

A BALANCING ACT:  
NEGOTIATING THE TEACHER ROLES OF INSTRUCTOR AND PARTICIPANT  
DURING A HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE DISCUSSION UNIT

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this naturalistic, qualitative inquiry is to provide more information about how literature discussion as a reading instructional strategy can work in the secondary classroom. Elementary teachers have known about and incorporated literature discussion into their curriculum for years. However, high school classrooms tend to focus more on covering content using anthologies and whole-class reads rather than giving students the opportunity to talk about what they're learning by using a variety of teacher-selected texts. By observing three teachers' literature discussion groups, we learn more about the decisions they make both as instructors and group participants as well as the classroom environment needed for students to be successful during the unit. These teachers help us think about when to step in and out of students' conversations and how to create instructional materials that will aid them in their understanding of a text.