, ‘Read it from the beginning to the ending.’”

**Table 4.8**

*Takeya's Reading Identities*



*Note.* This table indicated that the reading identities in Takeya's narratives balanced in favor of a positive reading identity with which she agreed.