The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom

by

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Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Queen’s University, 2008
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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

The inclusion of critical literacy is becoming more prevalent in our curricula, however, while the value of using trauma literature in the English Language Arts classroom has been established, the explicit use of sexual assault narratives sometimes seems too risky or intimidating for educators. This case study research utilizes social constructivism, feminist, gender studies, and queer studies, trauma theory, and reader response theory as lenses for analysis. Further, a narrative methodological framework was employed to explore how reading trauma literature can influence the writing practices, specifically the digitally written responses, of grade ten adolescents. As well, the study examined the usefulness of digital writing platforms and social media as vehicles to use while incorporating such critical literacies into the classroom.

The research was carried out in one western Canadian high school and across two grade ten academic English Language Arts classes. Data was collected from 25 student participants for the primary portion of the classroom study and four of those participants also participated in the focus group discussion.

The findings suggest that engaging with trauma literature is certainly a valuable form of critical literacy, particularly sexual assault narratives. Students’ responses indicated that they responded angrily and aggressively to the texts presented, they voiced a need to be heard through the use of repetition, they identified the significance of mental health issues, they made personal connections with the literature as well as intertextual connections between other stories, and created significant and telling silences. Perhaps most importantly, this study found that we must continue to work towards finding best practices for teaching these texts because doing so may lead to challenging rape culture and fostering a sense of empowerment, agency, and resiliency in our learners. These qualities were particularly demonstrated through the students’ personal, critical, and creative written responses using digital literacy practices.
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I greatly acknowledge my school and school board for granting me permission to conduct this study. Further, I am so grateful to my colleagues for supporting me throughout this process, particularly Andrew Smith, a teacher I try to emulate. His unwavering support, kindness, and insight greatly contributed to my research.

A huge thank you is due to my graduate cohort, who I started this journey with. Taking classes with such bright, dedicated, and creative educators truly inspired me to experiment with my own practice and to pursue further graduate work. As well, all of my professors in this program taught me so much, challenged me, and demonstrated an incredible ethic of care in every class. Dr. Begoray, Dr. Nahachewsky, Dr. Pantaleo, and Dr. Tobin are amazing educators and I am so grateful for their teaching and support throughout these past three years.

I am so privileged to have worked with such an excellent committee who provided astute insight and feedback throughout my research. Dr. Banister, Dr. Begoray, and Dr. Tobin taught and encouraged me so much and often, their expert suggestions and supportive comments were what helped me combat my occasional paralysis and self-doubt the most. I repeatedly returned to their words to convince myself that I was on the right track.

Finally, I am beyond fortunate to have worked with Dr. Begoray, who is simply, nothing short of amazing. She is brilliant, kind, and so generous, as she never hesitated to answer my many (many) questions, always in record time. Even as I completed this project a province away, her thoughtful guidance and friendly emails always made me forget the distance.
Dedication

My thesis is dedicated to survivors of sexual assault. Your stories have inspired me to continue with this work. Thank you for sharing them with me.

I would also like to thank my partner, Mike, for the constant encouragement, editing, back rubbing, and kleenex-passing. I owe many thanks to my wonderful friends, especially Kristen, who always asked about how the project was going and rolled her eyes through the phone when I worried. Finally, a huge thank you to my family; Dad, Mom, Lee-Anne, Steve, Max, Grandpa, Nana, and the Diamants for their blind faith in me and all their love.
Chapter One

Introduction

Jim (all names are pseudonyms) looked warily at the copy of *Speak* (Anderson, 1999) in my hand and then shook his head, taking a step back. “No, I don’t think I’ll go there.” He paused. “I don’t want to touch that. I think I’m going to stick to something… safer.” *Speak* is a powerful novel about a rape survivor and it is one of my favourite teaching texts so I didn’t want him to give up on it so easily. I assured my colleague that we could meet to discuss effective strategies, approaches, and terminology that I use when teaching this text, but Jim still felt too uncomfortable with the subject material. He had just started working at our school and understandably, wanted to ease into our learning community without choosing a novel with such intense, and potentially controversial, subject matter.

I’m comfortable discussing these issues in part because I worked as a sexual assault and rape crisis counsellor for two years during my undergraduate degree, providing feminist crisis intervention. As such, I was trained to have the ‘right’ language, such as politely inquiring what pronouns and name a person prefers to use, using the term “survivor” rather than “victim,” avoiding heterosexist language, being vigilant to not equate negative experiences with darkness and being aware that language reflects racism (e.g., “He must have a black heart”), to remember to always thank individuals for disclosing to me, and to always work on being a good listener. I was also trained to demonstrate an ethic of care such as empathizing rather than sympathizing, providing non-judgmental support, to demonstrate my ally role through my actions rather than trying to convince others of it through my words, believing that there are always opportunities for alliance building, recognizing that no form of oppression is more significant than another,
and knowing that my work is never done. Lastly, I was educated on recognizing and preparing for trigger warnings and flashbacks, to work through disclosures, coach allies on how to support survivors, and so forth.

In my crisis intervention work, my goals for working with survivors and allies were to help the caller talk about feelings, allow them to vent, help them to clarify and define the problem that they are facing, and to develop a plan of action. Some major components of this intervention included establishing that the caller was safe, and if not, to help them to secure safety, to establish a positive and caring rapport with the caller and to do so by being warm, calm, attentive, and validating, to help the caller identify the issue(s) they are dealing with, to assist them to explore their options and available resources to help with their issue(s), to develop a plan while enabling the caller to gain control of the issue(s) that they are struggling with, and to attain closure at the end of the call through reflection and affirmation. I bring these skills with me to the classroom and so teaching critical literature and issue-based literature on topics such as sexual assault is in my comfort zone. What I would like to see is more teachers addressing sensitive issues such as sexual assault through literature because oftentimes, the material that makes us the most uncomfortable as educators are often the works to which students need access and connection. To this end, I understand that it is likely that the majority of secondary school English teachers do not have a similar background of training as myself with survivors of sexual assault. Therefore, I have endeavoured to make my work accessible for and helpful to educators who are less familiar and comfortable with these issues.

I completely sympathize with my colleague’s concerns; it is intimidating to discuss subject matter such as consent, sexual assault, survivorship, and so forth with anyone, let alone
teenage students. As much as many educators likely want to foster a critical classroom space where learners are asked to read, write, discuss, and think about sociocultural issues that affect them, there is a considerable amount of risk involved. As a result, educators may self-censor, feeling as though they could be jeopardizing their jobs, or perhaps they feel incapable of dealing with facilitating classroom discussions on this topic and potential students’ disclosures or instances of ‘triggering’; that is when a survivor of a traumatic event is reminded of that painful experience which can result in the survivor having a variety of upset feelings or reactions such as a flashback or a panic attack. However, I believe that it is important to open up conversations about sexual assault and rape because unfortunately, it is prevalent, often goes underreported, and adolescent girls are some of the most vulnerable people targeted by perpetrators, along with young children, differently-abled individuals, homeless youth, women of colour, women in same-sex relationships, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit women, and women living in poverty (Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre, 2010, pp. 1-2).

While numbers reported in statistics about sexual assault and rape are thought to be lower than what is the likely the real number, as a result of underreporting, researchers estimate that “between 15% and 25% of women will experience rape or attempted rape at some point during their lifetime” and “while adolescent girls are at the highest risk of rape, their reporting rates are often the lowest” (Malo-Juvera, 2014, p. 410). The reason for this problem may be because, as Freedman (2014) reveals in her memoir that chronicles her own rape and recovery story, there is “social and cultural pressure on women to keep their stories private [which is] for many, an insurmountable hurdle… [and] both reinforces the shame that we struggle against and widens the gap between who we are and how others see us” (pp. ix-x). Consequently, as Ullman (2014)
posits in her article, a retrospective account of her research on women’s resistance to rape
including her own experiences, “Studying rape… [is] both powerful and scary” (p. 344), but she
goes on to argue that “[rape is] a topic that need[s] more attention,” and that we also “need to
study resistance” (p. 345). I agree, and argue that Melinda’s story in Speak is very much one such
story in novel form of resistance, survivorship, and empowerment, and studying this text is
exactly the educational work that Ullman calls for.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this case study was to explore the ways in which Grade 10 students
responded to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives, using digital approaches.
For this study, trauma literature will be defined as, “work[s] of fiction that convey[] profound
loss or intense fear on individual or collective terms” (Balaev, 2008, p. 150). I hope that findings
from this research will serve to highlight the importance of integrating trauma literature as a
strategy for creating dynamic education spaces, and demonstrate that this genre can be a
particularly powerful body of literature to draw from. Further, these narratives demand “the
necessity of a critical stance in acts of witnessing” (Dutro, 2011, p. 206) trauma, which can
trigger especially resonant emotions in learners, and critical literacy teachers can tap into these
powerful responses for meaningful student connection and literary engagement. Insights gained
from this study may help educators explore potential benefits of encouraging students to take on
a critical literacy lens in their writing to learn. Teachers may discover that it can provide
purposeful opportunities for critiquing dominant narratives and voices while subsequently
working to build learning spaces where learners assert their own voices, identities, and power.

My case study, titled “The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English
Classroom,” centers on a bounded unit on the novel *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson (1999) as well as a selection of other complementary texts and films. It particularly looks at Grade 10 student response through the use of digital literacy in a public school in a small city in Western Canada.

**Research Questions**

As Sitler (2006) asserts, “few educators would be able to disagree with this statement: ‘Trauma has always been a part of learning and teaching’” (p. 119). In any given classroom, there is bound to be at least one student who has dealt with some form of trauma in their lifetime, and unfortunately, many students will eventually face traumatic circumstances. However, a significant re-focusing is emerging on the potential of trauma in the form of literature as to how it can be transformative in the critical literacy classroom. Researchers and scholars such as Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín (2013), Balalev (2008), Crawford (2005), Dutro (2008), and Whitehead (2004) have all made compelling arguments for how powerful trauma literature can be for adolescents. All argue for the inclusion of trauma literature in the critical literacy classroom, and that despite the hesitancy that educators may experience due to the sensitive nature of the issues explored, this inclusion is worthwhile. Curwood, Schliesman, and Horning (2009) concur, stating, “Teachers who approach selection reactively can become mired in ‘what if’ scenarios that leave them second-guessing, agonizing, and rejecting anything they think of as unsafe. (The irony being, of course, that there is no such thing as a truly ‘safe’ book)”. Curwood et al. (2009) go on to assert that:

Teachers who approach selection proactively focus first and foremost on their teaching goals, curriculum, and standards, and how the book they are considering fulfills all of
these needs. They don't ignore potential concerns, but they consider them in the context of the work as a whole. (p. 40)

Thus, the primary goal of this research was to investigate the outcomes of such risk-taking in teaching by researching how learners respond to trauma literature with the primary research question being: *in what ways do Grade 10 students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives?*

In addition to my primary research question, I was also interested in exploring the following sub-questions through my research:

1. What critical literacy strategies are most effective when using trauma literature to teach content material such as issues of rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, exclusion, power, peer pressure, bullying, and so forth?
2. In what ways can trauma narratives function in a public school space to develop critical literacies and empathetic classroom culture?
3. In what ways can private digital writing using blogs and public digital writing, using online literary discussion groups, impact student critical literacy development and shared meaning making on sexual trauma?

The issue of teacher preparedness and comfort with using trauma literature in the classroom is a central issue that inspired this project to begin with, and so I took time to consider how to develop a safe learning environment as a foundation. Safety is a central concern for any educator, particularly teachers in critical literacy classrooms where the texts that are studied raise difficult questions about power, explore social change, question social norms, and endeavour to position students as knowledge-holders. Riley (2015) argues, “[with critical literacy], teachers are
simultaneously reading their own worlds in new ways and attempting to open space for students' critical readings of their worlds” (p. 423). As such, these new spaces need to be opened with safety, care, and consideration.

Next are questions on how the literature can be effectively integrated into a classroom as well as how it can impact learners' development of various English Language Arts skills. Sadly, the community I teach in does not always value literacy and learning. It can be difficult to foster a love of literature with learners, the majority of whom do not read outside of school. As a result, a general sense of apathy is an attitude that my colleagues and I often feel as though we are battling daily in the classroom. As such, we work hard for engagement from students and strive to choose stories that students may find reflect or relate to their own experiences. One of the central values of a critical literacy classroom is that stories of those who are often silenced are instead privileged, which may appeal more to our students. As Hagood (2010) argues, “Teachers and researchers employ critical literacy to instruct impressionable adolescents about the ways texts organize readers' thinking, views, and senses of self” (p. 247).

**Study Significance**

In an increasingly digital world, and with digital literacies becoming a focus in the practice of many teachers, studies such as this one are important to help educators explore how to best utilize digital platforms as tools for learners to use to respond to literature in new and different ways. As Webb (2007) argues, “As literature goes from print to digital formats, rich possibilities are opening up to deepen and extend teaching and learning. Fundamental to the new literacies will be students’… critical engagement with online, digitized texts” (p. 83). Additionally, many scholars and researchers (Andermahr & Pellicer-Ortin, 2013; Balalev, 2008;
Crawford, 2005; Dutro, 2008; Whitehead, 2004) assert the potential of trauma literature in the classroom and that educators can better serve learners by incorporating these stories, especially those who might connect with these narratives and thus make meaning of their own lived experiences as a result. Building a more meaningful curriculum by choosing texts that might resonate with learners’ experiences or increase engagement through exploring difficult stories is important if educators wish to foster empathetic, inclusive, and culturally responsive citizens in our students.

Overall, I believe that this research holds potential to benefit the participants, society, and to the state of knowledge in terms of contribution to the existing body of research on trauma literature. For student participants, this unit on Speak is already part of their Grade 10 academic English Language Arts curriculum. As such, they are expected to continue developing a variety of skills including their written communication, reading comprehension, and visual analysis skills. Insights gained from this study may help educators explore potential benefits of encouraging students to take on a critical literacy lens in their writing to learn that may provide purposeful opportunities for critiquing dominant narratives and voices while subsequently working to build learning spaces where learners assert their own voices, identities, and power. Lastly, it was the goal of this research to benefit the state of knowledge in terms of contribution to the existing body of research on trauma literature in the classroom.

Overview of Thesis

In Chapter One, I have provided an introduction to my research including the inspiration for this study and the reasons why I feel it is significant for the sexual assault narratives to be explored in the classroom. I outline my primary research question, as well as my guiding sub-
questions relating to various student responses to the novel *Speak*. Finally, I presented the potential benefits and importance of my study in particular.

Next, in Chapter Two, I explore the theoretical frameworks of social constructivism, feminism and gender studies, trauma theory, and reader response theory followed by the literature on issues connected with this research. The literature reviewed includes how to effectively create a safe critically literate classroom, how to address sexualities in learning environments in a mindful and culturally responsive manner, and how to use feminist pedagogies to address narratives about violence against women, paying particular attention to sexual assault narratives. From here, I move into research surrounding the significance of the novel *Speak* and then review the use of this text in the classroom. Finally, I explore how writing in its many forms can be used as a critical response tool, how it can function as a means of self-care, and conclude the review with a focus on the potential of digital literacy in particular.

Chapter Three details the methodologies used in this research including case study methodology and a narrative inquiry approach. I review the research design, data collection and analysis, validity and limitations and restrictions of the research.

In Chapter Four, I review my findings from my case-study research. I discuss my results arising from analysis of my field notes, student written responses, both in traditional writing and digitally, through social media outlets, contributions offered during class and online literature discussions, and in the focus group meeting. I discuss the central themes that emerged from my data interpretations and offer conclusions regarding these themes.

In Chapter five, I first reflect on my central research question as well as my sub-questions. I then review the pedagogical and research implications of these conclusions, with
respect to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Finally, I present my final reflections on the use of trauma literature in the secondary English classroom.

In the Appendices, I provide my ethics application including its appendices, my request for modifications, my application to my school board for permission to run the study, and my field notes log form. I then provide teachers with links to resources to begin incorporating trauma literature into their English language arts curricula.
Chapter Two

Theoretical Frameworks and Literature Review

The theoretical underpinnings of this study were not only foundational to every aspect of the project, but are also representative of the lenses I use as learner and as an educator in my everyday teaching practice. An overview of these critical theoretical perspectives—social constructivism, feminist and gender studies theory, trauma theory, and reader response theory—is provided in this chapter.

Additionally, there are a number of primary research studies and scholarly papers that demonstrate and discuss how to create a safe and empathetic critically literate classroom space where mature issues can be explored (Carello & Butler, 2014 & 2015; Curwood, Schliesman, & Horning, 2009; Finders, 1996; Mulhern & Gunding, 2011), the significance of using trauma literature in the classroom (Andermahr & Pellicer-Ortin, 2013; Balalev, 2008; Crawford, 2005; Dutro, 2008; Whitehead, 2004), as well as the significance of discussing sexualities and gender issues in school (Ashcraft, 2009, 2012; Bott, 2006; Crawley, Curry, Dumoist-Sands, Tanner, & Wyker, 2008; Davis, 2005; Durfee & Rosenberg, 2009; Finders, 2000; Hesford, 1999; Johnston, 2015; Moje & MuQaribu, 2003; Shrewsbury, 1997), how students respond to this literature through their writing (Alexander & Banks, 2004; Dutro, 2011; Hamilton, 2009; Hollander, 2000; Jolly, 2011; Sinats et al., 2005; Wissman, 2008; Wright & Ranby, 2009), and in particular, through digital writing such as blogging, chat rooms, and digital literature circles (Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2005; Koutsogiannis & Adampa, 2012; Nagel & Anthony, 2009; Stavrositu & Sundar, 2012; Lee & Lee, 2006). In the same vein, the development of student voice through writing is also explored, and Gemmell (2008), Lovejoy (2009), Maguire (2011), Rector-Aranda and
Raider-Roth (2015), Romano (1987), Stewart (2010), Wessels and Herrera (2014), and Whitney (2001) and are all consulted for their work with helping learners to find and build their writing voices. Additionally, several scholarly articles about the significance of the novel *Speak* were consulted (Ames, 2006; Detora, 2006; Latham, 2006; McGee, 2009; Tannert-Smith, 2010) and a number of primary research studies that focused particularly on the use of the novel *Speak* in the classroom including Alsup (2003), Brauer & Clark, 2008, Dykstra (2013), Jckett (2007), Park (2012), Malo-Juvera (2014), Snider (2014), Sprague, Keeling, & Lawrence (2006), and Xu (2008). However, there are limited studies with a specific focus on how secondary students respond to trauma literature such as sexual assault narratives through digital literacy.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

**Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism is a framework that many would argue began with Dewey’s (1926) Pedagogic Creed where he asserts the necessity of the learner being educated by their social context: “I believe that [school] is also a social necessity because the home is the form of social life in which the child has been nurtured and in connection with which [they have their] moral training” (p. 542). Of course, contemporary educators realize that this assumption that children are nurtured in the home is not necessarily congruent with all home environments. Thus, there are several different definitions of constructivism, and Philips (1995) likens it to something reminiscent to a secular religion because “as in all living religions, constructivism has many sects- each of which harbours some distrust of its rivals” (p. 5). He goes on to assert that there is a significant body of educational literature on many varieties of constructivism, which is only growing. However, for the purposes of this research, social constructivism will be understood as
“a way of building knowledge about self, school, everyday experience, and society through reflection and meaning making” (Shor, 1992, as cited in Hirtle, 1996, p. 91) and that “in a learning community grounded in constructivism, learners mediate knowledge within a social context” (Hirtle, 1996, p. 91). In essence, social constructivism is a perspective that advocates for learning with others collaboratively and within a community. A central theorist that developed this variety of cognitive construction was Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky.

Vygotsky believed in many ideas about learning that, as Smagorinsky (2013) asserts, are “relevant for the modern-day… English classroom” with such topics including

- the use of speech as a tool for thinking, the role of emotion in thinking, the social nature of thinking, an emphasis on meaningful activity, and… what the notion of the zone of proximal development means in the setting of the language arts curriculum. (p. 193)

Firstly, Vygotsky believed that speech is a primary tool for expression and culture creation, serving “not only as this means of representing the world; the process of speaking itself often serves as a vehicle through which new thoughts emerge” (Smagorinsky, 2007, p. 64). Vygotsky posited that there are three different forms of speech activity: external or social speech, egocentric or private speech and inner speech. Vygotsky considered external speech to be the primary linguistic variety of the three forms (Jones, 2009, p. 169). What this means for the classroom is that speech is an important mode for learning, however, learners may have difficulty if they are not encouraged to use speech in “exploratory ways” (Smagorinsky, 2013, p.193) because “what matters is using the development potential of speech to generate and explore ideas
rather than to always speak… in ways that meet an assessor’s approval” (p. 194).

Next, Vygotsky recognized the role of emotion in thinking, in fact, calling them “inseparable” (p. 194). In one of his first works, he argues that our emotions produce and organize internal reactions of our behaviour and Mesquita (2012) argues that Vygotsky approaches the subject of emotions in his work through a variety of subjects including art (p. 810). Importantly, Vygotsky’s attention to affect in learning affirms how important it is to ensure that diverse students feel included in the learning environment as he was committed to helping educators find ways to help their students overcome feelings of inferiority in the classroom (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 195). One of the ways in which to eliminate such feelings is for youth to be social in their thinking and to engage in meaningful collaborative activity, and as such, one of Vygotsky’s primary focuses was on how, through being social, learners co-construct meaning (Mahn, 1999, p. 341) because he believed that “individuals construct new knowledge as they internalize concepts appropriated through participation in social activities” (p. 344). This idea of the importance of social interaction in learning connects with Vygotsky’s work on the zone of proximal development, which emphasizes the power of collaboration and “exists as an individual’s one of potential that can be scaffolded into something new by a skilled adult or more competent peer, resulting in tomorrow’s new, individual competencies” (Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 1999). The idea that collaborative learning will lead to development in individual understanding is central to Vygotsky’s constructivism.

Other central social constructivist theorists include Berger and Luckman (1966), who wrote *The Social Construction of Reality* and are credited with coining the term ‘social constructivism’ in this text. Berger and Luckman’s book was initially reviewed as being an
exciting text because it is exploratory in nature and poses numerous provocative questions (Rose, 1967, p. 307). One reviewer, Rose (1967), cites one of the fundamental notions in the text as

…the reality of specific groups is objectified in symbols that can be communicated, such as art and language. These realities, which have become projections of the rationality of man, are distributed throughout social order. Different groups hold to different enclaves of meaning and value, seeing aspects of the world in dissimilar ways.

(p. 307)

Like Berger and Luckman's focus on knowledge as being socially constructed, Gergen (2001) also builds on the significance of community learning, stressing the importance of how “postmodern dialogues invites intercultural dialogue, in which concepts of the person and of knowledge itself, along with methods and practices, are appreciatively exchanged” (p. 810) and emphasizes, “as we speak together now, so will we create our future” (p. 812). As Schwandt (1998) argues, the focus of Gergen's approach is not on the individual’s ability to create meaning, but is rather focused on the production of meaning by a collective (p. 204).

Overall, social constructivism is central to this research as it is a perspective that promotes many progressive and productive classroom practices such as increasing opportunities for classroom discussion and collaborative learning which can result in many positive learning outcomes for students including problem solving, reasoning skills, synthesizing ideas, and developing compassion and empathy. Social constructivism was used in combination with feminist, gender, and queer studies, as well as trauma theory and reader-response theory, to serve as an important theoretical foundation to this project.
Feminist, Gender, and Queer Studies

Overall, feminist, gender, and queer studies work to transform societies in order to liberate marginalized individuals and groups, including but not limited to women and girls. Feminist, gender, and queer studies’ educators have long focused on providing access to texts and learning materials that challenge patriarchy, bring attention to oppression of any kind, and empower silenced voices. Feminism, gender studies, and queer theory have always been a major influence in my teaching practice, especially because it is work that emerges from the tradition of critiquing social injustices. Without reflection on the norms, values, principles, and practices underpinning social structures of gender differentiation and replication, there could be no understanding of issues of justice and injustice, of the many cultural ways in which gender operates. (Essed et al., 2009, p. 22)

However, it is important to point out, as Hobbs (2013) does, that there is no single understanding or definition of gender studies and that “it is not now perspective or one analysis but many, expressed differently by scholars and activists whose ideas and approaches differ from one another, shaped by their own backgrounds, interests, training, experience, and understandings of the world” (p. xviii). The works of such feminist, gender, and queer studies theorists as Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, bell hooks, Eve Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, and Simone de Beauvoir have all influenced and shaped my own feminism and my feminist pedagogical practice. For instance, Audre Lorde’s experiences with education have deeply impacted how I think about my students, and the need for creating a critical classroom. Lorde is best known as a feminist thinker and poet who focuses on issues related to sexism,
Eve Sedgwick and Judith Butler, both prominent gender studies and queer theorists, made many important contributions to feminism and gender studies, and drew largely on Michel Foucault’s work on sexuality and the meaning given to bodies by discourses and systems of power. To begin with, Sedgwick’s influence is powerfully captured in an obituary written for her by Berlant (2009), who credits her “remarkable intellect to asking about patterning, especially in the relation of aesthetics to sexualities” and claims that “the parts of queer theory… on which she had the most impact had… to do with the creativity and insistence of desire in all of its mediations, even in the face of… institutionalized phobias against recognizing the gay and lesbian forms of it” (p. 1089). Judith Butler also significantly contributed to understandings of sexualities, particularly the transformative power of the term “queer” and her highlighting of the
performative nature of gender. In this research, the term “gender” is understood as a socially constructed and fluid entity, as Butler (1990) posits. She addresses such fluidity at the end of *Gender Trouble*,

If identities were no longer fixed as the premises of a political syllogism, and politics no longer understood as a set of practices derived from the alleged interests that belong to a set of ready-made subjects, a new configuration of politics would surely emerge from the ruins of the old. (p. 149)

Feminist and gender studies theory is a natural fit for this research project, as the placement of a sexual assault narrative as a central course text provides opportunity for what cultural critic and feminist scholar bell hooks (1994) calls, “not only the responsibility but also the obligation to educate students, the leaders of tomorrow, to inform themselves through knowledge about themselves and ‘the other’: marginalized, peripheral citizens” (hooks, 1994 as cited in Strong-Leek, 2008 p. 851). As Ferrebe and Tolan (2012) argue,

While teaching gender… demands that we question distinctions, boundaries and categories, it can and should enrich the work conducted within single disciplines. This is nowhere more evident than within English studies, where the study of both language and literature has been transformed by an attention to discourses of gender and sexuality. (p. 216)

Andermhar (2012) also attests to the necessary opportunities that teaching feminist texts offer with

It… goes some way towards fulfilling the still-evident desire for narratives of female experience, while simultaneously questioning identity categories and foundational
narratives. Seen in this way, the feminist text makes possible an exploration of the discourses of sex, gender and feminism, and in the process reasserts the value of feminist theory and pedagogy. (p. 28)

Feminist and gender studies-focused pedagogy was used in this project in an effort to establish a liberatory environment so that students of all genders including young men, women, transgender, gender-neutral, and so forth, were encouraged to connect with one another, recognize, honour, and celebrate their differences, care about each other’s learning as well as their own, and hopefully feel grounded in their own experiences as well as be enhanced by the contributions of others.

Feminist and gender studies is a central theoretical lens for this study and was also employed in looking at the next significant theory used for this research, trauma theory. In this way, trauma theory is approached with the understanding that individuals from varying gender identities, races, classes, sexualities, abilities, and so forth, experience trauma differently and have unique lived experiences and levels of access to resources to help with healing from traumatic events.

**Trauma Theory**

For this study, trauma theory is understood as a “focus on the aspect of disorder and vulnerability caused by external factors, such as human or natural violence, terror, violation, and so forth” (Becker, 2014, pp. 15-16). Additionally, as Caruth (1995) asserts, trauma studies works to examine “how trauma unsettles and forces us to rethink our notions of experiences and of communication, in… the classroom, and in literature” (Caruth, 1995, p. 4). Caruth (1996), a prominent trauma theorist, examines the staying power of traumatic events in people's lives,
arguing that “the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor against his very will” calling the event of trauma something that “one cannot simply leave behind” (Caruth, 1996, p. 1). Caruth’s influence in the field is clear, with Forter (2007) crediting her with helping us to see how a historical moment might be experienced less as an ongoing set of processes that shape and are shaped by those living through them than as a punctual blow to the psyche that overwhelms its functioning, disables its defenses, and absents it from direct contact with the brutalizing event itself. (p. 259)

Caruth explores trauma largely through the example of the Holocaust and Forter (2007) cites her work as offering a significant chance to reflect on this collective traumatic experience that is both influential and sophisticated (p. 259).

A central trauma theorist that Caruth draws from is Freud (1920), who largely explored the “repetition compulsion: those reenactments in the present of psychic events that have not been safely consigned to the past, and that disrupt the unruffled present” (Forter, 2007, p. 260). In Freud’s time, trauma referred to “a violent attack damaging the organism from the outside” (Zepf & Zepf, 2008, p. 331) and that when trauma is experienced, Freud points to two distinctive characteristics; firstly, Freud identifies fright, when one is not expecting danger and is thusly taken by surprise (Shinebourne, 2006, p. 337), as a distinctive characteristic of trauma. Secondly, Freud discusses “latency” as central to the experience of trauma. “Latency” occurs when a person who survived something traumatic does not experience bodily harm, however, they are psychologically impacted and so they have difficulty reconciling the traumatic experience (p. 337). Overall, Freud explored issues of trauma at length in many works, including as it relates to
sexualities, dreams, and memory. As such, his definition of trauma evolved, as argued by Keiser (1967), who highlights that Freud referred to trauma as powerful “excitations,” as differentiating between different types of trauma, such as “premature traumas,” “traumatic moment[s],” or a period of “psychical helplessness” (pp. 781-2). His extensive work in trauma theory has contributed and continues to contribute to the field of trauma studies in a major way.

Many researchers have also started to explore how trauma narratives can be used in the classroom, as well as the connection between sexualities and literacy education. As Hartman (1995) asserts, trauma theorists are “trying to find ‘a way of receiving the story, of listening to it, of drawing it into an interpretative conversation” (Hartman, 1995 as cited in Whitehead, 2004, p. 8). Felman (1999), another important trauma theorist, concurs and considers the significance of silenced stories with, “silence can be either the outside of language or a position inside language, a state of noiselessness or wordlessness. Falling silent is, however, not a state but an event” (p. 203). Thus, the interpretative conversations that Hartman (1995) describes was one of the goals of this research, aimed at interrupting the event of silence that Felman (1999) discusses, recognizing that participating students will receive the trauma narratives differently and respond to these stories uniquely.

Trauma studies theorists have demonstrated that art such as literature has the powerful potential to express pain, can be used as a tool for healing and harnessing survivorship, and that telling our traumatic stories can aid in healing and empowerment (Andermahr & Pellicer-Ortin, 2013, p. 3). Central to this research and to trauma studies generally are constructs of testimony and witness. Felman and Laub (1992) argue that these constructs represent “a ‘resolution’ of the crisis of witnessing, a healing process” (Felman & Laub, 1992 as cited in Horowitz, 1992, p. 54).
In order to meaningfully incorporate trauma studies in the classroom, an appropriate approach to reading must be taken to maximize learning and empower learners as meaning-makers. Reader response theory is one such theoretical approach that can help to foster a classroom culture where students come to see themselves as having valuable voices and as knowledge-holders.

**Reader Response Theory**

Reader response theory is significant both to my teaching practice and to this study. It is defined by Harkin (2005) as an “effort to provide a generalized account of what happens when human beings engage in a process they call “reading”” (p. 411). She points out that in addition to authors, readers also need to be recognized as producers of meaning for all kinds of texts (p. 413). Stanley Fish (1970) is a central scholar associated with this theory, and he likewise asserts this ownership of meaning in the reader:

> If at this moment someone were to ask, “what are you doing?”, you might reply, “I am reading,” and thereby acknowledge the fact that reading is an activity, something that you do. No one would argue that the act of reading can take place in the absence of someone that reads…- but curiously enough when it comes time to make analytical statements about the end product of reading (meaning or understanding), the reader is usually forgotten or ignored. (p. 123)

Here, Fish argues that the power to create meaning, understanding, and interpretation of text resides chiefly with the reader. As an educator, this philosophy is something that often comes across as foreign to students, and is a notion that I need to repeatedly reinforce with learners so that they begin to understand that their ideas have value and create meaning. In my experience,
when students begin to embrace reader response theory, they come to feel more confident in their responses and see themselves as part of a conversation rather than witnessing one. When learners are positioned as authorities over text, in an active reading role, they seem to feel as though they have the room and validity to express their responses and lose hesitancy.

Athanases (1988) commends the work of Fish and specifically how reader response theory impacts the English classroom as he claims that when he read Fish's work, he “felt like [he] had come home” (p. 45). A high school English teacher, he felt relieved that it was “time for the real stuff. Literary experiences. Reader-text transactions. Personal constructions of meaning. I vowed to overhaul…” (p. 45). Butin (2008) also speaks to Fish's contributions to the classroom, crediting him with trying to save Florida National University because of his “antifoundationalism of resisting and rejecting all “objective” and thus “static readings of a text” (p. 62). Fish did this because he believes this resistance is the work of the academy; academics must avoid complacency, always pursue new meanings, and be constantly engaged since truth has no finality (p. 63). Fish’s name is certainly synonymous with the power of reader response theory.

Another prominent reader response theorist includes Rosenblatt (1938). Athanases (1988) understands Rosenblatt as believing that “the text is a blueprint for the reading, and the reader must be alive to all textual clues, examining closely the process of interpretation” (p. 45). Holmes (2005) commends Rosenblatt, who wrote the seminal text Literature as Exploration (1938). Holmes laments having gone through his entire English education and had never heard of Rosenblatt or her theory. Rosenblatt (2005) is so influential because she positions the reader as powerful, arguing “no one else can read a literary work for us… [the reader] is enabled to actually mould a new experience, the literary work” (p. 27). She also importantly points to the
role of the English teacher as one in which we “help[] our students learn to perform in response to a text… the instrument on which the reader plays and from which [the reader] evokes the work is - [them]self” (p. 27). Rosenblatt’s influence significantly contributed to the educational progress made in the last century, and as Daniels (2005) credits Rosenblatt with much of this progress, claiming that “every time a teacher invites a child to make her own meaning with a text, she’s striking a blow for democracy” (p. 21).

Bleich (2007) has also made significant strides for reader response theory. Returning to Athanases (1988), he sees Bleich as having fewer constraints, reading Bleich as believing that “whatever a text means to a reader is legitimate” (p. 45). Bleich (2007) claims there is “virtually no relaxation of the interest in objectivity” and calls for “changes [in classrooms and curricula] that are required by a shift towards subjectivist epistemology” (Bleich, 2007 as cited in Ryan, 2007, p. 2). One of Bleich’s most influential works, *Subjective Criticism* (1978) is, as Timpe (1983) straightforwardly calls it, “literally, a defense of subjectivity” and a “manifesto for a new system of literary criticism based on subjectivity alone” (p. 458). Bleich (1976) defines subjective criticism as

a way of thinking about how people use language and literature, how our words function in our thoughts and feelings, how stories, sagas, and scenarios activate our daily lives, how the minds of children use language to grow, and how major artists, with the help of a few carefully chosen lies, can tell the truth about their own lives, and make it seem like the truth about the lives of their readers. (p. 455)

Bleich, an English teacher himself, stresses in his work that “all children know that thoughts and feelings go together” and so he pushes back against the trend of students going to school only to
be “taught to abandon the first person, abandon their feelings, and concentrate on learning the material” (p. 454) and how “the classroom community is prohibited from developing new knowledge on a communal basis” (p. 457). He advocates that learners should feel as free and as validated as the educator to share their responses and judgments of the literature.

Lastly, reader response theoretical underpinnings need to be culturally situated, with the acknowledgment that learners respond from, as Brooks and Browne (2012) argue, “the myriad cultural influences (values, practices, experiences, and so on) affecting both readers and authors, and the ways in which these influence meaning making” (Brooks & Browne, 2012, p. 77). They “privilege both readers and texts equally and in transactional ways” (p. 77).

Feminist and gender studies, trauma theory, and reader response theory are all central theoretical perspectives that have been employed in this research, as they are in large part, the foundation of my approach to pedagogy and curriculum design. As such, they are crucial lenses to incorporate into this project. Next, the literature review details the scholars and professionals whose articles and studies were consulted in the design of this novel study and this research.

**Literature Review**

**Creating a Safe and Empathetic Critically Literate Classroom**

The first and most crucial work that must be done with research of this nature is to ensure that the learning space has a classroom culture in which the students feel safe, welcome, and empathetic towards one another, even if they do not always agree with or relate to one another. This foundational work is no easy task and so a number of scholarly works were consulted in preparation for this study including Carello and Butler (2014 & 2015), Curwood, Schliesman,
and Horning (2009), Finders (1996), and Mulhern and Gunding (2011), in order to build a positive, critically literate class culture. For the purposes of this research, critical literacy is understood as “an overtly political orientation to teaching and learning and to the cultural, ideological, and sociolinguistic content of the curriculum. It is focused on the uses of literacy for social justice in marginalized and disenfranchised communities” (Luke, 2012, p. 5). Its importance is effectively summarized by Mulhern and Gunding (2011): “Individuals need to be proficient in critical literacy in order to reconcile the messages contained within the plethora of text forms, text types and constantly evolving communication technologies that surround them” (p. 6) that “encourages readers to identify the worldview being promoted in the text and then requires readers to ask themselves whether this is an acceptable view or not, whether it is aligned with their understanding or not” (p. 8). When engaging with this type of teaching and learning where the nature of the texts and discourses explored are typically sophisticated in nature, it is inevitable that difficult issues and thus, difficult moments in the classroom can arise. In this research, the chief topic of sexual assault and violence against women is certainly one with can ignite strong emotions and responses from learners and so it is imperative that the learning space is properly prepared for this critical work.

One of the first sets of scholars who were consulted for this foundational work was Curwood, Schliesman, and Horning (2009). They offered a great deal of practical advice on how educators can prepare students’ readiness for critical literacy work. For instance, they suggest that teachers should practice talking to classes about the curriculum ahead of time. This preparation can be done with a colleague, either casually discussing lesson plans or role-playing challenging classroom scenarios. It might even be beneficial to practice addressing the topic in
front of a mirror in private before teaching (p. 40). They assert that the first step to having students discuss issues outside of their comfort zone is for the educator to ensure that they project a confident and capable demeanour themselves to set a tone and to also model behaviour, speech, and appropriate terminology.

Mulhern and Gunding (2011) similarly assert that the work begins with the educator, as they must take the time to honestly reflect on their own biases, acknowledge them, and then work on being receptive to and validating of the prior knowledge of our learners (p. 10). This sort of teacher self-assessment can be done both internally and as Curwood, Schliesman, and Horning (2009) suggest, can also be fleshed out through prepping with a colleague. Mulheron and Gunding (2011) discuss the importance of creating a collaborative culture where students really know and value one another. They suggest allowing students to explore family histories and stories early on in the school year and to be culturally responsive by allowing students to talk about their own collective communities. Additionally, they advocate for educators to work on gradually releasing responsibility to students, to use multimodel texts, and to try to use music and other popular culture as a way to explore critical literacy and develop a safe and welcoming classroom.

Finders’ (1996) primary research study exemplified why a safe classroom needs to be established because “the power of the peer dynamic cannot be denied…status and power negotiations became clearly visible as focal students used literacy to establish and deny their positions within friendship circles” (p. 95). Her research, a year-long ethnographic study, explored how social roles and allegiances either facilitates or hinders literacy practices among four sixth graders, newcomers to an American Midwestern junior high school. Finders’ data was
collected from a variety of sources such as interviews, observations, and studying the written work of the participants. Participants, their families, and their teachers were interviewed. What she discovered about the importance of a safe classroom for literacy work was that in order to build this positive culture, the teacher must consistently encourage and facilitate empathetic interactions between learners. For example, she reported that in one of the participant’s classes, “the teacher’s intention was evident in his mini lessons on response. He directed the students to respond productively and positively every day, emphasizing explicitly the need for an audience and the importance of a positive writing community” (p. 118). She further emphasized the power of the influence of students’ lives outside of school, finding that “expectations beyond the classroom walls impose themselves upon classroom interactions” (p. 123), that comfort is not always necessary for students to feel empowered, such as “Dottie” who “fought against self-disclosure” (p. 124), and the recognition that students often make academic choices tied to their social roles.

Next, Carello and Butler (2014 & 2015) were consulted for their work with applying the elements of trauma-informed care (TIC) to education. They define being trauma-informed as understanding:

in any context… the ways in which violence, traumatization, and other traumatic experiences may have impacted the lives of individuals involved and to apply that understanding to the design of systems and provision of services so they accommodate trauma survivors’ needs and are consonant with healing and recovery.

(p. 264)
They asserted that it could be very risky to avoid traumatic topics in the classroom because the silence can perpetuate shame, secrecy, and stigma (p. 155) and so, they aimed to differentiate teaching about trauma. However, they warned against what they call “potentially perilous pedagogies” such as in one example they highlighted wherein a creative writing instructor “insist[ed] that one [student] write about her rape” which resulted in “upset” and “class skipping” (p. 158). Additionally, they discussed the risk of traumatic exposures being potentially triggering to instructors, which can also impact the tone and culture of the classroom. They cited Lindner (2004) who “started to bawl when a student confided her trauma story because the story activated Lindner’s memories of her own experiences with violence” (p. 159), which is why they advocate for educator preparedness. As such, they insisted that “in order to properly carry out the task of witnessing…one must understand that one’s experience overlaps with the victims’ but that one is not the victim” (p. 160) and that teachers must acknowledge their role conflict. They offer several principles as initial steps to reduce risk and to apply TIC to education including “being prepared to provide referrals to your institution,” “appreciate how a trauma history may impact…academic performance,” “become familiar with…trauma, retraumatization, and secondary traumatization.” “check any assumptions that trauma is good (or even romantic),” and to “honour the humanity and dignity of both trauma’s victims and those who are learning about them, education must proceed with compassion and responsibility toward both” (pp. 163-4).

Creating a safe and empathetic classroom is crucial for many reasons. It is especially important when more intense or sensitive subject matter is addressed in the learning environment, such as the topic of sexualities. This issue of sexualities is discussed next and is a significant topic that should be explored in school more often and more meaningfully.
Addressing Sexualities in School

Ashcraft (2009 & 2012), Bott (2006), Davis (2005), Finders (2000), Johnson (2015), and Moje and MuQaribu (2003) all explore the importance of incorporating issues of sexualities in the critical literacy classroom despite how difficult this subject matter may seem. However, first, Sarigianides (2014) acknowledges and explores teacher hesitation with addressing sexualities in school. In her seven-month qualitative study, she examines experienced teachers’ reluctance and challenges in reconceptualizing adolescence by “detangling conceptions of sexually innocent youth from promises of the happiness to come from a life lived according to social norms that include youths’ sexual innocence” (p. 1061). The four participants were a predominantly Caucasian group of teachers working at a low socio-economic charter school in the northeastern USA with a population of mainly African-American and Latin American teenagers. The research included teachers from this school meeting for professional development to discuss literature that challenged stereotypes associated with adolescents, including expectations based on bodily processes such as puberty. Data was collected from these workshops as well as from a semi-structured focus group interview and individual interviews, which were audio-recorded.

In her data analysis, she found that teachers struggled with “how to ‘feel’ about conceptions of youth,” such as one who asked, “So, are we supposed to feel happy for pregnant or sexually active teens?” (p. 1067). She also found that teachers had “allegiances to a properly ordered adolescence” and that “teachers expect [YA texts utilized in English classrooms] to espouse didactic messages about living one’s life within conventional views of success” (p. 1069). Such didactic messages did not include “Depictions of happy, sexual youth” which
“countered teachers’ ideas of what kind of adolescent deserved happiness” (p. 1070). Texts that explored sexualities seemed to worry the teacher participants that reading such books would perhaps endorse teen sexual activity and caused anxiety amid educators about being perceived and/or reprimanded for being potentially irresponsible with curricula choices. For example, one participant worried and questioned whether studying a book dealing with sexualities would “function as a ‘ticket to engage in oral sex or something?’” (p. 1073). Sarigianides concluded, “professionals must ensure they take the time to also help adults and youth examine what other conceptual losses seemingly accumulate along the way, and aim to demonstrate that, for already marginalized youth, the gains are worth the losses” (p. 1074).

While Sarigianides asserts that “Scholars studying teachers’ reactions to mandated expectations to teach contested material have shown that teachers’ emotional reactions may prove more ‘jumpy’ or erratic in such circumstances rather than logical or cohesive” (p. 1064), Ashcraft (2012) acknowledges that facilitating such discussions may seem daunting to many educators, calling them “daring” (p. 598). However, she nevertheless argues that they are vital. Ashcraft’s ethnographic research examined a community sexualities program with 14 youth peer educators aged 16-21, and how understandings from this program might inform classroom critical sex education and literacy practices. Her findings suggest that if educators choose to disrupt traditional silences that have surrounded this topic, they may discover that conversations about youth sexualities have the potential to function as powerful resources for building critical literacy skills. For instance, two skills that could be strengthened by these conversations could be interrogating dominant narratives, such as media messages and popular culture, as well as strengthening personal narrative writing skills.
Davis (2005) also advocates for bringing sexualities literatures into the classroom because she believes that sexuality needs to be acknowledged as a core area for adolescent learning, as it is central to the human experience, our society at large, and in how we construct our identities. As such, we need to allow room for important matters related to sexualities such as negotiating emotional terrain in cases of sexuality inequality and sexual violence where feelings of “anger, sadness, humiliation, fear, guilt, and anxiety” (p. 23) might be safely explored. Similarly, Moje and MuQaribu (2003) argue that by making room for discussions about sexualities in the critical literacy classroom, educators “make youth’s experience the centerpiece of literary instruction” and also understand that, “classroom interactions around texts…often include interactions around sexual identity” (p. 205). Additionally, Ashcraft (2005), Moje and MuQaribu (2003), and Finders (2000) all stress the necessity for more research to be conducted on how to purposefully engage learners in critical analyses of literacy practices around sensitive topics, such as issues found in trauma literature. As Finders importantly asserts, “[educators] do not have a language to talk about sexuality…Yet such talk seems necessary because the popular culture that young people consume teaches them particular versions of sexuality- versions edging on violence that often renders girls powerless and boys powerful” (p. 147). Bott (2006) likewise emphasizes that young adult books that deal with sexual content can “provide lifelines for some students” and urges educators to educate themselves about such texts as “there are books being written by insightful authors and being published by courageous publishers that will never make it into the hands of the students who need them, unless we read them first” (p. 29).

Like Davis (2005), who cites sexualities as a core area of study, Johnson (2015) looked at some of the ways that educators can make the most of moments when sexualities issues naturally
arise in the English classroom. As well, she explored how to effectively plan discussions about sex with adolescents in school because “sex is an inevitable part of the English classroom curriculum” (p. 61). In her article, she reflected on her study that took place between 2006 and 2008 where she looked at how teachers and students negotiated identities in their tenth grade English classes. The students’ central project was the production of a student-authored book with the support of a non-profit organization called the Young Writer’s Project (YWP). In their semester-long unit, students “composed individual essays on taboo topics they thought warranted discussion in high school advisories (e.g., addiction, sexual relationships, and youth overburdened with familial responsibilities)” (p. 63). In order to prepare for this writing, students read exemplar texts including teen help books and then talked about their readings and jotted notes. Johnson’s findings from student responses included the primary understanding that, “Work in critical literacy, sex education, and pedagogy emphasizes the importance of identifying and analyzing dominant conceptions of youth and sex operating in texts, counter texts, and social texts” (p. 64). Additionally, she found that teachers could benefit from honouring tricky moments in the classroom such as laughter, jokes, uncomfortable silences, and so forth, alongside the literature (p. 65). She concluded that in her practice, when the topic of sex comes up, she will observe first before responding to her class. By listening and watching to her students before reacting, she can figuring out what prior knowledge exists about sexualities issues and how they are already applying those understandings to how they interact with the literature (p. 66).

Just like choosing to address issues of sexualities in school, it can be a daunting and complicated process to begin to integrate trauma literature into the critical literacy classroom. The next section explores literature on the significance of including narratives that chronicle
Trauma into the curriculum.

**Trauma Literature in English Language Arts**

In a similar vein, several scholars are arguing for the inclusion of trauma literature in the critical literacy classroom, despite the hesitancy that educators may experience due to the sensitive nature of the issues explored. Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortin (2013), Balalev (2008), Crawford (2005), Dutro (2008) and Whitehead (2004) have all made compelling arguments for the significance of trauma literature and how powerful it can be. For instance, Andermahr and Pellicer (2013) examined the representation of female trauma in literature, demonstrating a strong “commitment to [the principle that] the power of storytelling [can] turn traumatic events into narrative memories, which may function as ‘strategies for survival’ at both the individual and collective level” (p. 5). Balalev (2008) is also committed to the assertion that trauma literature can be transformative, a quality of literature that any critical literacy teacher would want to include in the literature of their course offerings. Balalev argues that:

> the trick of trauma in fiction is that the individual protagonist functions to express a unique traumatic experience, yet, the protagonist also functions to represent and convey an event that was experienced by a group of people, either historically based or prospectively imagined. (Balalev, 2008, p. 155)

Next, Dutro (2008) powerfully explores the impact and influence of trauma literature in her study on how responses to literature in urban classroom situate trauma as testimony. She argues that, “to be effective witnesses for the testimonies of our students, we need, in turn, to allow them to be our witnesses – even when it is hard, even when it feels too risky” (p. 424). She reflects on her research with African American children’s gendered reading practices in a Grade 5 urban
classroom where she found that power and performance impacted four female students’ opportunities to engage with the literature, however, in looking back on this work, she now believes that “other stories, hard stories [were]… calling from the corners [and]… required new and different frameworks” (p. 426), perhaps frameworks that position painful stories at the center. Although the participants in this study are far younger than the adolescents in this research project, Dutro’s work importantly demonstrates that these “hard stories” exist in all classrooms, and that perhaps this integration of trauma literature should be done throughout all levels of education to allow for multiple possibilities and entry points for learners to explore narratives that “call[] from the corners.”

Finally, Crawford (2005) argues that English teachers need to begin engaging students more in moral themes by the way of stories of tragic fate and suffering, and then to make connections to “identify contemporary examples of suffering, experience by victims of war and terrorism, families who have lost homes or loved ones to arson, school communities that have been riddled with senseless violence” (p. 77). Next, educators should ask critical questions such as “What account can they provide for the resilience of those who have endured trauma, abuse, and injustice yet do not remain bitter?” and “What account can be provided for those who do become bitter or cynical?” and encourage teachers to “Ask students to identify those factors that enable a person to not only to endure physical or psychological pain but to emerge stronger as a result” (p. 77). She claims that the character education that accompanies traumatic stories is critical for students to witness so that they can either connect with these texts if they have also experienced trauma or learn from these experiences if they have not, and perhaps gain a greater appreciation for the resiliency of the human spirit (p. 101).
Within trauma literature exists a body of narratives addressing violence against women particularly, which is an area of this field that is central to this study. The following section will explore literature addressing the use of feminist pedagogy when integrating stories of violence against women in the classroom.

**Violence Against Women Narratives Viewed through Feminist Pedagogy**

Some scholars have also looked at the importance of addressing sensitive subject matter pertaining to women’s issues in particular, arguing for a feminist pedagogical approach to tackling topics such as gendered violence with youth. Shrewsbury (1997) asserts that feminist pedagogy is characterized by a liberatory environment and that “three concepts, community, empowerment, and leadership, are central to these steps and provide a way of organizing our exploration into the meaning of feminist pedagogy” (p. 168). Crawley, Curry, Dumois-Sands, Tanner, and Wyker’s (2008) work builds on the necessity of using feminist pedagogy with a student-centered focus, calling it “full contact” pedagogy where there is a “greater degree of self-reflexivity about the material, promoting a feminist goal along the way” because “personally relevant material remain[s] with students longer than abstract theories or concepts” (p.15). Durfee and Rosenberg (2009) also take up these features of feminist or ‘full contact’ pedagogy, arguing that we will need to build such liberatory classrooms to support students in crisis in our profession, as learners who find personal connections with more intense course material may be triggered and significantly impacted. These scholars campaign for Advocacy-Based Counseling (ABC), where “the core goal…is to address individual and societal inequalities through empowerment of individuals…[and to] subvert the traditional social service model by shifting the power from the advocate to the survivor” (p. 106). Similarly, Hollander (2005) explores
strategies for teaching gendered violence with an empowerment model where discussions of resistance are worked into every aspect of teaching. She argues that not only do we need to be teaching about violences against women such as battering and sexual assault, but that we need to rework the approach so as to minimize, as much as possible, students feeling scared, pessimistic, hopeless and generally overwhelmed by women’s oppression (p. 777). Lastly, Hesford (1999) also takes up the issue of the importance of exploring traumatic stories, particularly narratives about rape, in her essay on how critics and survivors can productively theorize their own experiences while minimizing or eliminating “the dangers of commodification and retraumatization” (p. 193) by considering how “realist strategies authenticate survivors representations” such as enacting a resistant, “dominant rape script” (p. 197).

In the next section, attention will be turned to the significance of the central text used for this study, the novel *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson. Literary scholars are drawn from here to explore the merits of the text to demonstrate why this story was chosen as a novel study for this research project.

**The Significance of *Speak***

Choosing *Speak* as a central text of study for this project was greatly influenced by a number of scholars and educational professionals. These experts explore the layers of the story’s significance through analyzing its literary qualities, particularly the issues explored in the story, the structure, themes, character development, and symbolism. These scholars and educators make compelling arguments about the narrative through unique interpretations of the text, offering dynamic readings of the story.
Laurie Halse Anderson, the author of *Speak*, has reflected a great deal on the impact of the novel, especially when considering the responses that she has received from readers and educators who have taught the book. In her article she explores the power of story, she describes the “hundreds and hundreds of letters; assigned, unassigned, blog responses, and emails” (Anderson, 2006, p. 5) that she has received regarding *Speak*, many of which are from sexual assault survivors, young people struggling with depression, youth feeling ostracized by their peers and so forth. After questioning why she was being inundated with messages from young people who connected with her book, she realized that “It’s quite simple. In story there is magic, words wound in a spell that mysteriously connects one heart to the next” (p. 6). In an interview, she revealed that of all the books she has written, she is “most proud of the impact of *Speak*, because it has helped so many survivors find the courage to talk about what happened and start to heal and grow” (Kaywell & Anderson, 2008, p. 81). *Speak* is clearly one such story that connects with young readers, even though it may be painful and intense.

Aside from the author, many scholars and professionals can attest to the complexity and power of the novel *Speak* including Detora (2006), Ames (2006), and Latham (2006). To begin with, Detora (2006) commends the novel for its structure that “allows for gradual revelations of a dangerous secret in the course of a linear series of events, reinforcing the truth of the narrative of trauma on a linear narrative” (p. 26). He also calls attention to how the fragmentation of the story carefully balances language and silence, especially through how “Melinda makes a revelation embedded with contradictory speech (or non-speech) acts,” finally admitting that she was raped “in writing, a means of simultaneously speaking and remaining silent” (pp. 26-27). Continuing with this theme of physicality, Detora also analyzes how Melinda effectively displays physical
effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and her efforts to avoid remembering and subsequently, speaking. He points to the powerful motifs of Melinda’s chewed lips, forgetting to shower, weight loss, and feeling faint when witnessing physically traumatic situations such as dissections in biology class and posits that overall, this story emphasizes “the simultaneous compunction to speak and remain silent about sexual trauma, creating a compelling primary focus [that Anderson] handles with sensitivity” (p. 27).

Similarly, Ames (2006) highlights a unique structural choice Anderson makes in the telling of Melinda’s story with the use of the bathroom stall to propel the narrative forward. She argues that this text “highlights the bathroom stall’s ability to turn from sanctuary to politically charged artist enclave” (p. 70). The bathroom stall is used as a public forum in the book, where the graffiti functions both as informative script and what Ames calls “oppositional art” and Ames was subsequently surprised by the power in the messages of the graffiti. She found graffiti to be a significant and unique space for adolescent communication, disclosure, and memoir (p. 71).

Next, Latham (2006) explores the queer subtext of the novel, arguing that this story can be understood as a coming-out story because “she retreats—literally and metaphorically—into a closet in order to keep people from learning the truth and to help her cope with her trauma” (p. 369). Latham asserts that this is interesting because her reconstruction of her identity and the strategies that she uses to perform this work are queer in nature because they “question[] and subvert[] dominant heterosexist assumptions about gender, identity, and trauma” (p. 369) with her ‘closeted’ voice. Like Detora (2006), Latham (2006) likewise illustrates that Melinda displays classic symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and analyzes her strategies to cope with her PTSD, including primarily interrogating dominant narratives about gender, identity, and trauma.
which may be heterosexist in nature (p. 371). For instance, Latham reads Melinda’s closet, a space often understood as significantly symbolic for the LGBTQ community. Her closet is not merely a hiding place, but rather, it symbolizes her lifeline in many respects, as the closet becomes the one physical space in the text where Melinda seems to truly feel as though she can live her life. The closet is a safe haven she turns to when she needs a place to escape, to hide, to cry, and to display some of her most prized possessions such as her Maya Angelou poster (p. 373). Additionally, Latham explores Melinda’s keen awareness and understanding of performative strategies when she does emerge from her closet. For example, Melinda is disturbed by Heather’s performing of her gender during her modelling sessions because she understands, “at least on some level, of this dynamic and a recognition of her own susceptibility to this kind of objectification” and wants to “protect her peers from growing up…perceived violation of childhood innocence that “creeps [her] out” (Anderson 83)” (p. 377). Latham concludes with commending this novel as it depicts a survivor protagonist who affects her own recovery using multiple strategies. The story ends with Melinda recognizing this insight and strength within her.

This novel is clearly a significant, powerfully evocative, and meaningful young adult book that not only addresses important issues for young people, but is also a story with considerable literary qualities. Next, literature concerning the use of this text in the classroom is reviewed.

**Using *Speak* as a Focal text in the Classroom**

Within the community of educators arguing for the use of trauma literature in the classroom, and/or the use of a feminist pedagogical approach, are teachers and researchers who have worked with *Speak*, specifically. As Snider (2014) outlines, some scholars classify *Speak* as
“a young adult ‘problem novel,’ a form of literature which rose to prominence in the 1970s [that] tends to feature first person narrative, an adolescent protagonist, and taboo subject matter” (p. 299). Alsup (2003), Dykstra (2013), Jackett (2007), Malo-Juvera (2014), Park (2012), Sprague, Keeling, and Lawrence (2006), and Xu (2008) all used this text in classrooms and assert that this book is an excellent tool for making learning relevant, meaningful, and critical, while Brauer and Clark (2008) call for a “reframe[ing] of English studies” (p. 299) to study works such as *Speak*. Alsup’s (2003) article on using trauma literature such as *Speak* begins with concerns about intervention strategies for violent youth. She points to English teachers as being at the forefront of helping students to cope with feelings of inadequacy, isolation, and frustration, and how the books that we study in language arts classes are crucial choices, as they can help young people to navigate their sometimes tumultuous lives (p. 158). She draws from Nussbaum (1997), who argues that literature can function as a tool for teaching world citizenship, and perhaps help to build a liberatory classroom.

Alsup continues to discuss how teaching *Speak* can help students find their voices as the main character, Melinda, struggles to find her own after being raped, asserting that *Speak* might “help [teen readers] cope with problems such as dating violence, divisive peer groups and cliques, and feelings of isolation and alienation from school” (p. 162). For instance, Alsup cites Trites (1997) who asserts that voice is essential to girls’ subjectivity, and how “its theme of finding voice (and hence identity and personal power) is one that is mirrored every day in real teenagers’ lives as they seek to become independent, yet integrated, members of their school and home communities” (p. 163). She stresses the dangers of ignoring stories about rape in our classrooms, and that although it may be difficult for educators to address these topics, what is
more dangerous is having some students think that rape is only something that happens to other people, particularly, some girls and women, and has nothing to do with them (p. 165).

In a similar vein, McGee (2009) analyzes the importance of voice in *Speak*, arguing that “Anderson is careful to show that as much as Melinda struggles, she is [not vulnerable, voiceless and fragile] nor purely a victim. Nor is she powerless. In fact, she finds strength *despite* her lack of a traditional ‘voice’” (pp. 174-175). He goes on to assert that there is “a careful dynamic between Melinda’s inner voice, which the reader is provided access to throughout but in a disjointed style, and the spoken or written word, through which adults and others can know her” (p. 183). As a result, the adults misunderstand Melinda in her life, as they label her as aloof, troubled, or even rebellious; but, in true dramatic irony, the readers know the truth about her character. Instead of seeing a sullen teenager, the audience comes to understand Melinda as being a true survivor who bravely manipulates language in her inner dialogue even if she chooses to not share this verbally (p. 183). Recognizing the complexity of the survivor's voice is crucial; as Trites (1997) argued about the necessity to avoid reducing rape to an experience of some, McGee (2009) showcases that the experiences of many are diverse, nuanced, and complicated.

Like McGee (2009), Tannert-Smith (2010) addresses the power of voice through analyzing the structure of Anderson's story, and how this structure reflects the traumatic experience itself. For instance, they argue that Anderson “of necessity has to employ a nonlinear plot and disruptive temporality to emphasize Melinda’s response to her traumatic experience: the novelist has to convey stylistically exactly how her protagonist experiences self-estrangement and a sense of shattered identity” (p. 400). Reflecting back on Caruth (1991) and her work with trauma theory, she asserts that “the traumatized person… carries an impossible history within
them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess” (p. 4). This impossible history that Caruth describes is evident in Speak, as Anderson importantly mimics how disruptive the trauma is to Melinda’s life. Tanner-Smith (2010) goes on to argue that Anderson additionally uses a deliberate intertextual strategy in the structure of the story, particularly through Melinda’s acts of remembering and asserts that “Trauma, acted out as compulsive repetition, is always a contagious, intertextual phenomenon” (p. 402).

In his article, Jackett (2007) similarly argues for the necessity of educators pushing aside their own discomfort with intense subject matter such as sexual assault because “often the things that make us uncomfortable are the things that are the most important for us to teach about” (p. 102). Jackett created opportunities for students to make connections between the novel and the students’ own lived experiences. For instance, he used writing as a tool, asking students to imagine what happened at the party when they first meet the character of Melinda, but don’t yet know what happened to her (p. 103). As well, he encouraged them to make intertextual connections with other complementary texts that he brought in, including articles on common behaviours of youth who are sexual assault survivors. However, he points to the importance of making time for discussion throughout teaching this novel, and reading difficult passages aloud in class, which is reminiscent of Moje and MuQuaribu’s (2003) assertion that classroom interactions around texts are where meaning is created, and are at the center of literacy education. Additionally, Jackett (2007) explored how this novel could be used as a tool to explore a variety of literary theories and encouraged students to consider different perspectives while working through the text. In particular, like Alsup’s (2003) focus on female subjectivity and voice, Jackett points to feminist theory as especially applicable to this study, and the class
analyzed whether or not Melinda would self-identify as a feminist. Jackett (2007) was particularly encouraged that the male students were equally engaged as the female students and that they did not balk at the term “feminism” during lessons (p. 104).

Park (2012) also used *Speak* with urban middle school female readers during a yearlong qualitative study where the female youth participants read *Speak* communally during an after school book club at Harmony School, a “racially socioeconomically and linguistically diverse… in a large Northeastern city” (p. 195) in the United States. In this study consisting of three book club groupings, Park found that working through this text with a reader-response pedagogical approach in a group setting helped twenty-three Grade 7 and 8 girls reach a deeper understanding of the novel and of their peers’ lived experiences. As such, Park argues “public conversations about texts may be more important than private readings of them” (Dressman, 2004 as cited in Park, 2012, p. 193) and as a result, proposes “that teachers of adolescents… create opportunities for students to insert themselves- their ideas, questions, and stories- into a community of readers” (p. 193). The book clubs in Park’s study demonstrate that the female learners engaged in critical dialogue and written response about the novel, such as how “the girls took hold of the text and used it to grapple with difficult questions such as who is responsible for what in cases of sexual violence” and consequently “pondered how to navigate the complex terrain of adolescence and girlhood” (p. 204). Brauer and Clark (2008) further suggest that Melinda’s story functions as a window for conversations that can build community where students can witness and honour one another’s difficult experiences, and that this novel is “a direct opportunity for students to meet and empathize with a peer who has experienced a particular kind of social justice and victimization” (p. 303).
In a similar vein, Sprague, Keeling, and Lawrence (2006) used *Speak* as a novel study and argued that reading it in comparison with another text with similar themes with discussion as a central strategy for learning is a meaningful education experience. They argue that teaching “young adult literature… together [] provide[s] different contexts or lenses into similar issues” (p. 31) because “the opportunity to contrast different worlds, especially when one of the worlds is the reader’s own, is of great help in developing adolescents’ critical consideration of their role and participation in that world” (p. 25). Like Park (2012), who advocates for public conversations about trauma narratives, Sprague, Keeling, and Lawrence (2006) similarly taught *Speak* using a book-club style with a group of Grade 10 honours students and describe a typical day, with the teacher Paul as facilitator, as follows,

Paul sits on the outside of the circle as students begin to discuss Melinda’s home life. The talk is interesting and lively. Many students participate, and the ball moves back and forth among the 30 pupils. Paul stops the discussion after about ten minutes to summarize some of the interesting points that have been made and to suggest that the students move on to the topic of Melinda’s school life. The discussion resumes. At the end of another 10 minutes, about half of the students have contributed something to the discussion. Paul now asks the students to pass the ball around the circle. Students who do not wish to speak can simply pass the ball along; however, this gives everyone one last chance to contribute to the discussion. This strategy results in almost every student contributing a comment. Paul summarizes the main points of the discussion and asks the students to read the next “nine weeks” section of the book by the following week. (pp. 28-29)
Just as Park (2012) and Brauer and Clark (2008) found the power of discussing these stories aloud, Sprague, Keeling, and Lawrence (2006) found that many important themes arose from their analyses of students’ responses including “Friendships are critical to the lives of teenagers,” “Rape and scary things happen, but they can be prevented with care,” “Today people tend to ignore teenager’s behaviours,” “Parents need to talk to their kids, no matter what,” and “Girls are resentful of the way some boys treat them” (pp. 29-30).

Like Sprague, Keeling, and Lawrence (2006), Xu (2008) also used Speak as a novel study in combination with another complementary text; the TV show, Survivor: Africa. Through a New Literacies Studies perspective, a perspective which “recognizes different types of literacy practices in which people are engaged in various social settings (e.g., community, home, shopping mall)” (p. 41), Xu analyzed the hybrid classroom of a Grade 12 remedial teacher named Jana who used her students’ prior knowledge of the television show to enhance the novel study with a focus on intertextual connections. Activities Jana ran with her class included sharing oral responses to the text, with a focus on questions at the beginning of the unit, writing journal entries, making connections to Maslow’s Theory about Human Needs (1943) to Melinda’s experience, considering both the tv show and the novel to create lists of 10 needs for both contestant and Melinda to survive, comparing and contrasting said needs, constructing media collages or survival, and creating a performance art kit on an event from the novel.

Xu analyzed how these activities allowed for a different way in which the struggling students could become engaged in learning. For instance, she found that “two discourse communities were blended nicely to form a new Discourse community within the hybrid space in Jana’s classroom” and that this new community “changed the roles she and her students played”
such as Jana becoming “a student who learned from her students,” “a co-participant,” “a facilitator,” and a “monitor,” while her students became “teacher[s],” “participant[s],” “critical thinker[s],” “producer[s],” and “capable learner[s]” (pp. 53-54). Xu argued that there are many lessons to be learned from this novel study on *Speak*, including that “multimodal texts challenge… the institution of old learning which focuses on “book culture”” and that “the question is not whether struggling students lack an ability to make sense out of a text, but whether multiple opportunities for engagement in purposeful and meaningful literacy practices are available to them” (p. 54).

In a similar fashion, Malo-Juvera (2014) used *Speak* to explore adolescents’ rape myth acceptance and how this could potentially be reduced. This is an exciting study because there has been little research that endeavours to gauge the ability for young adult literature to affect youth attitudes on such constructs. The participants in this experimental qualitative study were 139 Grade 8 language arts students with a balanced gender dynamic who came from a variety of racial backgrounds. The study was conducted over a five-week instructional unit “grounded in reader response-based dialogic instruction about the young adult novel *Speak*” (p. 413). The purpose was to find whether participation in such a unit could decrease adolescents’ rape myth acceptance (p. 420), with rape myth acceptance defined as the “prejudicial stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (p. 412). The findings revealed promising results; it is possible to use youth literature to change adolescents’ attitudes towards rape, as this program “afforded an opportunity to engage students and educators alike in changing…attitudes… [and] also the culture of a school” (p. 422).
Finally, Dykstra (2013) integrated *Speak* in a very interesting educational setting; he used it as a teaching tool for students working towards becoming ministers and spiritual leaders in their communities as a way to train these learners about how to discuss issues of sexualities with the youth they will come to work with. He believed that stories such as Melinda’s “prove a powerful stimulus not only for understanding the struggles of contemporary adolescents but also, more personally and as important, for eliciting and binding up the seminarians’ long-suppressed but still festering emotional wounds from their own adolescent years” (p. 640). He discovered that having his students reflect on their own adolescence, which potentially included painful memories, helped them become more in touch with the youth they counselled and were more emotionally available to them.

In his discussions with his students about the text, what he cited as a consistent focal relationship in the story for his students is the one between Mr. Freeman and Melinda, as his students identified with Mr. Freeman's character. However, a moment in the text that they were particularly sensitive to and uncomfortable with is when Mr. Freeman offers Melinda a ride home from school one day during the winter; he notes that his classes grew anxious at this point in the story and he described how “This reaction comes in one sense as a welcome relief” because it demonstrated “seminarians’ heightened sensitivity to ways authority figures, including, of course, ministers, can abuse the power of their offices. It speaks as well to the absolute necessity of maintaining appropriate personal and sexual boundaries with those in one’s care” (p. 641). Classroom teachers, of course, also carry concern in this regard.

The novel also brings up the issue of talking to youth about sexualities issues, and similar to the hesitations traditional educators have about these discussions, ministers do as well.
However, like Ashcraft (2009 & 2012), Bott (2006), Davis (2005), Finders (2000), Johnson (2015), and Moje and MuQaribu (2003) argued for the case for classroom teachers, Dykstra (2013) similarly asserts that it would be unthinkable for ministers who work with adolescents to avoid conversations regarding sexualities. He goes on to warn that perpetuating silences around the topic is dangerous and he goes on to make the analogy, “A minister’s unwillingness or inability to engage an adolescent around his sexual concerns would be like preventing a bereaved widow from talking about her grief” (p. 642). He concluded that religious institutions need to operate as the novel does; they need to “learn intently first to listen like Mr. Freeman and then, too, like Melinda Sordino, to learn anew to speak” (p. 646).

Now that the central text in this research study has been reviewed, we will turn to the primary tool employed to explore this story; writing. In the next section, the role of writing in both traditional and digital forms will be analyzed as a potentially significant critical response tool.

Writing as a Critical Response Tool

Next, I will discuss research that explores the role of writing, both traditional and digital, as a critical tool within a unit on trauma literature. Dutro (2011) chiefly emphasized the necessity to include trauma literature and create room for difficult, intense subject matter in critical literacy classrooms. Dubbing it the “hard stuff,” Dutro makes a compelling case for incorporating “difficult experiences- exposed wounds and the exposing of wounds” (p. 194) so that it might influence learners to connect with one another more meaningfully, take risks, and provide opportunity for taking stances to resist oppression and systemic inequalities. Dutro’s autoethnographic work came primarily from her context of teaching in urban classrooms where
she centralized difficult, traumatic stories with special attention to issues of class, race, gender, and sexualit(ies), and railed against teacher complacency and discomfort with such narratives because, as she writes, “the hard stories pile up” (p. 196). She was especially interested in testimony and witness, and how learners respond through writing. She used herself as an example, chronicling how cyclically meaningful it was for her to share her writing about feelings of loss and grief with her students. She “…found ways to share [her] writing in ways that exposed the stories that were not easy to tell and, certainly, not easy to hear. [She] kept sharing them, though, because [she] was convinced that they were positively affecting…students’ experiences in the classroom” (p. 204). Her findings signal that teachers need to expand their roles as educators and endeavour to deeply connect with learners, as their difficult stories demand witness.

Returning to Hollander (2000), she likewise advocates for using writing as a healing and teaching tool. In her teaching, she used the strategy of ‘fear journals’ where she “asks the students to keep a one day log of their feelings of fear and use of safety strategies, and then… analyze the role that fear plays in their lives” (p. 193) and has used it “seven times to date” (p. 199) with university students during her role as a sociology professor at the University of Oregon. Though the participants in Hollander’s study are a few years older than the participants in this research project, this study is relevant as the participants in both are close in age and engaged in comparable personal writing practices where they were encouraged to explore difficult emotions and be vulnerable in their writing. Always comparing the reactions between genders, what Hollander typically found is that female students provided extensive descriptions of daily moments of fear while male students rarely experienced fear, or chose not to disclose feelings of
fear. Hollander called the contrast “dramatic” (p.195). Students found that writing about their fears was a surprisingly eye-opening experience for them that they found meaningful; female students were especially surprised by how pervasive fear was in their lives (p. 199). Returning to Dutro (2011), she, like Hollander, argued that “children are made vulnerable every day and some much more than others” (p. 208), but the act of writing down and sharing these moments of vulnerability, fear, and trauma constitute “a plea by an other who is asking to be seen and heard, this call by which the other commands us to awaken” (p. 209).

Alexander and Banks (2004) also point to an important connection between sexuality studies and writing studies, particularly computer-assisted writing. They assert that both fields of sexualities and writing are concerned with issues of space and identity, investigating potentially “safe(r) spaces in our classrooms… and using the notion of sexual literacy as a lens for teaching and research” (p. 276). While their work looked primarily at integrating queer sexualities issues into the computerized writing classroom, this research connects with the aims of my study on integrating trauma literature. They similarly critically analyzed how and why teachers of writing need to continue expanding their multicultural, inclusive classroom concerns because trauma, like sexuality, “…is not just one more thing to add, but is integral to the ways we already conceive of technology and writing, as well as the bodies that produce texts (and are texts themselves) in the writing classroom” (p. 274). Further, Wissman (2008) looked at how young women can harness literacy and language such as poetry as a critical tool to resist being silenced and engage in social critique in schools. During her ten-month qualitative inquiry, she looked particularly at young women in an urban public charter school from diverse ethnic groups. These 16 women, who nicknamed themselves ‘The Sistahs,’ participated for four weeks during her
coordinated after-school program that she was asked to facilitate due to her experience with working in alternative educational contexts. Findings from this study demonstrate that “the students’ poetry and discussions are reflective of their needs and desires to claim agency” and that “[the Sistahs] felt compelled to make these movements throughout their literary…works” (p. 348).

**Writing as a Means of Self-Care & Site for Agency Building**

Writing may also play a significant role in not only helping students critically respond to trauma literature but to also cope with any potentially painful personal connections that they might make with that literature. This opportunity for students to exercise self-care through writing is especially significant when reading literature such as *Speak*, as some learners may relate to some of the more painful textual moments, and consequently explore these responses in their writing. For instance, Jolly (2011) discussed the therapeutic potential of creative writing such as letter writing, including letters written not-to-be-sent, particularly for individuals in “as a part of a program of recovery, in the sense of a treatment aimed at alleviating a physical or mental disorder” (p. 47). This practice could help students with “expressing, sometimes personifying, a hurt or emotion, thus facilitating a sense of agency in the self” (p. 49). Similarly, Wright and Ranby (2009) explored the responses of two counselling practitioner-researchers on the impact of personal journal writing, and the potential for it to function as a therapeutic vehicle as well as a feminist practice. In their article, they focused primarily on how journaling affected their own experiences, particularly “with an eye on gendered injustice and subordination in a social context where patriarchy means women are often not on an equal standing with men” (Fine, 1992; hooks, 1999; Reinharz, 1992 as cited in Wright & Ranby, 2009). In the same
vein, Hamilton (2009) reinforced Wright and Ranby’s assertions about the benefits of feminist use of new technologies such as the blog, and particularly focused on how the internet “has given rise to new forms of… the first person testimony” (p. 86), a potentially liberatory and healing practice.

Sinats, Scott, McFerran, Hittos, Cragg, Leblanc, and Brooks (2005) advocate for the potential of writing to function as a means of self-care for adolescents. In their qualitative research project, they explored “the inner self-awareness and self-presentation of adolescent girls based on excerpts from their own adolescent writings” (p. 17). Six young women between the ages of 11 and 17 years old participated, and their diary and poetry writing was examined with a focus placed on what the writing revealed about the girls’ spirituality and their self-care practices. Similar to Jolly’s (2011) investigation regarding the therapeutic potential in writing, this study also revealed that the participants found that personal writing in the form of the diary “became a place for saying what needed to be said and a space to work through… life struggles” (Sinats et al., 2005, p. 20) and that “writing set aside a place where the writer could make real her experiences, and gave a sense of control over a life that may have felt uncomfortable” (p. 21).

Finally, Jones (2011) argues that writing can be a vehicle for students to use to build agency. Jones used Ortner’s (1999) definition of agency, who considers it to be “a more active projection of the self toward some desired end”; it is that dimension of power that is located in the actor’s subjective sense of authorization, control, and effectiveness in the world (as cited in Jones, 2011, p. 226). Jones argued that writing helps students build a sense of agency that enables them to “see themselves as being able to theorize,” “transfer these capacities to other
areas of their life,” and “develop[] and enhance[]… communication skills” (p. 226).

The Emerging Role of Digital Writing

Lastly, digital literacy practices such as online writing forms such as blogs and threaded discussions might be an especially vital tool when incorporating trauma literature into the critical literacy classroom. Many scholars including Guzzetti and Gamboa (2005), Koutsogiannis and Adampa (2012), Lee and Lee (2006), Nagel and Anthony (2009), and Stavrositu and Sundar (2012) have explored this avenue as a potential learning tool and environment for safe and engaging learning in language arts.

Guzzetti and Gamboa (2005) assert that adolescents use online journaling for “social connection, identity formation and representation, and as a link to school literacy assignments” (p. 168). In their case study, their participants were two adolescent Caucasian females from upper-middle-class areas who had advanced literacy abilities and were selected based on a recommendation by a colleague of Guzzetti’s. Through analyzing data mainly consisting of interviews and observations, they found that the participants made social connections and engaged in important identity work through their online journaling practices. For example, for Janice (pseudonym), “online writing became a means of not only forming and representing one’s own identity” (McCarthy, 2002 as cited in Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2005, p. 186), but also, “shap[ed] and reinforc[ed] others’ perceptions and representations of self” (p. 186). Observed to be a “prolific journaler,” Janice also found this new literacy practice aided her in advocating for herself to gain access to more emotional support as she did not hesitate to disclose her feelings with her online friends (p. 184). Guzzetti and Gamboa concluded that online journaling empowered these adolescents “by providing a means for them to express intense
emotions and ideas as they occurred to become producers, and not just consumers, of texts and culture” (Knobel, 1999 as cited in Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2005, p. 198).

Next, Koutsogiannis and Adampa (2012) explored identities and agencies in adolescent girls’ digital practices using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and a critical discourse framework and aim to understand the complex new media and literacy practices of 2118, 14-16 year old female teenagers from two of the biggest urban centres in Greece (p. 225). Using questionnaires and interviews primarily, their findings suggest that there are gender differences in digital literacy practices, for example, discovering that “girls prefer more school-type digital literacy practices, such as writing personal and school texts by employing digital writing environments” questioning what the researchers cite as a popular the notion that “females are less experienced, inadequate or reluctant users of new technologies” (p. 242).

Returning to a discussion of the therapeutic potential of writing, researchers have also explored how specifically digital writing can positively impact learners’ emotional needs. Nagel and Anthony (2009) examined ‘the art of blogging’ and the emerging practice of people using blogs as a space for social support and self-expression, concluding that blogging should be recognized as an important new learning tool because the practice can help to lead to a better understanding of one’s identity and improved mental health (p. 44). Stavrositu and Sundar (2012) also take up the role of blogging and its potential for empowerment in a study including a survey “conducted to assess female bloggers’ perceived sense of psychological empowerment as a function of the type of blogging and their motivations for blogging” (p. 372). Participants included women sampled from a publicly available web directory listing female-authored blogs and findings provide “solid evidence for self-reported psychological empowerment benefits of
blogging” (p. 376) and further, “direct practical implications for members of marginalized groups (e.g. sexual and ethnic minorities) who can be empowered through the affordances of social media technologies” (p. 383). Huffaker and Calvert (2005) also found in their study, which was comprised of male and female participants who were randomly selected based on their weblogs, that adolescents used weblogs to express themselves and reveal their identities, such as how “gay males used blogs to discuss their sexual identity or to come out” (p. 18). Overall, their findings support the notion that blogging is a promising means of discovering identity and an important site for expressing ideas, experiences, and emotions.

In a similar vein, digital writing in the form of threaded discussion groups could also be a potentially empowering new literacy practice for language arts learners engaging with trauma narratives. As Larson (2008) argues, “online literature discussions have great potential for fostering literacy skills, strengthening communication, and building a sense of community” (Carico & Logan, 2004; Grisham & Wolsey, 2006; Wolsey, 2004 as cited in Larson, 2008 p. 125). For instance, Lee and Lee (2006) found that threaded discussion group online spaces were excellent learning environments for many different types of learners, including students who are considered to be more introverted in a traditional classroom. In their study consisting of 96 recruited undergraduates at a large university in Korea, they found that “extroverted learners can learn by actively posting their opinions when they want to, and introverted learners can think and reflect more when they do not participate in real-time discussions” (p. 85). Considering the sometimes intense nature of trauma literature, threaded discussion groups may be a good choice for a critical literacy classroom reading a book like Speak, as it would allow for some students to take time to process the text and then compose a
response when they feel ready to do so, and create a space where perhaps “extroverted learners are motivated by introverted learners’ analytical and thoughtful discussions, while, conversely, introverted learners’ are inspired by extroverted learners; spontaneous feedbacks and new ideas” (p. 85). Digital writing as a critical tool has a great deal of potential for language arts learners.

Overall, writing in its many forms is a critical tool for helping learners to exercise self-care and to build agency. However, writing is also an important tool that can aid in developing student voice and expression, an issue that will be explored in the following section.

**Developing Student Voice through Writing**

Whether students are engaging in traditional writing practices or more multimodal and digital writing activities, it is apparent that writing can be an important vehicle for students to use to develop and express their unique voices. For the purposes of this research, student voice will be understood as “the expression of individual subjectivity” and is something that “students (and we) can develop with work… it points to ongoing human labour that constructs and reconstructs our selves and our relations to others and the world” (Lensmire, T. & Satanovsky, L., 1998, p. 284).

Of course, student voice is incredibly important for the learner but it is also crucial for the educator to come to know, so that we can better support and assess learning. This is because as teachers and students become acquainted, the writing voice can be key for understanding who they are, which unfortunately, some teachers miss or trivialize, as Whitney (2011) admits in her article. Whitney recalls how at the beginning of her career, she approached voice as “kind of flavouring… like salt” and only noticed voice in language, such as when they used slang or
sounded conversational, like themselves (p. 187). However, through struggling to support a 
reluctant writer named Keith in her class, she realized that he felt his writing voice was being 
stifled and that the voices of experts were being privileged. This realization came chiefly after 
she assigned a research report and Keith seemed to be procrastinating to edit his work. However, 
rather than being lazy, Keith was avoiding communicating someone else’s conclusions instead of 
his own experiences with the topic, A.D.D., a condition he copes with (pp. 184-5). In response, 
Whitney knew she needed to augment her assignment and expectations of Keith’s writing in 
order to allow his voice to be privileged within a field of many, to be read as an expert, and to 
“set his own worldview” (p. 190). In rethinking voice, we can shift our practice to work with 
students to “understand and manipulate voice in the context of an academic discourse in which 
source texts are synthesized, and put to work in service of a writer’s argument” (p. 191).

Many experts have weighed in on the significance of student voice and how to help to 
foster it in the classroom so as to avoid the initial frustrations that Whitney’s student experienced. 
To begin with, Romano (1987), like Whitney, noticed a lack of passion in his daughter’s writing 
voice. A teacher himself, he knows that “without a distinctive voice, no writer will produce 
distinctive writing” and to his dismay, found his child’s voice to be “as bland as the marinara 
sauce served in second-rate restaurants” (p. 7). In order to help support her to find her voice in 
writing, Romano suggests avoiding being severe critics and rather support students to “become 
adept at switching on their own dynamos, at confidently letting their voices move across the 
page” which he believes can be accomplished through daily writing (p. 8). This work to help the 
student find their writing voice connects with ideas presented in a seminal essay “Inventing the 
University” by Bartholomae (1986), who recognized that in an academic setting, a student “must
learn to try on a variety of voices… to write” (p. 4). Elbow (1991) concurs, noting that for post-secondary freshman particularly, “many or even most of their teachers will expect them to write in the language of the academy” (p. 135). Returning to Bartholomae (1986), he goes on to explore how often, students perform in their writing, trying on different discourses as they figure out how to define their writing voices (p. 6). They sometimes find themselves in a context that is beyond them, and they subsequently lose themselves in the discourse of their readers (p. 8) which in turn results in writing that has conformed, lost control, and is uninteresting, much like what Romano was dismayed to see in his daughter’s prose. He suggests that to help students find their authentic writing voices, educators must “lead[] students to believe that they are responsible for something new or original… expect students to be active and engaged” (p. 10).

Gemmell (2008) searched for such a way to help students write something meaningful for them, and to subsequently, help her students to find their unique writing voices. She found that, like Romano (1987) did with practising daily writing habits, having students keep a writer’s notebook was a turning point in her teaching practice. She wanted to find a way to “validate the use of personal anecdotes and observations in [her] academic class” (p. 66). She had her class write daily in their notebooks and prompted students with more informal questions that related not only to the literature being studied, but also to them as people, with the goal to have students share their perspectives in their writing. When asked how this practice helped develop their writing voices, a student named Melissa explained that:

Before, writing was always about concrete details, analyzing, and summarizing. I never felt like my opinion mattered… I learned how to present my opinion in an organized manner… what it means to be passionate about writing and how to
connect the prompt to personal experiences. I know how to include my opinion and express myself with confidence. (p. 67)

This shows that this approach to fostering student voice is doing more than transforming student writing and the overall classroom atmosphere. Gemmell notes that overall, “several students’ self confidence and self-image also begin to change” (p. 68) and that when their writing voices developed, the entire learning environment became a safer, more supportive space for all of their learning. Like Gemmell, Lovejoy (2009) also wanted to help foster student voice differently in her classroom, and so she turned to self-directed writing as she saw it as an opportunity to write with her students. She asserts that self-directed writing fulfills a number of curriculum objectives including providing students with the freedom to write about what matters to them, to create continuous opportunities to write, to create a writing community with critique and revision, and to expand students’ expectations of what ‘good’ writing is (p. 82-85). She concluded that giving the students more control over their writing helped to “enable[] students to discover their voices so as to extend their abilities of writers” (pp. 86-86).

Like Gemmell (2008), Lovejoy (2009), and Whitney (2001), Rector-Aranda and Raider-Roth (2015) looked for a new learning environment altogether to find a better space to help foster student voice and to support them to be empowered by their unique writing voices. In their action-research study, they examined how one online, classroom-based role-play simulation (using JCAT or Jewish Court of all Time) offered 7th-9th Grade students the chance to strengthen their writer’s voices as well as a way in which to develop their sense of agency. They collected data from student and teacher online postings, as well as from interviews with eight students, two teachers, and one project director (p. 5). As a result of this study, they had two central findings.
Firstly, they discovered that through character portrayal online, students were able to enact agency and voice. For example, one student revealed, “…’cause I have the same beliefs as my character… it’s nice to like, be sort of able to add on to his beliefs” (p. 8). When students had to personify someone fictional, they had creative freedom and found agency through the process. Secondly, they also found that due to this increase in a sense of agency and having a writer’s voice, the students were more engaged and felt empowered (p. 6). For instance, students seemed intrinsically motivated to do their best work, like how one teacher noted that the students were “discovering for themselves that… what they put into it would help determine what they got out of it” (p. 9). They also saw that controversial topics lead to further engagement because the students found it exciting to work together to assert their writing voices when they were presented with the opportunity to take agentic action in the simulation (p. 9). What these findings point to chiefly is that educators need to work towards building more innovative curriculum and learning spaces, such as online spaces, that allow for students to have more control over their writing and to be encouraged to speak out through their written responses.

However, it is important to recognize that it may be more difficult for some students to find their writing voices than others, which is what Maguire (2011), Stewart (2010), and Wessels and Herrera (2014) explored. For example, Maguire (2011), looked at the particular needs and struggles of multilingual writers to appropriate new discourses in order to develop their writing identities in English. She urged schools to work to understand how they can best service multilingual writers to ensure that “their writing voices are understood, heard, and respected” (p. 37). In order to do this, she prompted schools to ask themselves whose writing is privileged and why, who is situated at the core and alternatively, at the periphery, which standards of English are
being used to assess proficiency, and overall, whose standards are being used to measure these students? These are some of the items that need to be scrutinized and perhaps reevaluated to better support multilingual learners.

In a similar vein, Wessels and Herrera (2014) explored the role of drawing in the development of the writing voice of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse in their two-year study. They looked at a family literacy program that involved nine midwestern American Latino families from low socioeconomic status comprising of parents and children. Visualization was used as an initial approach to the writing process wherein they created mini novellas. They defined visualization as “the process of creating a mental image and drawing that image before writing” (p. 108). In the project, the families were encouraged to write about a personal experience, choose their own topics, and worked to storyboard their novellas first, creating visual storylines. The students continued to check their initial drawing work while developing their writing voices and some of the illuminating findings from the study is that students needed to be allowed to work at their own pace, that they were provided with plenty of time to pause and revise as they work, and that they need to be encouraged to draw upon their cultural background knowledge to inform their writing voices (pp. 116-117). In this way, anxiety was reduced in students and they were allowed the space to develop their writing voices in their own time.

Stewart (2010) also focuses on language diverse students and the development of student voice in her article that reflects on her study. This study came about because educators began to note a disconnect between how students, in ages ranging from 18 to 75 in two ESOL writing courses in and American community college, verbally told their stories and wrote about them.
Though the ages of the participants are widely varied, this study is significant for this research as just as the literacy abilities of the participants are diverse, so to are the literacy abilities of the participants in this research study; although my students are all streamed into an academic course, their abilities vary greatly and several students are not mindfully placed in classes despite the recommendation of the school.

Returning to Stewart’s study, as a result of the noted disconnect, curriculum changes had to be made and so the focus of the course became immigration, a common experience of all of the students, and this theme proved motivating for students to work towards creating a class anthology on the subject (p. 269). Stewart was also careful to avoid separating reading from writing in the courses, and chose novels, poetry, essays, illustrated books, and short stories that represented an authentic immigrant experience (p. 274). She found that a major motivator for writing and developing a unique writer’s voice came from the end goal to produce a publishable piece of work. For instance, one student remarked that they hoped their voice could help others who have similar experiences as well as to help widen understanding and compassion among "white people," commenting that “I hope our writing can help Americans understand that we like them, we are human beings and we are here to work hard and to do good things for their country” (p. 276). Clearly, Stewart’s students did not feel heard in their lives and this writing project helped them to find a vehicle for their voices, perhaps surprisingly, through writing.

A writing voice is certainly an important issue to consider when looking at students’ writing practices, whether they are writing traditionally or in a more multimodal fashion such as with digital writing activities. It is apparent that writing can be an important vehicle for students to use to develop and express their unique voices.
Conclusion

Whenever teachers and learners confront trauma, there are many elements that need to be considered so that students feel supported in their learning, meaningfully engaged, and safe in their explorations. It was my goal with my research question, “In what ways do grade ten students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives?” and my sub-questions, that the benefits of risk-taking to include trauma narratives are worth the while of educators, as these stories have potential to build critically literate classrooms with students who recognize themselves as knowledge holders, meaning makers, and compassionate global citizens. In the following chapter, I review the methodology used in my research to better understand the potential of trauma literature and digital literacy as an impactful response outlet for students, as well as discussing the data collection and analysis process.
Chapter Three
Methodology

In Chapter Three, an overview of qualitative research, case study research, and narrative methodology will be conducted, as well as their connections to the design of this research project. Next, the teaching approach utilized for this study will be explored. This exploration will include a description of the trauma literature studied in the course leading up to the project because these texts were chosen deliberately to assess students’ readiness for the *Speak* unit. Following the teaching approach section is a description of the setting of the study including the school site, the position of myself as the teacher researcher, the participants, and the recruitment process. The data collection process follows, with an overview of the varied data used including field notes, blogs, threaded discussion groups, social media platforms such as Instagram™, Poll Everywhere™, Wordle™, and Ask FM™, traditional ‘tickets out the door,’ and data from the focus group. Once a detailed overview of the varied data is provided, the data analysis process is detailed, including the preliminary processes for developing categories, and the categories that emerged from the data. Overall, Chapter Three is a complete synthesis of the methodology, pedagogical approach, setting, data collection including the process, and an overview of the data analysis process for this project is provided.

Qualitative Research

As Hall (1990) asserts, “Since humans are very complicated, qualitative research has been proven valuable within the realm of education” (Hall, 1990, p. 54). Qualitative research allows us to “explore basic human processes, develop and verify theory, and enact social change” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 10). Qualitative research is crucial for educators because it provides ample
opportunity for reflection (Hall, 1990, p. 55) and also importantly includes the researcher’s discussion of their role. For instance, as Kincheloe (2002) asserts, teacher researchers grow more self-aware and the result is “a synergistic cycle - a cycle which grants them more insight into the issue being investigated” (p. 71).

In addition to these components, Creswell (2014) determines that important characteristics of qualitative research include having the research conducted in a natural setting, recognizing the researcher as a key instrument, using multiple sources of data, undertaking both inductive and deductive data analysis, keeping the focus on the meaning that the participants hold, there is room for emergent design and reflection, and the attempt to develop a complex, holistic account of the study (pp.185-6). Thus, the natural setting for this project is my classroom space. Due to the sensitive nature of the central text, I also knew that my role as a researcher was key because I had to be very mindful with addressing traumatic topics. This was important because, as Hays and Singh (2012) argue, “Qualitative researchers approach the setting with an intention to become immersed and to forget their expert status. They are accepting of and empathetic toward individuals, groups, and communities within that context” (p. 4). As such, educators must remember to teach a group of individuals rather than a class: “participants are best understood holistically rather than by the sum of their parts” (p. 7). This focus on teaching individuals also speaks to how an important element of the role of a researcher is the necessity of having empathy. Gair (2012) addresses the centrality of empathy and posits that empathy should be a goal of qualitative research, defining it as a quest to “hear, feel, understand, and value the stories of others, and to convey that felt empathy and understanding back to the client/storyteller/participant” (p. 139). Certainly, having an empathetic approach is advantageous for researchers.
and participants alike as it will enrich “research experiences and … representation[s] of participants' stories” (p. 141).

Creswell’s emphasis on the importance of using multiple sources of data and inductive and deductive data analysis is also reflected in this project. Valuing student choice reflects the important characteristic of qualitative research to keep the focus on the meaning that the students hold. Further, in order to begin to enact empathetic measures that Gair (2012) calls for, teacher researchers must remember to make time to praise participant efforts. Hatch (2002) also reminds teacher researchers that it is important to acknowledge and “recognize the discipline and effort it takes to sit and write” and implores teacher researchers to remember that “honest expressions of appreciation go a long way to making participants feel like their contributions are valued” (p. 143).

Qualitative research is undoubtedly an excellent vehicle for learning about education, and was a natural approach for this project due to its emphasis on reflection, its promotion of the awareness of a researcher’s role and position, conducting research in a natural setting, using multiple sources of data, and privileging the participants as meaning-makers. This qualitative research is a case study, and the importance of this methodology will be explored in the next section.

**Research Design**

**Case Study**

Case study research is an important methodology to use in education research because it has the potential to enhance our understandings of our teaching contexts, learning communities, and individual learners. As such, it can help enable teacher researchers to capture the complexity
of learning within a bounded unit. Case study is defined by Stake (1995) as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). Stake goes on to describe case study as “an integrated system. The parts do not have to be working well, the purposes may be irrational, but it is a system” (p. 2).

Similarly, Yin (2013) also asserts that the “classic case study consists of an in-depth inquiry into a specific and complex phenomenon (‘the case’), set within its real-world context” (p. 321). A few key elements of case study include; that it is conducted in a bounded unit, located within a specific community, that it involves building relationships between the case and a larger learning community, and also, that the researcher spends time within the context of those being researched. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier suggest that there should also be a focus on collecting rich and varied data, and that the data needs to be triangulated (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013, pp. 11-12). Data triangulation is defined as “a methodological approach that contributes to the validity of research results when multiple methods, sources, theories, and/or investigators are employed” (Farmer, Robinson, Elliot, & Eyles, 2006, p. 377). Thus, this project is a case study of a set of lessons on the novel Speak and its influence on students, as well as the influence of several complementary texts that also focus on the topic of sexual assault. It is also a project that analyzes students’ written responses, particularly their digitally written responses as well as their responses on social media platforms.

Case study research was an appropriate approach to answering my research questions because I ultimately had a limited amount of control over the behaviours studied, such as the writing that my students produced (Yin, 1994 as cited in Duke & Mallette, 2011, p. 22). As Yin (2013) argues, there are a vast number of variables in any study and “because of the complexity
of the case” we must “embrac[e]… the contextual conditions” (pp. 321-322). This embracing of contextual conditions especially resonated with me as I knew that I was introducing some intense subject matter with students who live in a culture where, from what I have observed in my six years of teaching at this school site, conversations about such topics as assault, gender issues, power issues, and so forth, are not usually privileged. While I hoped that the texts presented would illuminate new understandings that would perhaps manifest themselves in their writing, I only have so much influence over their writing. For instance, I certainly do have more control as compared to an external researcher because I can set expectations regarding the curriculum outcomes and set up work so that students are especially responding to the literature. However, I tried to do as Yin suggests and embrace the contextual conditions and integrate as much of their ‘culture’ as possible. For example, I used technologies that they are already using and brought in additional texts that they might have felt more connected to, such as hockey player Theo Fleury’s memoir, Playing with Fire (2009) so that they hopefully felt more capable to respond.

Ultimately, their unique perspectives as expressed through their individual writing voices is not something that I want to control, but I did hope to meaningfully influence them chiefly through text choice and writing tasks. In the same vein, because this case study is located within a specific school community, the culture of the larger local community and its influence on the learners is also out of my control. For instance, this small city is known as something of a ‘hockey town,’ where many students participate in organized leagues and/or are fans of the game. This cultural element is what inspired me to bring in Theo Fleury’s story, as mentioned above. He had spoken to our student body in previous years, and is admired by many students.
Thus, what I could control is designing a program of studies that promotes empathy and relationship building for the learners.

As a result, in order to execute a purposeful and engaging learning and research experience, I used case study design. In order to complement and enhance my case study design, I chiefly employed narrative methodology in order to best explore the research questions of this project.

**Narrative Methodology**

Narrative methodology is also aimed at understanding social context, however, it concentrates on individuals within a context rather than the context itself (Kitchen, 2006, p. 255). This focus on individuals rather than a collective is complementary to teaching as educators endeavor to teach individuals rather than just classrooms. Narrative methodology has been employed for the data analysis portion of this study and was a natural choice because as de Mello (2007) reminds us, “…bringing…personal stories to teaching and by using…teaching experiences to reflect on the everyday situations…faced, narrative inquiry seem[s] to offer a way to think about what [we teachers] try to do” (p. 204). Stories certainly have a capacity for action, are a potential site for agency building, and are a vehicle with which to make meaningful connections for learning. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, “Narrative inquiry is the study of experience” (p. 189). They connect this methodology back to John Dewey’s teachings because “as [he] taught, [experience] is a matter of people’s relations contextually and temporally… It is people studying with people in relation” (p. 189). Bell (2002) similarly highlights the advantage of narrative research in that it allows researchers to “understand experiences…[and] illuminates the temporal notion of experience, recognizing that one’s understanding of people and events
changes” (p. 209). Thus, in using narrative methodology, relationships are crucial so that power can shift fluidly between the researcher and the participants simultaneously sharing and re-sharing individual and collective lived experiences. This shifting of power is especially important as one of the central goals of this study is for participants to experience empowerment and a sense of agency through developing their writing voices in their responses to the literature. As Kim (2008) argues, “Narrative research challenges and problematizes the nature of knowledge as objective and questions unitary ways of knowing” (pp. 251-252). Narrative methodology thus opens up new ways of knowing, such as through connecting stories and experiences, and “There are also studies that describe how significant narrative inquiry is in helping prospective teachers make connections between the students’ lives and the classroom, and understand the interrelationships between narrative, pedagogy and multiculturalism” (Clark & Medina, 2000; Grinberg, 2002; Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005 as cited in Kim, 2008, p. 252).

Another primary reason why narrative methodology was used for this project was because, like case study research, it also has a considerable amount of flexibility that is not readily offered by other qualitative approaches. This flexibility is advantageous because it allows for a myriad of possibilities in terms of interpretations. One example of how narrative research offers multiple outcomes which was especially vital for this project is how it often finds its direction through the stories of the participants, as outlined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). For instance, they present researcher JoAnn Phillion in their text as an example of the flexible nature of this methodology. She felt “swamped” by the “complexity of the field experience” and thus realized that “what she was studying… will not be the same phenomenon that figured so clearly in the proposal” (p. 125). The complexity that Phillion encountered coincides with the
ideas of Kitchen (2006) who asserts, “Narrative inquiry is an intense, uncertain, and time consuming form of educational research” but is nevertheless an avenue for “developing hindsight accounts that convey the complexity of lived experience” (p. 263). Like teaching, which demands daily flexibility, narrative research similarly demands constant questioning, reflection, and an ongoing process of reconsidering approaches and representations of stories.

The opportunity to collaboratively create meaning is yet another central feature of narrative research and a characteristic that made it a natural choice for this project. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) speak to the benefits of the collaborative meaning-making nature of narrative methodology as they claim that “working with participants shapes what is interesting and possible under the field circumstances” (p. 73). Bell (2002) concurs with this, asserting “[narrative research] requires close collaboration with participants and a recognition that the constructed narrative and subsequent analysis illuminates the researcher as much as the participant” (p. 210). However, perhaps most importantly, Bell goes on to argue “narrative also offers teachers the possibility of understanding their students in new ways” (pp. 210-211).

Next, narrative methodology was an especially appropriate methodology because, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) reflect, “As narrative inquirers, we share our writing on a work-in-progress basis with response communities” (p. 60). This emphasis on process is exactly the structure and the experience that that I wished to create for my students. This methodology places emphasis on writing and particularly, on shared writing where we “ask others to read our work and to respond in ways that help us see other meanings that might lead to future retellings” (p. 60). The making of stories public is a central theme of Speak, just as it is a central characteristic of narrative inquiry. Further, while students were not active co-researchers, this
positioning of narrative and writing as important and as something that must be shared is not only for the participants but rather, it forces the teacher researchers to also be vulnerable and share their stories as well.

Lastly, narrative methodology was an appropriate approach for this project because in using this lens, a researcher can employ Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) metaphor of three-dimensional space, “a space in which narrative inquirers would find themselves, using a set of terms that pointed them backward and forward, inward and outward, and located them in place” (p. 54). They argue that with this metaphor, one of the possibilities for a researcher’s understanding is to create an analytic frame for the grand narrative that turns the stories into a “set of understandings” (p. 54). It is with this metaphor that narrative methodology was used in the presentation of findings in Chapter 4, as the narratives created by both myself and the participants through chiefly their written responses, led to a critical set of understandings about how trauma literature functions in a secondary English classroom. For instance, Clandinin (2006) elaborates on this metaphor, arguing that working in this three-dimensional inquiry space “highlights the relational dimension of narrative inquiry” as narrative researchers: “cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into participants’ experiences, their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process” (p. 47). This immersion of the researcher into the work especially became critical when I explored the findings in Chapter 4, as autobiographical writing became an important piece of foundational work. Thus, story as field text and autobiographical writing as field text will be further explored in the next chapter, as “field texts [were] placed in three-
dimensional narrative inquiry space both as they are composed in the living and telling and later as they are placed within the research text created through the inquiry” (p. 51).

Narrative methodology was a natural fit for this project and was the best lens to use for exploring the participants’ responses to literature, as it is an approach that works towards privileging and honoring the lived experiences of individuals. In order to prepare for a project using this methodology, a deliberate teaching approach was employed to support this work, which will be discussed in the next section.

**Teaching Approach**

The teaching approach for this project, as well as the grade ten program as a whole, was purposefully structured to introduce different trauma literature texts to learners before finally concluding the program with the *Speak* unit. Laying the groundwork for this project with the texts studied previous to *Speak* was just as important as preparing for the *Speak* unit itself.

Firstly, the learning outcomes that were addressed in this unit design included the several of the general learning outcomes as outlined by the Alberta Education Program of Studies for English Language Arts in grades 10-12 (Alberta Education, 2003). Key outcomes that were highlighted in this study include exploring thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences, to comprehend multiple types of texts and respond in a variety of manners including personally, creatively, and critically, to create texts and through this creative process, to improve thoughtfulness and communication, and finally, to collaborate effectively and respectfully. Perhaps most important of these general outcomes was to consider new perspectives while exploring thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences, such as analyzing and evaluating how various topics, themes, and texts influence understandings, attitudes, and aspirations.
Next, previous to reading *Speak*, students began the year by studying the novel *The Fault in our Stars* (Green, 2012) a story about two adolescents with cancer who fall in love while navigating the terrifying possibility that one of them might lose their fight with their disease. The story deals with chiefly with themes of grief, loss, and depression. This is certainly not an easy story to read. It is perhaps more immediately accessible as compared to *Speak* because of its recent success as a motion picture adaptation. Students were not apprehensive about starting this novel because they already had some idea about what the story entailed: however, it was important for me to make note of students who were struggling with the difficult themes.

Next, students studied Shakespeare's classic tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*, a story largely about love and loss, violence, turbulent and abusive family relations, and to some extent, the threat of sexual assault and harassment. This threat was highlighted in our reading of the play so as to briefly introduce this theme to students before tackling it in large part in *Speak*. Students certainly expected Shakespeare to be challenging in terms of understanding but they were certainly a bit taken aback by some of the more troubling scenes, particularly where violence against women came up in the story. However, these moments were important for me to ‘test the waters’ and see how students responded to this subject matter before focusing on it with *Speak*. This deliberate design helped me to, as Stake (1995) argues, “understand how the… people being studied, see things” (p. 12). Observing and understanding how students responded to other trauma narratives helped me to better facilitate a safer learning environment, know which students I needed to check in with to see how they were doing, and allowed me to in many respects, expedite relationship building as we delved into intense subject matter throughout the semester and not just during the research unit.
The lessons in the *Speak* unit ran as follows (Table 1):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson Agenda:</th>
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| May 13, 2015  | Introduction to *Speak*:  
• The ‘Can’t Do’ List Activity  
• Video Clip: *Speak* film preview  
• Video clip of Laurie Halse Anderson discussing *Speak*
• Begin reading (aloud)  
• Reflect on the first few pages (class discussion) |
| May 14, 2015  | Making Personal and Thematic Connections:  
• High School Lies Activity  
• Poll Everywhere Activity with thematic questions  
• Continue reading |
| May 19, 2015  | ‘Headlining’ *Speak*:  
• Continue reading  
• Write Headlines for *Speak* to check understanding  
• Current Event Connection video  
• Current Event Connection public blog response |
| May 20, 2015  | Blogging Project Debut:  
• Continue reading  
• Introduce Blog Writing Assignment  
• Survivor Love Letters personal blog response |
| May 21, 2015  | What Do You Stand For? Lesson:  
• What Do You Stand For? Public blog response and class discussion  
• Continue reading  
• Continue writing Survivor Love Letters personal blog response  
• Introduce the enrichment ‘Extragram’ Visual Analysis Project  
• For Extragram participants: Post a picture of a space that makes you feel ‘at home.’ |
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson Description</th>
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| May 22, 2015| **Bystanders Lesson:**  
  - Continue reading  
  - Video Clip of Ontario Govt.’s “When You Do Nothing” PSA  
  - Bystander Challenge Activity  
  - Continue writing Survivor Love Letters personal blog response |
| May 25, 2015| **Character Analysis Focus Lesson:**  
  - Choose an App for a *Speak* Character public blog response  
  - Continue reading  
  - *Speak* Character Diary personal blog response  
  - For Extragram participants: Post a picture of where you feel the most fear in the school |
| May 25, 2015| **Character Analysis Focus Lesson (continued):**  
  - ‘Ticket-out-the-door” Ask FM Questions Activity  
  - Continue reading  
  - Continue writing Diary personal blog response |
| May 27, 2015| **Reading Comprehension Check-In:**  
  - Visit from Third Party Recruiter  
  - Continue writing Diary personal blog response  
  - Reading Comprehension Quiz  
  - Analyzing Picasso Paintings  
  - For Extragram participants: Post a picture of a personal item that you treasure. |
| May 28, 2015| **Debut Digital Literature Circles in Threaded Discussion Groups**  
  - Title Acrostic Challenge public blog response  
  - Continue writing Diary personal blog response  
  - Choose group members for TDGs |
| May 29, 2015| **Digital Literature Circles in Threaded Discussion Groups**  
  - Work in TDGs for the period |
| June 1, 2015| **Healthy Relationships Lesson**  
  - What Do You Need for a Healthy Relationship? Public blog response  
  - Continue reading  
  - Intertextual Connections with Poetry personal blog response  
  - For Extragram participants: Post a picture of a screenshot of a text message that you sent to someone you care about and thank them for being an ally to you. |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 2, 2015</td>
<td>Consent Lesson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Read “A Night to Remember” Chapter from <em>Speak</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What is Sexual Assault? Mini Lesson</td>
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<td>- Consent Activity</td>
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<td>- Video Clip on Consent</td>
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<td>- Sexual Assault: Myth or Fact? Challenge</td>
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<td>- TED Talk Video Clip: Jackson Katz’s “Violence Against Women- It’s a Men’s Issue”</td>
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<td>June 3, 2015</td>
<td>Photography Connection Lesson:</td>
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<td>- Video Clip: “Project Unbreakable”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “Project Unbreakable”: Photography Connection and Word Cloud Creation public blog response</td>
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<td>- Continue reading</td>
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<td>- Video Clip: “Tea Consent” Analogy</td>
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<td>June 4, 2015</td>
<td>Male Experiences with Sexual Assault:</td>
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<td>- Video Clip: “People You May Know” Spoken Word Poem</td>
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<td>- Video Clip: Theo Fleury Victim Impact Statement</td>
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<td>- ‘Ticket-out-the-door’ Placemat Activity with Theo Fleury Quotations</td>
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<td>- Continue reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 5, 2015</td>
<td>Digital Literature Circles in Threaded Discussion Groups:</td>
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<td>- Work in TDGs for the period</td>
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<td>- For Extragram participants: Post a picture of someone’s shoes (for anonymity) and ask them what their best advice is.</td>
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<td>June 10, 2015</td>
<td>Protest Lesson:</td>
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<td>- Suffragette History Mini Lesson</td>
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<td>- Video Clip: Film preview for <em>Suffragette</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Current Event Connection: Carry That Weight public blog response</td>
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<td>- Continue reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 11, 2015</td>
<td>Conclude <em>Speak</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ‘Ticket-out-the-door’ Questions for Trauma Answers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Finish reading <em>Speak</em></td>
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<td>- Video Clip: YouTube’s Joey Salads Harassment Social Experiment</td>
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<td>- Video Clip: “What Would You Do?” on Street Harassment</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 12, 2015</td>
<td>Reading Comprehension:</td>
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<td>- Unit Test</td>
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The setting for this teaching including a discussion of the school, as well as the position of the teacher researcher, the participants, and the recruitment process for this project, will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

**The Setting of the Study**

**The School**

The setting was a high school in a small city in Alberta. In our building, we strive to create an inclusive community, foster a culture of collaboration, responsible citizenship, and mastery learning in order to help our students develop 21st Century competencies. We encourage integrating new educational technology, collaboration between students and among staff, a focus on process during assignments and projects, and we work to develop flexible learning environments so as to encourage and support personalized mastery. All of these practices are reflective of an ongoing provincial curriculum redesign initiative. Over the past three years, our school has been endeavouring to transform our leadership, teaching, and learning through a graduated and gradual transition to meet the expectations of the redesign initiative. This redesign is aimed at developing our learners to be more empowered to take on leadership roles in their classrooms, schools, communities, and our global community after they graduate.

The first key focus in this school that particularly impacts this research project is the implementation of personally owned devices and the accompanying efforts made by educators to utilize said technology in their lessons by integrating apps, digital writing, and so forth into their programs. To ensure that this research project aligned with the education plan of the school, I endeavoured to include many opportunities for students to use their personally owned technologies in class including their laptops, tablets, cell phones, and music devices. If students
did not have a personally owned device, our school has set up a lending service of laptops through our Learning Commons. This laptop lending service ensures that all students have access to the technologies that they need for their learning. As a result of this school initiative, students had immediate and timely access to new online learning tools, such as Google Apps™, Blogger™, Instagram™, and PollEverywhere™, which were all used in this project. This initiative was also supported during the time of this research project by the expertise of an Instructional Coach who was on site in the building. As a result, learning continues to become more blended, dynamic, and flexible.

The next area of focus in this school is integrating more collaborative learning opportunities such as inquiry and project-based learning and design thinking. A significant element of this shift entails fostering positive relationships with our students. Much of this shift requires a great deal of risk-taking on the part of both the teachers and the learners, much like the risk-taking required for the implementation of critical literacy, as discussed in Chapters One and Two. As such, we greatly focus our attention on building trusting relationships with our learners and building classrooms based on an ethic of care and empathy. As our staff learned during a two-day workshop on design thinking and project-based learning, this teaching and learning approach calls for empathy as a foundation for whatever work we engage ourselves in. Similarly, our writing assignments are always focused in some way on connection and response, as our provincial exams require intertextual work. These exams, conducted in both Grade 9 (Provincial Achievement Test or PAT) and 12 (Diploma Exam), are comprised of both written and reading comprehension components for English Language Arts. For the written components especially, students are presented with a selection of texts to use for their essay responses, and are also
instructed to draw upon their learning from the texts they studied in their courses. With all these
texts, the students need to make thematic connections between the stories as well as their own
personal experiences. Thus, focusing on making connections to real-world applications and
finding authentic audiences for our learning greatly informed the entire semester’s curriculum
design.

While the school is an excellent site for progressive learning, it is of course, not without
its challenges and in turn, these challenges do impact the findings in this research project. The
first and foremost area of concern is our class compositions. There are a growing number of
students who are not performing well, and yet are choosing to enrol in academic courses
regardless of their prerequisite grade or what program their previous teacher recommended for
them. As a result, an increasing number of students in university preparation courses are
significantly struggling. Unfortunately, assisting these students takes time away from students
who excel. In addition to this composition issue, we also have growing class sizes, which
continues to put a strain on teachers and learners alike. With 40 or more students in many
classes, it remains to be very difficult for our educators to sufficiently support all learners to
reach their personal best. Teachers in our Humanities department (English Language Arts Social
Studies, World Religions and Philosophy) in particular are collectively worried about providing
the meaningful and timely ongoing feedback and personalized support for so many students.

Next, while our teachers maintain a dedication to our school’s culture of excellence for
our learning, we continue to notice a trend of students working to do “enough” rather than their
best work. This attitude is especially challenging while working to integrate practices such as
project-based learning where the philosophy is that the work we are doing is never actually
complete. Fostering this philosophy of life-long learning with our learners continues to be a challenge as our students prioritize commitments outside of school such as part-time work and helping out with their families. Many of the students that we service are from a low socio-economic population. Understandably, our learners today have more responsibility than ever before. We recognize that our 21st Century learners continue to be very busy individuals and so we continue to search for ways to connect, engage, and motivate them in their learning.

**The Teacher Researcher**

It is crucial for a researcher to be explicit of their frame of reference because “A study's theoretical orientation, its focus and its procedures in themselves are interpretative” (Willig, 2014, pp. 147-8). Also, as Thoresen and Ohlen (2015) conclude following their intersubjective work in the “particularly challenging” (p. 1589) field of death and dying in palliative care, there is an explicit link between a researcher’s personal experiences and knowledge development as such “lived experiences during fieldwork can trigger new research questions… new insights and… layers of meaning” (p. 1596). As such, my personal, theoretical, emotional, and conceptual investments will be clearly outlined in this section as they influenced coding, reflecting, and determining results.

Firstly, I approached this research as I do my teaching - from a social constructivist perspective. In my practice, I believe that it is essential for the focus to be on the students as learners with their own funds of knowledge rather than the teacher as being regarded as the sole expert. Especially with the intense subject matter of this study, it is essential that students feel as though what they say and write using their own experiences and understanding is important. This validation for students is particularly essential if they feel they are taking a risk to share their
responses, which in some cases may be veiled disclosures, so that they do not experience
dysphoria, or develop what Vygotsky (1993) called a “secondary disability;” a feeling of
inferiority that can be “debilitating” (Vygotsky, 1993 as cited in Smagorinsky, 2013, p. 195). In
order to avoid dysphoria, I took great care to structure my classroom so that empathy is a focus
throughout the year. I had to work to develop positive, trusting relationships with my students
and establish a space where learners “know how to treat others respectfully in order to promote
*feelings of inclusion* that enable them…” (Smagorinsky, 2013, pp. 195-96) leading up to this unit.

As Daniels (1996) argues about learning, it “involves the whole person… a relation to social
communities - it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person…to ignore this
aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of
identities” (Daniels, 1996, p. 147). This class culture encouraged students to support one another
in constructing their own meanings, to understand that this personal construction of knowledge is
an active and ongoing process, and to learn from one another while taking care to respect and
honour each other’s cultures and experiences.

As stated in my Theoretical Underpinnings section in my discussion of feminist and
gender studies theory, feminist and gender studies theorists such as Audre Lorde have had a
major influence on me as a teacher and also as a teacher researcher. Lorde’s experiences with
education have deeply impacted how I think about my students, and the need for creating a
critical classroom as she admits that despite being such a renowned feminist voice now, “When I
went to high school, I found out that people really thought in different ways, perceived, puzzled
out, acquired information, verbally… I never read my assignment… I missed a lot of stuff, a lot
of my own original workings” (Lorde, 1981, p. 716). She goes on to reveal that despite a lack of

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connection with literature in the classroom, she “was constantly reading, but not things that were assigned. And if I read things that were assigned I didn’t read them the way we were supposed to” (p. 716). Students engage with narratives that speak to their lived experiences. Trauma literature is an important genre for the classroom, as it often chronicles stories that are difficult, but are nevertheless necessary and relatable and appealing.

Finally, the subject of trauma literature is of particular interest due to my own lived experiences and what I consider to be valuable. Growing up, I often felt that what I was reading in school seemed somehow ‘sanitized’ or ‘safe.’ I never encountered characters with whom I felt I could easily connect with or struggled with some of the issues that my peers or I did. Unfortunately, growing up in a conservative and predominantly Caucasian small farming town in southern Ontario did not seem to encourage explorations of the critical literature that revolved around issues of gender, race, or class. Rather, I found my teachers avoided controversial material or interpretations of texts. As a result, although I was a happy and capable student, I found that I turned to literature outside of the classroom to make meaningful connections with, much like the scenario that Lorde (1984) described. Studying literature became a more fulfilling experience for me during my English undergraduate degree, particularly during a seminar course on First Nations literature where we read many stories, especially from female writers, who had been struggling in silence because they were told to keep their problems private within their families. This emphasis on privacy and silence surrounding familial struggle is something that resonated with me and I found that reading such trauma literature provided an opportunity to connect and respond to literature in a way that I had not done before.
Later in my life, as I encountered difficult times, I often reflected on and returned to some of those texts to remind me of what strong survivor voices ‘sound like’ in writing. I similarly found that I drew strength and wonderful moments of learning through connecting with female sexual assault survivors during my work as a hotline crisis counselor, as discussed in Chapter One. Sharing your story and having your experiences heard and valued is incredibly powerful. What troubled me, however, was the number of young women, many teenagers, who called the hotline and blamed themselves, not really understanding that they had been abused and that it was not their fault. All these experiences drive me to bring trauma literature into the classroom so that young people have a safe place to learn about these difficult but crucial lessons.

The Participants

The participants in this study were 25 students, aged 15 and 16, from two grade ten academic English classes. There were 16 female participants, 8 male participants, and one self-identified gender fluid participant. There were 20 Caucasian participants (80%) three Asian students (12%) and two Hispanic students (8%). Two of the Asian students and one of the Hispanic students were from and identify with a multiple racial background. At this school, the novel *Speak* is a novel study option for the grade ten English Language Arts curriculum, and therefore, it was the placement of the trauma literature text in the grade ten curriculum that constituted the focus on grade ten students for this study.

Recruitment

The recruitment process for this project was carefully considered, especially because it is focused on analyzing the responses of minors, and students with whom I have a power-over relationship in my role as their teacher. Thus, I was mindful of what Miller and Bell (2012)
argue, that consent must be “ongoing and renegotiated between researcher and researched throughout the research process” (p. 61). Therefore, the precursor to the recruitment process was completing a detailed ethics form, including a request for modifications form (see Appendix A) and gaining approval prior to data collection. As well, I applied for permission to conduct research through my school principal and school board. I submitted a separate proposal with an Application to Engage in Research/Evaluation to my school board (Appendix B) through the director and the school board’s Research Review Committee. This research is also a part of my Professional Growth Plan, so my principal and I discussed this project on a few different occasions and she supported me in seeking out additional professional learning opportunities to ensure that I was prepared and confident to complete this work. For support, she put me in contact with the Director of Schools for my school board and with the individual who specializes with Research and Data Analytics,

As participants were my students, a third party conducted recruitment. He was a teacher colleague who was also the English Department Head during the research period. I asked him to act as my third party recruiter because he was not their teacher, nor would he have instructed them in their previous grade nine year, as he did not teach the grade nine English Language Arts curriculum in the 2013/2014 school year. As such, he was relatively unknown to the participants, and thus did not have power-over relationship with these students. Other important safeguards were put in place during the recruitment process to protect the students. To begin with, the script that I prepared for my third party recruiter was written using Section 3 of the Guidelines for Ethics in Dual-Role Research for Teachers and Other Practitioners (Version 3), from the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (University of Victoria, 2008), as a guide.
Before my third party recruiter’s discussion of the project with my students and their parents and guardians, I sat with my third party recruiter and discussed the outlined specific safeguards and procedures to prevent undue influence, coercion and inducement as well as the additional points for consideration at length.

After expectations were clearly outlined, the recruiter discussed the research project with my students during class time. This discussion took place before the research project started. He used a script that I wrote for him to read that outlined the purpose of my research project, what was expected of them as participants, the potential psychological and social risks involved, the voluntary nature of the project, how their confidentiality would be protected, and the contact information for the recruiter so that students and families could ask questions. I was not present for this discussion so students could ask questions and voice any concerns. I did not debrief the class discussion with my third party recruiter afterwards, except to ask if he had any clarifying questions about steps moving forward. Students were asked to sign letters of consent and return them to him. If they needed extra time, they could hand in the consent forms at the school office, addressed to my third party recruiter, or they could also drop off the consent forms to his classroom. Written consent from both students and their parents and guardians was required for participation in this project. It was stressed that students’ participation in the unit was part of their regular ELA classes, but being in the research project was voluntary.

After speaking to my classes, my third party recruiter sent home consent forms for students’ parents and guardians both with the students and through email. Although my students were between ages 13 and 16 and could provide their own consent for this minimal risk study, I believed it was in everyone’s best interest to be transparent and request consent of the families of
potential participants as well as the participants themselves. Additionally, because the research occurred over a period of time (approximately five weeks), after the research data had been collected, my third party recruiter obtained ongoing consent from the participants and the families of the participants. Then, at the end of the school year and before the data collected was used for research purposes, my third party recruiter reminded student participants and their parents and guardians that they had agreed to allow their student's writing samples and information to be included in the research, and that they had the option to withdraw their consent if they have changed their mind. This reminder was conducted through email reminders. Further, the recruiter met again with my classes to remind them of the research project, and that they could withdraw their consent if they wished. No participants withdrew once they had consented.

During the project, I also forwarded all questions about the research project to the recruiter during the duration of the project, when ongoing consent needed to be obtained. I ensured that confidentiality was maintained, and asked that he not discuss any communication that he had with participants or their parents and guardians during the semester with me. The students and their families were well informed that I was not allowed to discuss the research or their potential participation with me, for their own protection. This restriction helped to ensure that anonymity was maintained. As mentioned above, I was also never present in the room while recruitment took place, but rather, I waited in another classroom on the other side of the school.

Once the data collection period had concluded, I still was not made aware of who the participants were until after the final grades had been submitted for semester two, at the end of the month, on June 25th. This ensured that I was not aware of who participants were while I was completing any assessment. My third party recruiter met with me and presented me with a binder
filled with all of the consent paperwork that he had collected from participants, students who chose not to participate, and their parents and guardians. This binder had been kept locked in his desk in his classroom during the duration of the project. So…how many DID participate of total possible?

In the following section, the data collected from participants will be detailed which included field notes, blogs, threaded discussion groups, social media platforms, more traditional ‘tickets out the door,’ and a focus group.

**Collection of Data**

As case study research demands that there be a focus on collecting rich and varied data, and that the data is triangulated (Creswell, 2014), I collected data from a variety of sources. These sources included field notes, students’ written work from their private Blogger™ blogs as well as public written responses posted on my public Blogger™ blog, digital literature circle discussions that were housed in Google Groups™, private Instagram™ accounts, a variety of traditionally written ‘tickets out the door,’ which are short written activities completed during and after learning activities for teachers to check understanding, and finally, a focus group discussion session. The triangulation of this data was done not only to fulfill the expectations of a rigorous case study research project, but to further gain a deeper understanding of how the students were responding to the trauma literature.

**Field Notes**

A common method of documenting observations and reflections in qualitative research is taking field notes and/or maintaining a research diary. As Newbury (2001) outlines, such a method of collecting observation is unique because firstly, “it does not attempt to present the
research in the linear fashion that is typical of research paper writing” but rather, aids the researcher to capture the “real inner drama” (p. 2). Next, this practice helps the researcher to “stimulate reflective thinking about the research” at a later time (pp. 2-3). Finally, he posits that the value of a diary form of field notes “provides a form through which the interaction of the subjective and the objective aspects of doing research can be openly acknowledged and brought into a productive relationship” (p. 3). Clarke (2009) similarly found that keeping a research diary helped to “provide transparency,” “establish rigour,” and “clarify thoughts and feelings” during her qualitative research, however, perhaps most importantly, provided a much needed “form of self encouragement” (p. 68). Certainly, field notes and research diaries can be critical tools for qualitative researchers, as was the case with this project.

In my research, taking field notes quickly and effectively became a very important part of this project, and so I endeavoured to take carefully detailed, objective notes in my field notes binder. Firstly, I maintained field notes as I observed my students in their regular English Language Arts lessons, during the Speak novel study unit. This observational data was collected primarily on what they said in small group discussions and during work periods as I walked around the room and listened to their discussions of the text. Field notes were also taken as I reflected on what students contributed during whole class discussions on the literature and I additionally took notes on changing body language and facial expressions, particularly when we discussed some of the more intense scenes in the book. However, rather than look for the “real inner drama” that Newbury (2009) discusses, I was keeping an eye on potential trauma due to a strong emotional response, or potentially a flashback, so that I could make a point to pull that student aside and check in with them either later in the lesson or after class. I recorded such
observational data both during class time (if time permitted), during my prep period and/or
during my lunch break, or after school. I made field notes on all students, as I did not know who
my participants would be but only used notes regarding participants for my data analysis.

During this project, I began writing field notes with the assumption that Wolfinger (2002)
highlights: that they are “deceptively straightforward” (p. 85). However, in working through the
process daily, I discovered that this is certainly not the case. For instance, choosing what to
annotate was sometimes difficult to decide, especially considering that these notes would have a
significant impact on the research analysis and final conclusions. As a result, I established a
structure for maintaining my notes. I created a form (Appendix C) that follows the chronology of
my lesson plan, so that with each agenda item in a lesson, I have dedicated note-taking space for
each activity to clearly establish what lesson objectives I was reflecting on. At the same time, I
enacted what Wolfinger describes as the “salience hierarchy” where the researcher records
whatever strikes them as “the most noteworthy, the most interesting, or the most telling” (p. 89).
Helleso, Melby, and Hauge (2015) similarly conclude, “some events may be in the background
and others in the foreground” but assert that during ongoing observation, it can be expected that
the focus can change, “which is expected to be reflected in the notes taken” (p. 190).

I also maintained a research diary alongside my structured field notes. I recorded
observations and thoughts outside of the established form during writing work periods as well as
when reflecting on lessons after the class had ended, usually during my lunch break, prep period,
and after school. These reflections also usually detailed conversations I had with individual
students during writing work periods, as it would have been inappropriate for me to take notes
while I was either providing formative assessment or engaging in them in a discussion about the
trauma themes and their connections. Notwithstanding my dual roles of teacher and researcher, I had to privilege my job as their teacher first and thus, I could not and did not operate on a “positivistic tradition” which emphasizes that researchers “take a detached role from the field being observed in an attempt to remain objective” (Hellesø, R., Melby, L. & Hauge, S., 2015, p. 190). This research diary element naturally emerged as I began my data collection and came to realize that there is simply not enough time for me to fulfill my role as a teacher and take sufficient field notes during class periods. I also found that I needed time to process how students received lessons. Newbury (2009) comments on this necessity of reflection time in qualitative research, saying that “my learning was clearly outlined as I realized the importance of suspending judgment and the influence of my beliefs and values” (p. 74).

My field notes and research diary were certainly central to my study and were documents that I returned to repeatedly during my data analysis process.

**Blogs**

Blog writing was an important writing practice to include in this research project because it could be integrated in two different but significant manners. Firstly, I created a public class blog using Blogger™ to capture students’ responses to trauma literature as well as to post writing challenges. Blogger™ was chosen from the vast number of blog platform choices because it is directly linked to the students’ personal school email accounts. All of the student email accounts in our district are powered by Gmail™, and along with their email accounts, they are also connected to a number of Google™ Apps which teachers are encouraged to integrate into their classroom practice so as to increase student capacity for digital literacy. As such, using Blogger™ was a more convenient platform for the students, and coupled with its user-friendly
features, Blogger™ became a natural choice for this project as well as for my teaching generally. Further, it is also a platform that I have used a number of times in the past with other classes so I already know how to capably troubleshoot the platform; because of the sensitive nature of the themes that students were exploring in their writing, it was important to ensure that technological challenges were mitigated so as to minimize potential for additional stress. Usually, the writing activities posted on my public blog were designed to capture a ‘snapshot’ of learning as I typically used these activities as lesson engagement strategies as well as for digital ‘tickets out the door.’ As such, we usually used our public class blog at the beginning and/or at the conclusion of lessons. The writing activities posted on my public blog were typically playful, creative, and involved very little risk-taking so that students would feel comfortable responding publicly on this platform. For example, I asked students to choose apps that characters from the novel might download on their cell phones and write a few sentences about why they chose them. However, there were more serious topics and tasks that were also posted. A class discussion usually followed before and after, and I was careful to walk around and monitor students to check in with how they were doing with each task, which was always completed during class time.

The variety of writing activities posted on our public class blog included firstly, responding to current event issues that thematically link with the trauma literature. For instance, the evening before the culmination of the data collection and the launch of the blog project, a CBC™ story detailing how sexual harassment of female journalists at sports events is on the rise made the news. This current event connection became the first prompt, as students were invited to post their opinions on whether or not a couple of men caught on camera harassing a journalist...
should be fired from their engineering jobs. The second current events connection was a question regarding the story of Emily Sulkowitz, who spent her final year at an Ivy League American college carrying around the mattress that she was sexually assaulted on from her dorm room around her campus in protest. Other writing activities included asking what important issues students would take a stand for in their classrooms, listing characteristics of a healthy relationship, writing an acrostic poem using the book title to reveal insights about the text, recommending phone apps for characters from *Speak*, and creating a digital Wordle™ collage in response to a photography project about honouring sexual assault survivors called Project Unbreakable. Project Unbreakable is a project that was started by Grace Brown in 2011, and is a photography project where survivors hold posters in front of their faces with quotes from their attackers, people who said they didn’t believe them, the police, friends and family members and their reactions, and so forth, and posted online.

Students responded to the prompts in our public class blog using the comments section and received completion marks for responding so that again, there was little risk involved for publicly responding. It was clearly outlined that this blog forum was intended for experimentation in written expression and to focus on how these writing activities complemented or enhanced their understanding of the literature. They were also encouraged to engage one another in discussion in the posts’ comments section. They had the freedom of replying at any point during the five-week novel study so that they had time to carefully consider their answers. In that vein, we began the novel study by having a conversation about expectations regarding how to appropriately and sometimes sensitively respond to the prompts so that students were honouring both the subject matter and the digital classroom space. As such, we employed design-
thinking skills, an approach that our school site has spent a great deal of time working on for our professional learning. This approach to learning is where the focus is set on developing creative confidence in learners, and chiefly focused on being reflective and providing thoughtful feedback to one another’s shared ideas on the blog. As Tracey and Baaki (2013) assert, when design thinking is being employed, “the core challenge…is, in parallel, creating a complex object, service, or system and making it work” (p. 2). While students engage in such challenges, we operated under the expectation that feedback was always kind, helpful, and specific, because, as Cassim (2013) argues, individuals practicing design thinking “take a human centered approach” (p. 197) and concludes that “the student’s reflection points towards an understanding of the design process as an inclusive approach to managing social innovation… it also highlights the impact the application of design thinking may have on a student’s personal growth as a designer” (p. 200).

The second and more extensive way in which blogs were used in this project was through the establishment of personal, private blogs kept by each individual student that were shared with me to capture their more personal responses to the literature on a ‘safer’ platform. These written responses were assessed for learning and comprised the majority of their grade for this novel study. Writing assignments included writing a survivor ‘love letter’ to someone or themselves and this was inspired by a social media movement propelled chiefly by the hashtag #survivorloveletter which was ‘trending’ on Twitter™ and Instagram™ accounts at the time the students were working on this assignment. Next, students were asked to write creatively and complete a diary entry in the voice of one of the characters from the novel Speak. Finally, students were asked to make intertextual connections between the novel and poetry of their
choosing. For the first part of this assignment, they had to choose a poem where the speaker of the poem had a similar voice and tone to Melinda's character; a survivor's voice at any stage in the healing process following trauma. Next, they had to find a second poem that they believed would bring comfort and inspiration to the speaker in the first poem. Finally, they had a choice to either write about the choices they made or to use the two poems to create a found poem. For each personal writing assignment for their private blogs, I wrote exemplars and posted them on my blog so that I was sharing my writing with my students. Sharing my writing with my students was a decision I made chiefly after reading Romano (1987) who urges teachers to “be bold enough” (p. 39) to bring in not only “finished written products” but more importantly, “various drafts” (p. 40) to see how writing evolves. He insists that sharing your “messes” of writing improves your perspective as a teacher because it has the power to make you “more sensitive [to students]” and it can have a “salutary effect on classroom atmosphere” where students also understand that you are not only a teacher of writing, but also still an ongoing learner as a writer.

Also, blogging was used in two different ways, publicly and privately, for a number of reasons. To begin with, as Kist (2010) asserts, one of the primary characteristics of integrating new literacies into the classroom such as blogs is that “students take part in a mix of individual and collaborative activities” (p. 5). Next, as Hamilton (2009) explores, there is often a “common distinction between personal and political blogs” (p. 87). However, like the blogs that Hamilton analyzed, our class endeavoured to “combine political commentary with individual testimony” as trauma can function as “the basis for transformative political action” (pp. 86-7). The public blog that I built and maintained for the class became more of a forum for political commentary, especially with the current event connection digital discussions, and the private blogs maintained
by students were places to house their individual testimonies. However, naturally, there was
some crossover as of course, the ‘personal is the political’ and as Cleaf (2015) claims, “blogging
‘authentic experience’ is a political act” (p. 248). Further, Cleaf goes on to assert that blogging
can also be understood as a feminist act from a gender studies perspective because “mining
personal experience was the first step in transforming society for second wave feminists” (p.
248). Because I teach and conducted this project using a gender studies lens, this perspective on
blogging was especially motivating to use as a tool for this research.

The next reason why blogging was used both publicly and privately was so that students
could develop their writing voices in a couple of different ways; both for an authentic audience
and for their own reflection. Having a public blog forum for our class made the students mindful
of their audience and accountable to one another to respond in order to generate a meaningful
discussion. As Stavrositu and Sundar (2012) posit, blogging has the potential to promote “a deep
sense of community” (p. 370), which is actualized by central elements of blogging such as
“membership, influence, and integration and fulfillment of needs” (p. 372). Stavrositu and Sundar
(2012) further commend the “publicness” of blogging, suggesting that the “repeated act of
expressing one’s voice, coupled with the external validation of this voice, contributes to the
development of three core agentic attributes—competence, confidence, and assertiveness” (p.
371). In turn, these digital discussions usually prompted oral discussions and the understandings
that emerged from the public blog helped to inform many of their private written responses.

The private blogs served as a safe place to house their ideas and express their writing
voices, and it also evaded the phenomenon Cleaf (2015) discusses where “today, authentic
experience has been absorbed into our modern-day digital mode of production. Experience
becomes a commodity produced endlessly” (p. 248). In her article, she argues that “through
digital technologies… intimate, personal narratives have exploded into our cultural register” (p.
253), however, I did not want to force students to be a part of such a cultural explosion or to be
vulnerable to strangers on the internet evaluating and/or commenting on their responses. Rather,
I wanted to help them to construct blogging spaces for themselves that were “spaces of intimacy”
(p. 260), for their own exploration and potentially, empowerment, as Stavrositu and Sundar
(2012) assert. This psychological empowerment is explored in Stavrositu and Sundar’s study, as
described in chapter two, where they found that such empowerment came from feelings of
“connectedness, mastery and control over aspects of one’s life, and an ability to effect change” (p.
372), which was a goal of this ongoing personal blog. Students were also offered the opportunity
to use a journal and traditionally write their responses to the novel instead of using the blogging
format if they did not feel comfortable with this platform; however, all students chose digital
writing. In addition to empowerment, I also wanted to ensure that personal blogs were kept
private so as to encourage students to feel a “sense of agency” from maintaining a “heightened
sense of control”; unfortunately, public bloggers "sometimes receive negative, at time life-
threatening feedback…which may eventually push them to stop blogging or maintain a lower
profile, thus underlining the promise of empowerment” (p. 383). Thus, I ensured that every
student had adjusted their blog settings so that only readers invited by email, particularly only
readers with email addresses associated with our school board, could be granted access. I had all
students add me as a reader and they could choose whether or not they invited peers to read their
work through email.
Blogging was certainly the central form of digital writing used for this project, especially once feedback was gained from the students as to whether or not they were enjoying the practice. Further, blogging is especially a type of writing that contributes to narrative inquiry because it is akin to the soup metaphor that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use for narrative form. A blog, like a soup, are filled with “various chunks and pieces” while other soups are filled with “slightly different ingredients, different amounts, different sized chunks, spiced in other ways” (p. 155). Overall, the students’ blogs were a mixture of different texts types, including “argument, description, and narrative” (p. 155), much like my own research texts.

**Threaded Discussion Groups**

Another form of data that was collected was the participants’ written work in digital literature circles, or threaded discussion groups (TDGs). The students were asked to choose their own groups of three or more individuals and then I created a private threaded discussion group for them using the Google™ app, Google Groups™, which functioned as essentially private chat rooms for the students. I created these groups primarily because it was a tool to challenge the parameters of the classroom. As English (2007) argues, “the online discussion [is] an extension of [the] classroom” (p. 58).

In these groups, students were provided with a great deal of choice regarding what they would digitally discuss because with TDGs, it is important that students feel as though they are discussing issues that are meaningful to them, not just topics that easily connect to the curriculum. As Cox and Cox (2008) discuss in their study, what I tried to do with my forum posts is provide "open-ended, thought-provoking question[s] that supports the particular course material under consideration" (p. 554). As such, I posted a variety of options for them to choose
from. Firstly, I posted eight potential discussion topics that were perhaps more ‘traditional’ in nature and that directly meet curricular mandates, such as questions pertaining to the themes, motifs, the significance of the settings in the novel, the didactic nature of the text, and text specific questions about the relationships presented in the novel and a close reading analysis question. I alternatively posted a list of creative literary options that either thematically or directly linked to the novel study including a challenge to write recipes for healthy relationships, a survival guide for navigating the high school experience, lists of book and film recommendations for the characters, yearbook entries in the voice of the characters, and music playlists for the characters. Further, students were invited to role-play characters from the text having a chat room conversation and this proved to be a popular choice. From all of these traditional literature circle discussion topics and the creative options, students were instructed to choose one as a group for each session and engage in discussion.

Providing student choice was especially important for the threaded discussion groups for a number of reasons. Firstly, the choice in terms of topics to chat about online was made flexible. Initially, I worried about some of the more creative choices being ‘academic enough,’ but I soon realized that they often have better ideas than I do, and like Bowers-Campbell (2011), I found that, “online discussions occurred naturally [without] my direction” (p. 558). Secondly, it was important to make this as student-centred as possible. Thus, I provided students with the option to choose their own groups, as it was necessary to ensure that learners were working with peers that they felt comfortable with. This practice aligns with Lee and Lee (2006) who argue, “personality has a great impact on the quantity and quality of online discussion and group interactions” (p. 84). Next, I also allowed for movement once we had already started, so students
could critically consider who they are the most productive with, whom they can learn from, and so forth. As discussed previously with the blogging project, oftentimes, online forum can become a site of harassment and bullying and so creating private digital spaces for the students and their friends was significant.

In addition to this, appropriate manners of addressing one another were explicitly taught previous to launching the TDGs because, as Wolsey and Grisham (2012) assert, “technology requires responsibility in its applications” (p. 31). We collaborated to discuss and agree upon a code of conduct to abide by while engaging in the digital discussions. Examples of items we agreed upon for participation expectations included respecting classmates’ privacy, to ask for clarification when needed, considering whether you would say something out loud before you type and post it, and most importantly, any sort of hateful language including sexist, racist, ableist, transphobic, and so forth was strictly forbidden. Returning to Wolsey and Grisham, we followed their assertion that “the tools that humans build and use do convey values, which are built into the technology” and so there is a “need for thoughtful policy on how to best use technological innovation” (p. 31). I posted these rules on the main welcome pages of all of the individual chat rooms after we reviewed them as a class. Students were made well aware that if they did not abide by these rules, guidance and administration might have to become involved to help rectify the situation, as students feeling safe in these spaces was of the utmost importance.

Such opportunity for safe and respectful collaboration was a primary reason why TDGs were used. Like the collaborative nature of the public classroom blog, TDGs allowed for more space to students to collaborate and build on one another’s ideas and insights. This opportunity for ideation is important to not only this project, but to their English Language Arts skills.
development altogether as “this type of interaction is not merely noise in the instructional context, but essential to the cognitive development of the students” (Ahern, Peck, & Laycock, 1992, as cited in Cox & Cox, 2008, p. 554). TDGs were used to especially allow for more depth of collaborative discussion and were introduced halfway through the research project so as to make room for some introductory collaborative work with the classroom blog before delving into the more detailed and sustained digital literature circle work. As DeCosta et al (2010) argues, it is “necessary… that we consider ways of implementing collaboration that moves away from… students’ isolated thinking and move toward making collaboration an integral part of the overall class culture” (p. 15). With these groups, my aim was to facilitate students engaging one another in what Kipp-Newbold (2010) calls “‘fierce conversations’- ones that ‘interrogate reality,’ provoke learning, tackle our toughest challenges, and enrich relationships” and that “build the skills that are essential for successful collaboration and successful relationships” (p. 74).

TDGs were definitely a new literacy that proved to be crucial to this research project. In collecting data from the TDGs, I analyzed responses from only the participants, which was an easy task, as each contribution was preceded by the participant’s name. There is a lot of potential for TDGs to help enhance what teachers are already doing in their classrooms; looking for new opportunities to make learning more accessible, engaging, and meaningful for all students.

Social Media: Instagram™, PollEverywhere™, Wordle™, & Ask FM™

A number of social media and online tools were employed alongside traditional writing tasks with this project, including Instagram™, PollEverywhere™, Wordle™, and Ask FM™. While some researchers are hesitant to delve deeply into the use of such tools in the classroom, like Kaufer et al. (2011) who caution that “Without considerable care, the importation of social
media into writing classrooms can sacrifice important strengths of traditional writing education that we should be reluctant to lose” (p. 300), it is clear that the dynamics of our writing classrooms are and should be, shifting. As Kist (2010) argues,

“Whatever we call these new ways of communicating (new literacies, multiliteracies, ICT, media literacy, digital literacies, or multimodalities, to name a few terms being used currently), it's clear that we are experiencing a vast transformation of the way we “read” and “write,” and a broadening of the way we conceptualize “literacy.” (p. 2)

As such, social media outlets were woven into the unit design throughout the project.

The first reason why social media and online tools were used is especially due to the confidence the students already seemed to have using such tools. Like Mostafa (2015), many educators including me have noted students’ increased engagement with social media tools and such use in their “daily lives has inspired interest within education because of possible new approaches of engaging students in individual and collaborative learning activities” (p. 3). In fact, students who were already using them first introduced many of these tools to me and their use inspired me to try to draw from what new literacies they found interesting. Interestingly, while much of the literature regarding the use of social media platforms in the classroom is centred around discussions of the use of Facebook™ in the classroom (Barnes, 2012; Mallia, 2014; Marciano, 2015), students relayed that they no longer really use Facebook™, but rather use other sites and apps such as Instagram™. Student engagement with apps and online sites drove the selection of the social media tools for this project; while no formal survey was taken,
in the months leading up to the data collection period, I made a point of asking students what apps they used more frequently on their personally owned devices.

As mentioned, it quickly became apparent that Instagram is a very popular social media tool among students at this school site, and so this was the first platform that was incorporated into the unit design. I was further encouraged after reading Olszanowski’s (2014) article on her exploration of Instagram™ through her feminist artistic work where she found that this platform allows her to “approach intimate and vulnerable work—often focused on sexual violence and mental illness—in a way that is sensitive to the complex relations of age, gender, digital creativity, and online content sharing that are at the heart of our [feminist] practices” (p. 86).

Instagram™ is a free social networking service that facilitates photo and video sharing on its app as well as a variety of platforms including Facebook™, Twitter™, and Tumblr™. Students seem to enjoy taking pictures especially and using the app’s tools on their phones to enhance the photos and/or choose a filter to transform the image. Students can use the location tool to publish where the photo or video was taken and tag their friends as well. The comments section that sits below the posted photo or video allows space to write the story of the image or video and has room for something akin to a TDG where friends and followers can add comments. As such, I saw potential for classroom use, especially with the visual analysis skill development which is a requirement of the course.

However, because I could not mandate that students download and use an app on their personal devices, especially one that was not already vetted and provided for them by the school board like Blogger™, I chose to incorporate the use of Instagram through an optional enrichment project. Also, you can only post to Instagram™ using a mobile phone so “a type of medium
specify is at work here” (p. 93), and while the majority of students owned cell phones, there were some exceptions. Further, some students reported that their parents and guardians would not allow them to download the free Instagram app because they worried about their social media presence. However, the majority of students were in a position where they could participate if they chose to. I believed that the benefits outweighed the drawbacks as including more enrichment projects in our curricula are strongly encouraged at our school site. We are especially providing opportunities for our coded gifted define students, for whom many have IPP goals that speak to providing challenges to take on such opportunities. Because this research was being conducted in an academic class, I did have a number of students who had expressed interest. As well, in reflecting on our provincial achievement test results at our school site, the number of students reaching a level of excellence on these exams has been in decline for a number of years. To combat this, educators at the school are working towards providing additional opportunities for students to risk-take and transfer their skills to new literacies tasks.

The Instagram™ project was thus launched at the beginning of the novel study as an optional challenge and it was titled the “Extragram” project. If students wished to participate, they were instructed to create an Instagram account using their school email addresses and to follow my account where I posted the assignments. I knew that students were participating when they followed my account and I acknowledged their participation by following their accounts back. Returning to Olszanowski (2014), I also ensured that student privatize their accounts, much as they did with their personal Blogger™ blogs, because “One of the simplest and most popular options for minimizing risk is privatizing an account… [this] means that only accounts that a user has approved will be able to see their feed” (p. 88). Further, students were instructed to
directly message me their responses so that if they chose to use their Instagram™ accounts outside of the project, their assigned responses were kept separate and private even from their other followers.

Once it was established who was involved, I began posting pictures and wrote out the assignments in the comments section below. In addition to posting the assignment, I also posted an exemplar with a photograph so that I was also doing the project with them. Challenges were thematically connected to the novel study and included taking a picture of and reflecting on their bedroom spaces, taking a picture of and reflecting on a space in the school where they had felt fear, taking a picture and reflecting on a significant item of clothing that they own, taking a screenshot of a text message that thanked someone, and taking a picture of someone’s shoes and asking them what their best piece of advice was. All of these assignments were inspired by significant moments in *Speak* and these connections were clearly outlined in the assignment post. In addition to these assignment posted, I also posted frequent reminder photo posts and took the opportunity to share some of my life outside of teaching with them, in an effort to continue to develop a rapport with them.

The next prominent online tool which was used was PollEverywhere™, a website where individuals can create polls through a free account and then invite people to reply in real time using Twitter, web browsers, or their phones. I instructed my students to either use their web browsers or phone to anonymously text message in answers to the poll. As soon as students reply, they can see their responses live on the web. I projected my computer screen onto my white board in the classroom and we read the responses as they popped up. I always ran anonymous polls during this unit, as I was asking thematically themed questions that were fairly
intense in nature, and I wanted students to reply without running the risk of feeling exposed or judged. After each question, we often took time to discuss the replies and make note of any common themes and/or experiences. The questions discussed using PollEverywhere™ are listed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: PollEverywhere Survey Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Speak</em> is a book that deals with the issue of sexual assault. In your opinion, what issues should we be reading about in English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Would you rather be 10% smarter or 10% better looking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the first few pages of <em>Speak</em>, Melinda gets hit with mashed potatoes in the cafeteria. She flees the room in humiliation. What’s the most embarrassing moment that you’ve ever witnessed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Would you rather have everyone love you but hate yourself or the reverse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We know that Melinda is hiding a painful secret about being attacked. What’s an experience you’ve had (good, bad, or neutral), that not many people know about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We’ve learned that in Melinda’s home, her family doesn’t communicate very well. What about your childhood wouldn’t most people guess?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What’s the worst photo ever taken of you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have you ever witnessed a crime?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have you ever had an anxiety attack?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What fear have you outgrown?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Would you rather have more friends or be closer to the ones you have?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What’s the most scared you’ve ever been?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you do that’s bad for your health or wellbeing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When is the last time you did something mean to someone?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As displayed in Table 2, the more intense personal and thematically linked questions are interspersed with ‘lighter’ questions so as to insert moments of comic relief and breaks from the
intense subject matter. Because students replied anonymously to these questions, it was not possible to track who responded. As such, participants in the study could not be separated from regular students who chose not to participate and so only general themes as well as words and phrases that appear multiple times for multiple students will be discussed in the Data Analysis section rather than individual’s replies (this decision was determined after completing a Revised Request for Modification with the Uvic Human Research Ethics Board).

PollEverywhere™ proved to be an excellent tool and was used repeatedly throughout the unit as a result of the positive response from students. They enjoyed seeing their responses appear and it proved to be an especially effective tool for students who did not respond orally. While I always set up the polls to be anonymous, I could track how many responses were garnered for each question. Each question had a healthy number of responses with the lowest number of replies totaling 13 and the highest number totaling 40, which happened with seven questions across two classes. Since neither class had forty students, this meant that some students replied more than once and possibly multiple times. This tool was perhaps so successful because, as Connor (2012) discusses, PollEverywhere™ “not only gives students permission to use their cell phones for learning, but it also allows students that typically do not share their thoughts and ideas out loud to anonymously share their ideas” (pp. 21-22).

Wordle™ was another online tool employed during this project and introduced to students through our public classroom blog. Wordle™ functions to generate word clouds or mind maps of words that users supply. Users can personalize Wordles by playing with the font, colour, and layouts of the words they have given. This tool was used for one lesson where students were asked to respond to a photography project entitled Project Unbreakable, which is chronicled on
another popular social media platform, Tumblr™. However, images from the project were selected and lifted from Tumblr™ and onto our class blog so as to dissuade students from accessing Tumblr™ in class. This app, while popular with teens, is known among my colleagues to contain content that is not school appropriate and so I did not want to mandate that students visit this platform directly.

Project Unbreakable, as briefly described previously in this chapter, is a photography project growing in popularity and has been featured in many publications including Glamour, TIME, and The Guardian. The project is comprised of pictures of survivors of sexual assault who chiefly pose with a sign where they've written out what their attackers said to them during the assault as well as personal messages of courage and hope. Students were instructed to look through the example photos selected by me and used Wordle™ to write down words that came to their minds as they looked through the photography. From these word collections, they created Wordle™ word clouds and posted a link to the Wordle™ on their personal blogs. The aim of this exercise was to simply capture their raw responses to the photography, and not to try to articulate these responses in finished prose. Rather, while they worked on their Wordles, they were encouraged to chat orally about the pictures in their table groups and verbally share their word choices.

Finally, Ask.fm™ is the last social media platform used in this research project; however, it was not used in its digital form. Ask.fm is a forum that has had a significant and problematic impact on this learning community, and as outlined by Hoosienmardi et al (2014), Ask.fm™ is ranked among the top sites for cyberbullying placing “as the fourth worst site in terms of the percentage of young users bullied” (p. 2). Ask.fm™ is a social media outlet where individuals
create profiles and open themselves up to being asked questions by anonymous members. Perhaps due to the anonymity, individuals tend to ask questions that are cruel in nature. As a result, schools in the district made an effort to renew conversations about responsible digital citizenship. Interestingly, many students shared that while they had deleted their Ask.fm™ accounts if they had one at some point, they still maintained and enjoyed Instagram™. In fact, Hoosienmardi et al. determined in their study that while both platforms have a degree of negative behaviour, they found that “the users are more negative in Ask.fm™ than Instagram™” and this is likely attributed to how “Ask.fm™ users primarily post in text, whereas Instagram™ is highly focused on posting image media, followed by the commenting” (p. 7).

Because I wanted to avoid students downloading the app or continuing their use of it, I created paper slips that reflected the Ask.fm™ forum design and created character profiles from the novel. Students were given collections of these paper slips at their table groups and were asked to write down questions that teenagers at our school would ask the characters if they were a part of our learning community. This activity prompted an interesting conversation about young people’s behaviour online and the pervasiveness of online harassment. Students imagined how the story would be different if the characters from the story had an app such as Ask.fm™ and how this might change the narrative and potentially increase the amount of bullying that Melinda endured. Students wrote their question responses as a group activity and posed questions toward characters, not one another. Turning the activity into a literary exploration activity rather than a personal writing activity avoided students targeting potentially hurtful questions at one another. Instead, they explored the culture of Ask.fm™ critically by echoing the
types of cruel questions that they had seen on the app and discussing aloud how these questions might impact and influence the characters in the text.

Social media certainly proved to be a productive and illuminating avenue to take when trying to engage learners to use new literacies to respond to trauma literature. The innovative qualities of new literacies and familiarity students had with such tools proved to help them to respond with a greater sense of ease and in a dynamic fashion.

‘Tickets out the Door’

In addition to the digital writing activities we engaged in, we also used traditional paper-based ‘tickets out the door’ strategies. The lists that Melinda creates in novel inspired the first activity, which was to create “Can’t Do” lists. Students were instructed to think about all of the difficult things that they wished that they could do, or think that they can’t do, and make a list. They were also asked to think about whether these items would ever be possible for them to do, and to discuss them with an ‘elbow partner,’ the individual they sit beside. This activity was inspired by the opening pages of the book where the author quotes Eleanor Roosevelt who said, “You must do the things you think you cannot do.” Next, students were asked to compile, in their table groups, lists of lies that they are told in high school. Once the groups had compiled their lists, we had class discussions and created a master list on the white board, which generated quite a bit of discussion. Another traditional writing activity was an understanding ‘check in’ during our third lesson, to see if they were picking up on the major emerging themes and significant moments in the story so far. They were provided with newspaper headers from our local city’s newspaper and to fill in the leading headline with a moment from the story so far that has stood out the most to them; a moment that would be the most ‘newsworthy’ to them.
Next, we focused on the concept of the bystander effect and how it was presented in the novel, we followed watching a PSA video released by the Ontario Government called “#WhoWillYouHelp,” with a post-it note brainstorming activity. The video was part of an anti-sexual assault campaign and action plan launched in 2015 that shows a series of scenarios where it is evident that a sexual assault or harassment incident is about to take place. Before a new character comes on the screen, the actor portraying the perpetrator thanks the audience directly, such as in the first scene where a young man at a party is looming over a passed-out female on a couch and says, “Thanks for keeping your mouth shut” before turning back to the woman. After a few of these scenarios are portrayed, a voiceover states, “When you do nothing, you’re helping him. But when you do something, you’re helping her.” Rolling the voiceover, a series of young women turn to the camera and thank the audience for doing the right thing including “telling the bartender,” “Thanks for stopping him,” “Thanks for telling HR (Human Resources),” and “Thanks for getting help.” After watching the video, we read a scenario entitled: “It’s time…to help a friend” that came from a Sexual Assault Awareness Month education package. The scenario detailed a story where a young woman named Alison notices another young woman who is very drunk at a college party. When Alison notices that the intoxicated woman is being lead outside of the party by a male hockey player, Alison turns to two male friends and confesses that she had once been raped and this experience makes her concerned for this other girl being led outside. The boys ask Alison what she thinks they should do to help. Our classes used different coloured post-it notes to brainstorm ideas about what Alison could do to help the situation and what the boys could do to help. Table groups of students compiled the ideas and worked together to
organize them on the white board, grouping them by theme. We shared ideas aloud and discussed which ones students could enact if they saw something similar happen at a party.

The next paper-based ‘ticket out the door’ activity was a placemat activity for work with our focus on the sexual abuse and assault of men. It was important to make space in the unit for this topic so that we were looking at the issue holistically, and the necessity of this lesson was especially critical after a few male students inquired about whether we would be addressing sexual violence and men. The students were informed about the lesson in the days leading up to it, and we started the class by watching and discussing a performance poem written by a young male survivor. After this introduction to the topic, we watched Theo Fleury’s impact statement video, which he read during a press release. We then engaged in the placemat activity where students were provided large poster-sized pieces of paper that were sectioned into four quadrants; one for each student to write in, in their tables of four. In the middle of each sheet was a quotation from hockey player Theo Fleury’s memoir, *Playing with Fire* (2009), as well as various newspaper articles that reviewed the book. Theo Fleury is a famous athlete not only for playing the NHL, but he has also become well known as an advocate and spokesperson about sexual abuse and assault towards young men, as he has abused for years by a former coach during his adolescent years. As a result of this abuse, he explores in his memoir as well as at speaking events, such as one at our school site in the year previous to this research that he spiraled into self-destructive behaviour including drug use and alcohol abuse in an attempt to escape and forget about what happened to him for so many years. Now, he encourages young men in particular to speak out if they are being abused.
The quotations from his book and articles about his book all addressed the impact of his abuse and students were asked to reflect and discuss the quote and record their responses in their placemat quadrant. They were provided with a few guiding questions that asked about their reactions to the quote, what emotions Theo Fleury was expressing in the quotation, and why they think that, statistically, fewer men report sexual violence than women. Normally, what I would do next is invite the students to gallery walk around the room and continue reading other quotes at other tables and respond but because the room was quite quiet during this activity, I decided to walk around the room and swap the placemat papers myself so the students could stay seated with their table groups and continue to write their reflections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Quotations from Playing with Fire for Placemat Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “I no longer had faith in myself or my own judgment. And when you come down to it, that’s all a person has. Once it’s gone, how do you get it back?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Graham was on me once or twice a week for the next two years…An absolute nightmare, every day of my life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The direct result of my being abused was that I became a fucking raging alcoholic lunatic.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “[My life’s purpose is] to share my story and be vulnerable, and not really care about what the world thinks about what I’m doing. All I know is the feedback that I get is more positive than negative.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “For me spiritually was the way back to self…I don’t care what you believe in. It's not my journey and spirituality is very personal. I suggest that you try everything.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “[James] destroyed my belief system. The most influential adult in my life at the time was telling me that what I thought was wrong was right.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “We can all be a conduit for healing.”</td>
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</table>
• “I don’t wear the scarlet letter anymore. I’ve gotten rid of it. And that’s why I want other people to come to the realization… Because I look at my parents, I look at Graham James, I look at the lowest points of his life, I look at them as gifts now. Because without those gifts, I still have that face. With those gifts I have this face now.”

• “I could see how [people knowing about my abuse] would play. I would have been stigmatized forever as the kid who was molested by his coach. The victim.”

The students were instructed to only respond in writing to the quotations if they wanted to, and could write their names with their comment if they chose, however, they could keep their comments anonymous if they preferred.

Close to the conclusion of the novel study, another quick ‘ticket out the door’ writing activity was run as the conclusion of the lesson of the day. Students were provided with slips of paper and told that they were going to be given an answer on the piece of paper. However, it was up to them to construct the question for that answer, which had to relate in some way to the novel’s themes. Students were given words associated with trauma. A full list of the words provided to students of answers is as follows in Table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Answers Provided for “Coming up with Questions” Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adversity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devastation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suffering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
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The final ticket out the door was another traditionally ‘true’ one as students completed it as an optional bonus question for our final reading comprehension unit test at the end of the novel study. Completing this task was completely voluntary and the question read as follows; “Melinda stays silent throughout the majority of the novel in large part because she is afraid. In your opinion, what issues do teenagers stay silent about, and do you feel that reading books about these issues could help make school more meaningful?”

These traditional ‘ticket out the door’ activities and forms of formative assessment for learning helped especially in gauging how students were responding to the trauma literature and accompanying themes. They functioned as ‘snapshots’ of learning and the responses collected in these writing activities helped to inform the direction of the novel study.

Focus Group

A focus group is a data collection method that can be especially useful when attempting to capture understanding regarding the culture of a group and pervasive beliefs or opinions in a group (Mack et al., 2005, p. 52). The focus group discussion that took place after the conclusion of the novel study proved to be a vital and enlightening element of this research and functioned as Morgan (1997) described, as “basically a group interview” where data produced relies on “interaction within the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who typically takes the role of a moderator” (p. 2).

All students were invited to participate but it was repeatedly emphasized through my third party recruiter that participation was completely voluntary and would not contribute to their grade. It did, as Winlow et al. (2013) advise, “take place outside of taught curriculum” (p. 295). All of the recruitment procedures described for the research project in the recruitment section
applied to the recruitment of the focus group participants; the focus group took places after the final exam of the course and after the marks had been submitted to the office. However, in preparation of the focus group particularly, I requested and arranged for a member from my guidance department and my administration department who had previously agreed to support my research to be on ‘stand-by.’ If someone required extra support during the focus group, both of these colleagues were prepared to help the participant and had a safe place in the school to debrief with them, separate from the group. Both of these colleagues were chosen because they each have established relationships with the participants, as they are the grade ten guidance counselor and the grade ten assistant principal. At my school site, we have pairs of counselors and administrators who “follow” students throughout their high school career so that they establish a solid foundational relationship with students for the entire four years that they are in our building. I also notified the school office to hold any calls for me so that my classroom phone would not ring during the focus group and put a sign on the door requesting that our group not be disturbed while the discussion was in session. The date of the focus group was informed by the students’ requests, which I felt was important, as it would take place during our two-week exam period in June before the end of school. They established this date through my third party recruiter and so I did not know who the participants were until they walked through the door to begin.

Four students showed up to participate in the group and before the discussion began, I checked a list of approved participants from a list that my third party recruiter provided to me immediately before the commencement of the discussion, which took place in our classroom because “to help put participants at ease, it is generally recommended that focus groups take
place in familiar surroundings” (Winlow et al., 2013, p. 298). The participants on the list had been confirmed by my third party recruiter that they and their parents and/or guardians had provided consent to participate in the focus group. The discussion, which lasted an hour and 43 minutes, was recorded using my iPhone™ app, Voice Memos™, as well as a computer program on my laptop called Garage Band™. I designed the focus group to only run between forty minutes and one hour, as Winlow et al. designed their student centered focus group, however, students decided at the stopping point that they wished to continue. I felt it was important not to include an outsider observer or note-taker, as this project and specific focus group task is built largely on trust and established relationships between the students and one another and with me.

The first agenda item for the focus group was to review the established expectations for participation in the discussion group and offer the opportunity for any students to contribute additional rules to ensure that everyone felt safe in the group. This was critical because, as Kitzinger (1995) asserts, “When group dynamics work well the participants work alongside the researcher, taking research in new and often unexpected directions” (p. 299). The expectations for our focus group read as follows in Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Focus Group Ground Rules</th>
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No student asked to have any additional rules added, and all participants agreed to abide by these expectations; however, it was emphasized that they were allowed to interrupt the conversation at any time to suggest a new rule if they thought of one. All students had the ground rules in front of them on a piece of paper, along with the focus group discussion questions which will be addressed next. They were also reminded that they were allowed to leave the focus group at any time, which is “particularly important if sensitive topics are being discussed” (Winlow et al., 2013, p. 298).

The focus group was guided in large part by thirteen discussion questions. These questions are as follows in Table 6:

### Table 6: Focus Group Discussion Questions

<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>We will respect one another during this session. We will stop this focus group session if this does not happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>We will not discuss our conversation in this focus groups with students who did not participate. I want this to be a safe space where we can share our responses without worrying that others in the group will leave and share what was discussed afterwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>You do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable speaking to. You can simply say “pass” or just not be in the conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>You are free to leave at any time without explanation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>If you feel like you need to speak with an expert or speak privately with someone about what you are thinking or feeling, our guidance and administration team is on ‘stand-by.’ I can alert them and you can speak with them right away.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. What has stood out to you the most about the activities we’ve done during the Speak unit?
2. Was this story meaningful to you? Why or why not?
3. Which moment in this book was the most significant for you? Why?

4. Is this a story that you think high school students should study? If so, why? What do we learn?

5. Some teachers might be hesitant to teach this book because it deals with some complicated issues. What would you say to a teacher who feels this way? Do you have any advice?

6. If you could speak with Melinda, what would you say?

7. In the book, Melinda turns to art as a creative outlet. How do you feel about writing as a creative outlet? Do you enjoy writing? Do any of you keep a journal, or a digital writing platform such as a blog or a social media account where you write about what you’re thinking and feeling?

8. How do you feel about writing digitally, such as the blogging and threaded discussion groups (TDGs) that we engaged in?

9. Do you have a preference between writing individually and writing collaboratively, such as blogging versus TDGs? Why?

10. Were you surprised by anything that you wrote in response to this novel? Did you learn something about yourself while responding to Melinda’s story?

11. At one point in the novel, Melinda reveals that she wishes that her science teacher would teach them about love and betrayal instead of the ‘birds and the bees.’ Do you agree? Should schools spend more time teaching youth about healthy relationships and consent?

12. How does Melinda finally find her voice? Who helps her the most? How does she help herself? What do you do when you feel voiceless?

13. Melinda stays silent throughout the majority of the novel in large part because she is afraid. In your opinion, what issues do teenagers stay silent about, and do you feel that reading books about these issues could help make school more meaningful?

These discussed questions were carefully curated for the focus group with the intent to engage students in reflecting on the literature and the themes in more depth. I endeavoured to arrange the sequence of questions so that they were “ordered but flexible” and followed the idea of “funnelling” [which] involves an initial focus on general issues, moving towards more personal matters or specific issues with sensitive issues at the end” (Winlow et al., 2013, p. 296).
As I wanted an opportunity to engage the students in discussion, I suspected that one-on-one interviews might seem intimidating, so I had to be sure to establish an atmosphere that was welcoming. It was also important that if tough personal stories came up, it happened more organically and as a result of a small group conversation rather than a person in a power-over position seemingly prying for information; I wanted the group to be flexible, and to allow the participants in large part, to drive the conversation. Kitzinger (1995) asserts that focus groups have the potential to “tap into the many different forms of communication that people use in day to day interaction, including jokes, anecdotes, teasing, and arguing” (p. 299). This is exactly the more casual mood that I wanted to establish and such personal stories that Kitzinger discusses was exactly the type of responses that I wished to generate. As such, refreshments were offered so as to create a sense that we were sitting down for a more relaxed gathering.

In addition to the easygoing atmosphere that I wished to create with this group, I wanted to ensure that it felt as though participants were “engaging in collective sense-making” (Neil et al., 2015, p. 36), myself included. I did not want to be understood as an ‘expert’ who was ‘studying them’ but rather, I wanted to participate in this collective work. Consequently, I decided that it would be best to not take notes during the group discussion (in addition to reasons stated above). I did this because I wanted to demonstrate that I was listening carefully and privileging my role as a facilitator. I was also careful to be mindful of the physicality of the room; I arranged the chairs in a circle with myself included in that circle because as Neil et al. recommend this after noting that with a similar set up in their study, one of their participants commented that “the seating helped” to emphasize that the facilitator was a “co-contributor” (p. 46).
Finally, it was also important for the participants to be made to feel as though what was contributed during the focus group would have an impact and result in something to be “carr[ied] forward” (Neil et al., 2015, p. 46). I wanted them to feel as though they contributed to something productive and that the conversation would lead to new understandings. As such, I made a point of thanking the group at the end as well as articulating my plans throughout the novel study, through my third party recruiter, that this study would be made available to the participants and their families when completed through being defended and published. Participants and their families were informed that I would be contacting them via email to ask if anyone would like to read the findings.

The focus group certainly proved to be an illuminating experience and a site for some of the richest data collected during this project. The group interaction contributed to this project because students allowed themselves to be very vulnerable and shared stories about themselves as well as their thoughts on our school community as well as our larger culture and the connections they made to the literature. This rich data will be discussed at length in the findings section in Chapter Four.

All of the hand-written data described in this section, including my field notes, were labeled and organized in a binder as I ran the project. I kept all of the collections of hand written ‘tickets out the door’ data in “archival envelopes” within this binder (Mack et al., 2005, p. 86). During this data collection period, I was careful to keep the binder locked in my desk in my classroom and after the data collection period concluded, this data was stored in my home.
**Analysis of Data**

As Creswell (2014) asserts, the intent of data analysis is to make sense of the data, which involves “segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling back the layers of an onion) as well as putting it back together” (p. 195). In order to do this, it was important to have a systematic approach to analyzing data so as to honour the responses that the participants recorded. As such, I chiefly followed the strategies outlined by Creswell on analyzing and coding data, as well as “Tesch’s Eight Steps to Coding” (1990) which Creswell recommends and outlines. These steps are as follows:

1. Get a sense of the whole. Read all the transcriptions carefully. Perhaps jot down some ideas as they come to mind as you read.

2. Pick one document (i.e., one interview) -- the most interesting one, the shortest, the one from the top of the pile. Go through it, asking yourself, “What is this about?” Do not think about the substance of the information but its underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.

3. When you have completed this task for several participants, make a list of all topics. Cluster together similar topics. Form these topics into columns, perhaps arrayed as major, unique, and leftover topics.

4. Now take this list and go back to your data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. Try this preliminary organizing scheme to see if new categories and codes emerge.

5. Find the most descriptive wording for your topics and turn them into categories. Look for ways of reducing your total list of categories by grouping topics that
relate to each other. Perhaps draw lines between your categories to show interrelationships.

6. Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.

7. Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.

8. If necessary, recode your existing data. (p. 198)

These steps guided me through my data analysis and were the instructions that I turned to and reviewed again and again throughout my analysis process.

**Preliminary Processes for Developing Categories**

Firstly, during the entirety of the data collection period, I was sure to record anecdotal notes on my thoughts and feelings of how the lessons were progressing. I did this because I felt that it was important to, as Stake (1995) posits, “give meanings to first impressions as well as to final compilations” (p. 71). However, the first primary step of data analysis after the conclusion of the data collection period was organizing the data. Because much of the data had been captured digitally, all digital writing from those students was printed and added to the binder I maintained during the data collection period. I felt it was necessary to have hard copies of all data, and I also wanted to be able to hand-write notes on these documents during my readings of the data and subsequent coding, which I will expand on further. Once the data collection period ended, I reviewed the binder contents and removed any data from students who were not participants. I then merged the printed out digital data with the field notes and existing paper data.
and organized it into chronological order, following the sequence of lessons. Finally, I took the binder home with me and kept it there where I completed all of the data analysis and coding.

The next step was reading over all the data and deciding whether or not I would hand-code or use a qualitative computer data analysis program. I chose hand coding despite its time-consuming nature because I felt as though I should read and study the responses in the same manner in which I analyze and make notes about literature that I study. Typically, as I read, I write notes in the margins, underline and circle words that stand out to me, draw arrows to signal connections that I am making, draw stars beside moments in the text that I find particularly interesting and so forth. I decided to employ this method for a number of reasons. Firstly, because it is a process which is “dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing” (Basit, 2003, p. 143), I felt that manually analyzing and coding was more appropriate for me as a researcher because in my experience, it seemed more personal in nature. Writing out my analysis notes and codes and then collecting all of it in a typed document provided ample opportunity for the necessary reading and re-reading of the data so that I could feel confident during my coding process. Creswell (2014) outlines in his second step to data analysis (following organization) the necessity of studying all of the data and allowing time to “reflect on its overall meaning” by asking questions such as “What general ideas are participants saying? What is the tone of the ideas? What is the impression of the overall depth, credibility, and use of the information?” (p. 197).

After I had made copious analysis notes and taken time to re-read the data, I began to code the data by looking for themes. For this step, as mentioned, I employed Tesch’s Eight Steps in the coding process and I read through all data and made notes. I then chose a few key pieces
of data and as I read, compiled a list of topics. This was the start of what Guest et al. (2012) call the creation of the “codebook” (p. 52), which they describe as a process wherein “we deal with the inherent messiness of the text by minimizing messiness in the code definitions and maximizing coherence among the codes in the codebook” (p. 53). Through my initial working through of this stage, the topics that emerged were “Victim Blaming,” “Mental Health Issues,” “Fighting Words,” “Personal Responsibility,” “Screaming,” “Trigger Warnings,” “Assuming Bad Character,” “Obsession,” “Ally,” and “Healing Time.” I wrote all the topics out on an index card along with an abbreviated the topics as codes and used the index card to guide another reading through of my data. As I read through the data again, I wrote down the abbreviations next to the segments of data that connected to the code. Afterwards, I read through the data again with the abbreviations of codes and looked to see if new categories and/ or codes emerged, which they did. For instance, in looking through what I had coded for “Personal Responsibility,” I considered that some of the segments of data I had coded for this could also be coded for “Inner Strength” and found additional segments to support this. I also found other emerging themes, which I added to my topic list and created new codes for.

A thematic approach was necessary and natural for this research where the responses to literature are being analyzed. This thematic approach was certainly not a straightforward endeavour; as Gibson and Brown (2009) assert, “thematic organization of data is not simply a technical matter, but a theoretical and conceptual issue that cannot be codified or abstracted into concrete rules of practice” (p. 127). Similarly, they later go on to assert that in code development, “Hunches are very important…it is expected that the heavy emersion in data will lead to such inklings” (p. 134). However, as mentioned, this approach certainly felt natural because as an
English student and teacher, the search for and noting of themes is a constant in my practice, and
is a skill I teach every day. As such, I know that themes are never set but are rather interpretive
and often a personal discovery as a reader relates the literature to their own lived experiences and
then finds meaning and thematic possibilities. In this vein, my attitude was very much aligned
with Guest et al. (2012) who write of themes: “you'll know it when you see it and until then you
won’t understand what it means” (p. 65). I also certainly noticed during the early stages of
thematic coding that “we may observe things that are intriguing and unexpected” (p. 53) which is
why re-reading and recoding are a necessary step.

**Categories Emerging from the Data**

The final three steps of Tesch’s Eight Steps in the Coding Process were to finalize my
decisions about the abbreviations and alphabetize the final codes, assemble all of the data in each
category to perform a preliminary analysis, and to finally, if necessary, recode (Creswell, 2014,
p. 198). These final three steps were cycled through a number of times once I realized that
thematic analysis is not just about examining commonalities such as repeated themes in the
responses but that this work is just as much about examining differences and relationships
between noted themes. As Gibson and Brown (2009) note, “peculiarities and contrasts across a
data set” and “looking at the ways in which different code categories relate to each another” are
just as important as “pool[ing] together all examples from across a data set” (pp. 128-129). This learning was valuable and completed re-
shaped my perspectives on the data. For instance, I found that with initial readings of the data, I
was mainly looking for commonalities and did not consider differences or even what was notably
missing. Returning to Guest et al. (2012), “silence” or “missing data” is important to investigate
as “the absence of a theme can be quite telling… the observation of absence should be included in any report” (p. 66). As such, I looked through the data again and began considering what was missing from my codes and thinking about whether I was surprised that students did not explore certain themes such as explicitly addressing rape in their writing. The silence surrounding that lack of explicitly discussing sexual assault is explored in Chapter Four.

I also found that titling the coding and subsequently abbreviating the codes became a far more challenging task than I first expected, and became something of an ethical challenge. Willig (2014) addresses these concerns, writing that “to interpret another’s experience means claiming to have access to (some of) its underlying meaning” and that “the act of interpretation always involves a degree of appropriation” (p. 141). As the names of the codes might suggest many different things to different individuals, I was concerned about both best representing and titling the themes so as to honour the responses but to also ensure that these codes were directly reflective of the emerging themes. I worried that I might fall into my old English student habits of finding ways in which to make the details work for my thesis and what I was trying to prove rather than taking a step back and considering the data more holistically. This is of course one of the criticisms of thematic coding: “this process can result in an impoverished view of complex lived features of social life as the categories can potentially hide rather than reveal” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 129). In order to avoid or minimize this dilemma, I tried to maintain my focus on my position as a narrative researcher, wherein my chief goal was to work towards a more “empathetic interpretative position” where I hone in chiefly on the stories in my data (Willig, 2014, p. 148).
In summary, laying the groundwork for analyzing the data and exploring findings was a critical and illuminating step in this project. The methodological lens, the significance of the setting of the study, the data collection methods, and the analysis of data represent important learning that greatly informed the understandings that emerged during the exploration of the findings of this study. These understandings will be discussed and analyzed in Chapter Four.
Findings & Discussion

Orientation through Narration

As I began this project, I found that I was reflecting a great deal on my first night as a sexual assault counsellor and my first day of teaching as I began pouring over my data and was brought back to the commencement of this project. All three moments, all three ‘firsts,’ are meaningful for me and the first two moments significantly inform the third, the first day of my bounded unit on *Speak*, with my grade ten students. As I begin my narrative inquiry into my findings, I found myself considering past experiences of other beginnings in my roles as counsellor, teacher, and researcher. I found links between such moments, and realized that these are the starting points for many important stories that I heard over the years. They inspired my research questions and shaped how I fulfill each of these roles. I’ve come to understand that this awareness is crucial to a narrative researcher; as Claudinin and Connelly (2000) urge, researchers must be cognizant of how data, or field texts, as they name them (p. 92), are composed. They must be presented in a manner that is consistent with what narrative researchers actually do (p. 95). One of the first steps that is taken is positioning oneself “in the midst” (p. 100) by writing personal narratives; “a small slice of time and a very particular event” that “illuminate[s] the context of [a] life” (p. 101). I sighed in relief after reading, that “narrative inquiries are always strongly autobiographical” (p. 121). Thus, I begin presenting my findings by situating what I learned in moments that mark the beginning of my understanding of what it means to be a survivor, a teacher and learner, and a researcher.
The most nerve-wracking of these three ‘first’ moments is certainly my first night as a crisis counsellor, placing the heavy black hotline flip phone on my nightstand in my broken down student house. I set it on top of a book I was reading for a third year women’s studies course, bell hooks’ *All About Love* (2000). I thought somehow that seemed like a good place to put it; perhaps by osmosis, hooks’ prose would inspire good things for the people I’d meet through the phone. But as I turned out the light, I guiltily hoped that it would not ring. However, a couple of hours later, the phone exploded into activity, as I had put it on vibrate and on the highest level of volume out of fear that I might sleep through my first call. I took a moment to sit up and clear my throat before answering. An automated message told me that I had a call, and to press a button when I was ready to accept it. I turned on my bedside lamp and took a sip of water before letting out a deep breath and pressing the button. I smiled pointlessly and said as sweetly as I could, “Hi, this is Amber.”

The next forty five minutes or so will stay with me for a long time. The women who trained me had warned that you always remember your first call. A very soft-spoken woman whose tears I could almost hear sliding down her cheeks through the phone described the flashback that she was experiencing. She was speaking quietly so as not to wake her husband; he had to work early in the morning. The event she was reliving had happened over a decade ago, when she was about twenty, a year younger than I was at that time. I listened to her re-tell her story, re-live her shame, and cycle back again and again into blaming herself for being raped. When I remember this phone call, I mostly remember her story and not what I said in return. I know that I did not say much; I mostly listened. How I felt is still memorable and palpable though- my anxiety and the self-doubt were crouched in my throat, ready to pounce out and hurt
the woman on the other end of the line. I swallowed again and again in an attempt to protect her from my growing certainty of my inadequacy. I berated myself internally for being distracted and feeling inept instead of focusing my full attention on her words. I shook my head and forced myself to get lost in her story. I discovered that we were similar in a few ways, especially in our self-perception. I felt like a failure when we said goodnight, even though she thanked me several times. I didn’t think that I could help her and I wondered if I had made a huge mistake thinking that I could help any survivor. I felt like a complete imposterer.

This imposterer syndrome reared its ugly head again on my first day of teaching high school English. It was three years after the events above. I found myself in a small classroom with no windows and 56 grade eleven students sitting everywhere; on desks, the floor, a bookshelf, and my new barely used desk. Many had raised eyebrows and looked at me expectantly. There had been a clerical error somewhere along the way and two classes had accidentally been scheduled for me, at the same time. I gaped at the rolling waves of students who came in and broke into a cold sweat, wondering if I should call the office and ask if there had been a mistake. Fear of having a problem on my first day of teaching held me back from reaching out for help. Instead, I called the custodian and asked for more desks although I had no idea where he would put them. He arrived while I was halfway through roll call, desperately trying to appear calm to keep my voice from shaking. I remember not hearing him until he was right beside me. I’m not sure if the low buzzing in my ears was from the students chatting or my own head. He said, “Hi, you’re Amber, right? I think you have too many students in here. There must have been a mistake; let’s call Gary.” Then Gary (pseudonym), my vice principal, arrived
and burst into laughter in my doorway. “Moore!” he yelled at me. “I know you’re keen, but this is a bit much.” By the next day I had a class of thirty-seven and everyone had a place to sit.

I certainly had more confidence last spring while beginning this project, but I still had a difficult time sleeping the night before the first day. I kept telling myself that I knew how to talk to people about difficult stories and I had years of teaching experience. Moreover, I knew these students well. I had taught them for three months already and knew who was dating, whose parents were separated, and who pretended to listen while they hid their iPhone in their lap and played Angry Birds. Further, I had taught many of these students the previous year, in grade nine. Because that year is usually so crucial for students, I had helped several of them to navigate their first few steps in the difficult terrain of high school. Regardless of my feelings of preparedness, I stood in front of my classroom door and greeted the students with nervous anticipation. As a few wished me good morning, they asked if we were starting “that thing” today, the research my colleague and third party recruiter had discussed with them already. “Yes, I’m really excited to start this novel with you,” I replied. I tried to remind myself again, as I had those years ago on the phone with the whispering survivor that really, I need to get over myself, because this isn’t even about me. This is all about their experience, so I owed it to them to start strong. Luckily, during the first activity where I asked them to write a list of things they can’t do, one young man with a devilish sense of humour yelled out supermodel Kate Upton’s name and the class erupted into laughter. I slid right back into teacher mode and raised an eyebrow, trying to stifle a smirk. *Speak* was exactly the story that they needed to be reading.

In this chapter, I explore the many themes that emerged in the responses to the literature that my participants produced, either through their oral contributions, written contributions, or
digitally written contributions. These prevalent themes include a variety of angry and aggressive responses, expressing a need to be heard demonstrated chiefly through the use of repetition in their responses that illustrates the development of their unique writer’s “voices,” mental health issues that emerged when coping with their angry expressions, their use of supportive and mindful ally communication, and making connections between self, story, and other texts. Additionally, I briefly ruminate on the data that I found to be surprisingly absent from their oral and written responses.

“You are a Warrior”: Angry & Aggressive Responses to Sexual Assault Narratives

When I reflect on my own high school experience, I found that I discovered more interesting reading outside of the classroom rather than in school where the books were filled with white men’s rumination that sounded alien to me. Instead, I sought out texts that my father called “depressing; everyone is going to think we neglect you” literature, such as the oh-so-predictable Sylvia Plath poetry, *Wuthering Heights, The Shipping News, The Colour Purple, Runaway: Diary of a Street Kid*, and so forth. There was something about the pain in these stories that represented life experience that I so desperately wanted, even as I was blind to the significance of the experiences I was already having. The anger and the struggle in the stories I read represented passion and sophistication in some way. My students similarly were very engaged in reading *Speak* as it represents the injustices my students see and feel everyday.

Consequently, the first theme that I noticed right away, even during teaching the unit and the data collection, was the tendency for students to respond to Melinda’s story with anger and aggression, such as using violent war imagery. Ronnberg and Martin (2010) argue that the symbolic possibilities of such archetypal images as those of “war…do bring about profound
change, for good or ill…. evokes the radical tension of opposites [which can] engineer dynamic
process,” and that such images could also “foster a sense of brotherhood, loyalty, and shared
suffering… intense aliveness” (p. 472). They also claim that we all “dream of bloody battles…
even those who have never been soldiers dream of being soldiers.” High school, it seems, is
something of a battlefield for many. Swartz, Reyns, Henson, and Wilcox (2011) assert, “we know
that a substantial number of students do not feel safe at school” despite the fact that “In general,
schools are thought of as safe havens for children” (p. 62). The entire context of school has long
been associated with the notion of surviving in it rather than thriving in it. High school is often
regarded as a time in people’s lives where they feel, and are, the most vulnerable, both
figuratively and literally, especially in considering that teenagers fall in the age bracket most
frequently targeted for sexual violence, as addressed in Chapter One. Swartz et al. note “The
balance between students’ fear of school crime and their risk or vulnerability may be dependent
on their gender or age” (p. 64).

Perhaps in response to the fear students feel in school, many participants used warrior
rhetoric repeatedly, “in order to get through an ordeal or complete a particularly difficult
task” (Ronnberg & Martin, 2010, p. 472), throughout both their written and verbal responses. For
instance, during an early activity, students were asked to create their own list of “10 Lies They
Tell You in High School,” as Melinda does in the early pages of the novel. In groups, students
compiled lists and then we had a group discussion where we created a master list of lies. Fighting
your way through school was a clear emergent theme as students’ lie suggestions included that
“all students will feel safe in our building, that everyone will be treated equally and that ‘beat
week’ for grade nines is a myth.” Students spoke with fervour, with many students suggesting
that in order to deal with such lies, you need to be tough, to fight your way through, because “it
takes too long to get help” and “you become a target if you try to help.” Several mentioned
waiting for at least a week or more for an appointment with the guidance department, a team that
is often overwhelmed with demand from our student body, especially in early September.

Fighting metaphors and references to warriors also came up a great deal in the students’
personal blogs, whether they were choosing poetry that they believed would bring comfort to
Melinda, or writing survivor letter assignments. For instance, Benita, Camille, and Helen (all
student names are pseudonyms) all refer to warriors in their survivor letters. Benita wrote to the
recipient of her letter, “You are a warrior, a brave Amazonian warrior,” Camille similarly started
her letter with “You are a warrior who has fought through the very depths of the Earth,” and
Helen states, “You are strong and brave; you are a warrior.” For Grace’s survivor letter, a letter
she wrote to herself, she uses several war and fighting metaphors throughout to approach her
feeling her own loss of innocence, struggle with mental health issues, and discloses being a
survivor of sexual molestation. I was a bit concerned about her angry expressions, as well as the
anger expressed by other participants, because, as Lee (1993) discusses, “there is concern… that
anger can result in, or coincide with, feelings of despair and frustration” (p. 15). Lee goes on to
explain that “What this means is that the actions that accompany anger in order for it to be dealt
with productively are blocked… [and] students feel powerless” (p. 15). However, Grace ends her
blog post with strong sentiments on the power of feminism and how this ideology helped her to
continue to fight for power, concluding: “Grace, you do not need the water from a man to make
your flower bloom… Your stem gets stronger and stronger even after many try to rip your beauty
out of the dirt.” Here, she powerfully asserts her independence and demonstrates that rather than
feeling powerless, she is resistant against those who violently try to “rip [her] beauty out of the
dirt.” This resiliency is capably conveyed through her use of floral imagery here; as Bharadwaj
and Clark (2010) discuss the significance of the symbolism of flowers: “flowers are, in truth,
remarkably resilient. Their aggressive roots invade rough, inauspicious soil. They assert their
bright growth on the rocky banks of highways and out of asphalt cracks” (p. 150). Grace seems
to use floral and warrior imagery quite capably and persuasively to assert her agency as a
survivor.

As many students wrote about fighting through difficult situations or going up against
people they felt had wronged them, experiential self-focus writing became an important outlet
for several participants. Experiential self-focus writing is a writing process wherein “the
processing of an interpersonal hurt which can be considered an interpersonal problem and can
result in a negative effect” (Liao et al., 2012, p. 1091). Liao et al. (2012) examine the
importance of such writing, arguing that it prompts “self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-
regulation that [will] likely to help the emotional and cognitive processing of an interpersonal
hurt” (p. 1091). Similarly, Smythe (1998) posits that “written emotional expression leads to the
transduction of…traumatic experience into a linguistic structure that promotes assimilation and
understanding” (p. 174). The potential for such understanding is perhaps demonstrated in how
Ren, like Grace, also explored finding strength through fighting and finding strength of self
through that process. She addressed bullying in her survivor love letter, which she chose to write
in the form of the poem, saying “But you’re strong. I know you are./ You can get through the
bullies, the grief, the break ups./ Make the bad days better…focus on what you have now.” Ren
and Grace’s responses here suggest that Symthe’s argument that “written emotional expression produces positive outcomes across a variety of measures” (p. 174).

Another example that potentially illustrates the self-reflexivity found in experiential self-focus writing was Landry’s response during a threaded discussion group chat where the writing challenge was to create a recipe for how to survive high school. They (I use the plural pronoun to indicate a gender fluid person) wrote, “I think a good way to avoid being bullied in high school is by having a reputation like mine. Rumour has it that I… am very strong and kind of ruthless and sent a kid to the nurse’s office a number of times after several physical fights in grade eight. Because of this, no one messes with me.” I was quite stunned; Landry is very physically small, kind, intelligent, and self-aware. For instance, during the activity where students had to choose an app for one of the characters, Landry chose an art therapy app called Thisissand™, because, they said “it’s very calming… I’ve used it for my anxiety when it was really bad.” Landry is quite an activist in our building by working to educate the student body on gender and identity issues as well as campaigning for a gender-neutral bathroom. I would have never thought of Landry as ever being violent in any respect. Landry went on to write in the TDG, “Just to confirm, the rumours are in fact true, however, those fights were all self defence as this kid liked to attack me, and I have impulse control issues,” which was certainly all new information for me.

Landry’s response about their frustrations and violent encounters with other students perhaps reflects “frustration with the gender regulation [they face] in everyday life [which] echoes postmodern anxieties over identity categories” and a “desire to escape social judgment” (Davis, 2009, p. 97). Davis (2009) explores the hostility many gender fluid students face daily, explaining that “Individuals may be held personally responsible and penalized for
their gender variance” and cites one of their students as declaring that “People can be just nasty…[it is] like you did something wrong” (p. 108). Perhaps Landry experienced such ‘nastiness,’ and seemingly worse, as they detail being physically attacked. Such nastiness in turn seems to have generated a great deal of anger with them, and in many moments, has left them seemingly vulnerable and alone. In order to mitigate further feelings of vulnerability and pain, Landry was proactive in requesting that I warn them about upcoming potentially triggering moments in the novel as we studied it.

Overall, fighting metaphors and reference to violence was a significant element of the anger and aggression theme. Although I was initially surprised and concerned, it seemed to become somewhat cathartic for students to express their anger in the safe space of the classroom and their writing. The next element of this anger and aggression response theme that emerged was the numerous references to screaming in outrage in their responses; their screams erupted in their blogs, threaded discussion groups, and various other writing activities. For instance, Teddy, a very quiet and often sheepish young man who loves hockey and playing pranks on his friends, spoke very honestly in our focus group session about the pressures he faces as a male student and as a hockey player in this community culture. He reveals that because of his religion, he does not wish to treat girls the way that many of his peers do, and is frequently frustrated by the pressures to do so, such as, alarmingly, the pressure to ask girls for nude photos of themselves to show his teammates. He voiced concern about pushing back too aggressively with his friends or else he fears he will be rejected. He references screaming in citing another example of pressure he feels is when he explains to the group that “people go really fast physically but then the mental will try to catch up, and then they’ll break up and it just shatters a person…it’s tough…it’s a vicious
cycle…you kind of just want to scream at them like, ‘grow up.’” The group nods in response and Ren especially leans back and shakes her head, as if in agreement.

Literal screaming occurred throughout activities, such as during the consent challenge, during the discussion about our first current event connection blog response, and while choosing poetry for Melinda’s character. Firstly, the consent challenge was an activity where students where given an envelope full of different intimate activities, both physical and emotional, that partners might do together; their task was to put the activities in order, according to what they think would unfold in a healthy relationship. Included in the envelopes were several cards that read “consent” that needed to be included in their lists as well. Interestingly, six groups left more emotionally intense steps after all of the physically intimate options, including “Saying ‘I love you,’” “Introducing your partner to your friends,” and “Allowing yourself to cry in front of your partner.” However, thirteen groups left either “Sex” or “Oral sex” at the very end of the list, and one outlier group left “Back rub” at the end of the list. When I asked about this, a few students scrunched their faces and said, “that’s pretty intense, Miss.” Surprisingly, learners started hollering at one another during this activity. There were shrieks of “are you kidding me?” “what?” “no way!” and “you cannot put that before that!” Ren especially took charge during this activity, yelling above the others that the cards that read “consent” must come before the others, and kindly answered other students’ questions including, “do you need consent for both sex and oral sex?” and then pointedly retorted, “are you done?” to one young man who was disrupting the activity. Watching her reminded me of a story she disclosed regarding an incident that had happened the previous year in my class. Suddenly and uncharacteristically, she jumped out of her seat during a lesson and starting shouting and swearing at a male student. At the time, she
apologized to me for disrupting but never explained what caused it. However, during our focus group, she recalled the moment after Teddy brought up the pressures he faces to get nude photos of girls via text. Ren piggybacked on his share, and asked if I remembered the incident. I said that I did and she divulged that during that class, the male student she swore at had group-shared with most of the other students in our class a nude photo of her. The student beside her showed her the text and picture of her on their phone, and she understandably completely lost her temper and starting screaming wildly. In the small focus group, she recalled screaming at the young men, “I’m right here!” while they looked at the photos in class. She admitted during our focus group discussion “That, like, ruined all my trust. I had so many trust issues from that day. It took me so long to get into another relationship and trust that person…it just ruined me…I couldn’t do anything.”

Another lesson where students’ responses got quite heated and voices were raised was the introduction to the first prompt that I posted on our class blog, the current event connection response, which also connects with this screaming theme. I discussed the current event issue with my department head before bringing it to my students because it was a jarring news story and involved some intense language including profanity and a derogatory reference to the vagina. However, as Jones and Hughes-Decatur (2012) posit, in education, “somewhere along the way, [educators] heard the faint whispers of bodies” and that “once we attuned our ears to the whisper it became more like a roar, a yelp, a cry, and a silence that was deafening” (p. 52). They go on explore the potential of applying critical body pedagogy and its connection to teaching social justice, and describe how they “responded to these faint whispers, loud screams, and silences through pedagogical practices…asking students to engage in conversations about bodies” (p. 52)
and conclude that the “integration of issues of the body throughout a justice-oriented teacher education course opens up spaces for… to explore, critique, and reconstruct normative discourses and practices around the body” (p. 59). Despite these students being adults, the integration of these issues in young-adult classrooms also seem necessary because as Miller-Lane (2006) argues, “the body as a key source of how individuals come to know the world” and goes on to say that “One has to understand how one’s lived body has shaped what one understands about the world in order to understand fully the world in which one lives.” (pp. 16-17).

With this in mind, I felt compelled to bring in the controversial news video of two men interrupting a live sports cast being delivered outside of a stadium by a female journalist. During her live coverage, these two men ran up behind her, looked into the camera, and screamed, “Fuck her right in the pussy,” which is apparently a trend. The journalist, visibly shocked and alarmed, quickly recovered and followed the men, demanding answers. The men weakly responded, making excuses for their atrocious behaviour. I played the video and told the students that the two men were seen by their boss on TV and were subsequently fired from their engineering jobs. In the class discussion that followed, many students loudly voiced their opinions, such as Grace, who quickly yelled out in exasperation, “This promotes rape culture!” Rose quickly followed loudly with her point that this will especially impact the lives of the men because “who would want to date them? What if they have daughters?” Ren also chimed in; from her seat near the front, she half-turned, facing the class and hollered, “why don’t we teach boys how not to be perverts?”
After the class discussion, the students set to work responding on the public blog and while I only asked for a few sentences in response, most of the students wrote lengthy paragraphs explaining their reactions. For instance, Benita wrote a very long, insightful, and persuasive post on the public blog about her reactions to the men’s screaming:

Shouting out vulgar comments such as what had been spoken in the article is plainly very disrespectful and inappropriate, especially when said thoughtlessly in front of a broad range of viewers. Derogatory comments can be incredibly hurtful and really quite disgusting. Although to many people what was spoken was nothing more than a joke, people need to realize that what is funny to them, is not necessarily so hilarious to everyone else. As for whether or not the men should have been fired, is entirely up to the company they work for. If they act and speak so impulsively in their spare time, then who's to say that they do not behave the same way during company time? Furthermore, the company employing them may not want to be associated with people who have unfavourable ideals. Regardless of the fact that the comments were intended as a harmless joke, they can be incredibly offensive to not only women, but men as well. It can be embarrassing and frankly very rude, which does not display the respect that people should have for one another. I believe that there are some people that need to really think before they speak, especially in front of a worldwide audience.

Interestingly, the comment that followed was posted by a male student but quickly deleted before I could view it. At that moment, I worried that I may have missed something inappropriate.

Benita’s post demonstrates a depth of thinking as well as a sophisticated and persuasive writing
voice but I had a moment of doubt that perhaps I debuted this forum with an issue that was a bit
too heated, controversial and/or mature for them. However, in reflecting on the detail of the
responses, the frequency of the responses, and the buzz it created in the classroom, I decided that
it was worth the risk. Like Benita, Camille also wrote a detailed response on the public blog that
went beyond the expectations of the assignment with:

I just think that these obscenities being screamed at this reporter isn’t okay in any
sense. And I’m not just saying that because I’m a female. It’s offensive and
degrading to both genders and we see it all the time in our world and apparently it
has become “okay.” Even downright “hilarious” to some people. But it’s not.
Something like this isn’t a joke and people cannot expect their victims (because
that’s what this reporter is) not to fight back or take action against their attackers. It
isn’t fair to the people who have never done anything to these bullies and are getting
blatantly verbally attacked.

Here, Camille is very clear and thorough about her opinions on the current event and extends her
stance to her own observations and experiences. What I especially did not expect was for other
students to comment on one another’s comments as much as they did, as it was not a
requirement. Landry decided to post a message in response to Camille here, and use this
opportunity to teach Camille about being mindful of terms when discussing gender:

Your comment looks really good. I agree with this 100%. One thing though, the term
“both genders” is a little constructed as there are more than two genders (I assume
you mean male and female only). There are actually very, very many, and the term
“all genders” would be more appropriate.
While of course Landry was not screaming in response to Camille’s very thoughtful comment, Landry does take the opportunity to take advantage of a teachable moment and “call out” gender as socially constructed while also being very encouraging of Camille’s ideas.

Next, there were a couple of interesting references to screaming in the chosen poetry for Melinda’s character, as selected by Rose, Teddy, Ellie, Helen, Jason, and Landry. Rose chose a poem that explores family strife and described Melinda as a character who is screaming on the inside, writing “In the first poem, it discusses more about family problems and how they do not listen to her. This relates to Melinda because she is screaming on the inside.” Teddy also made some powerful poetry choices that addressed sexual assault issues, describing the speaker’s tone as one that is screaming. Teddy writes, “In the first poem, it describes how the victim doesn’t feel that anyone cares and how she is forever trapped… no one is listening even though she feels that she is screaming.” Ellie too, chose a poem that reads, “All you want to do is scream/ “Please God, tell me it’s a dream!”/ When you wake in the morning/ to realize it’s reality.” Similarly, Helen’s chosen poem reads, “The screams in the air are thick/ I can feel her pain in my lungs.” Further, Jason chosen a poem about combating depression with the speaker writing, “Go away! I yell into the dark/ As if someone is there.” Finally, Landry chose to write some of the ‘loudest’ poems that reference screaming including their piece with the lines “Her screams,/ They pierced through the air,/ Tearing her silence apart she screamed,/ She cried, she called for help/ But no one/ No one was there.” Although the assignment was for students to find existing poetry that Melinda might enjoy or find strength with, Landry bravely decided to share their own work, adding the note to me at the top of the post, “I hope it’s okay that I’m using my own poetry; they just sit around in my Google Docs™ collecting dust.” Reading this really struck me, as I was of
course delighted that they would rather share original work, but it almost seemed as if they no longer wanted their writing to sit in silence. In their second original poem that they selected for Melinda, they again uses a piece that reference screaming with the opening line, “The screams in the air are thick/ I can feel her pain in my lungs.” Landry then went on to critically analyze and explain their own writing, reflecting firstly that:

In the first poem… it’s about something that happened to someone, and though that someone called out for help, the stormy night drowned out her calls so no one could hear her. In the morning, she was discovered, it being “too late” to do anything, and the city mourned a loss. It’s supposed to be a vague metaphor for losing a valuable piece of yourself or something.

I was so impressed with their discussion of their writing, and particularly literary devices, such as their own metaphor.

Overall, the screaming that erupted throughout their responses can be interpreted in myriad ways. My immediate reading of this theme was that the screams in their writing were expressions of their fears, as they read about Melinda’s overwhelming, silencing terror in the year following her rape. Next, students often feel as though they are not heard, and that other voices are privileged over theirs. The crying out could also be read as a call for action in response to pain and frustration they experience during adolescence. Also, because Melinda remained silent throughout the majority of the story, perhaps this screaming is the result of the students attempting to differentiate themselves from Melinda. In the same vein, perhaps Melinda’s screaming in the climatic moment in the closet where she screams at her attacker who has cornered her again is something students’ came to associate with her having a breakthrough.
and finally harnessing her personal power. However, in order to better understand their
“screaming,” I read a bit about poetry and screaming in particular, looking to Yuen (2010), a self-
reflective poet whose poem “Kicking and Screaming” carries a comparable tone to some of my
participants. Yuen writes that her work is “a response to a crisis of representation” (p. 431). She
is a poet who conducted research with incarcerated Aboriginal women, and through this process,
became a critical theorist who was “kicking and screaming with incarcerated women and for
incarcerated women” (p. 429). The speaker in Yuen’s poem writes, “She wouldn’t stop crying/
Soothing songs so she could feel safe” (p. 430), which seemed reminiscent of Ellie’s poem
choice which also discusses crying out for comfort with “‘All you want to do is scream/ ‘Please
God, tell me it’s a dream!’”

Whatever the reason, screaming became a central, and perhaps the most pervasive
element of the anger and aggression theme in their responses to Speak. Additionally, in the same
vein as screaming in outrage, many students adopted cruel, almost sinister tones while role-
playing various characters from the novel and other high school students. These adoption of
sinister tones particularly happened while participants worked on the Ask FM™ social media
questions activity. Students had to pretend to be Merryweather High school students in the novel
and post questions anonymously on the Ask FM™ profiles of characters. I encouraged them to
be as authentic as possible and to re-create the typical tones and messages that are typical on the
app. The severity of the hate in the posts that the students composed surprised and dismayed me,
as it seems as though they have either experienced reading such lists about themselves, witnessed
posts akin to these being published on real Ask FM™ profiles, or, perhaps most disturbingly,
posted similar messages themselves. The cruel messages for Melinda included “why are your
lips so cut up, psycho?” from Carter’s group, and “It’s not rape if you like it” from Ren and Wallace’s group. Also from Ren and Wallace’s group, they asked Mrs. Sordino, Melinda’s mother, “how do you put up with Melinda the whore” and messaged, “It’s no surprise your daughter got raped tell her she shouldn’t be so easy or you should raise your kid right next time.” They commented on Hairwoman, the English teacher’s profile, “Your hair is full of cum,” and on the character David Petrakis’ wall, “I want you to tutor me. Gimme dick!” While walking around the room and seeing these messages, I asked if people really left messages like this on social media and several of them replied, “worse.” These sinister tones, while disturbing, were interesting especially because they perhaps capture the tones and types of messages usually posted on this social media platform, and certainly shed light on why this app has caused such a problem in this learning community.

The role-playing and subsequent cruel tones that emerged during this type of writing also became apparent during TDGs. Many students opted to choose this creative writing task and took on the voice of various characters in their digital writing. For instance, Nina assigned an uncharacteristically curt tone to the character David Petrakis, replying to another student playing Mr. Neck’s character who said that David is suspended, “Oh, ouch. Only thing is, you can’t do that cuz I got you on camera. Ha.” Then, in response to another student who insulted David’s character using caps lock to establish tone, Nina wrote David as being almost snarky with “I think your caps lock is broken…” and then followed with the insult “Don’t you have an education or something?” soon afterward. While David is certainly assertive with Mr. Neck in the book and speaks out against his teacher’s intolerance, David’s tone is straightforward and clear while Nina portrayed him as more of a smart aleck.
In a similar vein to the use of cruel tones during role-playing writing activities, students also showed a tendency towards demonizing characters from the novel and imagined them as having crueler intentions, thoughts, and actions than they did in the literature. This demonizing of characters became especially apparent with Rose and Benita, who wrote about Heather’s character. Firstly, Rose does this with Heather’s character when she writes a diary entry from her perspective. She assumes the worst of Heather, portraying her as especially malicious with “[Melinda’s] so depressed; no wonder no one wants to be around her.” Next, Benita also depicted Heather’s character, a self-absorbed, selfish, but ultimately insecure new student who befriends Melinda for the first part of the novel before abandoning her, as being worse than she actually is. For instance, Benita writes as Heather, “…my friends and I are planning another night together, without Melinda of course. She isn’t valuable to me anymore.” While Heather is certainly unkind when she writes Melinda a note that says she doesn’t want to be friends anymore, she is more of a weak, meek, ‘follower’ of a character who does this out of fear of being rejected by other peers rather than from a place of malice. However, Rose and Benita depict Heather as a very cold character who uses Melinda until she has no ‘value.’

Perhaps most severely, Wallace took on David Petrakis’ voice from the novel for his diary entry assignment. David is presented by the author as a confident, mindful, and intelligent young man who is committed to justice in Anderson’s story. However, Wallace writing as David imagines Andy, Melinda’s rapist, as being even more sinister than he seems in the book. For instance, he writes that Andy was contacting David to “get some information about my lab partner, Melinda.” In David’s voice, Wallace goes on to reveal that “he wanted to know this information but he refused to tell me [why he needed it]. All he said was that she did a bad thing.
over the summer and he needed to make sure she never talked again. This sounded like quite the sinister proclamation so I hang up the phone…” In the same vein, Silas and Carter do the same thing using Andy’s voice, making Andy even more predatory than in the original text. Firstly, Silas describes Andy as literally smelling his prey and also acting like a murderer. He writes, “So today…I finally managed to get all of Melinda’s contacts. Some day I will have her all to myself and when I do it will be magical.” He goes on to creatively explore Andy’s character as especially sinister, writing:

So I watched *American Psycho* today and I thought about it and if I had killed Melinda, I wouldn’t just let her rot. I would make a shrine out of her. Some of what similar to what I did last time only I would make sure not to make that much of a mess. Note to self, don’t use the wood chipper again.

Imagining Andy’s character as even more deplorable, and in Silas’ case, as murderous, is perhaps the result of our lessons on sexual assault where I taught them that in the majority of attacks, the perpetrator plans it ahead of time and many rapists reoffend. While this is not suggested in the novel with Melinda’s rape, Wallace’s creative response could perhaps be understood as an application of his understanding about the nature of many sexual assaults and subsequently, further exploring the horrifying nature of this reality in his writing, through the outraged tone of David’s character. With Silas, reading this entry was certainly disturbing, and what concerned me is that I wondered if some of the young men were further demonizing Andy’s character because it didn’t seem sinister ‘enough’ that he was a rapist. I found myself distracted and unsettled by this potential interpretation. However, I believe that ultimately, it demonstrates that Silas has no sympathy for Andy and subsequently, writes him to be a monstrous murderer. While initially I
was a bit alarmed by the level of anger and violence I picked up in in their responses to the text, with their fighting imagery, warrior metaphors, references to and literal screaming, cruel tones while role playing, demonizing of characters, and expressed frustrations with adults in their lives, I was comforted by Lee (1993) who claim that “Anger may work to motivate students to learn more, fuelling an interest to comprehend certain issues and encouraging them to work for personal and social changes” (p. 15).

Next, similar to Silas, Carter also engaged in demonizing during a TDG role playing creative writing activity while taking on the voice of Andy Evans. Carter and another student wrote a dialogue between Mr. Neck and Andy, depicting these unlikable characters as aligned. Carter writes Andy as boastful of his connection to Melinda as well as his playboy reputation to Mr. Neck writing, “But how bout that Melinda, I mean dang, she hot!” and “Haha the only trouble she is causing is other girls getting jealous of her having my heart.” Then, like Silas who imagines Andy as even more predatory than he was, Carter also depicts Andy as trying to use Mr. Freeman, Melinda’s trusted art teacher, in order to get access to Melinda with “Hey Mr. Freeman, have any connections to Melinda, I need to start talking to her more and get her in my back pocket.” After being rebuffed by the other student pretending to be Mr. Freeman, Carter writes, “She's mine, she bites off my donuts all the time.” In seeing this last comment, I was tempted to verbally ask Carter what that meant, however, I held back because I didn’t want to interrupt the activity or embarrass him because I was perplexed. Carter is a very respectful, shy, and well-liked student which is why I was a little surprised by his role playing; nothing in his writing ‘sounded’ like Carter at all.
Overall, the students took surprising risks in their role-playing of characters, often employing crueller and more sinister tones than depicted in the original story. Connected to this theme is how students expressed a great deal of anger towards adults in the novel; they took issue with many of the actions or inaction that certain characters embodied, such as Mr. Neck’s racism and the seemingly neglectful behaviour of Melinda’s parents. In fact, they also seemed to almost relish in this anger towards adults in several moments, such as during the TDGs when they were role playing; the class was very loud and students kept hollering and laughing as they posted responses where they were criticizing adult characters. I even overheard one student say, “Mr. Neck should be fixed” alongside many whisperings about how awful Melinda’s parents are. Perhaps this is because, as Galambos, Barker, and Krahn (2006) argue, a major factor impacting the nature of adolescents transitioning into adulthood is conflict between parents and children, although, however, such conflicts “waned over time” (p. 362). In their study, they explored the frequency with which adolescents have conflict with their parents and why, with participants citing ten primary areas as ones of conflict including “school,” “spending money,” “choice of friends,” “dating,” “appearance,” “household chores,” and “the time [adolescents] come in at night” (p. 354). These conflicts are perhaps arguments that students have with their families, and such conflicts may have crossed over into their writing. For example, Nina, writing as Melinda, expresses her anger towards her parents and again, screaming also is referenced:

My parents think that there is something wrong with me. They yell and scream at me.

They want me to speak. When I say nothing, they turn on each other. I feel like there is a civil war going on in my house. Maybe I could become Switzerland.
This written response reflects many of the sentiments expressed during class discussions while reading the novel; many students said they were upset with the teachers and parents, the adults in positions of power, who neglected or abused their crucial roles as protectors of the youth.

Naturally, there was a great deal of anger directed towards the Social Studies teacher character, Mr. Neck, who proves to be a bigoted bully in the story and abuses his position of power, particularly with David, a character the students really seemed to admire. For instance, Ellie explored David’s anger with his teacher further in her diary assignment, writing David saying, “I stood up and left the classroom… still fuming and just wandered… I headed to my next class, with thoughts of possible recording devices that I could bring into the classroom to make sure Mr. Neck wasn’t teaching us crap.” In addition to outraged written expressions regarding Mr. Neck, students also called out Melinda’s parents. For instance, several students picked up on how Melinda’s father has a liking for alcohol, and used that detail as a point of criticism of him, imagining him as an addict. For example, Max chose a poem for Melinda to read about an alcoholic parent’s death by suicide which included poignant lines such as “When we need a dad here for us today,/ Is that what you want, the easy way out?” and “Drinking like this could lead to your death.” Max goes on to emphasize Mr. Sordino’s drinking problem in his diary entry, writing her father as confessing “I really want to try to stop drinking so much, it is wrecking my life… It’s an escape but not always a better place.”

However, although the majority of students did write antagonistically toward or about adults, Max alternatively portrayed Melinda’s father as feeling helpless, and wrote him in a very sympathetic light. In his diary assignment, he takes on a forgiving tone and writes the father character as feeling defeated and worried about his position with “Today, things at work still
didn’t get any better; my boss is disrespecting everybody and losing his temper” and as worried about Melinda with “Melinda seems distressed although I feel I cannot help her.” This is interesting because very few students took this approach towards a character who seemed to act, in large part, as an absentee parent. Max’s assignment made me pause to wonder if his own strong relationship with his parents and his noted capacity for forgiveness factored into his positive reading of the father character. Max’s writing seems to employ what Romero (2008) suggests, “empathy may be a particularly powerful factor in the intrapersonal process of shifting away from revenge and avoidance and towards compassion” (Romero, 2008, p. 627). In Romero’s study where the potential of forgiveness-based expressive writing for improving cognitive processing is explored, first year university student participants in Chicago were encouraged to engage these writing practices where in order to fulfill this task, “participants were encouraged to empathize with the offender… although these tasks… would likely be challenging” (p. 628), however, Max’s responses reflected these practices despite not being instructed to do so and despite his unique direction with his writing, which certainly stood apart from the majority of his classmates.

Anger towards adults was certainly expressed repeatedly through students’ creative writing and particularly during role-playing. However, repetition itself as a literary device also became an interesting and prevalent theme that emerged in students’ responses, as explored in the following section.
“David David David”: A Pattern of Repetition, A Need to be Heard, and the Development of a Unique Writer’s “Voice”

In a similar vein to the heated tones conveyed with the angry and aggressive responses to sexual assault narratives, emphasis in the form of repetition also presented itself as a recurring theme in the students’ responses, which perhaps suggest a need for students to feel heard. Whether students were repeating themselves or exploring texts that included repetition, a sense of ‘saying over what I have said before’ emerged. This repetition is very interesting and potentially telling; as Rogers (1987) asserts of repetition, “repetition is meaning. Repetition is always meaningful” (p. 584). Similarly, Neuman (2013) argues of repetition in poetry, “Repetition is of interest both to psychoanalysis and poetry. While repetition has been originally considered by Freud as a sign of repression (1914: 147–156), for poetry it has been mainly a stylistic feature” (p. 119). As such, to begin with, many students chose poetry that included significant repetition, such as Silas, Gabe, Grace, Benita, and Ari.

Firstly, Silas chose Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Raven” as a poem for Melinda and it contains significant repetition of the words “more,” “nevermore,” and the phrase “nothing more” throughout. As Freedman (1999) argues of the raven’s repeated answer “nevermore,” he asserts that this is a “straightforward reply to the questions put to it by the curious, then increasingly self-tormented, student” (p. 147). If Silas recognized this tormented student in the poem and made the connection between this subject and Melinda, then this is a remarkably significant connection. Allowing students complete freedom and choice with their poetry selections for this assignment seemed to empower many of them to make personalized connections. Freedman goes on to argue that the raven’s “nevermore” is “a reply to that is more accurately understood as a
refusal to respond to the plea for an answer than as a reply to a question” (p. 148). Silas perhaps read this repeated refusal as troubling, as he discusses his choice: “The first poem, “The Raven,” I chose because the Raven can be seen as memory. Haunting Melinda. Tormenting her till she can confront the issue.” Here, Silas is tapping into Melinda’s repeated “torment” in the book, as she is retraumatized each time her attacker harasses her throughout the story.

With Silas, I found this reading especially encouraging, as he seemed to be slightly dismissive of the severity of Melinda’s experience earlier on in the novel study. For example, in the first ‘ticket-out-the-door’ activity where students had to write ‘Can’t Do’ lists, Silas’ answers struck me as silly. For example, his list included the following items; “never die,” “become invisible,” “rule the world with an iron fist,” “kill the dinosaurs,” “learn to falcon punch,” “find Waldo,” and lastly, and perhaps most disappointing to me, “not have to read crappy books that I don’t like.” That last item on his list really forced me to pause and reflect on the novel study and also signalled to me that I would need to keep a close eye on Silas for engagement. After that class, I wrote in my field diary, “is he doing this because this is an activity that requires a lot of vulnerability?” Also, during the ‘ticket-out-the-door’ where the students were instructed to write a newspaper headline about what they found to be the most significant aspect of the novel so far, Silas wrote, “Girl continues to moan and complain and refuses help.” In my own field diary, I wrote “Silas is disturbing” and “Yikes.” After these concerning moments, I was pleased to see his Poe poetry choice, as it seems to signal growth and a sophistication that I was not seeing exhibited in the couple weeks prior to this blog assignment.

Silas’ ‘elbow partner’ and friend, Gabe, chose perhaps the most striking example of poetry that contains repetition, as he selected a work by Abdul Wahab called “Life Life Life Life
Life Life Life Life Life Life Life Is A Real Addiction” which concludes with a stanza of the word “life” repeated 842 times. Gabe interpreted this poem with, “Though in the end we all die, we should try our best to live as well as we can, which is shown [in this poem]. It also shows how people hold on to life as long as they can. It’s an addiction that we all have that is drilled in our mind from evolution for the continuation of our species.” This reading of the poem seems to suggest that we are somewhat powerless in our pursuit of happiness in life, perhaps our addiction to pursue happiness, as this has been happening “since evolution for the continuation of our species.” Gabe is certainly a pensive and introspective young man and this weighty insight of a reading is in keeping with his character. Interestingly, in reading his next assignment, the diary entry, Gabe employs Wahab’s repetition technique in his own creative writing while taking on the voice of Mr. Neck. He writes the teacher as completely and somewhat manically obsessed with his student, David Petrakis, in a series of entries. He writes, “Dear diary, this prick named David Petrakis made a scene in my class today. He ruined a perfectly good debate about Americans versus stupid immigrants. I hate David.” In the next entry, he writes, “damn you, David” and then in the entry following comes the repetition with “Dear diary, David David David David…”; this entry, like the poem he chose, repeats the name “David” 123 times. The entry following the repetition characterizes Mr. Neck as being in denial about his behaviour with “Dear diary, my family thinks that I have an obsession with David. They are wrong [and] they don’t understand.”

Next, Grace also uses repetition in her writing, and when I first read it, I was immediately reminded of Gabe’s blog posts. The poem she chose to provide Melinda’s character with comfort, like Gabe’s choice, ends with the words “Live/ Live/ Live.” The lengthy narrative poem
chronicles the story of a speaker with mental health struggles including reflecting on a subject who died by suicide with “My bones said, “Tyler Clementi dove into the Hudson River convinced/ he was entirely alone” and then later, the speaker contemplates suicide with “Calculating exactly what I had to swallow to keep the bottle of sleeping pills down.” However, the hopeful and strong “Live/ Live/ Live” at the end seems to mimic Grace’s own writing which is unflinchingly raw, as she is unafraid to write about her pain and struggles, yet she always maintains a hopeful tone or message at the end of her entries, as discussed in more detail in the following section on mental health issues.

Benita and Ari also both chose the same poem with repetition; “Alone” by Maya Angelou. The poem repeats the line “nobody/ can make it out here alone” throughout. Considering Ari and Benita’s poetry choice here illuminated to me, as I recorded in my field notes, that I was “seeing a trend of needing a community.” This observation lead to a new code about how the students write about the importance of having and acting as allies, which will be explored thoroughly in a section later on in this chapter. Perhaps this is why this poem, with this repeated message of needing others, was selected for Melinda who is most certainly alone throughout the majority of the story. The speaker seems to assert that without others, a void remains, as demonstrated in the lines “How to find my soul a home/ Where water is not thirsty/ And bread loaf is not a stone.” As the repetition builds throughout, with the repeated lines at the end of each stanza, the message comes across as almost sounding like a mantra. While Melinda does not have a mantra per say, she is encouraged by Mr. Freeman to repeatedly draw the image of a tree so that she can explore the symbol in a variety of mediums and interpretations. She is both alone and accompanied in this endeavour, as she is the only student studying a tree,
however, she is supported and coaxed on by her teacher. In turn, she begins housing her tree art in her secret room, the custodial closet, to keep her company and make the space her own.

Overall, this poetry selection by Benita and Ari demonstrates a deep consideration on their part to find a text that would resonate with Melinda’s experience. Overall, repetition appeared to be a stylistic feature of writing that appealed to a number of the participants.

This repetition points to the students’ development of their own unique writer’s voices, a growth that they demonstrated in a number of ways. In addition to repetition, students also began to take personalized approaches to assignments. For instance, Wallace also asked permission to complete two diary assignments instead of the survivor love letter because he said that he preferred the confessional quality of diary writing, showing that he is beginning to harness what types of writing he gravitates towards and how his own style fits in. Interestingly, Ari also chose to write her survivor love letter assignment as a poem, and used numbers as a motif in her work, as demonstrated with the opening lines: “The life expectancy is 77 years./ You have been around for 15 years./ You are only 1/5th of the way. There are 1000000000+ opportunities ahead of you.” She commented during her composition that she wanted to use numbers in her poem because she loves math. This creative direction showcases how Ari was incorporating her passion and finding a way to make the task her own. Finally, Camille also significantly demonstrated that she could express her unique voice through her writing, especially through her very lengthy and beautifully written survivor love letter. She organized her letter by beginning each paragraph with the phrase, “You are a…” and then wrote a paragraph with this phrase and ending with “warrior,” “disciple of god,” “assassin,” “soldier,” “enchanter,” “fighter,” “renegade,” “healer,” and concluded with “hero.” Her tone throughout this assignment is
reminiscent of the literature and films that I know she enjoys; fantasy, science fiction, period
pieces, and historical fiction, as she explores these archetypal characters.

The students certainly demonstrated that they felt a need to be ‘heard,’ and perhaps used
the literary device of repetition as a strategy to achieve this. This strategy, along with other
attempts to personalize their assignments, illustrates that they were beginning to develop their
unique writer’s voices, a growth any ELA teacher would want to see their students experience. In
the next section, the theme of mental health issues that emerged during their angry responses to
the literature will be addressed, as this theme suggests, in another way, that students need their
struggles with such issues acknowledged and explored as well.

“Please Get Help”: Mental Health Issues Emerging when Coping with Angry Expressions

Alongside their expressions of anger, interest in repetition and developing their writer’s
voices were repeated concerns expressed about their abilities to cope with this anger, especially
because of their experiences with mental health issues. This struggle with mental health issues in
our building was recently made clear to me when, after asking if one of our admin team had a
good week, he sighed, rubbed his temples, and said, “We sent seven kids to the Children’s
Hospital this week for mental health issues.” Mental health challenges such as depression are
certainly not unique to our population; rather, as Thapar, Collishaw, Pine, and Thapar (2012)
determine, “Unipolar depressive disorder is a common mental health problem in adolescents
worldwide,” that “Depression in adolescents is a major risk factor for suicide, the second-to-third
leading cause of death in this age group,” and that particularly, it is “often unrecognized…
notably in girls” (p. 1056). Ruble, Leon, Gilley-Hensley, Hess, and Shwartz (2011) concur,
reporting “Major depression, often the diagnosis identified on psychological autopsy following
completed suicide, is one of the most common illnesses affecting teenagers” (p. 1025). As such, my admin’s comment about the prevalence of mental health struggles in our school is not surprising and was illuminated for me after reading their responses, which was filled with references to mental health issues.

Depression was the mental health issue that was continuously referenced in students’ writing. As Gallardo, Furman, and Kulkarni (2009) assert, “Depression is perhaps the most common form of emotional struggle… so common, that is has been likened to the common cold of emotional conditions” (p. 288). The first striking reference to depression I particularly noticed was Teddy’s survivor love letter. In says, in part “Depression is a dangerous thing when it is not dealt with. I would encourage you to see someone…If you were to die you would leave many people behind that love you.” He ends the letter by pleading: “We have our whole life ahead of us and I don’t want you to miss out. Please get help. You need it.” Similarly, Savannah also addresses her “friend” in her survivor love letter with “you hurt yourself, and almost took your own life, and…you’re living with depression, always know I will be here for you.” Both students demonstrate an ethic of care as they try to comfort the recipient. In fact, in reading these responses concerning mental health issues, I was continually taken aback by and encouraged to see students confront such difficult issues unflinchingly, vulnerably, and oftentimes, with a sense of compassion and hope. For example, returning to Savannah, she concludes her letter with a poem she wrote called “A Bad Day,” perhaps in an attempt to make the recipient feel a little less alone, that ends with an image of escape: “A curtain drawn before the sun/ and I wish to go on sleeping.” Next, Landry’s diary entry, written in the voice of Melinda, is hauntingly brief, and explores Melinda’s apparent depression in the novel with,
Dear Diary,

Heather told me she didn’t want to be my friend anymore essentially because I’m too sad. I am completely and entirely alone now, but that’s okay I guess because I always have my closet. My dear, sweet, beautiful closet. I am going to draw a picture of Heather dying gruesomely in art class tomorrow.

Even as Landry depicts Melinda in this painful moment, there is arguably a sense of hope, or at the very least, a sense of survival with “That’s okay” and how Landry has Melinda comforting herself with how she’ll “always have” her “dear, sweet, beautiful closet.” There is also a sense of fiery anger when she has Melinda plan to fantasize about Heather’s “gruesome” death. In reflecting on my field notes, the students discussed the potential symbolism of Melinda’s closet, and explored how this space might represent safety, comfort, and seemed almost womb-like as it is nurturing for her. It is also the rare space in the story where Melinda allows herself to break her silence and scream into her clothing, to muffle her cries. As Benita argues on our public class blog, “Sometimes Melinda goes into her closet, where she feels safe and unharmed from any ‘predators.’” Landry’s creative response demonstrates that they are mindful of the coping strategies Melinda employs to help her deal with her trauma and her subsequent depression.

Many students also chose poetry about depression for Melinda’s character to read. This is perhaps because, as Gallardo et. al (2009) point out, “It has been argued that poetry is an ideal medium for capturing the lived experience of complex, emotionally laden experiences” (p. 290). Also, Mohammadian, Shahidi, Mahaki, Mohammadi, Baghban, and Zayeri (2011) speak to the therapeutic potential of poetry, arguing “poetry therapy is a recognized modality employing poetry and other forms of evocative literature to achieve therapeutic goals and personal
growth” (p. 59). As such, Jason, Gabe, Ellie, Rick, Grace, Allison, Nine, Ari, and Wallace’s poetry choices all included speakers who are battling depression like Melinda, conquering depression, or were addressing individuals with depression. Firstly, Gabe, Ellie, and Rick all select poetry that addresses suicide particularly. Gabe chooses a poem about depression and suicide, with one stanza reading “suicide is not normal/ it is an abnormal mental condition/ it is forced upon/ an exceptional one.” The trend of choosing poetry about suicide specifically continues with Ellie piece that contains the lines “You don’t see a reason any longer/ To even wake up.” Lastly, Rick’s poem choice opens with a reference to suicide with the lines “I wish I knew how to change your mind/ Life is too precious to leave behind.”

Next, Grace, Allison, and Nina’s chosen poetry all chronicle depression as somewhat unfathomable, beginning with Grace’s poem called “Alone,” which contains the lines “My sorrow; I could not awaken.” Allison’s choice reads “In times of deep sadness/ The pain is all too real/ And it’s hard to believe” and choice lines from Nina’s include “What do you call it when all you feel is pain?/ When your loved ones look at you and all you feel is shame?/ Are you tired of living and playing this game?/ When you know your life is meaningless and you’re the only one to blame?” Ari chooses a very powerful poem that opens with “I am the self-consumer of my woes” and continues with the lines “Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,/ Into the living sea of waking dreams,/ Where there is neither sense of life nor joys,/ but the vast shipwreck of my life’s esteems.” However, Wallace’s poem is a bit more uplifting, as it acknowledges the severity of depression but offers a “Daily Reminder” of hope, as the title suggests such as the lines “This is a daily reminder/ To love yourself/ To not hurt yourself.” Overall, the students’ choices of poetry about depression illuminated what Gallardo et. al argues, that “poetry encourages an
empathetic relationship between author and audience” (p. 291). The connections that the students made between the poetry and Melinda’s experience demonstrate their excising of the empathy that Gallardo et. al call for.

A few students also disclosed that they had struggled with mental health issues themselves. Returning to Savannah, she discloses in her discussion of her chosen poetry about grief and loss for Melinda that “I’ve had a loss myself, so a lot of people including myself might understand and relate with those feelings.” Ellie also is perhaps writing to herself in her survivor love letter, addressing it “Dear Secret,” and goes on to detail the mental health struggles of this “secret,” writing, “You’ve fallen down in deeper holes that I could imagine. You’ve been abused emotionally, physically, and mentally…I know its been dark for you…full of doubt, pain, depression” Meili wrote by far, the lengthiest, very emotionally vulnerable letter, seemingly to someone who has broken her heart and left her for a time, in a depressive state. She writes, “My breath still gets weak, and cracks every time… I swear it would’ve been easier to rip my own heart out than see you love ‘her’ the way I loved you.” Finally, Grace powerfully discloses in her survivor love letter to herself that she is a sexual assault survivor who battled depression as a result, writing:

With the molestation [by] your peer, he filed the gun barrel with manipulation and fear that busted your chest open. This battle continued for 3 years, but you did not give up the fight. The more he took off, the more armour you layered on your body. Although innocence was replaced with a dirty feeling in the pit of your stomach, you continued to ache away during these years…
Later, during the focus group, Grace revisited this disclosure and discussed how she is now much more careful, such as avoiding drinking and parties, saying “I do not go to parties because I do not trust any of [the boys]” and how she is wary even with male friends she knows well, saying that during a conversation with one such male friend, “he was saying one thing then acting another, see you say you’re gonna respect consent but then you act a completely different way [when I say no].”

Additionally, we discussed the prevalence and seriousness of mental health issues on a few occasions, including at the beginning of one class after a previous class where the students were involved in a discussion about mental health that upset them. They said that during their previous class, they were talking about Amanda Todd, a Canadian youth who died by suicide after being bullied and harassed online, including having a nude photo of herself posted online. Apparently, another teacher who led this discussion had a tone and a few remarks that the students took issue with. The comment was something along the lines that Amanda Todd chose to take off her shirt so she has to take responsibility and then said that she “chose” her reaction to the fallout. What my students reacted to was the problematic idea that someone could “choose” to be depressed. Many of them said that they had struggled with mental health issues and it was certainly not something that they had chosen.

While such disclosures are alarming, their expressive writing is perhaps an excellent outlet for them, and is potentially healing. For instance, as Meston, Lorenz, and Stephenson (2013) found in their study on testing the effects of expressive writing-based practice on women who had been sexually abused during childhood, they found that “Women in both writing interventions exhibited improved symptoms of depression and posttraumatic stress disorder
Similarly, Lorenz, Pulverman, and Meston (2013) also explored “sudden gains during patient-directed expressive writing treatment” (p. 690) where participants wrote personal essays according to provided writing prompts and concluded that it reduced depression in women with a history of childhood sexual abuse. Returning to Grace’s disclosure, she concluded her letter to herself with,

> There were many battles [after the abuse], each of them believed to have weakened you, when in reality, it just polished your armour with lessons and wisdom to show the world… You must hold on, you must continue to survive because although there may be many flowers out there, you are the only one with beautifully bruised petals.

Her response for this assignment truly exemplified what was being asked of her; to write a love letter to a survivor with a message of support and encouragement. Her expressive writing here certainly seems to do what Meston et al. assert, that “sessions of writing… [were] associated with improvements in depression in adult survivors of CSA [Childhood Sexual Abuse]” (p. 2185), as Grace writes that though she was “weakened” by her sexual trauma, she must “survive” with her “beautifully bruised petals.”

> Mental health issues were certainly prevalent in their writing which was worrisome as a teacher, however, it was encouraging to witness the students exploring this intense subject matter. Returning to the focus group discussion, Grace and Ren both articulately argued that we should be studying more books about mental health issues, even suggesting a couple of titles. Even more encouraging than their willingness to explore mental health issues and thinking about other stories schools could use was how they wrote and spoke about the necessity to reach out
and act as an ally for someone who is struggling, which is explored in the following section on the prevalence of ally communication in their responses.

“Good on her”: Engaging in Supportive, Mindful Ally Communication

One of the most encouraging themes that emerged, especially after considering their anger and concerning experiences with mental health issues, was how so many students wrote and discussed the importance of being an ally and surrounding yourself with a community when you need support. The need for connection in high school seems to be tantamount, with students reaching out to create communities of friendship and support. For instance, in our focus group, Grace discussed her surprise that as a grade eleven student, she is finding that many younger students consistently, even desperately, reach out to older students such as hers to build networks, especially through social media. She reveals, “one grade nine, she was like, ‘can I take a picture with you?’ and I’m like… ‘do you even know my Instagram handle?’” However, when Ren and I point out that Grace is something of a role model in our community because of various initiatives she has founded and successes she has experienced publicly, she seemed flattered and surprised by her own power to act as an ally and be a go-to person for younger students.

Throughout the novel study, we addressed and revisited the importance of witnessing, being an ally for someone, and not defaulting to the role of a bystander. For instance, overall, I was pleased that the students in groups overwhelmingly took all of the material very seriously and were respectful of the stories we witnessed. A particular moment that struck me early on in the project was when I asked them to write a love letter to a survivor, many students took time to read over several examples I had posted for them to explore and passed laptops around, sharing what had especially resonated with them. They were quiet and respectful as they witnessed the
expressed pain in the exemplars. Max stood out to me the most. When I remarked that he had got
down to work so quickly, he explained that he was writing to the family of his best friend who
had recently died by suicide. He talked about how he had witnessed his struggle with mental
health issues for a few years and that his death is “something that follows you.” He wanted to
write a letter to his family to recognize their grief and mourning and say that he would always be
there as a support for them. Explaining this, he grew a bit teary so I decided to not ask him any
more questions but rather thanked him for telling me about his friend. My conversation with Max
was the first major demonstration that these participants wanted to be allies and had a significant
capacity for empathy and compassion.

As for the bystander approach, Cares, Banyard, Moynihan, Williams, Potter, and
Stapleton (2015) define this importance of being an ally as the bystander approach to the
prevention of sexual violence and define it as one that “focuses on changing community attitudes
and norms providing all community members a specific role they can identify with and adopt in
preventing sexual violence” (p. 166). Additionally, DeTurk (2011) defines an allies as “people
who have relative social power or privilege and who stand against injustice directed at people
who lack such privilege” (p. 570) and goes on to say that allies “work to promote social justice
on behalf of others through a variety of means involving both verbal and nonverbal tactics, and
ranging from interpersonal support for individuals to actions intended to influence the culture as
a whole” (pp. 580-581). We explored this bystander approach as a method of acting as an ally
especially during an activity where we looked at a party scenario called “It’s time…to help a
friend” where a young female goes off with an unknown male, alone. The girl’s friends see her
leave with him and consider if they should intervene or not. The students worked together to
brainstorm what the friends should do and wrote their ideas on sticky notes to be posted on the class white board for the upcoming discussion. Having a verbal discussion about being an ally in such a situation is important because, as DeTurk (2011) found in her study, “the [most] prevalent, rhetorical strategy invoked by allies was *dialogue*” (p. 579).

However, this class-wide dialogue did not immediately function as productively as I had hoped. In my first class, I was slightly dismayed after reading the scenario with the class because when one student’s first idea was “don’t drink at parties.” Ren replied laughingly, “why else go?” However, the tone seemed to shift throughout the activity, as many students seemed to speak from a place of experience, as if they had seen something akin to it happen before. For example, Landry’s group discussed how the friends “could lead the girl away from the guy while her friends distract the guy” or “could accompany the girl and the guy outside with her friends to make sure nothing happens.” A productive class discussion followed wherein we chatted about safe practices when out with friends, such as having a buddy system, closing monitoring your drink, and we also discussed new products that are available to help people identify that your drink has been tampered with such as coasters and nail polish that can detect date rape drugs.

The next activity that was deliberately set up to have students consider if they would act as an ally for someone who identifies as a sexual assault survivor was when I told them about Emma Sulkovitz, a university student who was assaulted in her campus dorm room and decided to carry her mattress around campus as a form of protest in a project called “Carry That Weight” when her attacker remained in school. What I was hoping to trigger here is that students would use the bystander approach that Cares et al. (2015) call for, and that especially, the students would engage in “empathy and perspective taking” which is “embedded in this approach” (p.
Firstly, we watched a video of Emma carrying her mattress during her graduation ceremony and then I had students read an article about her from *The Huffington Post™*. Then, students were asked to decide if they thought this was a productive form of protest, and to leave their comments in the article’s comments feature and take a screen shot to post on their blogs. To begin with, Ari and Avery seem to experiment a bit and try to look at the issue in a very balanced manner, considering what they see as two sides to the story. For instance, she starts with demonstrating her learning from our class on sexual assault by stating “Statistically, she probably is telling the truth,” enacting one of the attributes of an ally that we discussed, which is to believe the person who is disclosing to you. However, she goes on to say “…but I also see the position the school or police may be in, because without any evidence, he cannot be charged.” Then, very maturely, she continues with “I don’t know enough about the evidence to take a fully informed position” but concludes with “I believe that the case should be reopened and brought into a judicial court.” Although Alcoff (1991) warns about such a “retreat response” that may be “motivated by a practice immune from criticism” (p. 22), I believe that Ari was not merely avoiding having a definitive stance but rather recognizes the power in knowing your limitations and being forthright about her comfort with having a concrete opinion based on only a couple of sources selected by her teacher. Similarly, Avery also believes that “what Emma did with her mattress protest is effective” but does stipulate that “However, I think in order for Emma to release the man’s name he needs to be proven guilty.”

However, Meili unhesitatingly acted as an ally, as she was one of the first students to post her response, which applauded Emma’s project. She writes “I think this is a good way to get the word out about rape… Good on her.” Other students including Landry, Rose, and Tara follow
suit. Landry posts a lengthy response muses about the politics of protesting in general; “Usually people don’t listen to peaceful protests. If they’re violent, people listen, but then discredit the protesters for being violent.” This response is perhaps on the heels of the recent Black Lives Matter movement that was beginning to pick up the pace in the United States during the time of this data collection, and the protests going on in the states was something students were talking about a bit throughout the weeks of the novel study. Landry goes on to describe a physical reaction they had to Emma’s experience with “It’s sickening that she was forced to see her assailer repeatedly” and concludes passionately with “I think he should go jobless for the rest of his life. I don’t care if his life is ruined, how many lives did he ruin? Honestly, he deserves it.” Rose also stands by Emma; “I think that Emma is such an amazing [and] brave person to do this…I hope that her movement will open people’s eyes.” Finally, Tara declares that Emma is “extremely brave to carry the mattress she was raped on all over campus” and mindfully considers the potential of retraumatization, demonstrating her learning on the impact sexual assault trauma can have on an individual, writing “It would have been difficult for her to relive that day by carrying the mattress but she made a statement to stand up to her rapist.”

It was especially encouraging to see some of the male students act as allies towards Emma as well, including Max, Jason, Rick, Carter, and Teddy. I was expecting more comments like the ones from Wallace, Silas, and Gabe. Wallace declares that “No, it is not a form of protest because she carried around the mattress for a whole year and nothing happened” and suggests that “of she truly cared so much, she would… actually take some real action.” Also, Silas, who does sit right beside Wallace in class, begins his comment with “First off, I hate people who lie to get five minutes of fame,” demonstrating that he assumes Emma is lying about her assault. He
concludes flippantly and dismissively, “For all the people who don’t know her story, she is showing off her new Ikea mattress.” Next, Gabe, to my surprise, vehemently chastised Emma’s protest. He states, “This is not an appropriate way to protest. It is not even a protest. It is breaking the rules of the university.” He qualifies his point by declaring that “This is not meant to be taken that I believe rape and sexual assault are OK… it’s just that people should have the decency not to lie about it.” What I appreciated about his comment was that he felt it was necessary to clarify that is is certainly not minimizing the issue or denying that sexual assault is a very serious issue. Interestingly, he cites the danger in Emma’s protest, and its potential to make “a mockery about the believability of rape accusations.” It seems as though Gabe feels that the manner in which she decided to protest was somewhat theatrical, and is thus, reductive. I certainly paused on this point and appreciated that Gabe was thinking so critically about the vehicle with which she chose to protest and whether or not she was productively representing and speaking for sexual assault survivors. Additionally, perhaps what these participants are speaking to here as well is the difficult task of speaking for and about others, and in this case, interpreting Emma’s artistic protest, because in returning to Alcoff (1991), she explores “a strong, albeit contested current…which holds that speaking for others is arrogant, vain, unethical, and politically illegitimate” (p. 6). Perhaps this assignment made them uncomfortable and so they reacted against Emma’s protest in response, particularly because I was instructing them to analyze Emma’s protest, thus, asking them to speak about Emma, on the public blog rather than on their private blogs. Aloof goes on the argue that “when we sit down to write, or get up to speak, we experience ourselves making choices. We may experience hesitation from fear of being criticized” (p. 11).
In stark contrast, Max begins his comment with “Yes, I believe that this is a wonderful form of protest.” Jason also commended Emma’s protest, commenting, “I personally think that this is a good way to express what’s happened to her.” Next, Rick states, “Emma stood up against the people who defied her and didn’t advocate for her. I believe it is a great way to show that she does care to do this, as this is quite the burden… She obviously wants her voice to be heard and will do a lot to have it heard.” I was very impressed with Rick’s use of the term “advocate” here as well, as it is a word we revisited a few times during our class discussions of the text. Carter also claims, “This is a very good form of protest” and concludes with a call for more allies for Emma with “Hopefully many people realize the problem here.” Finally, Teddy commends Emma with “Her dedication shows that no one should get away with rape. Her inspiring idea will show that it is not the victim’s fault. She is an amazing role model.” The reason why this was especially encouraging to read from a male student is because as DeTurk argues, Jason was acting in a “rhetorical situation[], [where] allies assert their identities as allies to the world at large in order to discursively (re)produce their values at the cultural level. Male allies to women, for example, might ‘intervene’ by commenting during a class discussion that they believe [in gender equality]” (p. 579).

Next, nearly half the students discussed the necessity for Melinda to have allies, including Allison, Tara, Ren, Silas, Benita, Ari, Meili, Avery, Ellie, Savannah, Camille, and Landry. In Allison’s discussion of her poetry selection for Melinda, she writes “…the poet makes the point “the sun will shine tomorrow,” [which is] talking about it might be a bad time but there’s sunshine coming through the clouds. Melinda just needs one person to recognize the pain she’s going through and that one person to help her get out of the clouds and into the sunlight.”
Allison revisits the importance of having an ally in her survivor love letter as well: “…I’m happy that you trust me to share…with me. I don’t think of you any different… I’m here to support you!” Similarly, Tara writes in her survivor love letter, “You will find people who love you and want you in their life.” Returning to Benita’s choice of poetry, she selects a Rudyard Kipling poem with the lines “If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,/ or walk with kings- nor lose the common touch” and going back to Ari’s choice of the Maya Angelou poem “Alone,” she explains that “Ms. Angelou is basically saying that we all need someone, and that being alone isn’t a good thing. I believe Melinda needs to speak to someone…that is the only way to pull her life together and start over.”

Meili decides that instead of choosing poetry, she wants to select inspirational quotations, which she sees as poetic, and she asked my permission before doing so. Meili is someone who frequently checks in to ensure that she is ‘doing the right thing.’ Although she has a strong writer’s voice, and usually exceeds the expectations of her assignments, she is always tentative; I wanted to assure her that she had a great deal of creative license. One of her choices was “It’s okay to push people away sometimes. But it is rare for someone to come back to you no matter how many times you push them away. So remember, when someone does come back to you again, hold them close and never let go. Because, they might become the anchor in this rough sea, of people who never came back.” In discussing her choice, she emphasizes the importance of recognizing when people are acting as allies for you and to appreciate them: “I chose this because after the incident, Melinda loses all of her confidence and has pushed so many people away… she continuously feels like she has a barrier, and that she is alone… because she got rid of so many people…once you push people away, it is very rare that they come back.” Meili
returns to this idea of the importance of recognizing an ally in her survivor letter, and writes as Melinda to her favourite teacher, Mr. Freeman, and concluding it with “…but I know that you’re not the type of teacher to just pick a favourite, you give each kid a chance to be their absolute best.” Finally, Meili really exemplifies in a poem she wrote for her blog, called “Expression of Tears,” how she acts as an ally to others through her speaker. The poem reads:

I believe that tear lines are one of the most beautiful things on Earth/ The way that lines switch all directions, go wherever they please and/… how they just cross your face… to show that you’re feeling something…it’s one of the things that prove that you are human…you have a heart…gives your character… I think that is beautiful.

Here, Meili impressively demonstrates an incredible capacity for empathy and compassion, as the tone is celebratory and reassuring. The speaker seems to convey that being vulnerable is beautiful, and that the subject should not feel shame or be alone. Meili’s speaker is certainly capturing the voice of an ally. Impressively, Silas also writes a poem about the importance of allies in his letter, further demonstrating his growth throughout the novel study. A stanza from this poem includes:

But if something goes wrong you can rely on your clan

They are the pillow that props you

The people you can always go to.

Those people who won’t stab you in the back.

The people who will get the glue heart begins to crack.

When known strangers start swinging the chainsaws.

The people who will get the gauze.
Yes it will sting but the wounds will heal.

Ren interestingly takes on the voice of Mr. Sordino, Melinda’s father, in the novel and writes him as wanting to act as an ally but feeling confused about how to go about it with “Sometimes I wish I could be a better father. I know something has been bothering Melinda lately and I feel there is nothing I can do about it.” This insight struck me as especially impressive, as no one else decided to explore the struggles that Melinda’s father might be facing. Rather, as discussed in the previous section on anger aimed towards adults, many students chastised Mr. Sordino for his seemingly excessive drinking and for ignoring Melinda. She also recognizes the difficult nature of how to be a strong ally for someone. For instance, returning to DeTurk (2011), she discusses that there are many challenges when acting as an ally, and that many allies are “loathing to intervene directly in a verbal exchange” because of their “fear of disempowering targets by speaking for them, co-opting their positionality, inciting retribution, embarrassing them further, or outing them as members of stigmatized groups” (p. 578). This is perhaps why Ren decided to write Mr. Sordino as wanting to be an ally on her personal, private blog because, like DeTurk argues, many allies “wait until they were alone with the target and then express support by affirming their concern and offering to be a sounding board for the person’s feelings” (p. 578).

Students began slowly experimenting with acting as allies or speaking and writing as allies, including in small, significant moments such as when they were responding briefly on the public class blog. For instance, when students were tasked with finding apps that they would recommend for the characters, many came up with mindful responses that demonstrate that they were thinking as allies. The first comment that appeared especially exemplified this, as Carter suggested “Twitter™” because “then [Melinda] will be able to let her feelings out and then
people can be her friend.” Immediately, Carter is thinking about how social media could be an outlet for Melinda to use to find a community of people online. Maria and Tara also touch on an app that will allow Melinda to “let her feelings out,” as Carter described, and Maria suggests Tumblr™ “because it would be a very good place for her to release her emotions a multitude of ways including through visual images and music.” Next, Ren, Lucia, and Ari chose apps that would might help Melinda feel safer. Ren suggests “the app Emergency Whistle™, so that when she feels she’s in danger, she can turn it on cause it’s loud.” Similarly, Lucia mindfully chooses the app Aspire News™ “because it is an app designed for those in abusive relationships or for those who have been sexually abused.” Lucia goes on to offer a detailed explanation of the functions of the app including “They send messages to ‘trusted contacts’ and ‘911’… it is disguised to look like a regular app… Andy Evans goes to her school and she needs to be careful.” Finally, Ari writes a lengthy post about the app SafeTrek™ “because obviously she feels unsafe.” She thoroughly explains the app, calling it “pretty straightforward” because you just need to “press down on the screen [to alert the police]” if you’re in a situation that is “a little dodgy.”

Students also used ally communication during their ‘Extragram’ Instagram™ project, particularly Landry, Teddy, and Ari. For this assignment, they were instructed to send a text to someone that they cared about and to thank them for being understanding and essentially, for acting as an ally. This assignment came on the heels of reading when the character Heather pens a card to Melinda that cuts off their friendship; she can no longer be an ally or a friend to Melinda because it is too risky for her now, as it puts her reputation and social status at stake. Landry wrote a thank you text to a friend to express their gratitude “for always being there for
[them], even when it’s inconvenient or bothersome” and ended the message with “You are the closest person to me and I’m grateful for you.” Here, Landry is not only using ally communication by expressing gratitude for this relationship, but is also importantly recognizing the significance of having someone act as an ally for you. Teddy also writes a kind and thankful note to honour someone he sees as an ally to him with, “You… always brighten my day whenever I am down. You have always been there for me and I hope our friendship lasts forever!” Ari also writes a moving message to post on her Instagram™ account, writing “I really appreciate you…You are the most intelligent and well-rounded person I’ve ever met, and I really admire the fact that you stand up for your opinion and will call people out for their terrible opinions.” Here, Ari seems to be directly addressing this person’s capacity to act as an ally even when it may be uncomfortable or difficult to do so. These students exhibited through this assignment that they can powerfully recognize, express gratitude for, and act as, allies.

Overall, many students experimented with using ally communication throughout the novel study. While some expressed discomfort in this task, it was encouraging to witness their grappling with this role and use of ally speak. In addition to this ally speak, students also demonstrated that they were making connections between their lived experiences, Speak, and other texts, which illustrates that the stories resonated with some of them and that they were building a capacity for intertextual work, which will be explored next.

“You Can Take Advice from the Book to Help Solve your Current Issue”: Making Connections Between Self, Speak, and Other Stories

The next important theme that emerged from the data analysis was how students made connections between themselves and the novel. As Morgan (1993) argues, good books “ma[ke] a
difference, stir[] us, engag[e] our imagination, contribut[e] to our moral development” (p. 492)
and *Speak* seemed to resonate with many of the students. For instance, many students expressed
the merit in the story and how it could help make their everyday school experience more
meaningful. For example, on their final test, Jason wrote that this book could be helpful because
“you can take advice from the book to help solve your current issue.” Ren, Colette, Rose, and
Landry also commented on the usefulness of such a book, with Ren commenting that a survivor
might particularly connect to the story: “The victim may feel like they can relate to the story
more than wanting to open up about what happened to them” and Colette suggesting that “some
kids may relate to this book, and it would maybe help them to speak out about it, like Melinda
did.” Rose goes a bit deeper, considering that “reading books such as this one … may help
[students] feel empowered. This will be meaningful to them because they will remember the
strength and hope it helped them to feel for the rest of their lives.” Like Rose, Landry also picks
up on the potential to find personal power in reading stories such as this with “Books like this
may help some people find power again.” Finally, I was especially impressed by Helen who
wrote about the connections between the issues in the novel and other struggles that teenagers
often face. On her final exam, she writes about eating disorders as another issues that students
often stay silent about because “it’s something that you don’t really want to tell anyone about for
fear that someone will say that you should just “get over it.”” She goes on to connect the struggle
with eating disorders to the novel, writing that:

> I think Melinda felt that way about telling people about her abuse as well. She
> realizes at the end that she needs to speak up and then she can get help. It goes the
same for people suffering with eating disorders; when you speak up, people can then help you. This story might motivate them to do so.

Ellie, like Helen, also connects Melinda’s struggles with a significant battle many teenagers face, including herself: anxiety disorders. She wrote about how:

It took my mom two years to figure out her “worried” daughter had anxiety; it takes so long for people to notice problems. Reading books like this in school will benefit everyone differently… this story and other survivor stories like it will help kids be stronger and realize that speaking up and speaking out are two different things.

In all of these examples, the students demonstrate that they are making connections between the experiences of the characters in the novel and their own lived experiences; what they see as the needs of themselves and their peer group.

Next, in addition to students making connections between self and story, students also made significant intertextual connections between this story and other texts. Intertextuality, a term coined by Julia Kristeva (Allen, 2000, p. 15), is, as Kim and Covino (2015) assert, “in its simplest meaning, refers to the juxtaposition of different texts. Intertextuality is central to developing narratives that build on other texts” (p. 358). Intertextual connection-making is a key English Language Arts skill that educators endeavour to model and foster with their students because, as Allen (2000) posits, “Theories of intertextuality suggest that meaning in a text can only ever be understood in relation to other texts; no work stands alone but is interlinked with the tradition that came before it and the context in which it is produced” (p. i). As such, throughout the unit, many different texts were included; students were encouraged to draw connections and find new meanings in their understandings of the literature by reading the novel alongside
nonfiction current event selections such as newspaper articles, memoir excerpts, poetry, music, and video clips. Such complementary texts are what Elkins, Hogner, Lifshitz, and Wisdom (1998) call “‘strange attractors,’ elements that help us gain control over the information we perceive and thereby work with the information and to understand it” (p. 193). Integrating these “strange attractors” into the *Speak* unit was important because, as Armstrong and Newman (2011) argue, “A learner’s comprehension of a particular text is rarely completely supported by existing schema and prior knowledge… For that reason, supplemental texts provide additional knowledge needed to fill in some of the gaps in a learner’s foundation of comprehension” (pp. 9-10). They go on to outline three primary and significant intertextual connections that students can make including “associating,” where students connect past texts they have studied to the current text of study, “integrating” background knowledge to the text of study, and “evaluating” their own own ideas and opinions in comparison to the texts (p. 11).

Findings from this study suggests that the intertextual connections that emerged, as explored through the discussion of themes in Chapter Three, were sophisticated and demonstrated an extended application of their understandings. This was especially illustrated with students’ connections between Melinda’s experience and the poetry they chose for her, as they engaged in Armstrong and Newman’s (2001) “associating” intertextual connection-making. Their selections were thoughtful and reflective of the major themes of the novel such as depression, loneliness, bullying, trauma, survival, and finding strength. For example, students used explicit phrases that connected the texts such as “This relates to Melinda because…” as Rose and Collette identically began their responses. Jason, Silas, Ari, and Helen also directly connect the novel and their poetry selections with Jason writing that “Melinda is directly affected
by this poem and it would directly relate to her and how she feels throughout the book [:]

Melinda feels sadness” and Silas commenting that “[The poem] “The Raven” I chose because
“The Raven” can be seen as a memory haunting Melinda. Tormenting her until she can confront
the issue.” Like Jason, Ari connects the novel and her poetry selection with the theme of
depression with “I chose the first poem because Melinda is very depressed and alone.” Helen
connects her poetry selection to Melinda’s character by seeing how the literature has the potential
to bring comfort and strength to Melinda with “This poem might motivate Melinda to [become
an advocate] and give her strength to speak up.”

Students also made note that *Speak* was a story with intense, serious issues and began
making suggestions for other stories like this one that we should be studying in school, many of
which I wrote down in my field notes. Arguably, this demonstrates that students are engaging in
Armstrong and Newman’s (2011) “evaluating” intertextual connection-making, as they are
voicing their own “personal judgments, values, conclusions, and generalizations in comparing
past and present texts are used by the reader” (p. 11). For instance, during the very first lesson
and activity as I was walking around the classroom while students completed their ‘Can’t Do’
lists, one student suggested studying a book they enjoyed, *A Million Little Pieces* (2003) by
James Fray, a memoir about a very serious drug and alcohol addict. The student qualified his
choice by saying that this was also a story about a severe struggle. This solidified for me the
importance of designing ELA courses that “welcome discussion about other texts students have
read (cultural texts like movies, music, and art, for example)” (Armstrong & Newman, 2011, p.
17) so they have schema related to the themes of the text under study. Also, early on during a
class discussion, I asked the students if they would have guessed what happened to Melinda if I
had not told them ahead of time. From my field notes, I chronicled how the students said that they would have been about to guess that Melinda would get raped because of the character “IT” but also because of the party scene. They discussed how whenever there is a party in stories, not much good comes of it.

Some students even demonstrated their intertextuality work when criticizing *Speak*, demonstrating perhaps, the “integrating” (Armstrong & Newman, 2011, p. 11) connection work of intertextuality as they draw upon their previous knowledge of texts to make comparisons between the stories. For instance, Silas was, especially at the beginning at the unit, very reluctant to read this text and was highly critical of the story. During our lesson focused on character analysis work, he complained that he didn’t like the book because it is too “realistic” and “depressing.” He commented that he would rather read the types of books that he reads on his own- fantasy and science fiction novels because, as he explained, “I want to be in the realm of fantasy when I read… I don’t want to read about real life.” This critique is certainly valid; many of us read to escape our own lived experiences. However, I was encouraged that he was drawing distinct differences between the literature he normally reads and this trauma text, noting the differences in theme, tone, atmosphere, and genre. Luckily, Silas seemed to change his mind and appreciate elements of the story, like Ellie who during the same lesson that Silas critiqued the book, mentioned that her favourite parts were Melinda’s “inner voice” because she finds those more raw moments more “interesting” than when Melinda uses dry humour to describe her environment and circumstances. Silas actually took the time outside of class to write me an email to further question my choice of text, which truthfully excited me more than anything because it
demonstrated how he was comparing this story to other texts and it led to a productive conversation between the two of us. An excerpt from his email reads:

Its perspective is from an unlikable protagonist that refuses to do anything but still complains about how life is unfair and blah blah…She also has no real personality and the other characters are shackled by silly personality quirks that should be apart of the character not the character itself… It’s also not told from an interesting perspective. If it was told from the perspective of the rapist or something it would be interesting because it has that hook and you would tolerate more. That's why movies like American Psycho and Clockwork Orange work. In fact if it was told like Clockwork Orange it could have been a great novel. I know this has become more of a rant but hopefully you have little bit of a reason I hate this novel.

In the moment, I admit I was at first dismayed. But then I reminded myself that this critique demonstrates that Silas is thinking critically about what he is reading and highlighting elements of other texts that he finds more successful. When I pulled him aside to speak to him about his email, I reminded him that this is a character who had been raped, which is why she may come across as “refus[ing] to do anything” due to her fear, and maybe “has no real personality” because she feels as though she has lost a part of herself. Shocked, he admitted that he didn’t know that she had been raped; somehow, he had missed this information. With this knowledge, he said that that critical piece of information made him reconsider. His elbow partner, Gabe, who had been listening in, remarked at the end of our talk that “it is a complex book!”

Perhaps one of the most powerful intertextual connections made was when Teddy offered his ideas on the spoken word poem video shown in class called “People You May Know.” This
performance poem, performed by a male survivor of sexual assault, details the impact the speaker felt when seeing his attacker on Facebook as a suggested friend. During the class discussion that followed, Teddy said that it must have been hard for the poet because like Melinda, they both had to see their attackers everyday. He went on to address a symbolic connection between the two stories as well; he point out that in the performance poem, the speaker uses the symbol of the wolf to represent his attacker, as does Melinda also, at one point calling her attacker “Andy Beast.” I actually clapped when he offered this in class, as I was so impressed with his interpretation and connection. The class joined me in clapping and Teddy flushed, hopefully, with pride. In addition to finding a sense of personal pride, as Teddy seemed to, making such intertextual connections is significant because, as Smith (2011) argues:

“we as teachers need to help our students activate inside of school the kinds of consciousness they employ outside of school so they can pay attention not just to texts as they read, but to echoes of and references to other texts that have to be resonant in the recesses of their own minds. Until students learn to listen to the echoes, the texts that they read are in danger of remaining compartmentalized in their heads.” (p. 144)

Perhaps, the students themselves, like Teddy, could also create such “echoes.” Additionally and interestingly, these ‘echoes’ are influencing new disciplines in education as well, as intertextuality is being heralded for playing a significant role in the new area of adaptation studies. This new discipline is “geared towards examining… aspects of the culture [such as] video games, theme park rides, websites, graphic novels, song covers, operas, musicals, ballets, and radio and stage plays” which are “as important” as the “more commonly discussed movies
and novels” (Allen, 2011, p. 205). Hubbard (2013) aptly speaks to the importance of intertextuality by using multiple literacies such as the ones Allen (2011) speaks of, arguing that “in classrooms environments where texts “talk to each other”… opaque and simplified realities are replaced by nuanced ones that resist strict or static classifications” (p. 101).

This ‘making connections’ theme, and all of the themes that emerged from their responses to the literature illuminate many important findings regarding how impactful it can be to use trauma literature such as this novel in the classroom. While many of these themes are intense and personal in nature, they nevertheless speak to the topics that students are honing in on through the literature and consequently want to explore, experiment with, and connect to.

**Missing Data: The Silences that Speak**

Lastly, of note is the interesting lack of data on a couple of themes, which I, perhaps problematically, expected. Firstly, there seemed to be a general avoidance to discussing sexual assault and rape in detail. For instance, during the headlines activity where students had to write a headline to capture the story of *Speak*, only one student, Ren, directly used the word “rape” in hers with “High School Girl gets Raped.” Other students alluded to a sense of shame and secrecy with headlines like “Don’t Say Anything” from Camille, “Sealed Lips” from Allison, and Nina who wrote “Melinda’s Nightmare Becomes a Reality as her Tormentor Joins Merryweather High.” Similar to Ren, Ellie came close to bluntly addressing that the book was about rape with “Girl Attacked for Being Attacked,” however, the majority of students in both classes seemed to avoid plainly stating that this was a story about the fallout from being raped.

My first reaction to this is that perhaps many of the students had not experienced anything like this, and so because it was not something they had experience with, they did not
explicitly address it. However, as a few students disclosed to me that they are survivors, I
wondered if perhaps this theme is largely absent simply because it is difficult and upsetting to
talk or write about. Next, I noticed that there seemed to be a lack of discussion around fear and
concern for personal physical safety. While the students explored in detail their struggles with
feeling mentally and emotionally safe, their physical safety is not something that they seemed to
explore, even when explicitly asked about it. For example, one of the prompts they were
provided with for the ‘Extragram’ Instagram™ assignment was to take a picture of a place in our
school where they had felt unsafe. Most students wrote about walking through certain hallways
being intimidating because they felt that they were very visible there and felt judged. However,
no one addressed feeling physically unsafe which was both a relief to me in one respect, but also
curious to me in another as I suspect many do feel physically unsafe in some spaces in the
school. Despite this, what I was encouraged by was a few students’ efforts to minimize fear by
way of triggering with their classmates. A couple of students, such as Teddy, actually posted
trigger warnings at the beginnings of a couple of their responses so that their audience would be
informed that potentially upsetting writing was to follow. Teddy considerately wrote “!!
WARNING!! These poems do contain mature language to help convert the dark and scary times
for most individuals!” Although they did not write so much about physical fear, they were
mindful of ensuring that they did not cause a physical or emotional reaction in a reader as a result
of their response, which certainly impressed me.
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

In chapters one through four I have explored the focus of my research and presented a literature review, my methodology, data analysis, and findings. In this chapter, I firstly reflect on studies from my literature review that were particularly influential on this project and discuss the similarities and differences between their findings and the findings from this study. Then, I endeavour to answer my central research question: In what ways do grade ten students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives? As well, I re-examine my sub-questions regarding effective literacy strategies for teaching intense content material, how trauma narratives function in school spaces, and how digital writing in its many forms impacts student critical literacy development. Then, I explore the challenges of the study, the limitations of the study, as well as the potential implications of the findings of this study and make recommendations regarding future practice and research. I finish the chapter with my final conclusion for this research.

The findings from this study have a few distinct similarities to the findings of other studies discussed in the literature review, as well as a few differences. To begin with, studies that addressed the importance of addressing sexualities in school such as those by Ashcraft (2009 & 2012), Bott (2006), Davis (2005), Finders (2000), Johnson (2015), and Moje and MuQaribu (2003) were heavily examined during this research project as there were many connections to this research including how to go about these issues safely in a classroom, how teachers balance these issues with their own confidence and comfort, and so forth. For example, Ashcraft’s (2012) study was a central project that I reflected on. Her central epistemological premise is that we
know that conversations about sexualities is something that youth are starved for and her central investigation is to find out how we can know that sexuality is itself an important site for students’ critical literacy development. Her findings on the necessity of incorporating discussions of sexualities in the classroom were very influential on the unit design for this project. Like Ashcraft’s study, my research also found the value in taking risks to include more controversial conversations about relationships, bodies, and health, particularly mental health, and this study similarly found that there is a great need for more research in this area. However, where our studies seem to greatly differ is that my project focuses its attention on discussions regarding traumatic sexual experiences, and how important these stories and conversations are. A gaping hole in Ashcraft’s study was that it did not acknowledge the possibility of students discussing such potentially ‘dangerous’ sexual experiences, including assault. Ashcraft’s’ work would have been enhanced if she had included insight about how educators can help navigate conversations about sexual trauma in a safe, supportive manner. This gap is one that my study has attempted to fill, as sexual trauma is a crucial issue to consider and include when talking to youth about sexualities.

I also relied on studies that addressed how to incorporate trauma literature into the literacy classroom, such as those by Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortin (2013), Balalev (2008), Crawford (2005), Dutro (2008) and Whitehead (2004) were also heavily relied upon for insight. For instance, Crawford (2005) importantly calls for English teaching to begin increasing student engagement by incorporating traumatic stories, and cites stories about the impact of war, violence, and grief as prime examples of what to include. While these are important topics for students to confront and explore, they are arguably more accessible, perhaps ‘safer’ experiences
to bring into the classroom, as discussions regarding violence, war, and loss are more prevalent in our mainstream Western culture. Stories of sexual assault and trauma, however, as illustrated throughout this study, are often not a part of the dominant narratives told and rather, are problematically silenced. As such, we need to work towards expanding our ideas about what the “contemporary examples of suffering” (p. 77) include and how to make room for stories about sexual trauma.

As another example, Dutro’s (2008) study strongly influenced this study, as it illustrates how educators should work towards building new frameworks for teaching: those that position painful stories about trauma at the centre of classrooms at all grade levels so that students can better understand and be effective witnesses of traumatic testimonies. Dutro’s study, different from my own, looked at elementary level students and specifically at how their reading practices were impacted by reading trauma literature, my study looked at older students and focused on their writing practices, and particularly at their digital writing practices. However, similarly, my study overall also calls for the use of painful stories, as they might help to enhance the literacy practices of high school youth. A gap that my study addresses that Dutro’s did not is the potential for digital spaces and social media spaces as sites for exploring and contributing to the writing of traumatic stories. Perhaps the “required new and different frameworks” (p. 426) that Dutro calls for could be found, in part, in online classroom spaces, as the findings from my study suggests.

Finally, research from Dutro (2011), Hollander (2000), Jolly (2011), Wissman (2008), Wright and Ranby (2009), Sinats, Scott, McFerran, Hittos, Cragg, Leblanc, and Brooks (2005), and Jones (2011) show that writing can certainly be a site for self-care and agency building within students. My research certainly found this to be the case as well, and further builds on
this notion to show that students can use writing, especially public and group digital writing practices, to encourage and care for one another as well as for themselves, particularly through ally speak. Private writing practices such as journaling can enhance literacy practices, as demonstrated by Jolly (2011), who explored the therapeutic potential of creative letter writing, such as writing not-to-be-sent letters as a part of a recovery program, and Wright and Ranby (2009), who looked at the therapeutic potential of journaling. In addition to these more private and individual kinds of writing, there is also further potential in the public writing platforms, such as social media and digital spaces, as illustrated in this research.

The Research Questions

In answering my central research question regarding the ways in which grade ten students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives, it became clear through the data analysis that students respond in a myriad of ways that can firstly and chiefly be characterized as personal, such as through expressions of anger and by making connections between characters and their own lived experiences. Next, students’ written responses reflected compassion for others; an ethic of care that they exercised both towards the characters they read about as well as towards one another. Finally, students also became agents through the development of their unique writer’s voices. Using digital and social media platforms in particular seemed to help students with extending and deepening their more traditional written responses.

As for my findings in relation to my sub-questions, I first reflected on effective strategies for teaching more intense subject material such as sexual assault narratives. To begin with, teachers need to feel a certain level of comfort and confidence when teaching about such
material, and in order to achieve this, an educator might undertake some professional learning on teaching about trauma before commencing a unit of study. If there are no explicit opportunities for workshops in this area, a teacher might reach out to their school board to find help with connecting to resources such as school counsellors or partner groups that might facilitate such a learning opportunity. Educators might also reach out to their local community groups as partners, such as women’s centres and hotlines for resources on how to begin conversations about traumatic stories. Next, educators might access resources within the school and set in place a safety plan and a team including administration, guidance counsellors, and so forth, so that if difficult moments arise during a lesson on a traumatic topic, both the students and the teacher are supported. Finally, ensuring that educators have a firm grasp on the classroom culture and know their students fairly well before beginning a study with trauma literature might be a helpful strategy. This understanding is important because it might help the teacher gauge which students might be of concern, and teachers can work on developing a rapport with their students and their families before introducing a study.

My next sub question speaks to the ways in which trauma narratives function in the public space of a school and how they might help to develop critical literacies and create empathetic classroom culture. As discussed in my findings, these narratives inspired loud, often-angry responses and strong opinions in classroom discussions. The discussions that took place over the course of the project impacted the overall classroom culture, as students began to take more risks to voice their opinions and engage in debate with one another. They critically questioned the characters in the story, the individuals presented from complementary texts that were integrated, and one another. However, despite their critical questioning, empathy and
compassion certainly emerged as a result of finding new understandings in one another’s ideas, making connections, and creating new meaning together. Exploring trauma literature in the ELA classroom certainly powerfully affected the culture of the learning space in my study.

Finally, my last sub-question was about how digital writing in both private and public forms can potentially impact student literacy development and shared meaning-making on sexual trauma. Digital writing in all its forms became an interesting and useful vehicle for students’ written responses. Firstly, because many students, especially the participants in this study, are well-versed in the use of digital platforms and social media, many of the assignments seemed to be housed in their writing ‘comfort zones.’ For instance, many students were excited by the ‘Extragram’ Project, as it involved a social media platform that they already used daily. They enjoyed taking pictures, sharing their world, and playing with the various tools of the app and so the writing component of the assignments did not seem to intimidate them. Rather, it seemed to empower them to show their ability to write in that space and it allowed them to connect their writing to one another as they followed one another and myself on the app so our writing was all accessible and connected. Many digital writing platforms have the capacity to make room for sharing written responses not just with the educator, but with the entire class community, or even the larger community of the Internet, where they can connect with other students, experts in the field, and resources that they may seek out for support.

**Challenges of the Study**

While I had considerable success with this study, problems emerged in a few different areas. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, as Dutro (2011) asserts, “moving difficult stories to the center of research and teaching—and, through that work, into a vision of more equitable
classrooms— is inherently risky for those on both sides of the witness chair” (p. 207). One central risk could be that trauma narratives could raise intense and painful issues that students might not be ready or able to deal with. As Miller (2008) argues, “Students engaged in this inevitably intensive learning experience, and directly exposed to dimensions of overwhelming life events, find themselves confronting powerful responses to the material” (p. 160). Johnson and Vasudevan (2012) speak to inevitability as well with regards to trauma literature, stating, “educators will inevitably encounter unplanned moments that challenge classroom norms and teacher comfort— moments when critical literacy is possibly being performed differently” (p. 39). If students have complex reactions in such inevitable moments, it might result in what Ashcroft (2012) calls “fragile conversations” that “tend to occur spontaneously” and “might be considered by many to be particularly complicated, messy, unpredictable, and even dangerous” (p. 612).

Furthermore, the classroom space might not be the best site to deal with such reactions or conversations if a student is in need of additional, personalized support. Another avenue might be a small study group, such as a book club, where students are invited or are free to join if they wish to explore this subject material. While conducting this research and teaching this novel, I was worried that a student or a number of students and/or their families might resist the chosen literature. However, this scenario did not play out while teaching this unit, although it was anticipated and planned for, as reflected in unit design and the ethics application. I was pleased to not be challenged on my choice of literature, (evident since no participants considered opting out of the novel study on *Speak*); however, there were no insights gained regarding what can be done to support such a student and productive alternative measures were not explored. In the
same vein, the support team set in place before the beginning of the study was not utilized. Although a few students disclosed having experienced trauma, they were already getting support from proper resources if they needed and their caregivers were already aware. While it is certainly a positive that no students had painful reactions to the literature, it is likely that some students do have complicated responses to trauma literature, and no new insights were gained during this study regarding how to best support students in these moments.

Finally, in terms of the potential methodological approach, while narrative methodology worked best for me to go about answering my research questions, it might not be as useful a study for individuals not working from a place of experience with dealing with sexual assault trauma. I speculate that my background in working as a sexual abuse counsellor is rare amongst teachers, and so writing from this place of experience and orienting my findings from narrating about that experience might not resonate with some educators.

Limitations of the Research

In a similar vein to struggles I encountered during this study, there are also limitations to the research itself. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, I am a new teacher-researcher and this is my first time working in this role. Being a beginner researcher impacts all facets of this research, and being new to the process certainly shaped the scope of the research. Firstly, my own sense of comfort and confidence in the role as teacher-researcher wavered throughout the research project, especially near the beginning. I frequently struggled with balancing formatively assessing for learning with looking at learning for my own research purposes, what Cochran-Smith (2005) identifies as “a major part of the work of the teacher educator” which has been “working the dialectic of research and practice by blurring boundaries and functioning
simultaneously as both researcher and practitioner” (p. 224). Pine (2009) concurs, writing “the biggest challenge in conducting action research is to collect and analyze data while you are in the midst of taking an action” (p. 251). He goes on to stipulate that “[a]s you are implementing an intervention to improve student learning or to make a change in your teaching practice, you have to be mindful of [what]… will make the intervention successful while [also]… carefully collect[ing] and analyz[ing] data” (p. 251). Often, I felt a great degree of guilt doing this challenging work, feeling selfish for focusing on how the learning I was seeing would impact my research questions rather than on solely considering the students’ literacy development. In these moments, feeling ‘green’ in a researcher role, I experienced self-doubt and this may have impacted the quality of the research, as I was sometimes preoccupied with balancing my roles of teacher and researcher.

Kerdeman’s (2015) article on graduate students in education speaks to this struggle, as she argues that self-doubt is a primary emotion that students feel and potential limitation, concluding that “students will likely experience self-doubt” (p. 737). Returning to Cochran-Smith (2005), another source of self-doubt besides balancing roles was knowing that “As more and more research is produced about teacher education—by those both inside teacher education and external to it—teacher educators need to know how to read, evaluate, critique, and use that research in their own work” (p. 224). Throughout this research, I consistently reflected on and questioned whether I was using the existing literature effectively such as questioning whether I was interpreting new studies properly, making the best connections and locating them within a larger discourse. However, Kerdeman (2015) argues that “self-doubt, while uncomfortable, can be transformative” (p. 737), which I certainly found to be true throughout the process. Despite
my limitations as a new researcher, the support I received from my academic supervisor and the feedback provided by my academic committee, as Hill (2010) argues, the relationship can be characterized as “rigorous, systematic, and generate[d] new knowledge as each partner negotiates and creatively engages with ‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’ knowledge” (p. 337). As I completed this research part time and by distance education, I found that “the changing digital world offer[ed] opportunities to create new forms of teacher research partnerships” (pp. 336-7). While self-doubt was an emotion I consistently struggled with throughout the research process as a result of being a beginner researcher; I did find comfort and confidence in the feedback, troubleshooting, support, and guidance that was provided to me by my supervisor and committee.

Next, the boundaries that I set for this research are limited. The data collection only came from two of my own classes. This was done because these are the only two grade ten classes that I taught in that school year, and were consequently the only grade ten groups that I had access to. The data collection had to come from grade ten students because the novel *Speak* is designated as a grade ten novel in our school building. Extending this novel study to other grades and classes, such as grade nine classes, would have compromised and/or limited my colleagues in choosing this novel in future school years; for instance, if I taught this to my grade nine students this year, teachers of these students would not be able to teach the novel in grade ten. Since classes do not move as cohorts of students throughout the grades, this decision would mean that some students would never have the opportunity to study this novel- a consequence which certainly conflicts with my findings that *Speak* this is definitely a book that should be incorporated in secondary ELA classes. The unit design for this research was also new; I had not taught this novel in this
manner quite like this before and so I was experimenting with unit design as I conducted my research. As a result, the data sources for this classroom research could have been expanded to include, for instance, interviews with colleagues who have also taught this novel study and might have insights about the writing output produced in their classrooms, interviews with families of the students, student progress reports, video and audiotape recordings, student referrals to counselling, and self-evaluations of teaching. In retrospect, the research could have benefitted from an increased number of data sources.

Next, there was a lack of primary research on using rape stories in the secondary English classroom and how these narratives impacted student writing. For instance, although there exists a great deal of literature on the use of *Speak* in the classroom, many of these studies explored the potential of this story for literary analysis rather than developing student voice through writing. Also, while a great deal of literature on the use of trauma narratives in the classroom was explored, few explicitly explored rape stories and a number of these studies had participants that were from a different age range than the adolescent participants in this research. As a result of this lack of primary research, one factor that might have limited the representativeness of the material included in the literature review for this research was a “selective inclusion of studies… based on the reviewer’s own subjective assessment of the quality of the underlying studies” (Pine, 2009, p. 248). Further, with the literature that was reviewed and used for this research, I felt what Pine points to as the “unconscious bowing to the ‘expertise of the printed word,’ deferring to the authority of the printed text” (p. 249). This approach led to moments where I sometimes doubted and distrusted my own thinking as a beginner researcher, especially since I found that I was reading different literature than what I had anticipated at the beginning of
the research project. Although this evolving literature review is a natural development in action research, it sometimes led to moments where I questioned the direction of the research and subsequently reached out to my supervisor for help.

Finally, in considering the limitations of the methodological approach, as Leith (2006) explores, this study did not consider “the potential role and impact of unconscious elements” such as “emotional, sensory and embodied dimensions of experience [that] lie below the threshold of consciousness and are thus often impossible to articulate into words” (p. 551). Leitch’s paper looks at the limitations of narrative methodology for teacher researchers and posits that such unconscious elements, while important, are often left as “undisclosed aspects of people’s experience” but can be contextually located, “in which case the social, historical and political influences require scrutiny” (p. 551). This scrutiny that Leith calls for largely was not considered in this study, however, for future studies, these “unconscious elements” should perhaps be considered so as not to “privilege consciously narrated experience” (p. 566) and so that researchers may go “beyond the limits of language” (p. 567).

**Implications for Practice**

After reflecting on insights that came from the research questions and the limitations of the study, I offer implications for our teaching practices. Firstly, the findings from this study demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating trauma literature into the ELA classroom, especially with written responses as students made powerful connections between trauma literature, themselves, and other texts. Trauma literature can function as a valuable form of critical literacy that is more relevant for students. Thus, classroom teachers should consider sharing trauma stories with their students, despite how risky this work may be, and should explicitly recognize
sexual assault as a crucial topic that needs to be explored, in large part, to combat rape culture. As Dutro (2011) argues, “I have come to believe that such an explicit acknowledgment of the hard stuff of life is important in classrooms… We cannot be complacent about how difficult experiences function in schools” (pp. 193-195). Conversations regarding sexual assault usually largely exist outside of the school community and so, we need to reconsider where these conversations occur and eliminate silences.

Practitioners also need to mindfully lay the groundwork for units of study surrounding trauma literature, which likely begins with the educator gaining comfort and confidence with addressing traumatic issues through professional development, as discussed in the previous section on research questions. As Willis and Nagel (2014) argue, “an educated, discerning and reflective teacher may be the vital catalyst that sparks engagement… [especially] in a stressed or traumatized learner” (p. 50) and these qualities can be developed through professional learning on integrating trauma studies in the classroom. Willis and Nagel go on to emphasize the importance of teachers being given access such learning, concluding that there is a “need for investment in [teacher’s] intellectual capital [which is] considered to be transferable” (p. 50). Next, developing a rapport with a class and establishing a healthy class culture before introducing trauma literature is crucial to ensure that the unit of study is as safe and meaningful as possible. This preparation should also include establishing a support team within the school, school division, and larger community, which educators can turn to for resources or referrals. Accordingly, these supports will empower teachers to take these risks in the classroom. Finally, in order to lay a strong foundation for this learning, establishing a foundation of understanding for students might also include introducing trauma literature slowly, such as with shorter texts
including short stories, poetry, videos, or current events, to gauge students’ reactions and gain a sense of which students might be triggered by more intense subject matter before moving on to a longer unit, such as a novel study.

Finally, integrating trauma literature, like so many critical literacies, also challenges existing power relationships in the classroom, particularly between students and teachers. As students draw more on their funds of knowledge and experiences, they can become positioned as experts and meaning-makers while teachers can fulfill the role of facilitators. For instance, after this project and witnessing my own gender fluid student’s responses to the literature, I wonder about what I could do better and differently in the future when teaching this literature. This student took several opportunities to speak from their experience of being gender fluid and educate their classmates, especially on gender issues; in the future, how could I better empower their voice and provide opportunities to speak to their experiences? In a similar vein, teachers can reconsider how self-identified survivor youth can be empowered to teach about their experiences in a classroom, if they are willing. This process of meaning making is especially important for students who have struggled with trauma, and as Willis and Nagel (2014) argue, it “can modify cognitive structures and therefore assist in the psychological and sociological rehabilitation of children who have suffered the effects of trauma” (p. 49). Utilizing the enormous resource of student knowledge can be largely beneficial, particularly if insights come from students who identify as witnesses and survivors of trauma. As Lee (1993) argues, such messages and insights enter the classroom, they can “mitigate against despair and helplessness” (p. 19). Educators need to be open to such changes in power dynamics in the classroom, however, they also need to “carefully pace and balance affect within the classroom” (Miller,
2008, p. 167) as “[a] delicate balance exists for the instructor who wishes students to closely understand the experience of trauma yet who is aware that many students can so easily become overwhelmed by abuse material in general” (pp. 166-7). Thus, teachers need to balance between letting go of some instructional power to make room for students’ potential to teach but also maintain the role of the expert in terms of taking charge of support and activating safety and action plans for students. Overall, healthy and positive student-teacher relationships are critical for change.

**Implications for Research**

In looking at how to most effectively and meaningfully integrate trauma literature into the ELA classroom, further research needs to be conducted on best practices. Firstly, further research should especially focus on specific groups of students and how trauma literature impacts their literacy practices, particularly students from marginalized groups such as LGBTQ youth and First Nations, Metis, and Inuit youth. As briefly discussed in the section on limitations, looking at how to be culturally responsive to certain groups of students is important because some groups of peoples have, for instance, specific gendered and racialized experiences with trauma, particularly sexual assault. For example, as Davis (2009) suggests regarding the needs of gender fluid students, “rather than approach gender identity from a radical, reconstructive perspective, many transsexual individuals are seeking social recognition” (p. 124). Such social recognition is important and thus, is worthwhile investigating when considering how to teach trauma narratives to a class that includes gender fluid students.

Next, research into school board and school administrative decisions regarding how supportive these bodies can be with teachers who want to use trauma literature might
demonstrate systemic barriers to teacher risk-taking. Such research might unveil why some educators are hesitant or discouraged to use trauma literature, or perhaps feel unsupported in this endeavour. For instance, Pine (2009) discusses the necessity for teacher-researchers to have ‘critical friends’ while conducting action research in a school site, arguing that it is “important to engage colleagues in a process of collaborative inquiry to advance the developing research effort” (p. 235). Administration can budget for release time to allow teachers to do such collaborative work, which is an indication that the school site is what Pine calls a ‘research engaged school.’ One of these features of such a school is that it “promotes research communities” where there is “critical colleagueship” (p. 168) and that “school leadership is committed to and supportive of teachers, students, and parents as researchers and to the concept of research as a form of teacher professional development” (p. 169). Future research could include looking into whether or not secondary schools are embracing the opportunity to become research engaged sites, what barriers exist, and how to best support schools and school board to develop the facilitative conditions that need to be present.

Further, if such support is being provided, what do the safety plans and strategies put in place teach us about how we can best support teachers and learners engaging in this critical work? Future research could investigate how to not only find out what effective supports are being put into place for teachers who want to use critical literacy, but could also look into how effective professional learning opportunities could be developed in order to foster a drive for a staff of teachers to want to address trauma narratives in the classroom. Returning to Pine, he also advocates for such professional development, calling for “time to be made available as a part of the teacher’s regular teaching load for discussion, reflection, investigation, and speculation” (p.
This is significant because school climate is largely impacted by the relationships between teachers and administration, and “research shows that atmospheres of trust, shared vision, and openness create positive school climate conditions” (Price, 2012, p. 39). Price (2012) goes on to assert that “Students prosper when qualified teachers and principals invest time and effort into their learning and development” (p. 41), demonstrating that it is crucial to investigate how such positive atmospheres can be created between adults in a school in order to effect change with teaching and learning. Also, in teaching trauma literature, this subject matter can also deeply affect the educator, and so a supportive and trusting school environment is critical for teachers who want to exercise self-care and reflect on their reactions to teaching trauma literature as well. Future research might also explore the impact of teaching trauma literature on educators and how teachers manage their potentially intense reactions to the subject matter and student responses to the narratives.

Finally, more research must be conducted on the effectiveness of using digital literacies and social media platforms for their potential of enhancing literacy experiences. In an ever-changing digital landscape, new digital spaces are being created and utilized by youth. Such spaces can become potentially rich sites for learners to use as a part of their literacy development, and it is worthwhile for future research to continue to investigate how to best integrate digital and social media responses to literature into the curriculum. For instance, Kaufer, Gunawardena, Tan, and Cheek (2011) come to the same conclusion, arguing, “Because of the allure of social media in the mainstream economy and culture, those entrusted with writing education feel great pressure to incorporate social media paradigms” (p. 318). They go on to assert, “Without a doubt, writing class-rooms of the future will involve writing with social
media. The challenge will be to make sure that these classrooms achieve the best integration of new learning paradigms with traditional practice” (p. 318). Future research should investigate how to best integrate such new learning paradigms to ensure that we are providing our learners with the best possible literacy experiences.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that there is still a significant amount of work to be done with how to best integrate trauma literature, especially sexual assault stories, into the ELA classroom. There is much research to be built on, as teacher researchers have explored and created many exciting developments in this area in recent years. However, a great deal of uncertainty and concern continues to exist for educators and students alike when considering engaging in critical literacy practices like the unit of study explored in this research project. Unfortunately, such hesitation is perpetuating the culture of silence that continues to exist around sexual assault narratives. As such, it is crucial that teachers and learners are empowered and supported to be innovative and engage in this ‘risky’ pedagogy. In order to do this, educators must be provided with the time, support, and professional learning necessary to be comfortable and confident when teaching trauma narratives so that teachers like my male colleague, won’t feel like they “can’t touch that” and back away. Rather, we must support one another, at all levels, to lean in to engaging in learning about traumatic experiences, especially experiences with sexual assault, to combat rape culture and foster a sense of strength, resiliency, and empathy in our students so that they can make change.
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Appendix A: Ethics Form & Request for Modifications Form

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Amber Moore
UVic STATUS: Master's Student
UVic DEPARTMENT: EDCI
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Deborah Begaray

PROJECT TITLE: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER: None

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an email reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closures
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.

Dr. Rachael Scarth
Associate Vice-President Research Operations

Certificate Issued On: 29-Apr-15
University of Victoria

Human Research Ethics Board
Application for Research Ethics Approval for Human Participant Research

The following application form is an institutional protocol based on the
Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

Instructions:
1. Download this application and complete it on your computer. Handwritten applications will not be accepted. You will receive a response from the HREB within 4-6 weeks.
2. Use the Human Research Ethics Board Annotated Guidelines to complete this application:
   [link](https://www.uvic.ca/research/govandgrant/humanethics/index.php)
   Note: This form is linked to the guidelines. Access links in blue text by hitting CTRL and clicking on the blue text.
3. Submit one (1) original and two (2) copies of this completed, signed application with all attachments to: Human Research Ethics, Administrative Services Building (ASB), Room 9202, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
4. Do not staple the original copy (clips O.K.).
5. If you need assistance, contact the Human Research Ethics Assistant at (250) 472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)
6. Please note that applications are screened and will not be entered into the review system if incomplete (e.g., missing required attachments, signatures, documents). You will be notified in this case.
7. Once approved, a Request for Annual Renewal must be completed annually for on-going projects for continuing Research Ethics approval.

A. Principal Investigator

If there is more than one Principal Investigator, provide their name(s) and contact information below in Section B.
Other Investigator(s)' & Research Team.

Last Name: Moore
First Name: Amber
Department/Faculty: Curriculum & Instruction, Faculty of Education
UVic Email: * Please use my work email: [email]
Phone: [number]
Fax: N/A
Mailing Address including postal code:

Amber Moore

Title/Position: (Must have a UVic appointment or be a registered UVic student)
   • Faculty  • Undergraduate  • Ph.D. Student
   • Staff  • Master's Student  • Post-Doctoral
   • Adjunct or Sessional Faculty (Appointment start and end dates:_________)

Students: Provide your Supervisor’s information:
Name: Deborah Begoray
Email: dbegoray@uvic.ca
Department/Faculty: Curriculum & Instruction, Faculty of Education
Phone: 250-721-7847
Graduate Students: Provide your Graduate Secretary’s email address: edcgrad@uvic.ca

FOR HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS' USE ONLY

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All PIs: Provide any additional contacts for email correspondence: N/A

Name: Email:
Name: Email:

B. Project Information

Project Title: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom
Anticipated Start Date for Recruitment / Data Collection: May 4 2015 Anticipated End Date: June 5 2015
Geographic location(s) of study: Canada
Keywords: 1. Trauma literature 2. Critical literacy 3. Digital writing 4. High school students

Is this application connected/associated/link to one that has been recently submitted? □ Yes □ No
If yes, provide further information:

All Current Investigator(s) and Research Team:
(Include all current co-investigators, students, employees, volunteers, community organizations.)
Contact Name Role in Research Project Institutional Affiliation Email or Phone

N/A

For Faculty Only: Any Graduate Student Research Assistants who will use the data to fulfill UVic thesis/dissertation/academic requirements: Include all current Graduate Student Research Assistants

Student/Research Assistant: Email or Phone:

C. Multi-Jurisdictional Research

Does the proposed project require Research Ethics Board (REB) approval from another research ethics board(s)? □ Yes □ No
If yes, list the other research ethics board from which you or research team members have sought approval or will seek approval:

(Attach proof of having applied to other research ethics board(s). Please forward approvals upon receiving them. Be assured that UVic ethics approval may be granted prior to receipt of other research ethics board approvals.)

If you have answered “yes” above, please indicate your role in the multi-jurisdictional research project (Check all that apply):

☐ Recruiting participants
☐ Collecting data
☐ Analyzing data (with or without identifiers) collected by you and/or UVic research team members

Revised June 2013
D. Agreement and Signatures

For further information on signature requirements, please see the Guidelines for Signatures.

Principal Investigator and Student Supervisor affirm that:

- I have read this application and it is complete and accurate.
- The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Victoria regulations, policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and all relevant sections of the TCPS 2.
- The conduct of the research will not commence until ethics approval has been granted.
- The researcher(s) will seek further HREB review if the research protocol is modified.
- Adequate supervision will be provided for students and/or staff.

Principal Investigator: [Signature]
Print Name: [Amber Moore]
Date: March 10, 2015

Student's Supervisor or co-Supervisor (for student applicants only):

Student's Supervisor: [Signature]
Print Name: [Redacted]
Date: March 12/15

Chair, Director or Dean

(To be signed by the person to whom the PI or student's supervisor reports, and must not be the same person as the PI or student's supervisor. The Research Ethics Office cannot accept applications with duplicate signatures)

I affirm that adequate research infrastructure is available for the conduct and completion of this research.

[Signature]
Print Name: [Redacted]
Date: March 13, 2015

Revised June 2013
E. Project Funding

Have you applied for funding for this project?  □ Yes  ☒ No  If yes, please complete the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Project Funding</th>
<th>Funding Applied</th>
<th>Funding Approved</th>
<th>Project Title Used in Funding Application (or additional information)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Will this project receive funding from the US National Institutes of Health (NIH)?

□ Yes  ☒ No

If yes, provide further information:

If you have applied for funding, have you submitted a funding application or contract notification to the UVic Office of Research Services?

□ Yes  ☐ No

Have you previously submitted an In-Principle Research Ethics Application for release of preparatory research funds associated with this project?

□ Yes  ☐ No

F. Scholarly Review

What type of scholarly review has this research project undergone?

□ External Peer Review (e.g., granting agency)

☒ Supervisory Committee or Supervisor—required for all student research projects

☐ None

☐ Other, please explain:

G. Other Approvals and Consultations

Do you require additional approvals or consultations from other agencies, community groups, local governments, etc.?

□ Yes, attached  ☒ Yes, will forward as received  ☐ No

(Attach proof of having made request(s) for permission, or attach approval letter(s). Please forward approvals upon receiving them. Be assured that ethics approval may be granted prior to receipt of external approvals.)

If Yes, please check all that apply:

☒ School District, Superintendent, Principal, Teacher. Please list the school districts or schools:

School District: [blank]

Revised June 2013
Superintendent: Don Holum

Bert Church High School Principal: Laurie Johnston-Drebert

I applied for approval for this research project to my school board, the
in [Redacted] I sent in an "Application to Engage in Research/Evaluation" to [Redacted] Schools. Dr.
[Redacted] Research Committee Chair and Director of Schools accepted my application and it
is now under review.

☐ Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) if you are UVic faculty, student or staff and will be conducting
minimal-risk research under the auspices of the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), involving VIHA
staff, patients, health records, sites and/or recruitment through VIHA sites (including recruitment via poster
placement), you must use the Joint UVic/VIHA application form. For above minimal risk research, please
contact the UVic Research Ethics Office.

☐ Other regional government authority, please explain:

☐ Community Group (e.g., formal organization, informal collective), please explain:

☐ Other Research Ethics Board (REB) Approval, please explain:

☐ UVic Biosafety Committee Approval, Attach your Biosafety Approval, or your correspondence with the
biosafety committee, to this application. Note that Research Ethics Approval is contingent on Biosafety
Approval.

☐ Other Approval, please explain:

H. Researcher(s) Qualifications

In light of your research methods, the nature of the research, and the characteristics of the participants,
what training, qualifications, or personal experiences do you and/or your research team have (e.g., research
methods course, language proficiency, committee expertise, training on the equipment to be used)?

As a graduate student with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the Faculty of Education
at the University of Victoria, I have completed my coursework including a research methods course.

I was also trained to be a certified volunteer sexual assault hotline counselor with the Sexual Assault
Center in [Redacted].. I was trained for this position in 2006 and volunteered part time in this
role from 2007-2008. In my position, I mainly counseled on the crisis hotline, answering phone calls
from individuals in crisis relating to issues of sexual assault. People would call the hotline for a
various number of reasons including but not limited to because they had been assaulted and
needed help in that moment, access to resources, experiencing flashbacks, panic attacks, needed
help as an ally, needed advice on how to report, tell friends and family, and so forth. I was also
trained to accompany survivors to the hospital to accompany them during the rape kit procedure and
to accompany survivors in court to confront their attackers.

Finally, in my role as an English teacher at my current school, I have taught this novel in past years,
with grade ten students. As a result, I have experience with helping to support students who have
strong responses to the literature.

Revised June 2013
I. Research involving Aboriginal Peoples of Canada (Including First Nations, Inuit and Métis)

The TCPS 2 (Chapter 9) highlights the importance of community engagement and respect for community customs, protocols, codes of research practice and knowledge when conducting research with Aboriginal peoples or communities. "Aboriginal peoples" includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis regardless of where they reside or whether or not their names appear on an official register. The nature and extent of community engagement should be determined jointly by the researcher and the relevant community or collective, taking into account the characteristics and protocols of the community and the nature of the research.

1. Conditions of the Research

1a. Will the research be conducted on (an) Aboriginal — First Nations, Inuit and Métis — lands, including reserves, Métis settlement, and lands governed under a self-government agreement or an Inuit or First Nations land claims agreement?
   ☑ No
   □ Yes, provide details:

1b. Do any of the criteria for participation include membership in an Aboriginal community, group of communities, or organization, including urban Aboriginal populations?
   ☑ No
   □ Yes, provide details:

1c. Does the research seek input from participants regarding a community's cultural heritage, artifacts, traditional knowledge or unique characteristics?
   ☑ Yes
   □ No

1d. Will Aboriginal identity or membership in an Aboriginal community be used as a variable for the purposes of analysis?
   ☑ No
   □ Yes

1e. Will the results of the research refer to Aboriginal communities, peoples, language, history or culture?
   ☑ No
   □ Yes

2. Community Engagement

2a. If you answered "yes" to questions a), b), c), d) or e), have you initiated or do you intend to initiate an engagement process with the Aboriginal collective, community or communities for this study?
   ☑ Yes
   □ No

2b. If you answered "yes" to question 2a, describe the process that you have followed or will follow with respect to community engagement. Include any documentation of consultations (e.g. formal research agreement, letter of approval, email communications, etc.) and the role or position of those consulted, including their names if appropriate:

N/A

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3. No community consultation or engagement

If you answered "no" to question 2a, briefly describe why community engagement will not be sought and how you can conduct a study that respects Aboriginal communities and participants in the absence of community engagement.

Community engagement will not be sought for this project because it does not apply to my research.

J. International Research

4. Will this study be conducted in a country other than Canada?

☐ Yes ☑ No

If yes, describe how the laws, customs and regulations of the host country will be addressed (consider research Visas, local Institutional Research Ethics Board requirements, etc.):

N/A

K. Description of Research Project

5. Purpose and Rationale of Research

Briefly describe in non-technical language:

Please use 150 words or fewer.

5a. The research objective(s) and question(s)

The research objective is to investigate how grade ten students respond to trauma literature, particularly the novel Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson (1999) as well as a selection of other complementary texts and films, in two grade ten academic English classes in a public school in a small city in Western Canada. My primary research question is: in what ways do grade ten students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives? A few other questions that I am also interested in exploring is how educators can be better prepared, supported, and equipped to incorporate trauma literature into their English Language Arts curricula, effective strategies for integrating this literature and how this literature could potentially enhance ELA studies, as well as how this literature can help to develop reading, writing, and oracy skills.

5b. The importance and contributions of the research

I believe that this research may advance scholarship in a few important ways. Firstly, this project will contribute to existing research on integrating trauma literature in the classroom. It will demonstrate the benefits for educators to take risks to choose texts that will build more dynamic learning spaces where adolescent learners engage more meaningfully, find their voices, identities, personal power, and foster stances that challenge systemic inequalities. In many past studies, researchers stress the necessity for more research on how to purposefully engage learners in critical textual analyses on sensitive, difficult topics such as sexual assault and other trauma narratives. Further, this project may also demonstrate that digital writing can function as an especially useful tool.

5c. If applicable, provide background information or details that will enable the HREB to understand the context of the study when reviewing the application.


Revised June 2013
SEXUAL ASSAULT CONTENT OF THE BOOK IS THE PRIMARY TRAUMATIC CONTENT, ALTHOUGH OTHER INTENSE ISSUES SUCH AS BULLYING, FEELING NEGLECTED, LONELINESS, PEER PRESSURE, AND POWER ARE ALSO EXPLORED.

6. Recruitment and Selection of Participants

6a. Briefly describe the target population(s) for recruitment. Ensure that all participant groups are identified (e.g., group 1 - teachers, group 2 - administrators, group 3 - parents).

The target population for recruitment will be grade ten students enrolled in my two academic Grade 10 classes.

6b. Why is each population or group of interest?

This population has been targeted because the novel Speak, around which this project is centered, has been designated a grade ten level text in the English Language Arts curriculum and at our school.

6c. What are the salient characteristics of the participants for your study? (e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, position, etc.)? List all inclusion and exclusion criteria you are using.

The salient characteristic of the participants for this study is age as I am collecting data on youth in the public education system. I will include all members of my ELA Grade 10 classes as possible research participants.

6d. What is the desired number of participants for each group?

I currently have 68 students enrolled across two grade ten classes and I am hopeful that all will consent to participate in this study.

6e. Provide a detailed description of your recruitment process. Explain:

i) List all source(s) for information used to contact potential participants (e.g., personal contacts, listserves, publicly available contact information, etc.). Clarify which sources will be used for which participant groups:

All participants are in my current class and will be recruited as outlined below. Contacting their parents will occur using PowerSchool, our web-based student information system. This is the system that educators use to manage grades, record attendance for students, and acquire parent and guardian contact information for communication purposes including home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, email addresses, and home mailing addresses.

ii) List all methods of recruitment (e.g., in-person, by telephone, letter, snowball sampling, word-of-mouth, advertisement, etc.) If you will be using “snowball” sampling, clarify how this will proceed (i.e., will participants be asked to pass on your study information to other potential participants?). Clarify which methods will be used for which participant groups.

To recruit participants for this study, I will have a third party (the English Learning Leader at the school site and my colleague in the English Department) discuss my project in person with my students (during which time I will not be present), as well as communicate the details of my study with parents and guardians of my students through email, and by sending consent forms for parents and guardians home with students. I also plan to recruit through word of mouth, as I will instruct my third party recruiter to encourage students to go home and speak with their families about the class discussions about the project.

iii) If you will be using personal and/or private contact information to contact potential participants (as stated above), have the potential participants given permission for this, or will
you use a neutral third party to assist you with recruitment? Note that this is not a concern when public and/or business contact information is used.

Parents and guardians have consented to all teacher contact through the use of PowerSchool when their students were registered at the school. My third party recruiter will use this platform for finding contact information for communication purposes, such as email addresses.

iv) Who will recruit/contact participants (e.g., researcher, assistant, third party, etc.) Clarify this for each participant group.

I will be using a third party, my colleague and English Learning Leader, for recruiting and contacting all student participants and their parents and guardians for this study.

v) List and explain any relationship between the members of the research team (including third party recruiters or sponsors/clients of the research) and the participant(s) (e.g., acquaintances, colleagues). Complete item 7 if there is potential for a power relationship or a perceived power relationship (e.g., instructor-student, manager-employee, etc.). If you have a close relationship with potential participants (e.g., family member, friend, colleague, etc.) clarify here the safeguards that you will put in place to mitigate any potential pressure to participate.

The third party recruiter, the English Learning Leader at the school site, is my colleague in the English Department and does not have any stake in this research. I will use this individual because he is not their teacher, nor will he have instructed them in their previous grade nine year, as he did not teach the grade nine English Language Arts curriculum in the 2013-2014 school year. As such, he will likely be relatively unknown to the participants, and will not have power-over a relationship with these students.

vi) In chronological order (if possible) describe the steps in the recruitment process. (Include how you will screen potential participants where applicable). Consider where in the process permission of other bodies may be required.

1. My third party recruiter will discuss the research project with my students during class time, in advance of the start of the research. I will not be present for this discussion so that students can ask questions and voice any concerns that they may have without my knowledge. I will not discuss the class discussion with my third party recruiter afterwards, except to ask if he has any questions about steps moving forward. Students will be asked to sign letters of consent and return them to him at this time for their participation. They will also be allowed to hand in letters at the school office addressed to him if they want further time to consider participation. Students will also be told that participation in the unit is part of their regular ELA classes, but being in the research project is voluntary.

2. My third party recruiter will also send home consent forms for students' parents and guardians both with the students and with an email that I have drafted to all parents and guardians of potential participants. This will be done in advance to the start of the research. Although my students will be between ages 13 and 16 and can provide their own consent for this minimal risk study, I believe it is in everyone's best interest to be transparent and request consent of the families of potential participants as well as the participants themselves.

3. Because the research will be occurring over a period of time (approximately five weeks), after the research data has been collected, my third party recruiter will obtain ongoing consent from the participants and the families of the participants. At the end of the school year and before the data collected is used for research purposes, my third party recruiter will remind student participants and their and parents and guardians that they have agreed to allow their student's writing samples and information to be included in the research, and that they have the option to withdraw their consent if they have changed their mind. This reminder will be conducted through email reminders. Further, my third party recruiter will again meet with my classes to remind them of the research project, and remind them that they can withdraw their consent if they wish.

7. Power Relationships (Dual-Role and Power-Over)

If you are completing this section, please refer to the:

Revised June 2013
Guidelines For Ethics in Dual-Role Research for Teachers and Other Practitioners and the TCGS 2. Article 3.1 and Article 7.4.

Are you or any of your co-researchers in any way in a power relationship, including dual-roles, that could influence the voluntariness of a participant’s consent? Could you or any of your co-researchers potentially be perceived to be in a power relationship by potential participants? Examples of “power relationships” include teachers-students, therapists-clients, supervisors-employees and possibly researcher-relative or researcher-close friend where elements of trust or dependency could result in undue influence.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Varies

If yes or varies, describe below:

i) The nature of the relationship:

Teacher-students.

ii) Why it is necessary to conduct research with participants over whom you have a power relationship:

Educational research on classroom interventions and student responses is important. As part of the regular curriculum, I am investigating the potential of using trauma literature in the English Language Arts classroom using a novel recommended by [a teacher]. I recognize that these texts can be triggering and intense for learners. I believe that it is important for them to work through their responses to this literature with an instructor that they know and trust, as well as in a classroom environment where they feel safe, welcome, and supported. It is equally important to research their responses in order to contribute to the literature in this area and to add to the body of pedagogical approaches suitable for high school ELA students. I have previous experience teaching this topic and this novel and now want to systematically research student responses.

iii) What safeguards (steps) will be taken to ensure voluntariness and minimize undue influence, coercion or potential harm:

To begin with, I will ask my third party recruiter to read a script I have prepared for him and Section 3 of the Guidelines for Ethics in Dual-Role Research for Teachers and Other Practitioners (Version 3) from the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria. Previous to his discussion with my students and their parents and guardians about this project, I will discuss the outlined specific safeguards and procedures to prevent undue influence, coercion and inducement as well as the additional points for consideration with him at length. I also plan to forward all questions about the research project to my third party recruiter during the duration of the project, when ongoing consent needs to be obtained, I will also ensure that confidentiality is maintained, and ask that he not discuss any communication that he has with participants or their parents and guardians during this semester with me. This will help to ensure that anonymity is maintained. As mentioned above, I will not be present in the room while recruitment takes place.

iv) How will the power or dual-role relationship and associated safeguards be explained to potential participants:

My third party recruiter will explain the power and dual-role relationship and associated safeguards to the students in person and to parents and guardians through a letter sent both by email and traditional mail. My third party recruiter will also be available to answer the questions of students and parents and guardians.
Recruitment Materials Checklist:
Attach all documents referenced in this section (check those that are appended):
☑ Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc. * The consent form will be used as invitation/recruitment guide as well.
☐ Invitation to participate (e.g., Psychology Research Participation System Posting)
☐ Advertisement, poster, flyer
☐ None; please explain why (e.g., consent form used as invitation/recruitment guide)

M. Data Collection Methods
8. Data Collection
Use the following sections in ways best suited to explain your project. If you have more than one participant group, be sure to explain which participant group(s) will be involved in which activity/activities or method(s).
8a. Which of the following methods will be used to collect data? Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>☑ Interviewing participants:</th>
<th>☐ Attach draft interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ in-person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ by telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ using web-based technology (explain):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Conducting group interviews or discussions (including focus groups)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>☐ Administering a questionnaire or survey:</th>
<th>☐ Attach questionnaire or survey:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ In person</td>
<td>☐ standardized (one with established reliability and validity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ by telephone</td>
<td>☐ non-standardized (one that is un-tested, adapted or open-ended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ mail back</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ web-based* (see below)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Other, describe:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*If using a web program with a server located in the United States (e.g., SurveyMonkey), or if there are other reasons that the data will be stored in the US (e.g., use of US-based cloud technology, sharing data with US colleagues, etc.), you must inform participants that their responses may be accessed via the U.S. Patriot Act. Please add the following to the consent form(s):

"Please be advised that this research study includes data storage in the U.S.A. As such, there is a possibility that information about you that is gathered for this research study may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act."

| ☑ Administering a computerized task (describe in 8b or attach details) |                                  |
| ☑ Observing participants | In 8b, describe who and what will be observed. Include where observations will take place. If applicable, forward an observational data collection sheet for review. |
| ☑ Recording of participants and data using: | ☑ Images used for analysis |
| ☑ audio | ☐ video | ☐ photos or slides |
| ☑ note taking | ☐ flipcharts |                                  |
| ☑ data collection sheet (attach) | ☐ other: | ☐ Images used in disseminating results (include release to use |

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8b. Provide a sequential description of the procedures/methods to be used in your research study. Be sure to provide details for all methods checked in section 8a. Clarify which procedures/methods will be used for each participant group. Indicate which methods, if any, will be conducted in a group setting. List all of the research instruments and interview/focus group questions, and append copies (if possible) or detailed descriptions of all instruments. If not yet finalized, provide drafts or sample items/questions.

I will observe my grade ten students (recorded in handwritten field notes) in their normal English Language Arts lessons, during the Speak novel study unit. THIS OBSERVATIONAL DATA WILL BE COLLECTED PRIMARILY ON WHAT THEY SAY IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND DURING WORK PERIOD TIME AS I WALK AROUND THE ROOM AND LISTEN TO THEIR DISCUSSIONS OF THE TEXT. IT WILL ALSO BE COLLECTED AS I REFLECT ON WHAT STUDENTS CONTRIBUTED TO WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSIONS ON THE LITERATURE. I ALSO PLAN TO KEEP A CLOSE EYE OUT FOR CHANGING BODY LANGUAGE AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AS WE DISCUSS SOME OF THE MORE INTENSE SCENES IN THE BOOK, TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR STUDENTS WHO MAY BE GROWING UPSET BY THE MATERIAL. IF I NOTICE ANY STUDENT WHO APPEARS TO ME TO LOOK AS THOUGH THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE MATERIAL DUE TO A STRONG EMOTIONAL RESPONSE, I WILL FOLLOW THE PROCEDURE AS OUTLINED IN SECTION N.13B. HOWEVER, AS I OUTLINE IN SECTION N, THIS UNIT IS A REGULAR PART OF THE GRADE 10 ELA PROGRAM AND ANY RISK OF EMOTIONAL TRAUMA IS LARGELY UNRELATED TO THE RESEARCH.

I WILL RECORD MY OBSERVATIONAL DATA BOTH DURING CLASS TIME (IF TIME PERMITS THIS) AND EITHER DURING MY PREPERATORY PERIOD AS WELL AS AFTER SCHOOL WHEN I HAVE TIME TO REFLECT ON WHAT I OBSERVED. THIS OBSERVATIONAL DATA IS NORMALLY COLLECTED IN MY TEACHING PRACTICE FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PURPOSES, TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THE LESSONS. HOWEVER, I
WILL ONLY BE TAKING THE TIME TO MAKE NOTE OF THIS OBSERVATIONAL DATA IN MY FIELD NOTES DOCUMENT FOR MY RESEARCH PURPOSES. BECAUSE I WILL BE WRITING FIELD NOTES SPECIFICALLY FOR MY RESEARCH PURPOSES, I WILL COLLECT DATA FROM ALL STUDENTS SINCE I WILL NOT KNOW WHO THE PARTICIPANTS ARE AND THEN ONLY USE THE FIELD NOTES ABOUT PARTICIPATING STUDENTS AFTER I KNOW THEIR IDENTITIES. I WILL FIND OUT THEIR IDENTITIES AFTER THE REPORT CARD MARKS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED.

Another source of data will be from collecting their regular assignments and projects and analyzing their written responses. Many of their written responses will be completed using a digital platform, such as a blog and a threaded discussion group, which are "computerized tasks" (8a.). I will obtain consent from participating students and their parents and guardians through my third party recruiter, and find out which students are participants after data collection is completed, as well as after final report card marks are handed in. I will only use data from students who have permission to be participants.

I also plan to conduct ONE focus group interview that I will record with an audio recording on my phone. I will invite students to THIS focus group that will be held at the end of the year, during the exam break in the last two weeks of June. This will be completely voluntary and is not a requirement of the course, which will be made clear to invited students. THE EXACT DATE OF THE FOCUS GROUP WILL BE DETERMINED AFTER SPEAKING WITH STUDENTS AND ASKING THEIR PREFERENCES FOR A POTENTIAL DATE.

8c. Where will participation take place for each data collection method/procedure? Provide specific location, (e.g., UVic classroom, private residence, participant’s workplace). Clarify the locations for each participant group and/or each data collection method.

Participation for this study will take place in my classroom, in a public high school, in Western Canada during regular class hours and during the exam break for interviews.

8d. For each method, and in total, how much time will be required of participants? Clarify this for each participant group, each data collection method, and any other research related activities.

There will be no time apart from their regular participation in school. Participation will take place during scheduled class time. If students choose to participate in voluntary focus group interviews, these students will participate during the two-week exam break, for about an hour or so for discussion. It will be made clear to the students that these interviews are not a requirement of the course and the course will already be completed by the exam break.

8e. Will participation take place during participants' office/work hours or instructional time?

[ ] No  [X] Yes. Indicate whether permission is required (e.g., from workplace supervisor, school principal, etc.) and how this will be obtained:

Participation will take place during participants' regular instructional time. However, if students voluntarily choose to join a focus group for an interview, they will join me during the spring exam break for about an hour. This focus group is not a requirement of the course and students will come only if they wish to further discuss the text. I will choose a meeting time when our administration releases the spring exam schedule and choose a time that does not interfere with any of the grade ten exams.

Permission is required from my principal and my school board. I have obtained permission from my principal during a meeting where I reviewed the project plan with her. This research project is also a part of my Professional Growth Plan, so my principal and I have discussed this project on a few different occasions and she has supported me in seeking out additional professional learning opportunities to ensure that I am prepared and confident to complete this work. She has also put me in contact with [name], who is the Director of Schools and the individual who specializes with Research and Data Analytics. I submitted a separate proposal with an Application to Engage in Research/Evaluation to [name] through him and the [Research Review Committee] for permission to conduct this research.

Data Collection Methods Checklist:

Revised June 2013
Attach all documents referenced in this section (check those that are appended). Where draft versions are appended, please ensure that final versions are submitted when available. If final versions differ significantly after you have obtained Research Ethics approval, you will need to submit a Request for Modification:

☐ Standardized Instrument(s)
☐ Survey(s), Questionnaire(s)
☒ Interview and/or Focus Group Questions
☐ Observation Protocols
☒ Other:

I will be collecting work products completed for the novel study such as written work and projects, as well as collecting data from their online threaded discussion group work and blogs, which we will also be working on as part of the course.

N. Possible Benefits, Inconveniences, and Risks of Harm to Participants

9. Benefits

Identify any potential or known benefits associated with participation and explain below. Keep in mind that the anticipated benefits should outweigh any potential risks.

☒ To the participant ☒ To society ☒ To the state of knowledge

I believe that this research holds potential to benefit the participants, society, and to the state of knowledge in terms of contribution to the existing body of research on trauma literature. For participants, teaching them this unit on Speak is already part of their grade ten academic English Language Arts curriculum. As such, they will be expected to continue developing a variety of skills including their written communication, reading comprehension, and visual analysis skills. Further, trauma narratives demand audience witnessing of trauma, which can trigger especially resonant emotions in learners, and critical literacy teachers can tap into these powerful responses for meaningful student connection and literary engagement. Insights gained from this study may help educators explore potential benefits of encouraging students to take on a critical literacy lens in their writing to learn as they may discover that it can provide purposeful opportunities for critiquing dominant narratives and voices while subsequently working to build learning spaces where learners assert their own voices, identities, and power.

To build on the benefits for the learner participants, by extension, the potential impact on these learners may help shape how they contribute to their communities and cultures in society during and after the conclusion of this unit. For instance, we will be focusing heavily at the beginning of the unit on learning about consent and rape culture, and how we can better educate ourselves to stay safe, to fight oppression, empower ourselves, and exercise self-care. As a result, these learners will be becoming more conscious and educated global citizens.

Lastly, this research may benefit the state of knowledge in terms of contribution to the existing body of research on trauma literature in the classroom. In reviewing the literature, it is clear that more research such as that being completed for this project is necessary, as many scholars call for this.

10. Inconveniences

Identify and describe any known or potential inconveniences to participants:

Consider all potential inconveniences, including total time devoted to the research.

There are no known inconveniences to the participants, as all data will be collected during their scheduled class time, in our English classes.

11. Level of Risk

The TCPS 2 definition of “minimal risk research” is as follows:

"Research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research."

Revised June 2013
Based on this definition, do you believe your research qualifies as "minimal risk research"?

☑ Yes it is minimal risk. ☐ No, it is not minimal risk.

Explain your answer with reference to the risks of the study and the vulnerability of the participants:

I believe that this research qualifies as minimal risk because this novel study unit on Speak would be run as a part of this class and the English Language Arts curriculum whether it is used for research purposes or not. However, there are potential emotional risks and stress and there may be potentially vulnerable participants in this study, although this will remain unknown unless vulnerable participants disclose to me that they are such. There is emotional risk and potential stress because trauma literature sometimes emotionally impacts the reader if they connect with the literature and/or responses to the literature in an emotional or personal fashion. However, emotional risk is often a risk that English Language Arts educators take in their classrooms as they try to choose literature that is purposeful to learners and reflects their lived experiences, as well as their youth culture. Therefore, these risks are not caused by research methods.

12. Estimate of Risks of Harm

Consider the inherent foreseeable risks associated with your research protocol and complete the table below by putting an X in the appropriate boxes. Be sure to take into account the vulnerability of your target population(s) if applicable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Risks of Harm</th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) Emotional or psychological discomfort, such as feeling demeaned or embarrassed due to the research</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) Fatigue or stress</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) Social risks, such as stigmatization, loss of status, privacy and/or reputation</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) Physical risks such as falls</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) Economic risk (e.g., job security, salary loss, etc.)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi) Risk of incidental findings (See Article 3.4 of the TCPS 2 for more information)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii) Other risks:</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Possible Risks of Harm

If you indicated in Item 12 (i) to (vii) that any risks of harm are possible or likely, please explain below:

13a. What are the risks? (i.e., elaborate on risks you have identified above)

There are a couple of possible risks associated with this study including emotional risk and potential stress. Because the text Speak is a sexual assault narrative, there is potential for the subject to emotionally trigger the learners if they are upset by reading about the protagonist, Melinda's, experiences. Specifically, there is a possibility that students in these classes are survivors of sexual assault themselves and so this text may trigger flashbacks to their experience(s) and/or potentially re-traumatize them. However, as mentioned above, this unit is a regular part of Grade 10 ELA and risks are largely unrelated to research.

THE FOCUS GROUP SESSION WILL RUN DURING THE EXAM BREAK, A TWO WEEK PERIOD WHERE STUDENTS NO LONGER HAVE REGULAR CLASSES, BUT RATHER HAVE FINAL EXAMS FOR THE MAJORİTY OF THEIR CLASSES. THIS TWO WEEK PERIOD CAN SOMETIMES BE CONSIDERED A STRESSFUL, TIRESOME PERIOD FOR STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE LEARNERS WHO STRUGGLE WITH TEST ANXIETY.
THIS IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE FOCUS GROUP SESSION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY, WHICH WILL BE MADE CLEAR TO THEM. IF STUDENTS FEEL TOO STRESSED OR FATIGUED DURING THE EXAM BREAK TO JOIN, THEY CAN CHOOSE TO NOT PARTICIPATE. THE FINAL EXAM FOR OUR CLASS, ENGLISH 10-1, IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 17TH. I PLAN TO HAVE MY THIRD PARTY RECRUITER INVITE STUDENTS TO THE SESSION, WHICH WILL BE SCHEDULED AT SOME POINT BETWEEN JUNE 18TH AND JUNE 26TH. I DO NOT KNOW THE EXACT DATE BECAUSE I WANT TO BE FLEXIBLE IN ORDER TO HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE DATE THAT WORKS WITH THEIR SCHEDULES.

13b. What will you do to try to minimize, mitigate, or prevent the risks?

I have taken many steps to prepare for the potential emotional risks and stresses that students may be faced with while working through this novel study. To begin with, I will draw from my previous experience as a certified sexual assault hotline worker. In that role, I was trained to have the ‘right’ language when speaking with survivors, demonstrate the ethic of care, to recognize and prepare for trigger warnings and flashbacks, to work through disclosures, and coach allies on how to support survivors. However, as I am now a teacher, I will not be acting in a full counselor role. Rather, I have met with the guidance and administration teams at our school and discussed the potential emotional risk and stresses of these students during this research. I learned about the team in place both within the school as well as the community experts who are associated with our school for supporting vulnerable students including such bodies as the RCMP, Children’s Aid, and Education for Mental Health. I feel confident that if a student is triggered by the literature or discloses personal traumatic experiences that require support, there is a team in place in our school and outside community to support that learner.

Next, I have participated in professional learning in anticipation of this research in the past year in order to be as prepared as possible to minimize, mitigate, and prevent risk. For instance, I participated in a trauma writing workshop led by local author, so that I could see the instructor model how to navigate and encourage participants to write about and share painful lived experiences. Next, I was certified in Mental Health First Aid for adults who interact with youth by the Mental Health Commission of Canada in partnership with the local community to Mental Health organization. In this two-day workshop, we were trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues, to provide initial help and support, and to guide a personal struggling with mental health towards appropriate professional help. ADDITIONALLY, I RECENTLY SIGNED UP FOR A WORKSHOP IN MAY RUN BY HEALTH SERVICES CALLED “UNDERSTANDING TEEN MENTAL HEALTH.” THIS SESSION IS DESIGNED TO SHARE INFORMATION TO HELP UNDERSTAND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES THAT PARTICULARLY IMPACT ADOLESCENTS. THERE WILL BE SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS TO HELP THEM LEARN HOW TO SPOT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS.

Lastly, I plan to disclose to the learners in advance of the subject matter that we will be covering during our Speak novel study so that they have time to voice concern, ask questions, and get additional support if they need it. Again, this planning is part of my regular teaching regimen, and is not specially implemented for this research.

AS FOR RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR THE FOCUS GROUP SPECIFICALLY, I FIRSTLY BE ALERTING MY GUIDANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM OF THE DATE AND TIME OF THIS SESSION. ONCE IT IS DETERMINED SO THAT THEY ARE AWARE THAT THEIR EXPERTISE MAY BE NEEDED ON THAT DAY, AND/OR THE DAYS TO FOLLOW IF A STUDENT IS TRIGGERED BY OUR DISCUSSION OR DISCLOSES PERSONAL TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES THAT REQUIRE EXPERT SUPPORT. I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IF A STUDENT BECOMES UPSET OR IN CRISIS DURING THE SESSION, I NEED TO BE ABLE TO CALL EITHER A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR OR AN ADMINISTRATOR IN TO HELP THAT STUDENT WHILE I STAY WITH THE REMAINING GROUP MEMBERS. THIS IS THE PROCEDURE THAT I FOLLOW IN MY USUAL CLASSROOM PRACTICE IF A STUDENT IS IN CRISIS OR NEEDS TO SPEAK PRIVATELY WITH AN EXPERT WHILE CLASS IS IN SESSION.
NEXT, I WILL BEGIN THE DISCUSSION WITH AN OVERVIEW OF GROUND RULES WITH THE STUDENTS, INCLUDING RESPECTING ONE ANOTHER DURING DISCUSSION, NOT SHARING OUR DISCUSSION WITH OTHER STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF THE FOCUS GROUP, THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTION THAT THEY DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE SPEAKING TO, AND THAT THEY CAN LEAVE AT ANY TIME. I ALSO PLAN TO INVITE THE STUDENTS TO SUGGEST ANY FURTHER GROUND RULES THAT WILL HELP THEM TO FEEL SAFE.

13c. How will you respond if the harm occurs? (i.e., what is your plan?)

If harm occurs and it is disclosed to me, I plan to work with the student through their disclosure and then turn to my guidance and administration team to put an individual care plan in place for that student. For disclosures, the general protocol for supporting students in that moment is to exercise the ALGEE strategy, as outlined in the Mental Health First Aid course run by the Mental Health First Aid Commission of Canada. The ALGEE strategy is as follows:

- Assess risk for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies

In addition to the ALGEE steps, I always am careful to thank the student for sharing their disclosure with me, and in some cases, I need to explain to them that in order to act in their best care, I am legally obligated to discuss their disclosure with other adults in the building and/or community if I do not feel that they are safe.

13d. If you have indicated that there is a risk of Incidental Findings (vi) please outline your proposed protocol for information and/or action.

N/A

13e. If one or more of your participant groups could be considered vulnerable please describe any specific considerations you have built into the protocol to address this.

If any of my participants disclose that they are vulnerable (i.e. survivors of sexual assault), I will follow the protocol as discussed in 13c. as well as offer the learner the option of working on alternative assignments if they feel uncomfortable to move forward with this novel study, as well as the option to work in an alternative space if they do not wish to be present in the classroom for this novel study. This protocol would be followed regardless of research study.

14. Risk to Researcher(s)

14a. Does this research study pose any risks to the researchers, assistants and data collectors?

No. Aside from my third party recruiter whose role is to simply outline the project to participants and their parents and guardians, I am the only researcher involved in this project. I do not feel as though this research poses any risk to either my third party recruiter or to me.

14b. If there are any risks, explain the nature of the risks, how they will be minimized, and how you will respond if they occur.

N/A

15. Deception

Will participants be fully informed of everything that will be required of them prior to the start of the research session?

Revised June 2013
O. Incentives, Reimbursement and Compensation

16a. Is there any incentive, monetary or otherwise, being offered for participation in the research (e.g., gifts, honorarium, course credits, etc.)

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, explain the nature of the incentive(s) and why you consider it necessary. Also consider whether the amount or nature of the incentive could be considered a form of undue inducement or affect the voluntariness of consent. Clarify which participant groups will be provided with which incentives.

N/A

16b. Is there any reimbursement or compensation for participating in the research (e.g., for transportation, parking, childcare, etc.)

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, explain the nature of reimbursement or compensation and why you consider it necessary. Also consider whether the amount of reimbursement or compensation could be considered a form of undue inducement or affect the voluntariness of consent. Clarify which participant groups will be provided with which kind of reimbursement or compensation.

N/A

16c. Explain what will happen to the incentives, reimbursement or compensation if participants withdraw during data collection or any time thereafter (e.g., compensation will be pro-rated, full compensation will be given, etc.)

N/A

P. Free and Informed Consent

Consent encompasses a process that begins with initial contact and continues through to the end of the research process. Consult Article 3.2 of the TCPS 2 and Appendix V of the Guidelines for further information.

17. Participant’s Capacity (Competence) to Provide Free and Informed Consent

Capacity refers to the ability of prospective or actual participants to understand relevant information presented about a research project, and to appreciate the potential consequences of their decision to participate or not participate. See the TCPS 2, Chapter 3, section C, for further information.

Identify your potential participants: (Check all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Non-Competent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Competent adults</td>
<td>☐ Non-competent adults:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ A protected or vulnerable population (e.g., inmates, patients)</td>
<td>☐ Consent of family/authorized representative will be obtained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Competent youth aged 13 to 18:</td>
<td>☐ Assent of the participant will be obtained (note that assent of the participant is always required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Consent of youth will be obtained and parental/guardian consent is required, due to institutional requirements (such as school districts) or due to the nature of the research (e.g., risks, etc.)</td>
<td>☐ Non-competent youth:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Consent of parent/guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Assent of the youth will be obtained (note that assent of the participant is always required)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised June 2013
18. Means of Obtaining and Documenting Consent and/or Assent:
Check all that apply, consider all of your participant groups, attach copies of relevant materials, complete item 19:

☐ Signed consent (Attach consent form(s) – see template available)
☐ Verbal consent (Attach verbal consent script(s) – see template available.)

Explain in 19 why written consent is not appropriate and how verbal consent will be documented.

☐ Letter of information for implied consent (e.g., anonymous, mail back or web-based survey. Attach information letter, see template)
☐ Signed or Verbal assent for non-competent participants (Attach assent form(s), or verbal assent script(s)).

Explain how verbal assent will be documented in 19.

☐ Other means. Explain in 19 and provide justification.

☐ Consent will not be obtained. See TCPS 2 Articles 3.5 and 3.7. Explain in 19.
☐ Signed consent from the parents/guardians for youth/child participants (Attach consent form(s)).

Explain how parents/guardians will provide informed consent for child/youth participants in 19.

☐ Information letters for the parents/guardians of youth/child participants (Attach information letter(s)). If consent will not be obtained from parents/guardians and the parents/guardians will not be informed, explain why not in 19.

19. Informed Consent
Describe the exact steps (chronological order) that you will follow in the process of explaining, obtaining, and documenting informed consent. Ensure that consent procedures for all participant groups are identified (e.g., group 1 - teachers, group 2 – parents, group 3 – students). Be sure to indicate when participants will first be provided with the consent materials (e.g., prior to first meeting with the researcher?). If consent will not be obtained, explain why not with reference to the TCPS 2 Articles 3.5 and 3.7.

Group 1 - Students:
1. My third party recruiter will provide an overview of the research project to my classes before we start the novel study, THE WEEK BEFORE THE START OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY. TENTATIVELY, THIS WILL BE ON MAY 7TH OR MAY 8TH. I will not be present for this presentation and discussion.
2. My third party recruiter will hand out consent forms to the students one-week prior to beginning the novel study, at the end of April THE WEEK BEFORE
THE START OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY. TENTATIVELY, THIS WILL BE ON MAY 7th OR MAY 8th. There will be consent forms for both the students and the parents and guardians to sign, WITH SEPARATE FORMS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PORTION OF THE PROJECT THAT WILL RUN DURING CLASS TIME AND FOR THE FOCUS GROUPS. HE WILL REVIEW THE TWO DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE PROJECT AND THE TWO DIFFERENT FORMS OF CONSENT. He will instruct them to fill in their own consent forms and hand them in to him as soon as possible EITHER DURING THAT PERIOD OR THEY CAN RETURN THE FORMS AT A LATER DATE IF THE STUDENTS WOULD PREFER TO GO HOME AND DISCUSS THEIR CONSENT WITH THEIR PARENTS FIRST. The students will be instructed to take the consent forms to the parents and guardians home and will be encouraged to speak with their families about the project, have their parents and guardians fill it in, and bring back the forms to my third party recruiter or if the students also have the option to drop off the forms to the office, where a folder for my third party recruiter will be stored. He will be clear that the student are not to hand in the forms back to me, as I should not and will not know who will be participating until after their report card marks are completed. He will encourage them to hand in their forms as soon as possible, and will not collect forms past June 25th, 2015.

3. DURING THE DURATION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, MY THIRD PARTY RECRUITER WILL KEEP TRACK OF THE CONSENT FORMS THAT ARE AND ARE NOT HANDED IN. He will visit my classroom again, about halfway through the project (I will leave the room) and ask if anyone still needs to hand in their consent forms or if they need another copy of any forms. If a student returns their consent form with a "YES" but their parent or guardian does not return their consent form, that student's data will not be used. If a parent or guardian returns their consent form with a "YES" but a student does not return their consent form, that student's data will not be used. Of course, if any student or guardian returns their form with a "NO," then that student's data will not be used.

4. At the end of the novel study roughly five weeks later in June, my third party recruiter will visit my classes again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in this research project to obtain ongoing consent. He will also remind them that if they have not yet returned their consent forms and want to join, that he will still be accepting those documents until June 25th.

Group 2- Parents:

1. My third party recruiter will email an outline of my research project to parents and guardians of all potential participants one week prior to beginning the novel study, at the end of April. THE WEEK BEFORE THE START OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY. Tentatively, this will be on May 7th or May 8th.

2. My third party recruiter will send home consent forms with students for parents and guardians during a meeting with my classes a week before we start the novel study, at the beginning of April. THE WEEK BEFORE THE START OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY. Tentatively, this will be on May 7th or May 8th.

3. During the duration of the novel study and data collection period, my third party recruiter will be available to answer questions that any students, parents, and guardians may have either in person, by email, and/or by phone. He will be fully prepped by me with all of the information that he needs to answer questions.
4. DURING THE DURATION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, MY THIRD PARTY RECRUITER WILL KEEP TRACK OF THE CONSENT FORMS THAT ARE AND ARE NOT HANDED IN. IF PARENT AND GUARDIAN FORMS ARE NOT HANDED IN AFTER A WEEK, HE WILL SEND A FOLLOW UP EMAIL TO ANY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS WHO HAVE NOT SENT BACK THEIR FORMS. IF A STUDENT RETURNS THEIR CONSENT FORM WITH A "YES" BUT THEIR PARENT OR GUARDIAN DOES NOT RETURN THEIR CONSENT FORM, THAT STUDENT’S DATA WILL NOT BE USED. IF A PARENT OR GUARDIAN RETURNS THEIR CONSENT FORM WITH A "YES" BUT A STUDENT DOES NOT RETURN THEIR CONSENT FORM, THAT STUDENT’S DATA WILL NOT BE USED. OF COURSE, IF ANY STUDENT OR GUARDIAN RETURNS THEIR FORM WITH A "NO," THEN THAT STUDENT’S DATA WILL NOT BE USED.

5. At the end of the novel study roughly five week later in June, my third party recruiter will email the parents and guardians of my students again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in EITHER PART OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT (THE CLASSROOM RESEARCH COMPONENT AND/OR THE FOCUS GROUP PORTION OF THIS PROJECT) this research project to obtain ongoing consent.

18. Ongoing Consent

Article 3.3 of the TCPS 2 states that consent shall be maintained throughout the research project. Complete this section if the research involves interacting with participants over multiple occasions (including review of transcripts, etc.), has multiple data collection activities, and/or occurs over an extended period of time.

20a. Will your research occur over multiple occasions or an extended period of time (including review of transcripts)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

20b. If yes, describe how you will obtain and document ongoing consent. If consent procedures differ for each group or activity, please clarify each group or activity that you are referring to.

Group 1- Students: At the end of the novel study roughly five week later in June, my third party recruiter will visit my classes again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in this research project to obtain ongoing consent.

Group 2- Parents and Guardians: At the end of the novel study roughly five week later in June, my third party recruiter will email the parents and guardians of my students again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in this research project to obtain ongoing consent.

21. Participant’s Right to Withdraw

Article 3.1 of the TCPS2 states that participants have the right to withdraw at any time and can withdraw their data and human biological materials. Describe what participants will be told about their right to withdraw from the research at any time (i.e., who to contact and how). If compensation is involved, explain what participants will be told about compensation if they withdraw. If you have different participant groups and/or different data collection methods, clarify the different procedures for withdrawing as necessary.

Students, parents, and guardians will be clearly informed that they are allowed to withdraw consent at any time. If they wish to withdraw their consent before my third party recruiter contacts them at the end of the novel study and the data collection period roughly five weeks after the start of the project, then they are invited to call or email my third party recruiter to inform him of their decision. The work phone number and email address of my third party recruiter will be provided to the students, parents, and guardians on the consent form given to students, sent home through traditional mail, and emailed, and this information is also available on our school website.
22. What will happen to a person’s data if s/he withdraws part way through the study or after the data have been collected/Submitted? If applicable, include information about visual data such as photos or videos. If you have different participant groups and/or different data collection methods, clarify the different procedures for withdrawing as necessary. Ensure this information is included in the consent documents.

☐ Participant will be asked if he/she agrees to the use of his/her data. Describe how this agreement will be documented:

This agreement will be documented through the collection of a consent form that my third party recruiter will keep until the data collection period is completed, the school year is completed, and the report card marks are finalized.

☐ It will not be used in the analysis and will be destroyed.

☐ It is logically impossible to remove individual participant data (e.g., anonymously submitted data).

☐ When linked to group data (e.g., focus group discussions), it will be used in summarized form with no identifying information.

The person’s data from online threaded discussion groups will only be used in summarized form with no identifying information.

Free and Informed Consent Checklist:
Attach all documents referenced in this section (check those that are appended):

☐ Consent and Assent Form(s) – Include forms for all participant groups and data gathering methods

☐ Letter(s) of Information for Implied Consent

☐ Verbal Consent and Assent Scripts

Q. Anonymity and Confidentiality

23. Anonymity
Anonymity means that no one, including the principal investigator, is able to associate responses or other data with individual participants.

23a. Will the participants be anonymous in the data gathering phase of research?  

☐ Yes  ☐ No

23b. Will the participants be anonymous in the dissemination of results (be sure to consider use of video, photos)?  

☐ Yes  ☐ Maybe. Explain below.  

☐ No. If anonymity will not be protected and you plan to identify all participants with their data, provide the rationale below.

I will use pseudonyms in the dissemination of results.

24. Confidentiality
Confidentiality means the protection of the person’s identity (anonymity) and the protection, access, control and security of his or her data and personal information during the recruitment, data collection, reporting of findings, dissemination of data (if relevant) and after the study is completed (e.g., storage). The ethical duty of confidentiality refers to the obligation of an individual or organization to safeguard entrusted information. The ethical duty of confidentiality includes obligations to protect information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft.

24a. Are there any limits to protecting the confidentiality of participants?  

☐ No, confidentiality of participants and their data will be completely protected
Yes, there are some limits to the researcher's ability to protect the confidentiality of participants (Check relevant boxes below.)

- Limits due to the nature of group activities (e.g., focus groups): The researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality.
- Limits due to context: The nature or size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants (e.g., school principals in a small town, position within an organization).
- Limits due to selection: The procedures for recruiting or selecting participants may compromise the confidentiality of participants (e.g., participants are identified or referred to the study by a person outside the research team).
- Limits due to legal requirements for reporting (e.g., legal or professional).
- Limits due to local legislation such as the U.S.A. Patriot Act (e.g., when there will be data storage in the United States). When using USA based data instruments and data storage systems researchers are responsible for determining if this applies.

Other:

Because the data collected is student work that they would need to complete regardless of whether or not they are participants in the study, I cannot necessarily protect the confidentiality of their writing as we work through the novel study during CLASS PARTICIPATION OR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION. For instance, the students will be creating and writing in their own private blogs, but they are allowed to share these blogs with one another if they wish to do so. The students will also be writing in online threaded discussion groups and sharing their writing and ideas with one another. Additionally, we will be having class discussions where they may share their responses to the literature publicly, although participation in these discussions is voluntary. Lastly, for their final essay exams, the writing will be submitted to the school office as Appeal Data and may be reviewed at a future date by administration.

AFTER THE GRADES HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED AND I HAVE COMPLETED MY DATA COLLECTION AT THE END OF JUNE, I WILL BE KEEPING THE PHYSICAL WRITING SAMPLES AS WELL AS MAINTAINING ACCESS TO THE DIGITAL WRITING OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHILE I WRITE MY THESIS OVER THE SUMMER AND FALL MONTHS. I WILL REMOVE THE PHYSICAL WRITTEN MATERIAL FROM MY CLASSROOM AND TAKE IT HOME WITH ME DURING MY SUMMER BREAK TO WRITE MY THESIS. IF I AM STILL USING IT TO WRITE MY THESIS IN THE FALL WHEN I RETURN TO WORK, I WILL KEEP THE DATA AT MY HOME.

ONCE I HAVE COMPLETED MY FINAL WRITE-UP OF MY THESIS AND SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED IT, I PLAN TO SHRED THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE IN OUR SCHOOL OFFICE. THE ONLY MATERIAL THAT I WILL NOT SHRED IS THE FINAL EXAM MATERIAL THAT I HAVE TO SUBMIT TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE FOR APPEAL DATA, AS PREVIOUSLY STATED. THIS MATERIAL WILL BE SECURED IN A LOCKED ROOM IN THE OFFICE. AS FOR THE DIGITAL DATA, I WILL UNSUBSCRIBE TO THEIR BLOGS, DELETE EMAIL SUBMISSIONS, AND CLOSE THE DIGITAL THREADED DISCUSSION GROUPS.

24b. If confidentiality will be protected, describe the procedures to be used to ensure the anonymity of participants and for preserving the confidentiality of their data (e.g., pseudonyms, changing identifying information and features, coding sheet, etc.). If you will use different procedures for different participant groups and/or different data methods be sure to clarify each procedure.

I will use a pseudonym for the participants. COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY FOR EVERY RESEARCH PARTICIPANT IS NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE DATA CANNOT BE COLLECTED ANONYMOUSLY. THE DATA CANNOT BE COLLECTED ANONYMOUSLY BECAUSE THE WRITTEN RESPONSES THAT WILL BE COLLECTED FOR DATA ANALYSIS WILL ALSO BE USED FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT, AND ANY OTHER OBSERVATIONAL DATA WILL BE COLLECTED FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AS WELL.
AS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. FURTHER, I DO NOT WANT TO ASSUME THAT EVERY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT WANTS COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY. MUCH OF WHAT STUDENTS SHARE IN A CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT IS SHARED IN A PUBLIC MANNER AND SO PERHAPS SOME PARTICIPANTS MIGHT APPRECIATE RECOGNITION OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS. IF I ASSUME THAT PARTICIPANTS WANT TO ‘DISAPPEAR’ IN THE STUDY AS AN UNIDENTIFIABLE STUDENT, THEN I RISK ACTING AS A PATERNALISTIC RESEARCHER. I BELIEVE THAT USING PSEUDONYMS FOR STUDENTS IS A SUFFICIENT STRATEGY TO ENSURE ANONYMITY.

I WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT MY THIRD PARTY RECRUITER THOROUGHLY INFORMS THE POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ABOUT HOW THIS DATA WILL BE USED. I BELIEVE THAT BY MAKING MY DATA DISSEMINATION PLANS CLEAR, POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS MAY FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH MY PLAN TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY. FOR INSTANCE, THE AUDIENCE FOR THE STUDY RESULTS IS PRIMARILY MY THESIS COMMITTEE TEAM, OTHER EDUCATORS WHO I MAY PRESENT MY FINDINGS TO IN THE FUTURE AT A CONFERENCE, WORKSHOP, OR THROUGH AN ACADEMIC PUBLICATION, AND I WILL ALSO BE OFFERING TO SHARE MY RESULTS WITH THE RESEARCH TEAM AT SCHOOLS AS WELL AS WITH MY COLLEAGUES AT MY SCHOOL. WHEN MY THESIS IS COMPLETE AND SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED, I WILL ALSO CONTACT THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND OFFER TO SHARE MY FINDINGS WITH THEM. I ANTICIPATE THAT IF I STAY ON MY PLANNED SCHEDULE, I WILL BE ABLE TO OFFER TO SHARE MY FINDINGS WITH PARTICIPANT AND PARENTS AND GUARDIANS IN SPRING 2016.

24c. If there are limits to confidentiality indicated in section 24a. above, explain what the limits are and how you will address them with the participants. If there are different procedures for different participant groups and/or different data collection methods, be sure to clarify each procedure.

There are certain professional limits I have for confidentiality, although this is regardless of the research and rather my professional duty as an educator. For instance, if during the data collection period, such as during the voluntary focus groups session at the end of the school year, a student discloses to me that they have been sexually abused, it is my legal obligation to report this and ensure that this student is safe. I also have a responsibility to involve guidance, administration, parents, and guardians if I notice something in their written work or if they say something during our novel study discussions that I feel is generally concerning, as I normally would in my teacher role. Also, with written final exams, these essays will be handed in to the office for Appeal Data purposes and students’ full names will be on these documents, and accessible by office staff and administration.

AS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION, I WILL REMIND STUDENTS THAT IN MY ROLE AS A TEACHER, IT IS MY LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT IF I FIND ANYTHING THAT THEY REVEAL AS CONCERNING FOR THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY OR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS, THEN I HAVE TO REPORT MY CONCERNS TO THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE TEAM, ADMINISTRATION TEAM, AND POTENTIALLY THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS. FURTHER, IF ADMINISTRATION, GUIDANCE, AND/OR THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ALSO FIND THEIR RESPONSES CONCERNING, THEY MAY CONTACT OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERTS TO HELP SUPPORT THAT STUDENT AND SECURE THEIR SAFETY.

I WILL ALSO ASK THAT THE STUDENTS IN THE FOCUS GROUP KEEP OUR CONVERSATION CONFIDENTIAL OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE GROUP, HOWEVER, I WILL ALSO BE CLEAR THAT THIS CANNOT BE GUARANTEED AS I CANNOT PERSONALLY CONTROL THIS AND SO I WILL ASK THEM TO NOT SHARE ANY INFORMATION WITH THE FOCUS GROUP THAT THEY WISH TO KEEP PRIVATE. THIS WILL BE OUTLINED BEFORE WE COMMENCE WITH OUTLINE GROUND RULES AND THE PREPARED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.
R. Use and Disposal of Data

25. Use(s) of Data

25a. What use(s) will be made of all types of data collected (field notes, photos, videos, audiotapes, transcripts, etc.)?

I will analyze the data, including my own observational field notes and written student responses to the literature, and transcriptions of interviews. I will represent the data findings in my Master’s thesis.

25b. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by yourself for purposes other than this research project?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☒ Possibly

25c. If yes or possibly, indicate what purposes you plan for this data and how will you obtain consent for future data analysis from the participants (e.g., request future use in current consent form)?

I may use this data during a professional learning conference for educators in the future where I may discuss what I learned during this research. I may also write scholarly article or present at a at an academic conference. In order to obtain this consent, I will request future use in the current consent form.

25d. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by other persons for purposes other than explained in this application?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☒ Possibly

25e. If yes or possibly:

i) Indicate whether the data will contain identifiers when it is provided to the other researchers or whether it will be fully anonymous (note that “fully anonymous” means that there is no identifying information, links, keys, or codes that allow the data to be re-identified).

N/A

ii) How will you obtain consent from the participants for future data analysis by other researchers? (If the data will be transferred in fully anonymous form, this request for future use can be made in the current consent form. If the data will contain identifiers or links/keys/codes for re-identification, consider requesting permission to contact the participants in the future, to obtain consent for the use of the data at that time).

N/A

26. Commercial Purposes

26a. Do you anticipate that this research will be used for a commercial purpose?

☐ Yes  ☒ No

26b. If yes, explain how the data will be used for a commercial purpose:

N/A

26c. If yes, indicate if and how participants will benefit from commercialization.

N/A

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27. Maintenance and Disposal of Data

Describe your plans for protecting data during the project, and for preserving, archiving, or destroying all the types of data associated with the research (e.g., paper records, audio or visual recordings, electronic recordings, coded data) after the research is completed:

27a. means of storing and securing data (e.g., encryption, password protected computer files, locked cabinet, separation of key codes from raw data etc.):

Any handwritten student response work (assignments, writing activities on paper like placemat responses and tickets out the door) will be locked in my desk and/or filing cabinet in my classroom when classes are not in session, or I may take these items to my home to complete assessment. Any digital writing will be protected through privacy settings, and all digital writing will be done using their school-assigned email accounts that are provided to students as well as sites linked to their school-assigned email accounts. The students are only set up with school email accounts after the school has obtained consent from their parents and guardians. This consent was obtained along the guidelines of FOIP (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy) at the beginning of the year. Their Gmail is protected through the Google servers and their antivirus and their security software. The students however, are responsible for their own antivirus on personally owned devices and they were made aware of this at the beginning of the year. Every personally owned device that the students bring to the school should have antivirus protection on it. If a student is unable to bring in their own device, or their own device with antivirus protection, we have a lending laptop system that is free of charge through the Learning Commons in our school that the students may access.

As an example of a site linked to their personal email that we will use, they will be setting up personal Blogger blogs that are accessible through their school email accounts and I will ensure that students will adjust the settings so that these blogs are on private viewing settings. Students will have to email invite readers, including myself, as well as any other friends and family members they wish to share their writing with. For their threaded discussion groups, this will be done through their school Gmail accounts, using Google Groups, and I will set up all of these chat groups and set the privacy settings accordingly. These writing activities are already part of our class curriculum, regardless of this research and other educators in this school have run writing projects such as these two examples several times in the past. All digital writing that I will be accessing for assessment and data collection is password protected through my school email and my computer is password protected.

27b. location of storing data (include location of data-storage servers if using web-based technology):

All data, like any of their regular class assignment activities, will be stored in their school appointed email accounts and sites and resources accessible through their school email accounts. All students at this school have Gmail accounts. Students are not allowed to use other email accounts for their classroom writing requirements, and if they are having trouble accessing their assigned email account, we have an on-site computer technician who can help support that student to troubleshoot and use the proper technological platforms.

27c. duration of data storage (if data will be kept indefinitely, explain why this is necessary and state whether the data will contain identifiers or links to identifiers):

The data will be stored in a few different ways. All paper data such as handwritten written responses will be shredded once I have completed writing and defending my Thesis. Similarly, digital data such as written responses shared with me using Google Documents through school appointed email accounts will be deleted from my email files once I have completed writing my Thesis. I will also close all threaded discussion groups in the form of Google Groups when I have finished with it for my research purposes. Their blogs that they will set up for our novel study are in their control, and in the past when I have run blogging projects, some students have chosen to keep their blogs and continue writing. It is their choice if they continue with their blogs and I cannot delete them. For final essay exams, the writing will be submitted to the school office as Appeal Data and may be reviewed at a future date by administration. The appeal data is locked in the school office.

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27d. methods of destroying or archiving data. If archiving data, please describe measures to secure or protect the data. If the archiving will involve a third party (e.g., library, community agency, Aboriginal band, etc.) please provide details:

The office staff and administration will complete the archiving of final written essay exams. These exams are kept as Appeal Data and are locked in the school office.

28. Dissemination

How do you anticipate disseminating the research results? (Check all that apply)

- Thesis/Dissertation/Class presentation
- Presentations at scholarly meetings
- Published article, chapter or book
- Internet (Students: Most UVic Theses are posted on “UVicSpace” and can be accessed by the public)
- Media (e.g., newspaper, radio, TV)
- Directly to participants and/or groups involved. Indicate how: (e.g., report, executive summary, newsletter, information session):

I plan to inform interested parents and administrators with a summary of my findings, which I will email to anyone who wishes to read it.

- Other, explain:

5. Conflict of Interest

29a. Apart from a declared dual-role relationship (Section K, item 7), are you or any of the research team members in a perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest regarding this research project (e.g., partners in research, private interests in companies or other entities)?

- Yes
- No

29b. If yes, please provide details of the conflict and how you propose to manage it:

N/A
Attachments*

*Ensure that all applicable attachments are included with all copies of your application. Incomplete applications will not be entered into the review system. You will be notified in this case.

Information for Submission
- Applications may be printed and submitted double-sided
- Do not staple the original application with original signatures (clips O.K.)
- The two photocopies may be individually stapled or clipped
- Do not staple or clip the individual appendices

Title and label attachments as Appendix 1, 2, 3 etc. and attach the following documents (check those that are appended):

Section I - Recruitment Materials:
- Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc.
- Invitation to participate
- Advertisement, Poster, Flyer

Section J - Data Collection Methods:
- Standardized Instrument(s)
- Survey(s), Questionnaire(s)
- Interview and/or Focus Group Questions
- Observation Protocols
- Other:

Section M - Free and Informed Consent:
- Consent Form(s) – Include forms for all participant groups and data gathering methods
- Assent Form(s)
- Letter(s) of Information for Implied Consent
- Verbal Consent Script

- Approval from external organizations (or proof of having made a request for permission)
- Permission to gain access to confidential documents or materials
- Request to Use Deception form
- Biosafety Committee Approval
- Other, please describe:

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Appendix 1: Third Party Script (Email)

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is [redacted] and I am the English Learning Leader at [redacted] High School. I am writing to you about a research project that your student’s English teacher, Amber Moore, is completing as a part of her Masters of Arts in Education with the University of Victoria. She is conducting her research in your student’s English class and she is hopeful that your student and you will both consent to your student’s participation. YOUR STUDENT’S PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.

I have spoken with your student’s English class today at the request of Amber Moore and explained her research to them. I encourage you to speak with your student about this project and to complete the consent form(s) that I sent home with your student today. I have attached this consent form, which details the project, to this email just in case the form did not make it home today.

THE ATTACHED FORM IS AN EXTRA COPY OF THE PAPER COPY THAT YOUR STUDENT WILL BE BRINGING HOME FOR YOU TODAY. PLEASE REVIEW THESE FORMS CAREFULLY, AS THEY DETAIL:

- STEPS THAT AMBER MOORE HAS TAKEN TO MITIGATE POTENTIAL POWER-OVER RELATIONSHIP CONCERNS; AS SHE IS THEIR CLASSROOM TEACHER, SHE DOES NOT WANT STUDENTS TO FEEL PRESSURED TO PARTICIPATE WHICH IS WHY I, [redacted], AM ACTING AS HER THIRD PARTY RECRUITER.

- THAT [redacted] HIGH SCHOOL IS NOT INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY

- THAT THERE WILL BE NO NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS IF STUDENTS CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE. PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.

- THAT MS. MOORE WILL NOT KNOW WHOM THE PARTICIPANTS ARE UNTIL AFTER THE FINAL GRADES FOR ENGLISH [redacted] ARE SUBMITTED. AS HER THIRD PARTY RECRUITER, I WILL BE ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS, SPEAKING TO MS. MOORE’S STUDENTS, COLLECTING CONSENT FORMS, AND OBTAINING ONGOING CONSENT FOR THIS PROJECT.

AGAIN, please feel free to contact me with questions about Ms. Moore’s research as I am acting as her third party recruiter for this project. I can be reached at this email or by phone at [redacted].

Thank you very much for your time, and I hope that you have a lovely evening.
Best care,

[Name Redacted]
Appendix 2: Third Party Script (In person with potential student participants)

Good Morning.

My name is [redacted] and I am the English Learning Leader here at [redacted] High School. I am here today because I am helping Ms. Moore with a research project that she is conducting in your class, and I want to explain what she is trying to do and answer any questions that you may have.

Ms. Moore is completing her Masters of Education at the University of Victoria, and this Thesis Project is required for her to graduate. The reason why I am doing it and not her is because we want to protect you and make sure that it is completely up to you and your families if you decide to be involved. Ms. Moore doesn’t want to influence your decision, so you’ll be letting me know if you want to participate.

What Ms. Moore is interested in is how you respond to trauma literature, especially how you respond through your writing. Trauma stories are stories about profound loss, like what you just read, The Fault in Our Stars, or when a story depicts intense fear on the part of an individual or a group, like the book you are about to read, Speak. Speak is a novel about a character named Melinda who is raped at a party and how the following year of her life plays out. It is a book that Ms. Moore has taught before and she feels that books like this are important for study, and she wants to share this literature with you. HOWEVER, I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THIS BOOK IS ALREADY A PART OF THE REGULAR CURRICULUM FOR YOUR CLASS, AND YOU WOULD BE STUDYING THIS BOOK EVEN IF MS. MOORE WAS NOT USING THIS BOOK FOR HER THESIS PROJECT. What she will be studying for her research project is how you respond to this novel, and she will be carefully thinking about what you share in class, in your written work, and class projects. She wants to write about her findings for her Masters Thesis project, which will be published, but don’t worry because she is going to use pseudonyms, or fake names, instead of your real ones.

THERE ARE TWO PARTS TO HER RESEARCH THAT YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSENT TO IF YOU CHOOSE.

THE FIRST PART SIMPLY INVOLVES ALLOWING MS. MOORE TO STUDY AND WRITE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSES TO THE LITERATURE THAT YOU WILL ALREADY BE DOING FOR YOUR CLASS REQUIREMENTS. You will be completing this novel study and the work involved regardless of whether or not you decide to participate in her project BECAUSE AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, THIS BOOK IS ALREADY A PART OF OUR REGULAR CURRICULUM. There is no ‘extra work’ required at all of you if you decide to participate, and your class will continue as it usually does.

HOWEVER, FOR THE SECOND PART OF HER RESEARCH, YOU WILL BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE BOOK DURING THE EXAM BREAK IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE
TEXT IN A SMALLER GROUP. THIS FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WILL NOT BE FOR MARKS, AND IT WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THIS COURSE CONCLUDES. THIS FOCUS GROUP OPPORTUNITY IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE EXTRA INSIGHT FOR MS. MOORE’S STUDY, BUT IF YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN THIS PORTION OF HER STUDY AS IT REQUIRES YOUR FREE TIME, YOU CAN STILL CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIRST PART OF THE PROJECT WITHOUT ATTENDING THE FOCUS GROUP AT THE END OF THE YEAR. I WANT TO BE CLEAR THAT THIS INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP, AS WELL AS THE REST OF THE STUDY WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE DURING REGULAR CLASSROOM TIME, IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. I WILL SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT THIS FOCUS GROUP OPPORTUNITY ON A DIFFERENT DAY.

If you decide not to participate IN ONE OR BOTH PARTS OF THIS STUDY, Ms. Moore will simply assess your work like always in her teacher role, and she will not know if you agreed to participate or not until after she has handed in your report card marks at the end of the year. If you do decide to participate, she will of course, assess your work in her teacher role, and if you have decided to participate, she will also write about what she discovers in your writing and classroom responses in her research report. She will only know if you have decided to be a part of her project after the final report card marks are in.

Does anyone have any questions so far?

The next step is consent forms. I have two THREE sets of forms for you. The first one is a consent form for you TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIRST PART OF MS. MOORE’S RESEARCH PROJECT WHERE SHE IS ESSENTIALLY STUDYING YOUR HOMEWORK AND HOW YOU RESPOND TO THE BOOK IN CLASS. Let’s read it together and you can take a few minutes to decide if you want to participate. Please fill in the form and sign it whether you check “Yes” or “No.” IF YOU WISH TO TAKE MORE TIME TO DECIDE, OR TO WAIT AND SPEAK WITH YOUR FAMILIES ABOUT THIS, YOU ARE FREE TO DO SO AND YOU CAN RETURN THE CONSENT FORM TO ME TOMORROW.

THE SECOND CONSENT FORM IS FOR YOU IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN MS. MOORE’S FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ON THE NOVEL. THIS FOCUS GROUP WILL TAKE PLACE DURING THE EXAM BREAK. DURING THIS FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION, MS. MOORE WILL BE ASKING FOR YOUR FEEDBACK ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOOK AND YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH IT. LET’S READ IT TOGETHER AND YOU CAN TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE. PLEASE FILL IN THE FORM AND SIGN IT WHETHER YOU CHECK “YES” OR “NO.” IF YOU WISH TO TAKE MORE TIME TO DECIDE, OR TO WAIT AND SPEAK WITH YOUR FAMILIES ABOUT THIS, YOU ARE FREE TO DO SO AND YOU CAN RETURN THE CONSENT FORM TO ME TOMORROW.
The next consent forms ARE BUNDLED IN A PACKET is for you to take home to your parents and guardians to sign and return to me. I will also be sending home this information through email. THIS PACKET OF CONSENT FORMS CONTAINS TWO CONSENT FORMS FOR THE TWO DIFFERENT PARTS OF MS. MOORE'S PROJECT. To bring back the forms, please drop them off either in the front office for me to pick up, or you can bring them to me in my classroom, room 2002. Ms. Moore cannot accept these forms back because she can't know who is participating and who has decided not to participate. If you try to hand your form in to Ms. Moore, she will direct you to the office to hand it in. Please bring these forms back as soon as you can.

Does anyone have any final questions?

Thank you for your time—Ms. Moore really appreciates it. Have a great morning.
Appendix 2B: Third Party Script – Ongoing Consent (In person with potential student participants)

Good Morning.

I am here this morning to remind you of the project that Ms. Moore is conducting in your class, and I want to remind you of what she is trying to do and answer any questions that you may have.

Ms. Moore is completing her Masters of Education at the University of Victoria, and this Thesis Project is required for her to graduate. What Ms. Moore is interested in is how you respond to trauma literature, especially how you respond through your writing. The reason why I am doing it and not her is because we want to protect you and remind you that it is completely up to you and your families if you decide to be involved. Ms. Moore doesn’t want to influence your decision, so that is why I have instructed you to let me know if you want to participate.

Some of you may have already returned your consent forms, and the consent forms for your parents, to me. If you have not already done so, please return these forms to me at your earliest convenience. I will be accepting these forms up until June 25th. I also want to remind you that if you have provided consent, you can change your mind at any time. This is called ‘ongoing consent.’ It is understandable that at some point during this novel study, you may change your mind about whether or not you want to participate in one or both portions of her research— the classroom research component and the focus group component. I am here to assure you that you are welcome to change your mind, and to encourage you to please come and talk to me if you have. For example, if you and/or your parents or guardians originally said “Yes” on all the consent forms but then you said something or wrote something in class that you are worried about ending up in Ms. Moore’s research write-up, then you can retract your consent. All you have to do is let me know that you have changed your mind and I will update my information. You have until June 25th to change your mind if you wish and let me know. Remember that my email is revamaker@gmail.com and my classroom is room 2002.

Remember, participation in this project is completely voluntary and participating or not participating will not impact your grade in this class in any way. Ms. Moore will not know who is participating until after she submits her final marks in June; this is why I am here collecting your responses and answering questions and not her.

Does anyone have any questions?

Thank you very much for your time.
Appendix 2: Third Party Script – Email to parents for ongoing consent.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is [Name] and I am the English Learning Leader at [School Name]. I am writing to you today to remind you about a research project that your student’s English teacher, Amber Moore, is completing as a part of her Masters of Arts in Education with the University of Victoria. She is conducting her research in your student’s English class and I am checking in today for ongoing consent.

Some of you may have already sent in your consent forms with your student to be returned to me for this project. If you have not already done so, please return these forms to me at your earliest convenience. I will be accepting these forms up until June 25th. I also want to remind you that if you and/or your student have provided consent, you and/or your students can change your minds at any time. This is called ‘ongoing consent.’ It is understandable that you may change your mind about whether or not you want your student to participate in one or both portions of her research - the classroom research component and the focus group component. I want to assure you that you are welcome to change your mind, and to encourage you to please contact me if you have. All you have to do is let me know that you have changed your mind and I will update my information. You have until June 25th to change your mind if you wish and let me know. You can reply to this email or call me at the school at [Contact Information].

Remember, student participation in this project is completely voluntary and participating or not participating will not impact your student’s grade in this class in any way. Ms. Moore will not know who is participating until after she submits her final marks in June; this is why I am collecting responses and answering questions about the project and not her.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

Thank you very much for your time.

Best care,
Appendix 3B: Focus Group Ground Rules:

REVISED
APR 27 2015

Good afternoon.

Thank you for being here today; I really appreciate you taking time out of your day to further discuss Speak and its themes in this focus group. Before we begin, I would like to go over a few ground rules for this focus group.

Ground Rules:

1. We will respect one another during this session. We will stop this focus group session if this does not happen.
2. We will not discuss our conversation in this focus groups with students who did not participate. I want this to be a safe space where we can share our responses without worrying that others in the group will leave and share what was discussed afterwards.
3. You do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable speaking to. You can simply say “pass” or not just in the conversation.
4. You are free to leave at any time without explanation.
5. If you feel like you need to speak with an expert or speak privately with someone about what you are thinking or feeling, our guidance and administration team is on ‘stand-by.’ I can alert them and you can speak with them right away.

At this time, I would like to invite any of you to suggest any further ground rules to help you feel safe. Does anyone have anything that they would like to add?

Please interrupt discussion at any time to suggest a rule if you think of one.
Appendix 4: Parent & Guardian Consent Form for Classroom Research

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Your child is being invited to participate in a study entitled “Trauma Literature in the English Classroom” that is being conducted by Amber Moore, your student’s English teacher.

I, Amber Moore AM a graduate student in the Curriculum and Instruction Department with the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student with this program, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Education. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Begoray. You may contact her at dbegoray@uvic.ca and/or (250) 721-7847. Alternatively, you may discuss my project with the English Learning Leader at [redacted] High School who is acting as my third party recruiter with this project at [redacted] and/or at (250) [redacted]. YOU MAY ALSO VERIFY THE ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THIS STUDY, OR RAISE ANY CONCERNS YOU MIGHT HAVE, BY CONTACTING THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA (205-472-4545 OR ETHICS@UVIC.CA).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to explore the ways in which grade ten students respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives. We will be reading the novel Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson (1999), as well as a selection of other complementary texts and films. This is a text that myself and other English teachers have taught at this school before and is part of our curriculum. My aim is also to discover the potential of the role of writing, especially digital writing, as a critical tool when incorporating trauma literature in the classroom. During this unit, students will engage in a series of diverse writing exercises, including a mixture of traditional and digital writing, personal response, creative, and literary exploration with many opportunities for student choice.

Research of this type is important because I believe that this research may advance scholarship in a few important ways. Firstly, this project will contribute to existing research on integrating trauma literature in the classroom, and demonstrate the benefits for educators to take risks to choose texts that will build more dynamic learning spaces where learners engage more meaningfully. In many past studies, scholars stress the necessity for more research on how to purposefully engage learners in critical textual analyses on sensitive, difficult topics such as sexual assault and other trauma narratives. Further, I believe that this project may also demonstrate that digital writing can function as an especially critical and potentially healing tool. For instance, students may exercise self-care through their written responses to Speak, as some learners may relate to painful textual moments, and consequently explore these responses in their writing.

What is Involved?
As part of our regular classroom curriculum, your child will be receiving instruction on the novel *Speak* as well as other complementary texts. This novel study will begin in May and end in early June. If you agree to your child's participation, this means that you and your child are giving me permission to analyze samples of his/her classroom work as part of my research project, AS WELL AS USE OBSERVATIONAL DATA FROM CLASS SMALL GROUP AND WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSIONS SUCH AS NOTES ON HOW STUDENTS RESPONDED ORALLY TO THE LITERATURE AND COMPLEMENTARY TEXTS.

Your permission for your child's work to be used in this research must be voluntary and I want to assure you that there are no consequences that arise from giving or withholding your permission. The instruction in the classroom will be provided to all children regardless of whether or not the results of that instruction are used for my research. At the end of the year, during the exam break, I will ALSO invite students to participate in a focus group discussion for about an hour or so to further discuss the novel, but this will be completely voluntary and will not impact their grade in the class. THERE IS A SEPARATE CONSENT FORM FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN THIS FOCUS GROUP, AND YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO CONSENT TO ONE OR BOTH. THIS SEPARATE CONSENT FORM IS ATTACHED IN THIS PACKET.

In order to avoid any pressure you might feel because I am your child’s teacher, I have asked that all returned consent forms be sent to [redacted], our English Department Learning Leader, and not to me. Students may hand in their forms to the office to be forwarded to [redacted] or to [redacted] in person. [redacted] as well as any office staff will not reveal the names to me until after the final report cards have been completed this year. I have also informed the principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact my research supervisor, Dr. Begoray (403-948-3800, dbegoray@uvic.ca), the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545, ethics@uvic.ca), or our principal, [redacted] [redacted] to have your concerns addressed.

Further, I will remind you at the end of term of my intentions to use your child’s work for my research. If you decide to withdraw your consent you are free to do so at any time by notifying [redacted] [redacted]. If permission is not given or is withdrawn, no examples or notes regarding your child will be used in the written report.

**Risks**

There are some potential emotional and stress risks to your child, however, these risks exist whether your child participates in the research or not. In English Language Arts, texts from the curriculum often explore issues that may be considered intense subject matter, especially if the student relates to any events that take place in the literature. *Speak* is a novel about a grade nine girl who has been raped and the story follows the year
of her life following this event. As a result, this book explores many difficult issues including bullying, depression, peer pressure, and sexual assault. If your child has experienced any of these issues, this literature may be potentially triggering for them. However, if harm occurs and your child discloses this to me, I plan to work with the student through their disclosure and then turn to my guidance and administration team to put an individual care plan in place for that student. For disclosures, the general protocol for supporting students in that moment is to exercise strategies as outlined in the Mental Health First Aid course that I completed in January. I will also be drawing on my previous experience as a certified sexual assault hotline counselor to help any student in distress in that moment.

PLEASE BE REMINDED THAT THIS NOVEL IS A PART OF THE REGULAR GRADE 10 CURRICULUM AND SO STUDENTS WILL BE STUDYING THIS NOVEL FOR THIS CLASS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE. RESEARCH PARTICIPATION INCLUDES ANALYZING SOME OF THEIR CLASSROOM WORK AND RESPONSES TO THE LITERATURE FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. IF YOU AND/OR YOUR STUDENT CHOOSE TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY, THEIR WORK WILL BE READ FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY.

Voluntary Participation

Your child’s participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you or they decide to participate, you or your child may withdraw at any time without any consequences or explanation. If you or your child withdraws from this study, their data will not be used for research purposes, however, their writing will still be used for assessment purposes as a part of their English grade.

Researchers Relationship with Participants

I do have a teacher-student relationship with your child. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, I have taken steps to prevent coercion. As previously mentioned, our English Department Learning Leader, will be collecting all permission forms and answering questions of parents, guardians, and students. He will not inform me of who is and who is not participating in the study until after final grades are submitted in June. This means that your child’s grade will not be influenced whatsoever by their participation or withdrawal from the study. I have also informed the principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact Dr. Deborah Begoray at the University of Victoria (403-948-3800, DBEGORAY@UVIC.CA), or the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria to have your concerns addressed (205-472-4545 OR ETHICS@UVIC.CA).

Further, I will remind you at the end of the semester of my intentions to use your child’s work for my research. If you decide to withdraw your consent you are free to do so at any
time by notifying If permission is not given or withdrawn, no examples or notes regarding your child will be used in the written report.

Ongoing Consent

To confirm that you and your child continue to consent to participate in this research, I will ask that obtain ongoing consent from you and your child. At the end of the school year and before the data collected and used for my research purposes, will remind you and your child that you have agreed to allow writing samples and information to be included in the research. FURTHER, HE WILL REMIND YOU THAT YOU HAVE THE OPTION TO WITHDRAW YOUR CONSENT IN ONE OR BOTH PORTIONS OF HER RESEARCH: THE CLASSROOM RESEARCH COMPONENT AND THE FOCUS GROUP COMPONENT. IF YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND. This reminder will be conducted through an email reminder. He will also meet again with my classes to remind them of the research project, and remind them that they can withdraw their consent if they wish.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

In terms of protecting your child’s anonymity, I will use a pseudonym.

FURTHER, IN MY ROLE AS A TEACHER, IT IS MY LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT IF I FIND ANYTHING THAT THEY REVEAL AS CONCERNING FOR THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY OR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS. IF I DO FIND SOMETHING CONCERNING, THEN I AM OBLIGATED TO REPORT MY CONCERNS TO THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE TEAM, ADMINISTRATION TEAM, AND POTENTIALLY THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS. IF GUIDANCE, ADMINISTRATION, AND/OR THEIR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ALSO FIND THEIR RESPONSES CONCERNING, THEY MAY CONTACT OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERTS TO HELP SUPPORT THAT STUDENT AND SECURE THEIR SAFETY.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways; published thesis, thesis presentation, presentation at a scholarly meeting, professional learning presentation, and in a published article.

I WILL ALSO EXTEND AN OFFER FOR YOU TO READ A SUMMARY OF MY FINDINGS, IF YOU ARE INTERESTED. I WILL EMAIL THE PARTICIPATING STUDENTS AS WELL AS THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF ALL PARTICIPANTS AFTER MY THESIS IS SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDING AND ASK IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN READING THIS SUMMARY. THIS WILL LIKELY BE IN THE SPRING OF 2016.
Disposal of Data

Any paper data from this study will be shredded aside from the final essay exam, which will be stored at [REDACTED] with the Appeal Data in the front office. Digital data is largely in control of the students, so it will be their choice as to whether or not they dispose of their online written work. For instance, they will be creating personal blogs, and they will be in control of its creation and if they wish to take it down.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include [REDACTED] and Dr. Deborah Begoray.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (205-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Please fill in this consent form and have your student return it to [REDACTED]. Check one of the following options:

☐ YES, I agree to allow my student to participate.

☐ NO, I do not want my student to participate.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Thank you very much for your time.

Best care,

Ms. Moore
Appendix 4B: Parent & Guardian Consent Form for Focus Group Research

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As detailed in the first consent form for consent for participation in Ms. Moore’s classroom research, your child is additionally being invited to participate in a focus group for the study entitled, “Trauma Literature in the English Classroom” that is being conducted by Amber Moore, your student’s English teacher. This focus group, like participation in the classroom research portion of the project, is completely voluntary. The focus group is not a requirement of the English 10-1 course whatsoever.

The focus group portion of the research project is also being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Begoray. You may contact her at dbegoray@uvic.ca and/or (250) 721-7847. Alternatively, you may discuss my project with [Redacted], the English Learning Leader at [Redacted] who is acting as my third party recruiter with this project at [Redacted] and/or at [Redacted].

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the focus group session, which will be about one hour in length during the exam period with students who choose to participate, are the same as detailed in the classroom research consent form. An additional specific purpose and objective for this focus group is to have a deep and final discussion about the literature with interested students. I have prepared a list of questions to explore with participating students that I will attach to this consent form for your perusal.

What is Involved?

At the end of the year, during the exam break, I will invite students to participate in a focus group discussion for about an hour or so to further discuss the novel, but this will be completely voluntary and will not impact their grade in the class. Students are not required to stay for the entire hour if they do not want to. They are free to leave the focus group at any time.

Because this focus group will run during the exam break and this period can sometimes be considered stressful, tiring period for students, especially those learners who struggle with test anxiety, I want to stress that this is completely voluntary. I do not know the exact date because I want feedback from the students on preferable dates that work with their schedules.

In order to avoid any pressure you might feel because I am your child’s teacher, I would like to reiterate that I have asked that all returned consent forms be sent to [Redacted], our English Department Learning Leader, and not to me. Students may hand in their forms to the office to be forwarded to [Redacted] or to [Redacted] in person. [Redacted] as well as any office staff will not reveal the names to me until after the final report cards have been completed this year. I have also informed the principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of
participating or not, you are free to contact my research supervisor, Dr. Begoray (403-948-3800, dbegoray@uvic.ca), the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545, ethics@uvic.ca), or our principal, ( ) to have your concerns addressed.

Further, I will remind you at the end of term of my intentions to use your child’s work for my research. If you decide to withdraw your consent you are free to do so at any time by notifying ( ). If permission is not given or is withdrawn, no examples or notes regarding your child will be used in the written report.

Risks

There are some potential emotional and stress risks to your child for this focus group as detailed in the consent form for the classroom research portion of the project. As such, I have risk mitigation strategies for this focus group specifically. I firstly will begin by alerting my guidance and administrative team of the date and time of this session once it is determined so that they are aware that their expertise may be needed on that day, and/or the days to follow if a student is triggered by our discussion or discloses personal traumatic experiences that require expert support. This is a procedure that I follow in my usual classroom practice if a student is in crisis or needs to speak privately with an expert while class is in session.

Next, I will begin the discussion with an overview of ground rules with the students, including respecting one another during discussion, not sharing our discussion with other students outside of the focus group, that they do not have to answer any question that they do not feel comfortable speaking to, and that they can leave at any time. I also plan to invite the students to suggest any further ground rules that will help them to feel safe.

Voluntary Participation

Your child’s participation in this focus group must be completely voluntary. If you or they decide to participate, you or your child may withdraw at any time without any consequences or explanation. If you or your child withdraws from this study their data will not be used for research purposes. Further, if your student consents and shows up to the focus group, they can choose to leave at any time. They do not have to stay for the entire hour or so that our conversation will last for.

Researchers Relationship with Participants

I do have a teacher-student relationship with your child. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, I have taken steps to prevent coercion. As previously mentioned, ( ), our English Department Learning Leader, will be collecting all permission forms and answering questions of parents, guardians, and students. He will not inform me of who is and who is not participating in the study until after final grades are submitted in June. This means that your child’s grade will not be
influenced whatsoever by their participation or withdrawal from the study. The focus group will take place after the final grades have been submitted and their participation or choice to not participate will not influence their grades in English whatsoever. I have also informed the principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact [redacted], Dr. Deborah Begoray at the University of Victoria (403-948-3800), or the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria to have your concerns addressed.

Further, I will remind you at the end of the semester of my intentions to use your child’s work for my research. If you decide to withdraw your consent you are free to do so at any time by notifying [redacted]. If permission is not given or withdrawn, no examples or notes regarding your child will be used in the written report.

**Ongoing Consent**

To confirm that you and your child continue to consent to participate in this research, I will ask that obtain ongoing consent from you and your child. At the end of the school year and before the data collected and used for my research purposes, will remind you and your child that you have agreed to allow writing samples and information to be included in the research. Further, he will remind you that you have the option to withdraw your consent if you have changed your mind. This reminder will be conducted through an email reminder. He will also meet again with my classes to remind them of the research project, and remind them that they can withdraw their consent if they wish.

**Anonymity & Confidentiality**

In terms of protecting your child’s anonymity, I will use a pseudonym. However, whatever they share during the focus group discussion will be shared with not only myself, but also other participating students. In an effort to maintain confidentiality, I will, as described above, begin the discussion with an overview of ground rules with the students, including respecting one another during discussion, not sharing our discussion with other students outside of the focus group, that they do not have to answer any question that they do not feel comfortable speaking to, and that they can leave at any time. I also plan to invite the students to suggest any further ground rules that will help them to feel safe. These ground rules are attached.

Further, in my role as a teacher, it is my legal responsibility to report if I find anything that they reveal as concerning for their personal safety or the safety of others. If I do find something concerning, then I am obligated to report my concerns to the school guidance team, administration team, and potentially their parents and guardians. If guidance, administration, and/or their parents and guardians also find their responses concerning, they may contact other professional experts to help support that student and secure their safety.
Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: published thesis, thesis presentation, presentation at a scholarly meeting, professional learning presentation, and in a published article.

Disposal of Data

Any paper data and audio data from the focus group will be destroyed after I complete my final write-up for my thesis and successfully defended it. I plan to shred the physical evidence, which would be my field notes taken during and after the focus group session.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include [redacted] and Dr. Deborah Begoray.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (205-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Please fill in this consent form and have your student return it to [redacted]. Check one of the following options:

☐ YES, I agree to allow my student to participate.

☐ NO, I do not want my student to participate.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

_____________________________ _______________________________ __________
Name                  Signature                  Date

Thank you very much for your time.

Best care,

Ms. Moore
Ground Rules for Focus Groups:

1. We will respect one another during this session. We will stop this focus group session if this does not happen.
2. We will not discuss our conversation in this focus groups with students who did not participate. I want this to be a safe space where we can share our responses without worrying that others in the group will leave and share what was discussed afterwards.
3. You do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable speaking to. You can simply say “pass” or not just in the conversation.
4. You are free to leave at any time without explanation.
5. If you feel like you need to speak with an expert or speak privately with someone about what you are thinking or feeling, our guidance and administration team is on ‘stand-by.’ I can alert them and you can speak with them right away.

I would like to invite any of you to suggest any further ground rules to help you feel safe. Does anyone have anything that they would like to add?

Please interrupt discussion at any time to suggest a rule if you think of one.
Focus Group Questions

1. What has stood out to you the most about the activities we’ve done during the Speak unit?

2. Was this story meaningful to you? Why or why not?

3. Which moment in this book was the most significant for you? Why?

4. Is this a story that you think high school students should study? If so, why? What do we learn?

5. Some teachers might be hesitant to teach this book because it deals with some complicated issues. What would you say to a teacher who feels this way? Do you have any advice?

6. If you could speak with Melinda, what would you say?

7. In the book, Melinda turns to art as a creative outlet. How do you feel about writing as a creative outlet? Do you enjoy writing? Do any of you keep a journal, or a digital writing platform such as a blog or a social media account where you write about what you’re thinking and feeling?

8. How do you feel about writing digitally, such as the blogging and threaded discussion groups (TDGs) that we engaged in?

9. Do you have a preference between writing individually and writing collaboratively, such as blogging versus TDGs? Why?

10. Were you surprised by anything that you wrote in response to this novel? Did you learn something about yourself while responding to Melinda’s story?

11. At one point in the novel, Melinda reveals that she wishes that her science teacher would teach them about love and betrayal instead of the ‘birds and the bees.’ Do you agree? Should schools spend more time teaching youth about healthy relationships and consent?

12. How does Melinda finally find her voice? Who helps her the most? How does she help herself? What do you do when you feel voiceless?
13. Melinda stays silent throughout the majority of the novel in large part because she is afraid. In your opinion, what issues do teenagers stay silent about, and do you feel that reading books about these issues could help make school more meaningful?
Appendix 5: Student Consent Form

Dear Student,

You are invited to participate in my study entitled, "Trauma Literature in the English Classroom." In addition to being your teacher, I am also a graduate student at the University of Victoria and I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Education.

The reason why I am doing this project is to explore how grade ten students respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives. We will be reading the novel Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson (1999), as well as a selection of other complementary texts and films. I am interested in how you respond to this book, especially in your written responses, and I'd like to write about your writing! We will be reading this book as part of our regular classroom curriculum anyway, but if you agree to participate, it means that you are giving me permission to analyze your work as part of my research project. I will use a pseudonym (fake name) when I write about you in class and/or your writing assignments. I may invite you to talk more about the book during the exam break if you are interested, but you are certainly not required to. There will be absolutely no "extra work" for you.

Your permission must be voluntary and I want to assure you that there are no consequences that arise from giving or withholding your permission. You can also change your mind before the last day of class. Your grade will not be influenced whatsoever by your participation or decision to not participate. In order to avoid any pressure that you might feel because I am your teacher, I have asked that all of your consent forms be handed in to [Name] and not to me. I also want you to please ask your questions, if you have any. You can do this in person (room 202) or by email at [Email Address].

AS A GRADUATE STUDENT WITH THIS PROGRAM, I AM REQUIRED TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTERS OF ARTS IN EDUCATION. IT IS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF DR. DEBORAH BEGORAY. YOU MAY CONTACT HER AT DBEGORAY@UVIC.CA AND/OR (250) 721-7847. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU MAY DISCUSS MY PROJECT WITH [Name], THE ENGLISH LEARNING LEADER AT [Name] HIGH SCHOOL WHO IS ACTING AS MY THIRD PARTY RECOURISITY WITH THIS PROJECT AT [Name] AND/OR AT [Name]. YOU MAY ALSO VERIFY THE ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THIS STUDY, OR RAISE ANY CONCERNS YOU MIGHT HAVE, BY CONTACTING THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA (205-472-4545 OR ETHICS@UVIC.CA).

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT IS TO EXPLORE THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU RESPOND TO TRAUMA LITERATURE, PARTICULARLY SEXUAL ASSAULT NARRATIVES. WE WILL BE READING THE NOVEL SPEAK BY LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON (1999), AS WELL AS A SELECTION OF OTHER COMPLEMENTARY TEXTS AND FILMS. THIS IS A TEXT THAT MYSELF AND
OTHER ENGLISH TEACHERS HAVE TAUGHT AT THIS SCHOOL BEFORE AND IS PART OF OUR CURRICULUM. MY AIM IS ALSO TO DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL OF THE ROLE OF WRITING, ESPECIALLY DIGITAL WRITING, AS A CRITICAL TOOL WHEN INCORPORATING TRAUMA LITERATURE IN THE CLASSROOM. DURING THIS UNIT, YOU WILL ENGAGE IN A SERIES OF DIVERSE WRITING EXERCISES, INCLUDING A MIXTURE OF TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL WRITING, PERSONAL RESPONSE, CREATIVE, AND LITERARY EXPLORATION WITH MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE.

RESEARCH OF THIS TYPE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THIS RESEARCH MAY ADVANCE SCHOLARSHIP IN A FEW IMPORTANT WAYS. FIRSTLY, THIS PROJECT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO EXISTING RESEARCH ON INTEGRATING TRAUMA LITERATURE IN THE CLASSROOM, AND DEMONSTRATE THE BENEFITS FOR EDUCATORS TO TAKE RISKS TO CHOOSE TEXTS THAT WILL BUILD MORE DYNAMIC LEARNING SPACES WHERE LEARNERS ENGAGE MORE MEANINGFULLY.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

AS PART OF OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM CURRICULUM, YOU WILL BE RECEIVING INSTRUCTION ON THE NOVEL SPEAK AS WELL AS OTHER COMPLEMENTARY TEXTS. THIS NOVEL STUDY WILL BEGIN IN MAY AND END IN EARLY JUNE. IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE, THIS MEANS THAT YOU ARE GIVING ME PERMISSION TO ANALYZE SAMPLES OF YOUR CLASSROOM WORK AS PART OF MY RESEARCH PROJECT, AS WELL AS USE OBSERVATIONAL DATA FROM CLASS SMALL GROUP AND WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSIONS SUCH AS NOTES ON HOW YOU RESPONDED ORALLY TO THE LITERATURE AND COMPLEMENTARY TEXTS.

YOUR PERMISSION IN THIS RESEARCH MUST BE VOLUNTARY AND I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT THERE ARE NO CONSEQUENCES THAT ARISE FROM GIVING OR WITHHOLDING YOUR PERMISSION. THE INSTRUCTION IN THE CLASSROOM WILL BE PROVIDED TO ALL CHILDREN REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THE RESULTS OF THAT INSTRUCTION ARE USED FOR MY RESEARCH.

AT THE END OF THE YEAR, DURING THE EXAM BREAK, I WILL ALSO INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR ABOUT AN HOUR OR SO TO FURTHER DISCUSS THE NOVEL, BUT THIS WILL BE COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY AND WILL NOT IMPACT YOUR GRADE IN THE CLASS. THERE IS A SEPARATE CONSENT FORM FOR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN THIS FOCUS GROUP, AND YOU ARE ALLOWED TO CONSENT TO ONE OR BOTH. THIS SEPARATE CONSENT FORM IS ATTACHED IN THIS PACKET.

IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY PRESSURE YOU MIGHT FEEL BECAUSE I AM YOUR TEACHER, I HAVE ASKED THAT ALL RETURNED CONSENT FORMS BE
SENT TO OUR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LEARNING LEADER, AND NOT TO ME. YOU MAY HAND IN THEIR FORMS TO THE OFFICE TO BE FORWARDED TO OR TO IN PERSON. AS WELL AS ANY OFFICE STAFF WILL NOT REVEAL THE NAMES TO ME UNLESS AFTER THE FINAL REPORT CARDS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED THIS YEAR. I HAVE ALSO INFORMED THE PRINCIPAL OF MY INTENDED RESEARCH AND SHOULD YOU FEEL THAT THERE ARE PRESSURES OR UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATING OR NOT, YOU ARE FREE TO CONTACT MY RESEARCH SUPERVISOR, DR. BEGORAY (403-948-3800, DBEGORAY@UVIC.CA), THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA (250-472-4545, ETHICS@UVIC.CA), OR OUR PRINCIPAL TO HAVE YOUR CONCERNS ADDRESSED.

FURTHER, I WILL REMIND YOU AT THE END OF TERM OF MY INTENTIONS TO USE YOUR WORK FOR MY RESEARCH. IF YOU DECIDE TO WITHDRAW YOUR CONSENT YOU ARE FREE TO DO SO AT ANY TIME BY NOTIFYING . IF PERMISSION IS NOT GIVEN OR IS WITHDRAWN, NO EXAMPLES OR NOTES REGARDING YOU WILL BE USED IN THE WRITTEN REPORT.

RISKS

THERE ARE SOME POTENTIAL EMOTIONAL AND STRESS RISKS TO YOU, HOWEVER, THESE RISKS EXIST WHETHER YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH OR NOT. IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, TEXTS FROM THE CURRICULUM OFTEN EXPLORE ISSUES THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED INTENSE SUBJECT MATTER, ESPECIALLY IF YOU RELATE TO ANY EVENTS THAT TAKE PLACE IN THE LITERATURE. SPEAK IS A NOVEL ABOUT A GRADE NINE GIRL WHO HAS BEEN RAPED AND THE STORY FOLLOWS THE YEAR OF HER LIFE FOLLOWING THIS EVENT. AS A RESULT, THIS BOOK EXPLORES MANY DIFFICULT ISSUES INCLUDING BULLYING, DEPRESSION, PEER PRESSURE, AND SEXUAL ASSAULT. IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY OF THIS ISSUES, THIS LITERATURE MAY BE POTENTIALLY TRIGGERING FOR YOU. HOWEVER, IF HARM OCCURS AND YOU DISCLOSE THIS TO ME, I PLAN TO WORK WITH YOU THROUGH YOUR DISCLOSURE AND THEN TURN TO OUR GUIDANCE AND ADMINISTRATION TEAM TO PUT AN INDIVIDUAL CARE PLAN IN PLACE FOR YOU.

PLEASE BE REMINDED THAT THIS NOVEL IS A PART OF THE REGULAR GRADE 10 CURRICULUM AND SO YOU WILL BE STUDYING THIS NOVEL FOR THIS CLASS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE. RESEARCH PARTICIPATION INCLUDES ANALYZING SOME OF YOUR CLASSROOM WORK AND RESPONSES TO THE LITERATURE FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. IF YOU CHOOSE TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY, YOUR WORK WILL BE READ FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY.
VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH MUST BE COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, YOU MAY WITHDRAW AT ANY TIME WITHOUT ANY CONSEQUENCES OR EXPLANATION. IF YOU WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY, YOUR DATA WILL NOT BE USED FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES, HOWEVER, YOUR WRITING WILL STILL BE USED FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES AS A PART OF YOUR ENGLISH 10-1 GRADE.

RESEARCHERS RELATIONSHIP WITH PARTICIPANTS

I DO HAVE A TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU. TO HELP PREVENT THIS RELATIONSHIP FROM INFLUENCING YOUR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE, I HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO PREVENT COERCION. AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, OUR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LEARNING LEADER, WILL BE COLLECTING ALL PERMISSION FORMS AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS. HE WILL NOT INFORM ME OF WHO IS AND WHO IS NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY UNTIL AFTER FINAL GRADES ARE SUBMITTED IN JUNE. THIS MEANS THAT YOUR GRADE WILL NOT BE INFLUENCED WHATSOEVER BY YOUR PARTICIPATION OR WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY. I HAVE ALSO INFORMED THE PRINCIPAL OF MY INTENDED RESEARCH AND SHOULD YOU FEEL THAT THERE ARE PRESSURES OR UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATING OR NOT, YOU ARE FREE TO CONTACT DR. DEBORAH BEGORAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA (403-948-3800, DBEGORAY@UVIC.CA), OR THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA TO HAVE YOUR CONCERNS ADDRESSED (205-472-4545 OR ETHICS@UVIC.CA).

FURTHER, I WILL REMIND YOU AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER OF MY INTENTIONS TO USE YOUR WORK FOR MY RESEARCH. IF YOU DECIDE TO WITHDRAW YOUR CONSENT YOU ARE FREE TO DO SO AT ANY TIME BY NOTIFYING ME AND ENDING YOUR PARTICIPATION (YOUR NAME AND ANY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION WILL BE REMOVED). IF PERMISSION IS NOT GIVEN OR WITHDRAWN, NO EXAMPLES OR NOTES REGARDING YOU WILL BE USED IN THE WRITTEN REPORT.

ONGOING CONSENT

TO CONFIRM THAT YOU CONTINUE TO CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH, I WILL ASK THAT YOU OBTAIN ONGOING CONSENT FROM YOU. AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AND BEFORE THE DATA COLLECTED AND USED FOR MY RESEARCH PURPOSES, WILL REMIND YOU THAT YOU HAVE AGREED TO ALLOW WRITING SAMPLES AND INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH. FURTHER, HE
WILL REMIND YOU THAT YOU HAVE THE OPTION TO WITHDRAW YOUR CONSENT IN ONE OR BOTH PORTIONS OF HER RESEARCH - THE CLASSROOM RESEARCH COMPONENT AND THE FOCUS GROUP COMPONENT - IF YOU HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND. THIS REMINDER WILL BE CONDUCTED IN PERSON. HE WILL MEET AGAIN WITH YOU TO REMIND YOU OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, AND REMIND YOU THAT YOU CAN WITHDRAW YOUR CONSENT IF YOU WISH.

ANONYMITY & CONFIDENTIALITY

IN TERMS OF PROTECTING YOUR ANONYMITY, I WILL USE A PSEUDONYM.

FURTHER, IN MY ROLE AS A TEACHER, IT IS MY LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT IF I FIND ANYTHING THAT YOU REVEAL AS CONCERNING FOR THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY OR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS. IF I DO FIND SOMETHING CONCERNING, THEN I AM OBLIGATED TO REPORT MY CONCERNS TO THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE TEAM, ADMINISTRATION TEAM, AND POTENTIALLY YOUR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS. IF GUIDANCE, ADMINISTRATION, AND/OR YOUR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ALSO FIND YOUR RESPONSES CONCERNING, THEY MAY CONTACT OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERTS TO HELP SUPPORT YOU AND SECURE YOUR SAFETY.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY WILL BE SHARED WITH OTHERS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS; PUBLISHED THESIS, THESIS PRESENTATION, PRESENTATION AT A SCHOLARLY MEETING, PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PRESENTATION, AND IN A PUBLISHED ARTICLE.

I WILL ALSO EXTEND AN OFFER FOR YOU TO READ A SUMMARY OF MY FINDINGS, IF YOU ARE INTERESTED. I WILL EMAIL THE PARTICIPATING STUDENTS AS WELL AS THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF ALL PARTICIPANTS AFTER MY THESIS IS SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDING AND ASK IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN READING THIS SUMMARY. THIS WILL LIKELY BE IN THE SPRING OF 2016.

DISPOSAL OF DATA

ANY PAPER DATA FROM THIS STUDY WILL BE SHREDDED ASIDE FROM THE FINAL ESSAY EXAM, WHICH WILL BE STORED AT [HIGH SCHOOL WITH THE APPEAL DATA IN THE FRONT OFFICE. DIGITAL DATA IS LARGELY IN CONTROL OF YOU, SO IT WILL BE YOUR CHOICE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT YOU DISPOSE OF YOUR ONLINE WRITTEN WORK. FOR INSTANCE, YOU WILL BE CREATING PERSONAL BLOGS, AND YOU WILL BE IN CONTROL OF ITS CREATION AND IF YOU WISH TO TAKE IT DOWN.
CONTACTS

INDIVIDUALS THAT MAY BE CONTACTED REGARDING THIS STUDY INCLUDE [REDACTED], [REDACTED], AND DR. DEBORAH BEGORAY.

IN ADDITION, YOU MAY VERIFY THE ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THIS STUDY, OR RAISE ANY CONCERNS YOU MIGHT HAVE, BY CONTACTING THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA (205-472-4545 OR ETHICS@UVIC.CA).

Please fill in this consent form and return it to [REDACTED] EITHER AT THE END OF THIS PERIOD OR IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO TAKE SOME TIME TO DISCUSS THIS WITH YOUR PARENTS. Check one of the following options:

☐ YES, I agree to participate.

☐ NO, I do not want to participate.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

____________________  ________________  ________________
Name                  Signature             Date

Thank you so much for your time, and I can't wait to start this novel study with you.

Best care,

Ms. Moore
Appendix 5B: Student Consent Form for Focus Group

Dear Student,

You are invited to participate in a second portion of my study entitled, “Trauma Literature in the English Classroom.” In addition to being your teacher, I am also a graduate student at the University of Victoria and I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Education. For this part of my project, I want to conduct a focus group session for one hour or so during the exam break. This focus group, like participation in the classroom research portion of the project, is completely voluntary. The focus group is not a requirement of the English 10-1 course whatsoever.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the focus group session, which will be about one hour in length during the exam period with students who choose to participate, are the same as detailed in the classroom research consent form. An addition specific purpose and objective for this focus group is to have a deep final discussion about the literature with interested students. I have prepared a list of questions to explore with participating students that I will attach to this consent form for your perusal.

What is Involved?

At the end of the year, during the exam break, you are invited to participate in a focus group discussion for about an hour or so to further discuss the novel, but this will be completely voluntary and will not impact your grade in the class. You are not required to stay for the entire hour if you do not want to. They are free to leave the focus group at any time.

Because this focus group will run during the exam break and this period can sometimes be considered at stressful, tiring period for you, especially those of you who struggle with test anxiety, I want to stress that this is completely voluntary. I do not know the exact date because I want feedback from you on preferable dates that work with your schedules.

In order to avoid any pressure you might feel because I am your teacher, I would like to reiterate that I have asked that all returned consent forms be sent to [redacted] our English Department Learning Leader, and not to me. You may hand in your forms to the office to be forwarded to [redacted] or to [redacted] in person. [redacted] as well as any office staff will not reveal the names to me until after the final report cards have been completed this year. I have also informed our principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact my research supervisor, Dr. Begoray (403-948-3800, dbegoray@uvic.ca), the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545, ethics@uvic.ca), or our principal, [redacted] to have your concerns addressed.
Further, I will remind you at the end of term of my intentions to use your work for my research. If you decide to withdraw your consent you are free to do so at any time by notifying [redacted]. If permission is not given or is withdrawn, no examples or notes regarding you will be used in the written report.

Risks

There are some potential emotional and stress risks to you for this focus group as detailed in the consent form for the classroom research portion of the project. As such, I have risk mitigation strategies for this focus group specifically. I firstly will begin by alerting my guidance and administrative team of the date and time of this session once it is determined so that they are aware that their expertise may be needed on that day, and/or the days to follow if a one of you are triggered by our discussion or discloses personal traumatic experiences that require expert support. This is a procedure that I follow in my usual classroom practice if a student is in crisis or needs to speak privately with an expert while class is in session.

Next, I will begin the discussion with an overview of ground rules with the group, including respecting one another during discussion, not sharing our discussion with other students outside of the focus group, that you do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable speaking to, and that you can leave at any time. I also plan to invite you to suggest any further ground rules that will help you to feel safe.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this focus group must be completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or explanation. If you withdraw from this study, your data will not be used for research purposes. Further, if you consent and show up to the focus group, you can choose to leave at any time. You do not have to stay for the entire hour or so that our conversation will last for.

Researchers Relationship with Participants

I do have a teacher-student relationship with you. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, I have taken steps to prevent coercion. As previously mentioned, [redacted] our English Department Learning Leader, will be collecting all permission forms and answering questions of parents, guardians, and students. He will not inform me of who is and who is not participating in the study until after final grades are submitted in June. This means that your grade will not be influenced whatsoever by your participation or withdrawal from the study. The focus group will take place after the final grades have been submitted and your participation or choice to not participate will not influence your grades in English 10-1 whatsoever. I have also informed the principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact [redacted], Dr. Deborah Begoray at the University of
Victoria (403-948-3800), or the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria to have your concerns addressed.

Further, I will remind you at the end of the semester of my intentions to use your work for my research. If you decide to withdraw your consent you are free to do so at any time by notifying [name]. If permission is not given or withdrawn, no examples or notes regarding you will be used in the written report.

Ongoing Consent

To confirm that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will ask that you obtain ongoing consent from you. At the end of the school year and before the data collected and used for my research purposes, [name] will remind you that you have agreed to allow writing samples and information to be included in the research. Further, he will remind you that you have the option to withdraw your consent if you have changed your mind. [name] will conduct this reminder in person, in our classroom. I will not be present during this meeting.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

In terms of protecting your anonymity, I will use a pseudonym. However, whatever you share during the focus group discussion will be shared with not only myself, but also other participating students. In an effort to maintain confidentiality, I will, as described above, begin the discussion with an overview of ground rules with the group, including respecting one another during discussion, not sharing our discussion with other students outside of the focus group, that you do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable speaking to, and that you can leave at any time. I also plan to invite you to suggest any further ground rules that will help you to feel safe. These ground rules are attached.

Further, in my role as a teacher, it is my legal responsibility to report if I find anything that you reveal as concerning for your personal safety or the safety of others. If I do find something concerning, then I am obligated to report my concerns to the school guidance team, administration team, and potentially their parents and guardians. If guidance, administration, and/or their parents and guardians also find your responses concerning, they may contact other professional experts to help support you and secure your safety.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways; published thesis, thesis presentation, presentation at a scholarly meeting, professional learning presentation, and in a published article.

Disposal of Data
Any paper data and audio data from the focus group will be destroyed after I complete my final write-up for my thesis and successfully defended it. I plan to shred the physical evidence, which would be my field notes taken during and after the focus group session.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include [redacted] and Dr. Deborah Begoray.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (205-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Please remember that your permission must be voluntary and I want to assure you that there are no consequences that arise from giving or withholding your permission. You can also change your mind before the last day of class. Your grade will not be influenced whatsoever by your participation or decision to not participate. Please remember that in order to avoid any pressure that you might feel because I am your teacher, I have asked that all of your consent forms be handed in to [redacted] and not to me. I also want you to please ask [redacted], your questions, if you have any. You can do this in person or by email at: [redacted].

Please fill in this consent form and return it to [redacted]. Check one of the following options:

☐ YES, I agree to participate.

☐ NO, I do not want to participate.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

Name __________________ Signature __________________ Date ____________

Thank you so much for your time, and I can’t wait to start this novel study with you.

Best care,

Ms. Moore
Ground Rules for Focus Groups:

1. We will respect one another during this session. We will stop this focus group session if this does not happen.
2. We will not discuss our conversation in this focus groups with students who did not participate. I want this to be a safe space where we can share our responses without worrying that others in the group will leave and share what was discussed afterwards.
3. You do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable speaking to. You can simply say “pass” or not just in the conversation.
4. You are free to leave at any time without explanation.
5. If you feel like you need to speak with an expert or speak privately with someone about what you are thinking or feeling, our guidance and administration team is on ‘stand-by.’ I can alert them and you can speak with them right away.

I would like to invite any of you to suggest any further ground rules to help you feel safe. Does anyone have anything that they would like to add?

Please interrupt discussion at any time to suggest a rule if you think of one.
Focus Group Questions

1. What has stood out to you the most about the activities we’ve done during the Speak unit?

2. Was this story meaningful to you? Why or why not?

3. Which moment in this book was the most significant for you? Why?

4. Is this a story that you think high school students should study? If so, why? What do we learn?

5. Some teachers might be hesitant to teach this book because it deals with some complicated issues. What would you say to a teacher who feels this way? Do you have any advice?

6. If you could speak with Melinda, what would you say?

7. In the book, Melinda turns to art as a creative outlet. How do you feel about writing as a creative outlet? Do you enjoy writing? Do any of you keep a journal, or a digital writing platform such as a blog or a social media account where you write about what you’re thinking and feeling?

8. How do you feel about writing digitally, such as the blogging and threaded discussion groups (TDGs) that we engaged in?

9. Do you have a preference between writing individually and writing collaboratively, such as blogging versus TDGs? Why?

10. Were you surprised by anything that you wrote in response to this novel? Did you learn something about yourself while responding to Melinda’s story?

11. At one point in the novel, Melinda reveals that she wishes that her science teacher would teach them about love and betrayal instead of the ‘birds and the bees.’ Do you agree? Should schools spend more time teaching youth about healthy relationships and consent?

12. How does Melinda finally find her voice? Who helps her the most? How does she help herself? What do you do when you feel voiceless?
13. Melinda stays silent throughout the majority of the novel in large part because she is afraid. In your opinion, what issues do teenagers stay silent about, and do you feel that reading books about these issues could help make school more meaningful?
# Application to Engage in Research/Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Research Title:</th>
<th>*Full Title in Appendix.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Name of Applicant:</td>
<td>Amber Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mailing Address:</td>
<td>[Redacted]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>[Redacted]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cellular:</td>
<td>[Redacted]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>[Redacted]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Affiliate Organization/Program:</td>
<td>University of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Name of Ethics Review Body:</td>
<td>Human Research Ethics Board, UVic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Type of proposal submitted:</td>
<td>Research ☒ Evaluation ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Summary of goals and objectives of research/evaluation activity:</td>
<td>*Attached in Appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Projected start date:</td>
<td>May 4th, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Projected completion date:</td>
<td>June 5th, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is this research/evaluation required for the completion of a course or degree? Yes ☒ No ☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, please specify:</td>
<td>This research project is my MA Thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Proposed research/evaluation cohort(s):</td>
<td>My grade 10-1 English students in two classes (68 potential participants in total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Summary of proposed research/evaluation methodology(ies):</td>
<td>*Attached in Appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Projected date of receipt of ethics approval from body named above:</td>
<td>April 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Describe any activity or process that will need to be facilitated or supported by staffs:</td>
<td>My English Learning Leader will act as my third party recruiter for obtaining consent from potential student participants and from their guardians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. If students are included in the proposed cohort, describe the consent process to be utilized:</td>
<td>*Attached in Appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Describe how the research/evaluation activity will benefit system/students:</td>
<td>*Attached in Appendix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature of Applicant: [Redacted]
Signature of Program Supervisor (If applicable): [Redacted]

Date of submission: Feb 4, 2015

For office use only:
Date Received: [Redacted]
Approved/Denied: [Redacted]
Date Approval/Denial Letter Sent: [Redacted]
Appendix to Application to Engage in Research/Evaluation (Amber Moore's Application)

I have included this Appendix because I could not fit all of the information required on the form provided.

1. Research Title: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom

7. Summary of goals and objectives of research/evaluation activity:

The research objective is to investigate how grade ten students respond to trauma literature, particularly the novel *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson (1999) as well as a selection of other complementary texts and films, in two grade ten academic English classes at [school name] questions. My primary research question is: In what ways do grade ten students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives? A few other questions that I am also interested in exploring how educators can be better prepared, supported, and equipped to incorporate trauma literature into their ELA curricula, effective strategies for integrating this literature and how this literature could potentially enhance ELA studies, as well as how this literature can help to develop reading, writing, and oracy skills.

I believe that this research may advance scholarship in a few important ways. Firstly, this project will contribute to existing research on integrating trauma literature in the classroom, and demonstrate the benefits for educators to take risks to choose texts that will build more dynamic learning spaces where learners engage more meaningfully, find their voices, identities, personal power, and foster stances that challenge systemic inequalities. In many past studies, researchers stress the necessity for more research on how to purposefully engage learners in critical textual analyses on sensitive, difficult topics such as sexual assault and other trauma narratives. Further, I believe that this project may also demonstrate that digital writing can function as an especially critical and potentially healing tool. For instance, students may exercise self-care through their written responses to *Speak*, as some learners may relate to painful textual moments, and consequently explore these responses in their writing.

12. Summary of proposed research/evaluation methodologies:

Through a socioconstructivist perspective, I will be collecting data using a case study method and a narrative inquiry approach. I will be particularistic in choosing a central text of *Speak* to focus my unit of study on, descriptive by gathering rich description of how my students interact with the novel as well as the complementary texts in the unit, and aim to be heuristic in attempting to enrich understandings of the impact of trauma narratives on youth, as well as inductive, as I will work so that my data generates development of fresh understandings about the use of trauma narratives in the classroom. Case study research is an appropriate approach to answering my research questions because I have no control over the behaviours I’ll be studying, such as the writing that my students will produce. In addition to using a
case study research methodology, I will also be embedding a narrative approach as I
will be asking individuals to provide stories about their lived experiences as they
hopefully make connections with the experiences of the characters we will study in
*Speak*.

I plan to collect data in a number of different ways including class observation and
maintaining field notes, collecting student work products, such as digitally including
personal journaling through blogging and threaded discussion groups using a Google
Groups forum, and conducting small group, face-to-face interviews which will
consist of open-ended questions about *Speak* intended to gain insights about the
students' views and opinions on the novel. All reading of the text will be completed
during class time, and will include a mixture of sustained silent reading and teacher-
to-class reading, depending on what students prefer, however, I hope to read the
majority of the book aloud to the class so as to allow opportunities to pause and
discuss and/or write at critical moments that I will reflect on in my field notes.

I am also interested in collecting visual data such as having students take
photographs to represent their understanding through projects like photo essays or
creating found poetry. Because I am focusing on how writing can function as a
critical tool, I plan on collecting student writing in a few different forms such as
through 'tickets-out-the-door,' placemat-style group written response, literary
exploration in essay writing, creative writing, visual analysis and response writing,
and poetry in traditional and digital writing forms. I aim to provide learners with
opportunities to respond during the unit in many different possible forms of writing,
and with choice.

15. If students are included in the proposed cohort, describe the consent process to be
utilized:

To obtain informed consent, I will follow the steps below for each group I need to
obtain consent from.

**Group 1- Students:**

1. My third party recruiter (the Learning Leader for English at [School Name]) will provide an overview of the research project to my
classes before we start the novel study. I will not be present for this presentation
and discussion.

2. My third party recruiter will hand out consent forms to the students one week
prior to beginning the novel study, at the end of April. The consent form will be
for both the student and the parents and guardians to sign. He will instruct them
to take the forms home and speak with their families about the project, decide if
they want to participate, and bring back the forms to him or the students also
have the option to drop off the forms to the office. He will be clear that the
student are not to hand in the forms back to me, as I should not and will not know
who will be participating until after their report card marks are completed.
3. At the end of the novel study roughly five weeks later in June, my third party recruiter will visit my classes again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in this research project to obtain ongoing consent.

Group 2- Parents:

1. My third party recruiter will email and traditionally mail an outline of my research project to parents and guardians of all potential participants one week prior to beginning the novel study, at the end of April.

2. My third party recruiter will send home consent forms with students for parents and guardians during a meeting with my classes a week before we start the novel study, at the beginning of April.

3. During the duration of the novel study and data collection period, my third party recruiter will be available to answer questions that any students, parents, and guardians may have either in person, by email, and/or by phone. He will be fully prepped by me with all of the information that he needs to answer questions.

4. At the end of the novel study roughly five weeks later in June, my third party recruiter will email the parents and guardians of my students again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in this research project to obtain ongoing consent.

16. Describe how the research/evaluation activity will benefit the system/students:

I believe that this project will benefit the system and students in a few different ways. Firstly, findings from this research may highlight for teachers the importance of integrating trauma literature as a strategy for creating dynamic education spaces, and demonstrate that this genre can be a particularly powerful body of literature to draw from. Further, these narratives demand audience witnessing of trauma, which can trigger especially resonant emotions in learners, and critical literacy teachers can tap into these powerful responses for meaningful student connection and literary engagement. Insights gained from this study may also help educators explore potential benefits of encouraging students to take on a critical literacy lens in their writing to learn as they may discover that it can provide purposeful opportunities for critiquing dominant narratives and voices while subsequently working to build learning spaces where learners assert their own voices, identities, and power.

As a result, I will endeavor to make this project accessible for and helpful to educators who are less familiar and comfortable with these issues. I plan to provide links to resources to aid with their practice if they choose to begin incorporating trauma literature into their language arts curricula, and hopefully findings from this research will be helpful with anticipating some students' responses to trauma narratives, particularly in their writing.
Field Notes for *The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Observations:</th>
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<td>Number of students present:</td>
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<td>Lesson Focus:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Lesson Agenda:</th>
<th>Observations:</th>
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<td>Activity 1:</td>
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<td>Activity 4:</td>
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<td>Activity 5:</td>
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</table>

Additional Overall Reflections:


Modification of an Approved Protocol

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Amber Moore  
UVic STATUS: Master's Student  
UVic DEPARTMENT: EDCI  
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Deborah Begoray

ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER 15-093

PROJECT TITLE: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: None

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closures
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.

[Blank Name]

Dr. Rachael Scarth  
Acting Associate Vice-President, Research

Certificate Issued On: 19-Jun-15
Human Research Ethics
Request for Modification of an Approved Protocol

The Request for Modification form is an institutional protocol based on the
Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

Instructions:
1. Download this Request for Modification and complete it on your computer. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.
2. Submit two (2) copies of this completed application with all attachments - one (1) copy must have original signatures - and send to:
   Human Research Ethics, Administrative Services Building (ASB), Room 8202, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC,
   Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada. The review period for Modifications is approximately two weeks.
3. If you need assistance, contact the Human Research Ethics Assistant at (250) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca
4. Please note that applications are screened and will not be entered into the review system if incomplete (e.g., missing required
   attachments, signatures, documents). You will be notified in this case.

A. Principal Investigator

Last Name: Moore       First Name: Amber
Department/Faculty: Curriculum & Instruction, Faculty of Education  UVIC Email: *Please use my work email:

Phone: [Redacted]    Fax: N/A
Mailing Address including postal code: [Redacted]

Title/Position: (Must have a UVic appointment or be a registered student)

- [ ] Faculty  - [ ] Undergraduate  - [ ] Ph.D. Student
- [ ] Adjunct Faculty  - [ ] Master's Student  - [ ] Post-Doctoral
- [ ] Staff

Students: Provide your Supervisor’s information:
Name: Deborah Begoray  Email: dbegoray@uvic.ca
Department/Faculty: Curriculum & Instruction, Faculty of Education  Phone: 250-721-7847
Graduate Students: Provide your Graduate Secretary’s email address: edcgrad@uvic.ca

All PIs: Provide any additional contacts for email correspondence:
Name:  Email:
Name:  Email:

FOR THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE USE ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Protocol No.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Chair Approval Signature:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approval Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Start Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval Expiry Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewal Due:</td>
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</table>
B. Project Information
Original or most recent Protocol Number: 15-093
Original Project Title: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom
Project Title if modified: N/A
Date Recruitment or Data Collection began: May 13th, 2015
Anticipated End Date of Data Collection: June 25th, 2015

Is this project connected/associated/linked to one that has been recently submitted? □ Yes ☒ No
If yes, provide further information: N/A

All Current Investigator(s) and Research Team: N/A
(Include all current and new co-investigators, students, employees, volunteers, community organizations.)

Contact Name Role in Research Project Institutional Affiliation Email or Phone

For Faculty Only: Any Graduate Student Research Assistants who will use the data to fulfill UVic thesis/dissertation/academic requirements: Include all current Graduate Student Research Assistants

Student/Research Assistant Email or Phone

C. Agreement and Signatures

Principal Investigator and Student Supervisor affirm that:
• I have read this modification and it is complete and accurate.
• The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Victoria regulations, policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and all relevant sections of the TCPS 2.
• The conduct of the modified protocol will not commence until ethics approval has been granted.
• The researcher(s) will seek further HREB review if the research protocol is further modified.
• Adequate supervision will be provided for students and/or staff.

Principal Investigator

Student’s Supervisor

Signature

Signature

Print Name

Print Name

Date

Date

Revised June 2014
B. Project Information

Original or most recent Protocol Number: 15-093
Original Project Title: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom
Project Title if modified: N/A
Date Recruitment or Data Collection began: May 13th, 2015
Anticipated End Date of Data Collection: June 25th, 2015

Is this project connected/associated/link to one that has been recently submitted? Yes ☐ No ☑
If yes, provide further information: N/A

All Current Investigator(s) and Research Team: N/A
(Include all current and new co-investigators, students, employees, volunteers, community organizations.)
Contact Name Role in Research Project Institutional Affiliation Email or Phone

For Faculty Only: Are Graduate Student Research Assistants who will use the data to fulfill UVic thesis/dissertation/academic requirements: include all current Graduate Student Research Assistants
Student/Research Assistant Email or Phone

C. Agreement and Signatures

Principal Investigator and Student Supervisor affirm that:
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• The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Victoria regulations, policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and all relevant sections of the TCPS 2.
• The conduct of the modified protocol will not commence until ethics approval has been granted.
• The researcher(s) will seek further HREB review if the research protocol is further modified.
• Adequate supervision will be provided for students and/or staff.

Principal Investigator

Amber Moore

Signature

Print Name
June 2, 2015

Date
B. Project Information
Original or most recent Protocol Number: 15-093
Original Project Title: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom
Project Title if modified: N/A
Date Recruitment or Data Collection began: May 13th, 2015
Anticipated End Date of Data Collection: June 25th, 2015

Is this project connected/associated/linked to one that has been recently submitted? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, provide further information: N/A

All Current Investigator(s) and Research Team: N/A
(Include all current and new co-investigators, students, employees, volunteers, community organizations.)

Contact Name                  Role in Research Project | Institutional Affiliation | Email or Phone

For Faculty Only: Any Graduate Student Research Assistants who will use the data to fulfill UVic thesis/dissertation/academic requirements: Include all current Graduate Student Research Assistants

Student/Research Assistant | Email or Phone

C. Agreement and Signatures

Principal Investigator and Student Supervisor affirm that:
• I have read this modification and it is complete and accurate.
• The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Victoria regulations, policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and all relevant sections of the TCPS 2.
• The conduct of the modified protocol will not commence until ethics approval has been granted.
• The researcher(s) will seek further HREB review if the research protocol is further modified.
• Adequate supervision will be provided for students and/or staff.

Principal Investigator | Student’s Supervisor

Signature | Signature
Print Name | Print Name
Date | Date

Revised June 2014
Departmental Chair, Director or Dean
I affirm that adequate research infrastructure is available for the conduct and completion of this research.

Print Name
Date: June 31/18

D. Project Funding
Have there been any changes to the funding of this project since the previous ethics approval (annual renewal or modification)? ☒ No ☐ Yes

If yes, please complete the following: N/A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Project Funding</th>
<th>Year Applied</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Project Title Used in Funding Application (or additional information)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you have applied for new funding since the previous ethics approval (annual renewal or modification), have you submitted a funding application or contract notification to the UVic Office of Research Services?
☐ Yes ☒ No

Will this project receive funding from US Funders (e.g. NIH)? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, provide further information:
N/A

E. Synopsis of Study Progress

1. Progress
   Please provide a brief description of the progress to date:

Revised June 2014
D. Project Funding
Have there been any changes to the funding of this project since the previous ethics approval (annual renewal or modification)? ☑ No ☐ Yes

If yes, please complete the following: N/A

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have applied for new funding since the previous ethics approval (annual renewal or modification), have you submitted a funding application or contract notification to the UVic Office of Research Services?

☐ Yes ☑ No

Will this project receive funding from US Funders (e.g. NIH)? ☐ Yes ☑ No

If yes, provide further information:

N/A

E. Synopsis of Study Progress

1. Progress
   Please provide a brief description of the progress to date:

Revised June 2014
In this study, I am investigating how grade ten students respond to trauma literature, particularly the novel "Speak" by Laurie Halse Anderson (1999) as well as a selection of other complementary texts and films, in two grade ten academic English classes in a public school in a small city in Western Canada. Some of the complementary texts and films include reading 'survivor love letters,' news articles on current events related to the issues in "Speak" such as sexual harassment, poetry, videos including a TED Talk by Jackson Kurtz entitled, "Violence Against Women- It's a Men's Issue" and a video about consent. My primary research question is: in what ways do grade ten students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives? At this point in my research, my classes are just over halfway through reading the novel and have been engaging in a number of digital writing activities including blogging, threaded discussion groups for digital literature circles, using Instagram to respond to the text, using Polleverywhere to text in responses to the book, and students are also engaging in some more traditional 'low-tech' writing activities including tickets out the door, placemat activities, and so forth.

2. Unanticipated Events

An Unanticipated Event includes any incidents, experiences, or outcomes that have not been previously accounted for in the approved protocol and which place participants, or others, at a greater risk (i.e., physical, psychological, economic, etc.) than was previously anticipated. An Unanticipated Event may have implications for the conduct of the study or the integrity of the research data.

a. Have there been any unanticipated events experienced with this research?

☐ Yes ☐ Possibly ☒ No

b. If 'Yes' or 'Possibly' is this modification being submitted with an Unanticipated Event Report?

☐ Yes ☐ No, please explain:

F. Modifications

Please outline the details and rationale for the changes along with a brief synopsis of the progress to date. Attach copies of any modified and/or new appendices including recruitment materials, advertisements, consent forms, questionnaires, surveys, etc.

Please don't include and don't modify the original approved application form. We have the original approved application on file. Should we require additional documents we will let you know in a timely manner.

All the modified appendices that you are submitting must be underlined.

a. Modification to Recruitment

☒ Yes ☐ No

Rationale:

Parents and guardians are requesting to be allowed to consent to their student participating in the study via email. They have voiced to my third party recruiter that it would be easier for them to provide digital permission rather than send the forms back to the school with their student, and risk the forms not being handed in. In speaking with my principal, I confirmed that digital permission is accepted practice at our school, for items such as field trips and so forth. I have drafted an email reflecting the modification to recruitment and have attached it as an appendix to this application.

Attach copies of revised recruitment scripts, letters, advertisements, invitations etc.

Revised June 2014
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<table>
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| b. Modification to Participants (e.g., pool, group, numbers of, vulnerability, etc.) If there is a change in the level of vulnerability of the participant group(s) include any modifications to the risks and/or protocol to address this change | ☑ Yes ☑ No  
Rationale:  
Attach copies of recruitment tools, consent forms, advertisements etc. |
| c. Modification to Data Collection Method | ☑ Yes ☑ No  
Rationale:  
We have used a website called “PollEverywhere” for responding to the literature in class. The students text their responses into the website, and their texts pop up in real time, anonymously, on our class white board. I would like to honour their responses and use their responses as data, however, their responses would remain anonymous. For these responses, instead of using a pseudonym, I would discuss it as an anonymous response. Because everyone in both classes remained anonymous for this activity, it would not put any student at risk for being ‘found out.’ I did not previously account for anonymous responses in my original application. I would like to use the information in a general way such as collecting themes, words, and phrases that appear multiple times and are provided by more than one student. As such, I will be using the information in a way that makes it functionally anonymous to the students as well.  
Attach copies of revised instruments, surveys, interview or focus group questions |
| d. Modification to Consent | ☑ Yes ☑ No  
Rationale:  
Attach copies of the revised consent forms, scripts, or letter of information for implied consent. |
| e. Modification to Risk | ☑ Yes ☑ No |
| f. Other Modification(s) | Specify changes with rationale:  
Attach all applicable details. |

Revised June 2014
G. Level of Risk

1. Estimate of Risks
   Consider any additional inherent risks associated with the modification to your research protocol and complete the table below by putting an X in the appropriate boxes. Be sure to take into account the vulnerability of your target population(s) if applicable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreseeable Real or Potential Risks of Harm</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Increased Risk</th>
<th>Less risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel demeaned or embarrassed due to the research</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue or stress</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other emotional or psychological discomfort</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social risks, such as stigmatization, loss of status, privacy and/or reputation</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical risks such as falls</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic risk (e.g., job security, job loss)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other risks: (community reputation, workplace morale, family, other third parties)</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Possible Risks
   If you indicated (a) to (g) above that any risks are increased or less, please explain below:
   2a. How have the risks changed?
      N/A
   2b. What changes to the protocol have been made to mitigate or prevent the risks?
      N/A
   2c. If the risks have increased, how have the risks, and the ways that you will mitigate them, been conveyed to the participants?
      N/A

3. Other Information
   Please provide any other pertinent information here, or attach the details to this form:

Revised June 2014
Appendix: Third Party Script – Email to parents regarding recruitment modification.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is [Redacted] and I am the English Learning Leader at [Redacted] High School. I am writing to you today to remind you about a research project that your student’s English teacher, Amber Moore, is completing as a part of her Masters of Arts in Education with the University of Victoria. She is conducting her research in your student’s English class and I emailing you today to offer you the option of providing digital consent to her project by replying to this email and providing permission.

Please remember that there are two parts to her research. There is the classroom research portion of the project and the focus group portion of the project. I am attaching both of the original permission forms to this email for you to read over if you have not already done so. If you choose to provide digital consent by replying to this email and telling me that your student is allowed to participate, please ensure you let me know if you are providing consent to one or both parts of the project.

I would like to remind you that student participation in this project is completely voluntary and participating or not participating will not impact your student’s grade in this class in any way. Ms. Moore will not know who is participating until after she submits her final marks in June; this is why I am collecting responses and answering questions about the project and not her.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

Thank you very much for your time.

Best care,
Dear Amber,
Thank you for your email. In discussion with the HREB Vice-Chair Alex D’Arcy, it was determined that the use of this information needs to respect the informed consent process of the students and parents/guardians.

Thus it does not appear to be consistent to use all of the information from the white board, as is, since presumably, some students will not have provided consent for you to use their information, and discussion contributions, for the purposes of your research. Furthermore, while the information may be anonymously provided, students themselves may be able to recognize their contributions or those of others.

A compromise that would be acceptable to the HREB would be to use the information in a general way such as collecting themes, or words or phrases that appear multiple times and are provided by more than one student. In other words, to use the information in a way that makes it functionally anonymous to the students as well.

Please comment on this and revise the information in your Modification Request, if this is possible, using strikethrough and highlighting new changes. (If this is not possible please contact me).

Please respond to this email attaching any revised documents.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,
Kenna

Kenna Miskelly, B.Sc., M.A.
Human Research Ethics Facilitator | Office of Research Services | University of Victoria | Room B233, Administrative Services Building
3800 Finnerty Road | PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
Phone (250) 472-5555 | Fax (250) 721-8960 | Email hre@uvic.ca

We are in the Administrative Services Building on Ring Road http://www.uvic.ca/buildings/sfb.html

Our Website, forms, and guidelines are located on:
http://www.uvic.ca/research/conduct/home/regapproval/humanethics/index.php

This email message may contain confidential information and is intended only for the individual named. If you have received this email by mistake, please notify the sender immediately and delete the email from your system. Further unauthorized distribution is prohibited and is contrary to University computing policy.

Hi Kenna,
I understand if using this data is not permissible. We used PollEverywhere at the beginning of the unit, and I used it on purpose for the anonymity feature because I was asking thematic questions that I didn't think students would feel comfortable with sharing out loud or with their names attached. There is no way for me to figure out which students submitted which responses because the technology protects their information, and further, I assured them that the information would remain anonymous, yet public for the entire class to see as we carried out the activity. The modification request is for me to use the data from this exercise and report anonymously from all students, and I am unable to reconcile this. If it is not allowed to discuss the results anonymously, I completely understand.

Thank you for your help, and I'm sorry if I was unclear.

Best care,
Amber

>>> Kenna Miskelly <hre@uvic.ca> 06/16/15 1:01 PM >>>
Dear Amber,
Thanks for your email.

The concern is not whether the student information will be identifiable or anonymous, the concern is that it appears that some students will have provided consent for you to use their school work, and, presumably, some students will have not provided consent for you to use their school work. This Modification seems to indicate that you plan to use school work (the "PollEverywhere" information) from all students even those who did not provided consent. Is it unclear how you will reconcile this. Please address this concern.

Kind regards,
Kenna

Kenna Miskelly, B.Sc., M.A.
Human Research Ethics Facilitator | Office of Research Services | University of Victoria | Room B233, Administrative Services Building
3800 Finnerty Road | PO Box 1700 STN CSC | Victoria, BC | V8W 2Y2 Canada
Phone (250) 472-5555 | Fax (250) 721-8960 | Email hre@uvic.ca

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From: Amber Moore [mailto:]
Sent: June-15-15 4:27 PM
To: Kenna Miskelly
Cc: Deborah Begoray
Subject: Re: Modification Request - Moore (Request)

Dear Kenna,

Thank you for your reply. I can confirm that students still need to provide signed, written consent and that parent/guardian and student consent is still required for students to participate in this study. As for the Poll Everywhere results, I would like to include their anonymous responses as anonymous responses in my research; in the write up, I would write something
Hi Kenna,

Fantastic! I'll attach it to this email.

Thank you!

Best care,

Amber Moore

Kenna Miskelly, B.Sc., M.A.
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3800 Finnerty Road | PO Box 1700 STN CSC | Victoria, BC | V8W 2Y2 Canada
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Hi Kenna,
Thank you for your quick attention to this. I appreciate the compromise and I have revised the information in my Modification request using your wording from your email regarding the collection of themes and so forth. I have forwarded my revised application to my supervisor to submit for me, as I live in Calgary. Please let me know if there is anything else that you need from me.

Thanks again, and I hope that you have a lovely weekend.

Best care,

Amber Moore

>>> Kenna Miskelly <hre@uvic.ca> 06/17/15 4:54 PM >>>

Dear Amber,

Thank you for your email. In discussion with the HREB Vice-Chair Alex D'Arcy, it was determined that the use of this information needs to respect the informed consent process of the students and parents/guardians.

Thus it does not appear to be consistent to use all of the information from the white board, as is, since presumably, some students will not have provided consent for you to use their information, and discussion contributions, for the purposes of your research. Furthermore, while the information may be anonymously provided, students themselves may be able to recognize their contributions or those of others.

A compromise that would be acceptable to the HREB would be to use the information in a general way such as collecting themes, or words or phrases that appear multiple times and are provided by more than one student. In other words, to use the information in a way that makes it functionally anonymous to the students as well.

Please comment on this and revise the information in your Modification Request, if this is possible, using strikethrough and highlighting new changes. (If this is not possible please contact me).

Please respond to this email attaching any revised documents.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

Kenna

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From: Amber Moore
Sent: June-16-15 12:13 PM
Hi Kenna,

I understand if using this data is not permissible. We used Poll Everywhere at the beginning of the unit, and I used it on purpose for the anonymity feature because I was asking thematic questions that I didn't think students would feel comfortable with sharing out loud or with their names attached. There is no way for me to figure out which students submitted which responses because the technology protects their information, and further, I assured them that the information would remain anonymous, yet public for the entire class to see as we carried out the activity. The modification request is for me to use the data from this one exercise and report anonymously from all students, and I am unable to reconcile this. If it is not allowed to discuss the results anonymously, I completely understand.

Thank you for your help, and I'm sorry if I was unclear.

Best care,

Amber

>>> Kenna Miskelly <hre@uvic.ca> 06/16/15 1:01 PM >>>

Dear Amber,

Thanks for your email.

The concern is not whether the student information will be identifiable or anonymous, the concern is that it appears that some students will have provided consent for you to use their school work, and, presumably, some students will have not provided consent for you to use their school work. This modification seems to indicate that you plan to use school work (the "Poll Everywhere" information) from all students even those who did not provided consent. It is unclear how you will reconcile this. Please address this concern.

Kind regards,

Kenna

Kenna Miskelly, B.Sc., M.A.
Human Research Ethics Facilitator | Office of Research Services | University of Victoria | Room B233, Administrative Services Building
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Dear Amber,

Thanks for your email.

The concern is not whether the student information will be identifiable or anonymous, the concern is that it appears that some students will have provided consent for you to use their school work, and, presumably, some students will have not provided consent for you to use their school work. This Modification seems to indicate that you plan to use school work (the "PollEverywhere" information) from all students even those who did not provide consent. It is unclear how you will reconcile this. Please address this concern.

Kind regards,

Kenna

---

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---

Dear Kenna,

Thank you for your reply. I can confirm that students still need to provide signed, written consent and that parent/guardian and student consent is still required for students to participate in this study. As for the Poll Everywhere results, I would like to include their anonymous responses as anonymous responses in my research; in the write up, I would write something such as, "in our opening discussion of the novel, many students mentioned mental health issues as something that needs to be addressed more in school, with one anonymous student writing that "depression is something that lots of people struggle with." I wouldn't worry about finding out which students wrote what, but rather, I would discuss the responses for that activity as anonymous responses.

I hope this makes sense, and that I have answered your questions. Please let me know if there is anything else that you need.
Have a lovely afternoon and best care,

Amber Moore

>>> Kenna Miskelly <hre@uvic.ca> 06/15/15 5:04 PM >>>
Dear Amber Moore,

You recently submitted a Modification Request for your study entitled, *The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom*, file: 15-093. Upon review there are a few questions for you:

1. Parents/guardians providing consent via email confirmation is not problematic. Can you please confirm that students will still provide written (signed) consent and that parent/guardian and student consent is still required for students to participate in this study.

2. It appears that the "PollEverywhere" information is provided anonymously, with the whole class participating at the same time. Is this correct? If so, it is unclear how you would only include the information from the students who agreed that their information could be used for the research. Please comment.

Please respond back to this email.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

Kenna

Kenna Miskelly, B.Sc., M.A.
Human Research Ethics Facilitator | Office of Research Services | University of Victoria | Room B233, Administrative Services Building
3800 Finnerty Road [PO Box 1700 STN CSC] Victoria,BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
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This communication is intended for the use of the recipient to which it is addressed, and may contain confidential, personal, and or privileged information. Please contact us immediately if you are not the intended recipient of this communication, and do not copy, distribute, or take action relying on it. Any communication received in error, or subsequent reply, should be deleted or destroyed.
## Appendix B: Application to School Board

**Application to Engage in Research/Evaluation**

1. **Research Title:** *Full Title in Appendix.*
2. **Name of Applicant:** Amber Moore
3. **Mailing Address:** [Redacted]
   - Telephone: [Redacted]
   - Cellular: [Redacted]
   - Email: [Redacted]
4. **Affiliate Organization/Program:** University of Victoria
5. **Name of Ethics Review Body:** Human Research Ethics Board, UVic
6. **Type of proposal submitted:** Research ☒ Evaluation ☐
7. **Summary of goals and objectives of research/evaluation activity:**
   - *Attached in Appendix*
8. **Projected start date:** May 4th, 2015
9. **Projected completion date:** June 5th, 2015
10. **Is this research/evaluation required for the completion of a course or degree?** Yes ☒ No ☐
    - If yes, please specify: This research project is my MA Thesis.
11. **Proposed research/evaluation cohort(s):**
    - My grade 10-11 English students in two classes (68 potential participants in total)
12. **Summary of proposed research/evaluation methodology(ies):**
    - *Attached in Appendix*
13. **Projected date of receipt of ethics approval from body named above:** April 2015
14. **Describe any activity or process that will need to be facilitated or supported by staff:**
    - My English Learning Leader will act as my third party recruiter for obtaining consent from potential student participants and from their guardians.
15. **If students are included in the proposed cohort, describe the consent process to be utilized:**
    - *Attached in Appendix*
16. **Describe how the research/evaluation activity will benefit [ ] system/ [ ] students:**
    - *Attached in Appendix*

**Signature of Applicant:** [Redacted]

**Signature of Program Supervisor (if applicable):** [Redacted]

**Date of submission:** Feb. 4, 2015

---

**For office use only:**
- **Date Received:** [Redacted]
- **Approved/Denied:** [Redacted]
- **Date Approval/Denial Letter Sent:** [Redacted]
Appendix to Application to Engage in Research/Evaluation (Amber Moore’s Application)

I have included this Appendix because I could not fit all of the information required on the form provided.

1. Research Title: The Role of Trauma Literature in the Secondary English Classroom

7. Summary of goals and objectives of research/evaluation activity:

The research objective is to investigate how grade ten students respond to trauma literature, particularly the novel Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson (1999) as well as a selection of other complementary texts and films, in two grade ten academic English classes at __________. My primary research question is: In what ways do grade ten students use digital literacy such as online writing to respond to trauma literature, particularly sexual assault narratives? A few other questions that I am also interested in exploring how educators can be better prepared, supported, and equipped to incorporate trauma literature into their ELA curricula, effective strategies for integrating this literature and how this literature could potentially enhance ELA studies, as well as how this literature can help to develop reading, writing, and oracy skills.

I believe that this research may advance scholarship in a few important ways. Firstly, this project will contribute to existing research on integrating trauma literature in the classroom, and demonstrate the benefits for educators to take risks to choose texts that will build more dynamic learning spaces where learners engage more meaningfully, find their voices, identities, personal power, and foster stances that challenge systemic inequalities. In many past studies, researchers stress the necessity for more research on how to purposefully engage learners in critical textual analyses on sensitive, difficult topics such as sexual assault and other trauma narratives. Further, I believe that this project may also demonstrate that digital writing can function as an especially critical and potentially healing tool. For instance, students may exercise self-care through their written responses to Speak, as some learners may relate to painful textual moments, and consequently explore these responses in their writing.

12. Summary of proposed research/evaluation methodologies:

Through a socioconstructivist perspective, I will be collecting data using a case study method and a narrative inquiry approach. I will be particularistic in choosing a central text of Speak to focus my unit of study on, descriptive by gathering rich description of how my students interact with the novel as well as the complementary texts in the unit, and aim to be heuristic in attempting to enrich understandings of the impact of trauma narratives on youth, as well as inductive, as I will work so that my data generates development of fresh understandings about the use of trauma narratives in the classroom. Case study research is an appropriate approach to answering my research questions because I have no control over the behaviours I’ll be studying, such as the writing that my students will produce. In addition to using a
case study research methodology, I will also be embedding a narrative approach as I will be asking individuals to provide stories about their lived experiences as they hopefully make connections with the experiences of the characters we will study in Speak.

I plan to collect data in a number of different ways including class observation and maintaining field notes, collecting student work products, such as digitally including personal journaling through blogging and threaded discussion groups using a Google Groups forum, and conducting small group, face-to-face interviews which will consist of open-ended questions about Speak intended to gain insights about the students’ views and opinions on the novel. All reading of the text will be completed during class time, and will include a mixture of sustained silent reading and teacher-to-class reading, depending on what students prefer, however, I hope to read the majority of the book aloud to the class so as to allow opportunities to pause and discuss and/or write at critical moments that I will reflect on in my field notes.

I am also interested in collecting visual data such as having students take photographs to represent their understanding through projects like photo essays or creating found poetry. Because I am focusing on how writing can function as a critical tool, I plan on collecting student writing in a few different forms such as through ‘tickets-out-the-door,’ placemat-style group written response, literary exploration in essay writing, creative writing, visual analysis and response writing, and poetry in traditional and digital writing forms. I aim to provide learners with opportunities to respond during the unit in many different possible forms of writing, and with choice.

15. If students are included in the proposed cohort, describe the consent process to be utilized:

To obtain informed consent, I will follow the steps below for each group I need to obtain consent from.

Group 1- Students:

1. My third party recruiter (the Learning Leader for English at High School) will provide an overview of the research project to my classes before we start the novel study. I will not be present for this presentation and discussion.

2. My third party recruiter will hand out consent forms to the students one week prior to beginning the novel study, at the end of April. The consent form will be for both the student and the parents and guardians to sign. He will instruct them to take the forms home and speak with their families about the project, decide if they want to participate, and bring back the forms to him or the students also have the option to drop off the forms to the office. He will be clear that the student are not to hand in the forms back to me, as I should not and will not now who will be participating until after their report card marks are completed.
3. At the end of the novel study roughly five weeks later in June, my third party recruiter will visit my classes again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in this research project to obtain ongoing consent.

Group 2- Parents:

1. My third party recruiter will email and traditionally mail an outline of my research project to parents and guardians of all potential participants one week prior to beginning the novel study, at the end of April.

2. My third party recruiter will send home consent forms with students for parents and guardians during a meeting with my classes a week before we start the novel study, at the beginning of April.

3. During the duration of the novel study and data collection period, my third party recruiter will be available to answer questions that any students, parents, and guardians may have either in person, by email, and/or by phone. He will be fully prepped by me with all of the information that he needs to answer questions.

4. At the end of the novel study roughly five weeks later in June, my third party recruiter will email the parents and guardians of my students again and remind them that they have the option to withdraw consent to participate in this research project to obtain ongoing consent.

16. Describe how the research/evaluation activity will benefit the system/students:

I believe that this project will benefit the system and students in a few different ways. Firstly, findings from this research may highlight for teachers the importance of integrating trauma literature as a strategy for creating dynamic education spaces, and demonstrate that this genre can be a particularly powerful body of literature to draw from. Further, these narratives demand audience witnessing of trauma, which can trigger especially resonant emotions in learners, and critical literacy teachers can tap into these powerful responses for meaningful student connection and literary engagement. Insights gained from this study may also help educators explore potential benefits of encouraging students to take on a critical literacy lens in their writing to learn as they may discover that it can provide purposeful opportunities for critiquing dominant narratives and voices while subsequently working to build learning spaces where learners assert their own voices, identities, and power.

As a result, I will endeavor to make this project accessible for and helpful to educators who are less familiar and comfortable with these issues. I plan to provide links to resources to aid with their practice if they choose to begin incorporating trauma literature into their language arts curricula, and hopefully findings from this research will be helpful with anticipating some students’ responses to trauma narratives, particularly in their writing.
## Appendix C: Field Notes Form

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<thead>
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<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students present:</td>
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<td>Lesson Focus:</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lesson Agenda:</th>
<th>Observations:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1:</td>
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<td>Activity 2:</td>
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<td>Activity 5:</td>
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Appendix D: Resources for Teachers

Sexual Assault Narratives:

- *All the Rage* (Summers, 2015)
- *Boy Toy* (Lyga, 2007)
- *Canary* (Alpine, 2013)
- *Consent* (Ohlin, 2015)
- *Easy* (Webber, 2012)
- *Empty* (Walton, 2013)
- *Every Last Promise* (Hallbrook, 2015)
- *Exit, Pursued by a Bear* (Johnston, 2016)
- *Fall on Your Knees* (MacDonald, 1996)
- *Fault Line* (Desir, 2013)
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (Angelou, 1969)
- *Inexcusable* (Lynch, 2005)
- *Just Listen* (Dessen, 2006)
- *Live Through This* (Scott, 2012)
- *Living Dead Girl* (Scott, 2008)
- *Lucky* (Sebold, 1999)
- *Maybe I Will* (Gray, 2013)
- *Pointe* (Colbert, 2014)
- *Punch Like a Girl* (Crossing, 2015)
- *Rape Girl* (Klein, 2012)
- *Scars* (Rainfield, 2011)
- *She’s Come Undone* (Lamb, 1992)
- *Some Boys* (Blount, 2014)
- *Such a Pretty Girl* (Weiss, 2007)
- *Summer* (Wharton, 1917)
- *Swagger* (Deuker, 2013)
- *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (Hardy, 1982)
- *The Colour Purple* (Walker, 1982)
- *The Gospel of Winter* (Kiely, 2014)
- *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1983)
- *The Mockingbirds* (Summers, 2010)
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (Chbosky, 1999)
- *The Shipping News* (Prouix, 1993)
- *The Tenth Circle* (Picoult, 2006)
- *The Way I Used to Be* (Smith, 2016)
- *The Word for Yes* (Needal, 2016)
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960)
• *What Happens Next* (Clayton, 2012)
• *When She Hollers* (Voigt, 1996)
• *You Against Me* (Downham, 2010)

**Poetry about Sexual Assault:**

- All Poetry: [http://allpoetry.com/poems/about/Rape](http://allpoetry.com/poems/about/Rape)
- Hidden Hurt: [http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/domestic_violence_poems_1.html](http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/domestic_violence_poems_1.html)
- Life Centre: [http://www.lifecentre.uk.com/stories/lead_hear_our_stories.html](http://www.lifecentre.uk.com/stories/lead_hear_our_stories.html)
- One in Four: [http://www.oneinfour.org.uk/category/poems/](http://www.oneinfour.org.uk/category/poems/)
- Over the Rainbow: [http://www.pandys.org/overtherainbow/rainbows.html](http://www.pandys.org/overtherainbow/rainbows.html)
- Rape Crisis Center of the Coastal Empire: [http://www.rccsav.org/poetryforsurvivors.html](http://www.rccsav.org/poetryforsurvivors.html)
- Survivors Art Foundation: [http://www.survivorsartfoundation.org/gallery/poetry1.html](http://www.survivorsartfoundation.org/gallery/poetry1.html)
- Survivors in Transition: [http://www.survivorsintransition.co.uk/poetry/](http://www.survivorsintransition.co.uk/poetry/)

**Videos about Consent:**

- Tea Consent: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oObei51GiT8&index=1&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oObei51GiT8&index=1&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP)
- Dancing: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHkUczVRHSM&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHkUczVRHSM&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=4)
- Laughing: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtHK9wFAgys&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtHK9wFAgys&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=6)
- Whistling: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7t-rFM1IU0&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7t-rFM1IU0&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=9)
- Cycling Through Consent: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JwlKjRaUaw&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JwlKjRaUaw&list=PL0jlmG76Q_P8vjF2omh9IqPiK1wy0MqaP&index=7)