RESEARCH STUDY OF

TOUCHSTONES DISCUSSIONS

CRITICAL THINKING IN CLASSROOM DISCUSSION OF TEXTS:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

I took an ethnographic approach to describing the development of student critical thinking in the Pittsburgh Discussion Project, primarily focusing on discussion experiences in three case-study classes over the school year. In the larger study from which the data presented here is taken (Miller, 1988), I examined the collaborative learning in text discussions over time to address three related questions: (1) How does classroom social context affect student thinking and collaboration? (2) How do students collaborate to develop interpretations of texts? and (3) To what extent are critical thinking and collaboration evident in discussion? As used in this study, critical thinking refers to the disposition to raise questions about and evaluate the grounds for our own and others' beliefs, claims, and interpretations (Cornbleth, 1985; Dewey, 1933; McPeck, 1981). Theoretically, we learn our ways of talking and thinking in purposeful dialogues with others (Bruner, 1978; Halliday, 1975; 1973/77; Hymes, 1974; Vygotsky, 1962) and can develop critical thinking through conversation, as we become consciously inclined to evaluate conflicting ways of interpreting and knowing the world (Bahktin, 1981; Friere, 1967).

The data source used to quantify the extent of critical thinking and collaboration was the category coding scheme, which has just been explained. In this study, the coding scheme alone, particularly over short periods, proved inadequate for describing growth of discussion and critical thinking; however, combined with descriptive-narrative analysis (Erickson, 1982) of thinking

within a classroom context over time, it served as a valuable research tool. Because of time limitations, I will not focus on the quantitative data, but instead, allude to their usefulness as one lens in the ethnographic process of discovering and explaining unpredicted themes. This paper focusses on how the classroom context for discussion varied from teacher to teacher and how student thinking was, thereby, fostered or discouraged in each class.

Method.

The case-study selection decisions were patterned after Nelson's pyramid-design (1983), which involves beginning with a wide base of possible cases and then focusing in purposefully to include contrastive ones. During phase one of this study, I observed classroom discussions conducted by the 15 teachers who had volunteered to hold weekly discussions. Based on those observations and teacher interviews, I selected for intensive study three classes where students were interacting, deliberately including diverse teacher styles and class types in order to aim for more explanatory power in the ethnographic analysis. For phase two of the study, I became a participant-observer in one college-bound ninth-grade and two mainstream eleventh-grade classrooms, audiotaping weekly class discussions and conducting teacher and student interviews that included stimulated-recall sessions with transcriptions of selected discussions.

Guided by the ethnographic methods of Denzin (1978), Goetz & LeCompte (1984), and Glaser & Strauss (1968), I built up an explanation of the content and processes of discussions in the

context of each class from multiple participant perspectives, recursively testing one perspective and data type against another, "triangulating" to ground emerging themes in each context[1].

Findings

Linda Mitchell's Class. Linda Mitchell's primary goal in introducing discussion into her ninth-grade geometry class was a social one: she wanted her "well-integrated" group of 11 anglo, 10 black and 4 Asian non-native students to "begin to understand" each other. She saw right away that her usual approach in math class where they talked to "get a right answer" would not encourage discussion. Her first job, as she saw it, was to change the context for talking by sending consistent "messages" that she and students would play new roles in discussion in order "to make it their process." In interviews many students revealed that at first they felt "afraid to talk" and just observed to see "what was normal." Typically, Linda put the desks into a "tight circle" and took a seat there; she asked questions about what puzzled her in the texts, listened to students, talked on an average of 17% of the turns, changed to informal, non-evaluative language ("I'm kinda confused"), and allowed long pauses for "thinking time" (often over 20 seconds). She enforced ground rules in about a quarter of her turns in discussion and focused on creating what students saw as a "serious purpose" for talking. Students felt the class becoming a "safe group" where they learned to speak up freely and learned to listen to different views--"to talk with" each other, her student Jack said, not

"talk at" each other. Linda and her students agreed that over the year they developed what Antoine called "the right atmosphere for discussion...even though it's a dreary old classroom with a lot of people in it."

Over time the way of reading Linda modelled and encouraged also influenced how students learned to discuss and think. She asked "legitimate questions," ones she didn't think she "knew the answer" for, in a manner that suggested the text needed to be responded to and puzzled over: she began one discussion with "I wondered about why it [the fourth reason] was different and I thought we could talk about that." Questioning the text in this way and publicly sharing even vaguely formed responses (like, "that part bothered me") became an habitual approach for students in the class.

These students felt their developing sense of interpretive authority most sharply when they pursued student-generated questions together. When I asked about good discussions, they remembered, for example, the one when Antoine asked, " I don't understand what Descartes was saying at all, can somebody help me?" This group came to value such questions--what someone "wondered about" or wanted to "figure out"--as "the most important part to get us started" and, Jack said, "to keep discussion going," as they explained to each other and learned together. In the sixteenth discussion (of an excerpt from Euclid's The Elements)[2], Ivan's perplexity about what Euclid meant by "A point is that which has no parts," prompted students to go spontaneously to the chalkboard for the first time to draw

their explanations. Ivan's question brought a quickening to the talk: the group examined collaboratively their ways of understanding "point," and other concepts--"angle," "next to," and "straight line"--in a closely textual discussion that many, including Linda, felt was their best. Students asked more questions of the text and each other than ever before as they saw "so many complications," Laura said, that they never considered when they had memorized similar definitions for their first geometry test.

The theme of reading differently for discussions first emerged in the study when Angie distinguished between reading "to absorb it in your head" for tests, and reading "to make your own opinions." As I began asking other students how they read for discussion, they made similar distinctions that verified a changing stance towards texts they would "get to talk about": as they read and talked they looked for what they questioned, for gaps in understanding, for what they agreed on and disagreed with, for where they wanted clarification and justification. In all, this approach constituted a reflective text stance that engaged students in responding and raising questions and, in discussion, pursuing answers together.

Linda encouraged alternative answers and responses, expecting what she called "individual differences," most often probing for clarification in an interested way: "So are you saying even the law doesn't prevent it?" Students began to use this kind of questioning, as well, (on an average of nine times in each discussion), a sign to them of "trying to understand."

The emergence of these alternative perspectives for many students in the class became the surprise and lure of discussion: Julie, for example, had never imagined that others reading the same text would have "so many points of view." The interplay of alternative opinions motivated discussion, prompting students to ask for explanations and examples. Students responded, questioned, and learned how to be understandable and persuasive--to make what students called "good points."

The group slowly internalized values for these reflective ways of thinking. The category scheme codings of transcribed discussions in the class verified increasing numbers of student probing questions, substantive questions, explanation and text-based comments over the course of discussions, which sustained at a new higher level after the Euclid discussion turning-point (#16). The initial sequence from their twenty-seventh and final discussion in June, of an excerpt from Bacon's Revenge, illustrates their awareness of the need to justify beliefs in the group. Darla had opened the discussion by asking, "Is There satisfaction in revenge?"

(1) Dave: It's like that old saying, an eye for an eye. (2 second pause)
(2) Darla: Explain yourself.
(3) Dave: Well, let's say that somebody does some tragic thing to you. A lot of times you'll want to do it to them. I'm not justifying it, I'm just saying it's a common feeling.
(4) Darla: Well, what, did you feel, you know, like you were a better person after you had revenge on that person, on somebody else?
(5) Dave: No, but a lot of people find satisfaction; they don't feel better or worse, but they do find themselves at ease (3 second pause)

(6) Antoine: You said the opening question was `Is there satisfaction in revenge?´ I think everybody takes revenge in some sort of way. There is all kinds of revenge. There is actual physical getting back at them. Or there´s telling somebody about him and getting people mad or getting the police to get on him, getting him in trouble somehow. And they can put him in jail or something. Everybody takes revenge somehow. If a robber comes to your house and takes something that belongs to you, you´re going to take some sort of revenge, call the police, you know, get them, get your stuff back and get something done. So I think everybody needs revenge. Just letting it go, that doesn´t always work.

(7) Laura: Taking your example about a robber comes in to your house. On the second page in the last paragraph, if you call the police and put him in jail, that would be `public revenge.´ and it says that would be good. But if you pull out your gun and shoot him for coming into your house, that´s `private´ and that´s not good. That´s what he´s saying.

(8) Antoine: Yeah

(9) Julie: Why do you think it´s better to be `public´ than `private´? What´s the difference? It´s revenge the same way.

(10) Antoine: No, one here you´re saying it´s public, you´re not breaking the law. It´s private, you are.

(11) Jack: Revenge is like `savage justice,´ that´s what it says. But you do it in front of everybody, it´s just regular civil justice, like in a court.

(12) Michelle: I´m going to (unclear) because on the last page it talks about Julius Caesar. That was public revenge, but that was still wrong...just because you do it in public doesn´t mean that it´s, that you can justify it.

Students explicitly refer to justifying ideas or actions twice in the sequence (#1 and #12) and in almost every turn they request or provide justifications for their ideas. Darla´s skeptical challenge (#2) and probing (#4) of Dave´s unelaborated commonplace about revenge (#1) leads him to translate the cliche, but he moves away from arguing for or justifying it (#3, #5). Antoine takes up the idea of prevalence, justifying his claim (#6) by using examples and explanations to compose an oral essay and give his idea authority. The students have also learned how to move back to the text as a source of ideas to justify and

evaluate interpretations. Laura (#7) brings forward a distinction she sees in the Bacon essay to extend Antoine's examples and work out the implications of the text. Julie (#9) challenges for justification, and Antoine (#10) explains the difference as he sees it. To elaborate and explain that idea further, Jack (#11) pulls in his reading from another part of the essay, reformulating Laura's distinction between private and public revenge in terms of savage and civil justice. Michelle challenges this interpretation on moral grounds, returning to the theme of public justification.

We get a glimpse in this excerpt of what these students who at first were afraid to speak have learned. In the interplay of opposing points of view, they talked to try to understand the text together, learning to justify beliefs to authorize meanings. In the group's history, these values developed out of the changing social context, where Linda worked to distribute authority for talking and interpreting to the group. As students internalized Linda's active process of responding and questioning to make meanings, they developed reflective habits of mind-- learning to discuss and think critically together.

Rita Wilson's Class. Rita Wilson enacted discussion differently in her eleventh grade mainstream social studies class. She began by saying that the purpose of discussion was for students to provide proof for their beliefs and opinions. However, the quantitative coding scheme profile of thinking and discussion for the class--including indicators for student evidence and explanation, collaboration, questioning--rose to a

high in the third discussion of an excerpt from Bacon's <u>Revenge</u>, which everyone agreed was their "best discussion." For the remaining discussions, coding scheme indicators declined in all student categories. Through ethnographic analysis of the context and the content of discussions the reasons for this failure to develop emerged.

Rita's response to student questions in early discussions suggested a tension in her discussion goals. In the Bacon discussion, for example, when a student asked, "What is revenge?" Rita responded:

> You mean, what is revenge according to him? To Bacon? When is the only time it's allowed? To him. Wait. Why don't we find that spot and figure it out because it's a good question (2 second pause). What is it then? When does he allow it?

In the subsequent six turns, students searched for the place in the text that tells when Bacon allows revenge, asked Rita for "hints" about where to look, and Rita told them where. When they found the right answer, students were not sure what they had accomplished, and Rita went to the chalkboard to explain. Later, when Loretta initiated a new question related to the public revenge in the text ("Is capital punishment revenge?"), Rita asked a counter question ("Who's supposed to enforce the law?") and gave a brief lesson about law. Rita told me in our stimulated-recall interview, "I kept trying to get them back to the concept of the law." In these and other instances, Rita seemed to head off student questions with ones of her own.

Rita appeared to discourage students' questioning and interpretation in other ways: for example, she asked them to tell

her "what Bacon says, not what you say." These messages conflicted with Rita's stated goal for discussion and, at first, she seemed to be unconsciously undermining what she wanted to achieve. She could not seem to reconcile students' raising and pursuing questions with her need to actively control the talking.

Over time, though, as Rita maintained a physical position of authority, often standing at the board, directing students to find particular words in the text, her behaviors seemed to derive from strong beliefs about texts. When students did not see what she referred to as "the meaning" she saw in a song lyric, she told students they "lack critical thinking." As discussions progressed, she began adding in morals she saw "in the texts" as discussion conclusions, such as when she told students about "what Schopenauer is trying to tell you." The message to students seemed to be that the text had the authority to speak, to tell students things, much as a teacher does. Over time Rita's way of conducting discussion more and more seemed to reflect her identification with the author(ity) of the text: students and readers, she said, sometimes "refused to" see; teachers and authors tried to make them see what, she finally said, was "right in front of them."

Based on her gradually revealed view that text meaning is "written in stone," to be read each time the same, Rita understandably had concluded that it was students' failure to interpret and think critically that led them to alternative interpretations. Because of her view of texts and interpretation,

Rita did not see what students might be accomplishing as they questioned the text and gave examples in early discussions; instead she saw alternative interpretations as an inappropriate personal "agenda" that, in one case, she pointed to as evidence that the student was "trying to be the teacher."

With Rita's guidance, example and explanation, students learned accepted class behaviors for what she called "staying with the text," but they saw her purpose for discussion as different from other discussion classes. Jeremy felt a lack of "respect" for what he had to say. He and Gregory, who asked the opening question in the Bacon discussion, stopped participating. Andrea puzzled over whether discussion should have "different opinions" or "solutions." She described the problem she saw when Ms. Wilson's

> opinion goes too broad because she thinks differently
> from us because we're students and she has a better
> background, but it throws us off...we don't understand
> and she'll have to explain more and it will take away
> from discussion.

Because of meanings she could see when she read texts, Rita told students, that "makes me think a little more critically than you." The effect of that authoritative stance, communicated in multiple ways, was to discourage talking and thinking in the group, as evident when student questioning and justifying stopped. Students felt their ideas were not valued in discussion.

In the end Rita Baker decided to have what she called a "convergent discussion," where she felt "most comfortable" because "there my authority has some bearing." The quantitative

coding profile for that discussion looked very similar to the others after the turning point Bacon discussion with Rita playing an active role, asking substantive questions and directing attention to the text on an average of 45% of her turns. Students played the role of "picking" specific answers out of the text, but providing no evidence or explanation for claims. (See Table 1.)

Rita was a teacher caught between her stated goal of having students discuss and her sense that authority resided in her and in her interpretations of the text. Over time in the class, students learned that their interpretive response and critical thinking had no place.

Pat Baker's Class. Pat Baker's goals for her mainstream junior English class were to create a more "student-centered classroom" where students had "the opportunity to think things through and state an opinion and try to prove it, using some text." In early discussions in the class, only a few students responded when Pat encouraged them to speak about the text. At first she thought they were a "group that won't discuss." Students told me that at first they felt uncomfortable with these new roles, that talking in class just "wasn't natural" for them. Some said they "weren't used to the idea that the teacher wasn't telling us what to do and we were always looking to her for direction." Pat, too, puzzled over her new role, "trying to figure out a way to clarify without the teacher doing all the clarification." In early discussions of the first semester she persistently worked on how to accomplish this role and over that

time students said they slowly began to "feel comfortable" with "being in a circle" with the chance "to speak."

Pat's decision to focus on "training" student thinking became evident in the routines she developed for probing their responses to texts. After her opening question in the twelfth discussion of an excerpt from Aristotle's The Metaphysics Terry responded, "You might experience something the wrong way." Pat asked, "Could you give an example?" Lori suggested, "A boyfriend." Pat followed with, "Explain what you mean." After Lori elaborated her example, Pat asked, "Now how would you relate that to the question?" With this careful pattern of questioning, Lori was able to move from the inexplicit "a boyfriend" to a developed example and explanation relevant to the text idea of making knowledge from experience. Pat continued to structure students' discourse in this way throughout discussions, letting students know what they needed to say next in order to develop their arguments: when students gave claims, she asked for examples, when they gave examples, she asked for explanations; and when they gave explanations, she asked for implications for the prevailing question, always in an interested tone of wanting to know more.

Another form of questioning Pat modelled for students was an evaluative one. After a few students gave observations about "what Pascal is saying," Pat followed with, "Do you agree?" Later, Terry read part of the text and asked the class, "Do you think that's true?", using Pat's evaluative question form to get response. When Noreen responded baldly, "No," a student

immediately asked, "Why?", prompting Noreen to explain her reasoning. At this point in discussion--#15--these sequences were not long or prevalent, but they show the beginnings of students' evaluating text and discussion claims in student-directed collaboration.

The evaluative stance toward both the written and oral texts continued to focus the talking, as in discussion #16 of an excerpt from Galileo's The Assayer (#16). Pat began by asking, "Are you going to agree with Galileo?" In her sequences of questions, Pat moved students' attention from Galileo's philosophic claim that without animals there would be no smell or feeling, to his text examples, asking students to evaluate his justification. This movement between claims and their justification characterized the whole discussion. When Kent simply claimed about smell, "It's there," this followed:

(1) Pat: How would you, how would you prove that it's there?
(2) Tannis: You can't
(3) Josh: You can.
(4) Tannis: How?
(5) Josh: Light a fire and if you left the room and came back
there will still be a scent.
(6) Tannis: But if we're not there?
(7) Josh: It will still be there.
(8) Tannis: ...listen! If we're not there, how can you smell it?
If you're not there and you're never gonna be there?
(9) Josh: But it's the same thing, the same thing if you came
back, it would still be there.
(10) Tannis: Would you listen?
(11) Josh: I understand what you are saying--how can you know
what it smells like if you never smelled it.
(12) Tannis: No, what I'm sayin is how you gonna know what it
smells like if you were never there and are never gonna
be there?

Tannis (#4) takes over the questioning of Josh's claim (#3), provoking him to provide his own counterexample (#5). Then, she sharply questions him, embedding her explanations (#6,

#8), trying to get him to see the failure of the example to support the claim that he wishes to support. Josh (#9) maintains that the situation he has presented provides support and claims to understand the point Tannis is making (#11). She repeats something she has said, suggesting the absence of a person-- "never gonna be there"--as what Josh does not understand, or "listen" to. The close look at the nature of proof, how it comes from a perspective, challenged those who wanted to believe of evidence, "It's there." The explicit and implicit talk about the need of using examples "to prove" your point led to evaluation of how evidence can support claims by means of explanations--both in texts and in their talking.

Despite their difficult beginnings with discussion, students in this class were changing in the second semester, developing an evaluative stance toward text authority. They were quick to question claims made by the text and each other. Their gains became most obvious in the tur .ng-point discussion, #19 of Thucydides' The Peloponnesian Wars. For the first time a student asked the opening question. When Jane began, "Do you think the Melians were right, or do you feel they should have given up?" For 43 seconds students silently considered the text dialogue between the powerful Athenians and the small group of Melians who in the end fought and died to save their freedom rather than submit to slavery. Then, Terry responded, "I think they should have given in." When several students in chorus asked, "Why?", she said, they had "a chance for survival." In the sequence that followed Jane raised the issue of fighting for a

"just cause" and Terry scoffed at this version of the world as a "fairy tale." In the face of the opposing perspective that Terry gave voice to, students searched for ways to persuade her, testing the power of a variety of methods--text evidence, analogy, providing and questioning explanations. (See Table 2 for an excerpt.) The category coding scheme showed all indicators for student collaboration and critical thinking--probing and substantive questions, evidence and explanation--increasing dramatically in this discussion and sustaining at this higher level in subsequent discussions, accompanied by decreases in Pat's proportion of talking (from an average of 37% of total turns before, to 17% after this discussion).

This was their "best discussion all year," Terry and Jane later told me. Asking questions was a sign of "really thinking," Terry said: although "at first it was hard...as time went on, we started making up our own questions" and by the end "we led" discussion. The group's sense of their authority to raise and pursue questions had been building all year with Pat's careful attention to and scaffolding of their thinking. Her students explained best how the changes had happened: Jane saw Pat Baker's discussion role as "giving us things we're missing" and Sam saw that, then, Ms. Baker wanted to "slowly break away...let it go and see if it can go by itself." As students learned Pat's routines for elaborating and questioning over the year, they internalized these ways of thinking critically and took on the roles of provoking each other's thinking in discussion.

Conclusions and Implications

The findings of the study provide evidence for a view of discussion as a "sociocognitive activity" (Langer, 1987): out of the context for using language in social interaction students learned particular ways of thinking that affected the meanings they produced. Each teacher's verbal and non-verbal performances in her class, based on her goals and beliefs, signalled assumptions about the nature of texts and the purpose for student talking, which affected the text stance students learned to take and, thereby, the talking and thinking that they learned to do.

Rita focused her attention on her authoritative interpretations and finding answers in the text, thus inhibiting the development of student collaboration and thinking evident in early discussions. Linda focused on creating a context for thinking by forming a group that could collaborate and modelling a reflective stance toward texts; her students learned to respond to and question the text and each other to compose justified interpretations. Pat Baker focused her gaze on student thinking, creating scaffolds to enable them to think in ways they could not do alone, particularly to compose and evaluate justifications for claims; her students learned her evaluative stance, independently questioning the text and each other about the grounds for beliefs.

In Pat's and Linda's classes, where the text was perceived as open to alternative interpretations student questioning became the major spur for discussion and critical thinking. When the group got caught up in a student's genuine

question, there was a whole-heartedness, to the talk that was different in kind from the rest. Their "demand for the solution to a perplexity" (Dewey, 1933, p. 14) amid possible alternatives created a pulling current, an end that sharpened their sense of their purpose. Student changes in thinking during student-led turning-point discussions were evident from increases in category scheme indicators over the group discussion history. Descriptive analysis of discussion content and contexts from participants' perspectives revealed how students had learned their strategies for approaching texts, and why they had developed the inclination to use them in purposeful dialogues, finding their value as a way of thinking from their value as a way of talking. With such information we can further our own understandings of how changes in classroom social contexts encourage students to consciously examine what they know and how they know it. The contrastive features of these case-study classes shed light on the variations in the broad base of classes from which they were drawn; they provide patterns of themes important to enacting discussion, which can prove useful in formative evaluation and reformulation of teacher in-service workshops.

I want to end with a few observations about evaluating the Discussion Project. Introducing discussion into these classrooms required dramatic changes in the typical sociocognitive context for talking in schools, which has been described in numerous studies over the century as inhibiting to student thinking (e.g., Hoetker & Ahlbrand, 1969 ; Langer, 1984; Sirotnik, 1983). It does not seem surprising, then, that some

teachers and students resisted unfamiliar roles in discussion--some unconsciously--for reasons that ranged from their being afraid or feeling it was unnatural to their conflicting deep-seated beliefs about texts and sources of knowledge authority. Successful teachers in the discussion project persisted in adapting discussion to the needs of their students, patiently modeling new ways of talking and thinking over twenty or thirty discussions. Discussion in those classes created strong, active readers and critical thinkers, who viewed knowledge as actively composed and in need of questioning to weigh its justifying reasons. Student changes were complex and slow, however, not linear, but spiraling, sometimes regressive, depending on the challenge of different texts, changing teacher purposes, and the group's discussion history. Major positive changes in case-study classes occurred after six months of discussion, in the sixteenth and nineteenth discussions. Short-term evaluation of discussions using the category coding scheme, then, seems unlikely to reveal embryonic changes stirring in early discussions. And because teachers enacted discussion so differently, aggregate data may mask real gains made in some classrooms. I want to suggest that the categorical coding scheme, which we developed early in the project (Cornbleth, Miller, Moss & Pence, 1986), provided useful data about student thinking over the long period, but gained power as part of an ethnographic perspective: triangulating different types of data within each classroom revealed patterns of growth clearly related to variations in the social-cognitive context of each class.

Notes

[1] Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the anonymity of teachers and students.

[2] This text and others used in the Discussion Project are part of the Touchstones series (Comber, Maistrellis, O'Grady & Zeiderman, 1985).

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Table 1

SEQUENCE FROM THE FINAL DISCUSSION IN RITA WILSON'S ELEVENTH
GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS (verbatim transcription)

Directing students to the fourth paragraph, Rita has asked them,
"Would St. Augustine agree or disagree with that man who wrote
this article (newspaper text discussed earlier)?":

(1)   Carla: I think he would disagree

(2)   Rita: He would disagree with what?

(3)   Carla: What-

(4)   Rita: I mean what part of that would he disagree? (3
            second pause)

(5)   Carla: The second sentence. (3 second pause)

(6)   Rita: All right, now, look. Let's step back a second.
            What appeals to St. Augustine, the words or the music
            when he was making these comments?

(7) Student: Words

(8) Student: Music

(9)   Rita: Let's think again.

(10) Carla: This is so confusing.

(11)Student: I think he disagrees with-

(12)   Rita: (interrupts) Look at page 86, the bottom. "A reader
            of Psalms, he said, should use so little change of
            voice that the effort is more like speaking than
            singing. But then I remember the tears I used to shed
            in church when Psalms were sung....And I know that now
            I am often moved by the words sung and not by the
            singing." Once again, we've already said it. It's
            more pleasureable to hear them sing. And why is this
            popular with these visitors, why is this music popular,
            according to this paragraph? The words or the music
            popular?

(13) Carla: The words.

(14) Rita: Read it again. Concentrate on it.

Table 2

SEQUENCE FROM THE TURNING POINT DISCUSSION (#19) OF AN EXCERPT FROM THUCYDIDES' <u>THE PELOPONNESIAN WARS</u> IN PAT BAKER'S ELEVENTH GRADE MAINSTREAM ENGLISH CLASS (verbatim transcription)

Terry has just given textual evidence that the Athenians were "stronger" than the Melians.):

(1) Student: But they are still going to fight!

(2) Terry: I think that's foolish. That's foolish.

(3) Jane: When it is one against one you should fight, but when it's a larger amount against a large, larger amount they should give up?

(4) Terry: I'm just taking into consideration all the people's lives that are going to be lost. And all the people's lives that are going to be saved (students speak all at once).

(5) Tannis: On page 98, in the last paragraph where it says it was "a hard fight," okay, you don't know (2 second pause). For the ones that got killed, yeah, some of them got killed, yeah. But the ones that started the fight, their men got killed, too. So they are saying life was taken and they was fighting for a good reason.

(6) Don: Terry, (2 second pause) They were going to have to fight anyway. Why fight on a side that you really don't want to, instead of fighting for something that you do want to?

(7) Terry: They didn't want to fight period. They didn't even want to fight for this.

(Students all speak at once)

(8) Jane: Terry, that's what everyone is trying to tell you. So why not fight for something you want to protect, rather than go over there and fight and help these people?

(9) Tannis: For something you don't believe in (4 seconds).

(10) Jane: Do you understand that?

(11) Terry: Yeah...(students speak at once)

(18) Andre: (loud, above the rest) On page 96, the third paragraph, that sum it up right there. It say, 'If your subjects will risk so much to be free of you, how can you expect us to submit to you?' We're still free. Shouldn't we try everything to avoid losing that?'"...Anything can happen in a war.

TABLE 3. COMPARISONS OF MAJOR THEMES IN THREE CASE STUDY CLASSES.

THEME	LINDA	PAT	RITA
TEACHER FOCUS	SOCIAL-- GROUP FORMING	COGNITIVE-- S. THINKING	TEXTUAL-- T.INTERPRETAT]
TEACHER QUESTIONS PROBING SUBSTANTIVE	CLARIFICATION INTERPRETIVE	JUSTIFICATION EVALUATIVE	INFREQUENT LITERAL
TEXT STANCE	REFLECTIVE	EVALUATIVE	AUTHORITATIVE
T. DISCUSSION ROUTINES	ENFORCE GROUND RULES	3-PART Q. STRUCTURE FOR ELABORATION	DIRECT Ss. TO ANSWERS IN TE}
S. PERCEPTION DISCUSS. GOAL	TRYING TO UNDERSTAND TOGETHER	THINKING	COMING TO CONCLUSIONS
S. PERCEPTION OF T. ROLE	KEEP "SERIOUS PURPOSE," SAFE ATMOSPHERE; ENFORCE RULES	"GIVING US WHAT WE'RE MISSING, THEN BREAK AWAY	HELPING US FIN "SOLUTIONS"

GENERAL STUDENT
INCREASES
OVER YEAR IN
	QUESTIONING
	INTERPRETATIONS
	TEXT-BASED
	    COMMENTS*
	EXPLANATION
	EVIDENCE**
	COLLABORATION
		QUESTIONING
		INTERPRETATIONS
		TEXT-BASED
		    COMMENTS*
		EXPLANATION
		EVIDENCE**
		COLLABORATION	

GENERAL STUDENT **DECREASES** OVER YEAR IN			QUESTIONING EVIDENCE EXPLANATION COLLABORATION

*Student-initiated text based comments.
**EVIDENCE varied with the nature of the text, but most appeared in
    second semester discussions