

Hicks, D. (2004). Back to Oz? Rethinking the literary in a critical study of reading. *Research in the Teaching of English, 39*, 63-84.

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Summary: This essay focuses on the challenges of creating a responsive and critical reading pedagogy centered on literature for girls who come from working-class households. The researcher draws upon data collected during a 14-month study of pre-teen girls to explore how they read, speak, and value in more than one class-specific voice.

Assumptions

- Social-class differences affect how girls interact with literary text.
- Literary text can play a role in shaping how girls who come from working class households negotiate language, gender, and social class.
- Literary texts are a starting point for critiquing dominant ideologies that pervade school culture.

Results

- Students used text as a starting point for discussing neighborhood business.
- In order for students growing up in working-class households to incorporate unfamiliar forms of literary practices, they first have to see a place for their voices within the dominant practices of reading their teachers expect.

Conclusion: Literature discussions can be used to create space for working-class female voices and experiences in the classroom. Texts can be a place for beginning broader discussions that can incorporate the students' voices and experiences.

Suggestions for Teachers:

- Use literature to create space for working-class female voices and experiences in the classroom.
- Encourage text-to-self and text-to-world connections in literature discussions.

Suggestions for Literacy Leaders:

- Help teachers consider the rationale for promoting text-to-self and text-to-world connections as students respond to reading.