The story, the self, the other

Developing insight into human nature in the literature classroom

Schrijvers, M.S.T.

CHAPTER 6

TRANSFORMATIVE DIALOGIC LITERATURE TEACHING FOSTERS ADOLESCENTS' INSIGHT INTO HUMAN NATURE

This quasi-experimental study assessed the effects of the newly developed Transformative Dialogic Literature Teaching (or TDLT) intervention on 15-year-old students' insight into human nature, reasons for reading, use of literary reading strategies, and motivation for literature education. Six TDLT lessons centered around short stories about "justice and injustice". Students were stimulated to engage in internal dialogues with stories and in external dialogues with peers about stories and reading experiences. TDLT students (n = 166) were compared to students who received lessons focused on analysis of literary texts (n = 166). Results showed that TDLT fostered students' insight into human nature, their support for eudaimonic reasons for reading, their reported use of strategies to deal with difficulties in literary texts, and their motivation for literature education. Strategy use and two basic needs for motivation, competence and relatedness, mediated effects of TDLT. Limitations and implications for future work are discussed.

1 INTRODUCTION

"What part of the story really stood out to you?
The part where the man was executed.
How come?
Well, he got the death penalty and not even begged for sentence reduction.
Maybe it was simply because he acknowledges that he did wrong.
But still, wouldn't you beg for sentence reduction? Nobody wants to die.
I think he had so much regret that he thought the death penalty did him justice.
Yeah, that could be.
After all, he was a kind man, according to his friends and colleagues."

This response, of a 15-year-old student, is part of a written dialogue about a short story with an imaginary classmate. The student reasons about behavior and motives: why does a character act in a certain way? She considers possible scenarios ("Maybe", "But still", "I think") and compares the character to herself ("Wouldn't you beg for reduction of the sentence?"). Thereby, she explicates her ideas about how people may respond to complex situations that evoke

social-moral questions. This example, from data collected in 10th grade literature classrooms in the Netherlands, illustrates that reading and responding to literary texts may be a catalyst for developing insight into what it means to be human, or into human nature.

Developing and deepening insight into human nature is not a formal objective of the Dutch literature curriculum. However, it appears to be more important than ever for students to learn to reflect on who they are and how they relate to other human beings, considering the globalizing society in which they grow up. Indeed, Dutch teachers regard fostering personal development as an important objective of literature teaching (Janssen, 1998; Oberon, 2016), and suggested that literary reading may familiarize students with other worlds, contributes to moral development, and helps them to think about people's choices, about themselves, others and the world (Curriculum.nu, 2018a). A synthesis of intervention research suggests that such claims may be valid (Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2018), but few studies address the Dutch curriculum.

Therefore, we designed an intervention, titled Transformative Dialogic Literature Teaching (TDLT), and investigated its effects on Dutch students' insight into human nature, including insight into themselves and others. In addition, we investigated whether this intervention would alleviate two particular challenges in Dutch literature classrooms: students' struggle to deal with difficulties during literary reading and their low motivation for literature education.

1.1 *Insight into Human Nature*

Reading fictional and literary texts is assumed to affect readers' perceptions of self and others (Keen, 2007; Nussbaum, 1995), or in our terms, their insight into human nature. Results of empirical studies support these claims (Hakemulder, Fialho, & Bal, 2016; Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015). Insight into human nature is theorized to arise from simulated social experiences that readers live through when they read fictional texts, for example, novels, stories, or poems (Mar & Oatley, 2008). This process has also been conceptualized as "transformative reading" (Fialho, 2012). In phenomenological studies, Fialho (2018) found that adult readers may experience self-other perceptual depth, which resembles what we call "insight into human nature", as it entails both self and others. Fialho showed that self-other perceptual depth was predicted by six other experiences: vividly imagining story setting and characters (*imagery*); recognizing aspects of self or others in characters (*identification*); enacting and embodying the experiences of a character (*experience-taking*); evaluating characters, posi-

tively or negatively (*character evaluations*); feeling sympathy and compassion for characters (*sympathy*); and being aware of striking words, phrases or sentences (*aesthetic awareness*).

For adolescent readers, it has yet to be determined whether these experiences are precedents of self-other insights. Empirical studies suggest that processes and outcomes similar to transformative reading may occur amongst adolescents. For instance, they were found to construct their possible future selves when reading fiction (Richardson & Eccles, 2007), compared their own lives to stories and engaged empathetically with characters (Charlton, Pette, & Burbaum, 2004), and better understood experiences of others, which offered them new options for their own lives (Rothbauer, 2011). In addition, adolescents developed insight into human nature when reading was school-based rather than a leisure activity (e.g., Malo-Juvera, 2014; Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; White, 1995).

The literature classroom, thereby, seems a promising domain for adolescents to develop insight into themselves, fictional others, and real-world others. Examples include insight into previously unrecognized personal qualities or shortcomings, insight into self-other relations, understandings of why characters think, feel and behave in a certain way, understandings of individual others or groups of people, and insight into moral dilemmas that people may face. Moreover, readers may consider gaining insight into human life to be a meaningful reason for reading (eudaimonic reasons for reading), in addition to reading for pleasure and enjoyment (hedonic reasons), or for plot (Koopman, 2016; Miall & Kuiken, 1995). But how might we best design literary instruction when the aim is to foster students' insight into human nature?

1.2 *Design Principles*

In a review, we identified a set of instructional design principles based on intervention studies for which empirical support was found (Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2018). The first principle suggests that insight into human nature may be fostered when fictional texts that are read are thematically relevant for an intervention aim, such as texts addressing social relations or moral dilemmas. Malo-Juvera (2014), for instance, used a young adult novel about sexual harassment to affect students' attitudes toward such behavior.

Second, exploratory dialogic activities appeared to be important to foster insight into human nature (e.g., Adler & Foster, 1997; Eva-Wood, 2004; Malo-Juvera, 2014; White, 1995). If reading would remain an individual activity, readers only explore their own reading experiences. Talking to peers offers the op-

portunity to consider a broader range of thoughts, questions, feelings, ideas, and perspectives in response to texts and the social-moral themes they address. This may happen in small-group or whole-class dialogues, or in a combination where the latter follows the former. Such a buildup creates multiple layers of sharing responses and interpretations.

The third design principle indicates that students, to prepare for external dialogues, should engage in internal dialogues with texts. In such dialogues, students establish awareness of the responses that texts evoke in them as well as of how these responses are related to the outer-textual world, which may stimulate them to engage in transactional processes of meaning-making (see Rosenblatt, 1938/1983). Internal dialogues may be stimulated by writing tasks that prompt students to activate previous personal experiences before reading (White, 1995), to notice and annotate responses during reading (Eva-Wood, 2004), and/or to write (reflective) responses directly after reading (Malo-Juvera, 2014). However, implementing these three instructional design principles may not be sufficient, as students face challenges that potentially interfere with developing insight into human nature.

1.3 *Challenges for Students*

First, secondary school students may struggle to deal with difficulties in fictional and literary texts. As relatively novice readers of literature, they may doubt their own abilities as readers (Levine & Horton, 2013). Their responses tend to be confined to literal reiterations, character descriptions, or simple evaluations (see the introduction by McCarthy & Goldman, 2017, for an overview of the literature). To facilitate comprehension, attending solely to personal responses, relying on background knowledge, and making real-world inferences may not suffice (see McMaster et al., 2012, for research with younger children). Rather, there is a need to guide students toward making connections between the initial responses they notice during internal dialogues with texts, and textual elements (Eva-Wood, 2004). In 10th grade, this may concern literary devices (e.g., flashbacks, focalization, psychological suspense, motifs); students may consider how these devices evoke personal experiences and responses.

Moreover, students may yet have to learn literary reading strategies, such as monitoring their reading process, thinking about what they read, and actively considering questions that arise (Peskin, 1998). This was illustrated by what teachers reported in a recent study in 10th grade Dutch literature classrooms: students who struggle with comprehension oftentimes simply ignore aspects of texts that are difficult to understand (see Chapter 4). Thus, students' metacog-

nitive awareness of applying reading strategies seems limited (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). All in all, an instructional approach that explicitly attends to dealing with difficulties in literary reading may increase the likelihood that students engage in meaningful dialogues with texts.

A second challenge is Dutch students' low motivation for literature education (Stokmans, 2009; Van Schooten, 2005). As a remedy, a student-centered literature curriculum may contribute to students' motivation for literary reading, compared to a traditional teacher-centered curriculum (Verboord, 2005). Moreover, student-centered and affect-oriented interventions implemented in Dutch and other literature curricula were found to positively influence outcomes related to motivation, such as task interest (Henschel, Meier, & Roick, 2016), appreciation of literary texts (Janssen, Braaksma, & Couzijn, 2009), involvement in texts (Fialho, Zyngier, & Miall, 2012), and contributions to classroom talk (Eva-Wood, 2004). An instructional approach oriented toward student-readers' authentic responses to texts may therefore increase motivation for literature education, which may be determined by the extent to which students' needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

1.4 *Hypotheses*

We designed a reader- and affect-oriented intervention for 10th grade literature classrooms (Transformative Dialogic Literature Teaching, or TDLT), based on a theoretical-empirical model of transformative reading and a set of design principles concerning thematically relevant texts, internal dialogues, and external dialogues. First, as Figure 6.1 shows, we expect that TDLT fosters students' insight into human nature and their eudaimonic reasons for reading. Second, we expect that TDLT positively affects students' self-reported use of strategies to deal with difficulties during literary reading (for short: "strategy use") and their motivation for literature education (operationalized as feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness). Finally, we hypothesize that strategy use and motivation function as mediators of TDLT effects on insight into human nature and eudaimonic reasons for reading. Strategy use may positively affect students' internal dialogues with texts, via which they may develop insight into human nature. Motivation for literature class may enhance engagement in response tasks, which may be a precondition to develop insight into human nature and to consider this insight a reason for reading.

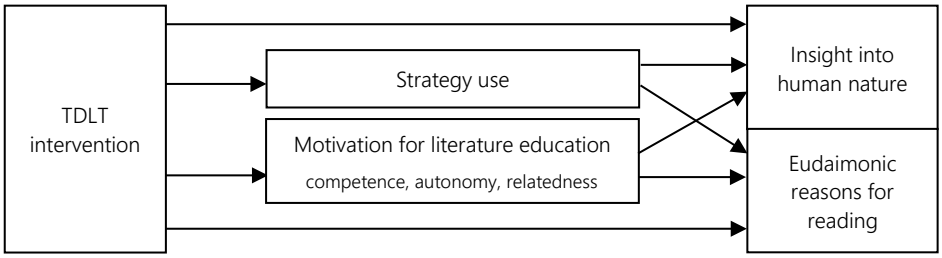

Figure 6.1. Hypothesized direct and mediated effects of TDLT.

2 METHOD

2.1 *Research Design*

We implemented a quasi-experimental design with a pretest, posttest and delayed posttest. Six classes were assigned to TDLT and six to a control condition. TDLT teachers scheduled the units in six weeks, in the Fall semester of 2017. The control condition also lasted for six weeks. It involved regular literary instruction ("business as usual"), focused on identifying literary devices by analyzing literary texts (see section 2.8 in this chapter).

2.2 *Participants*

Ten Dutch teachers from five schools volunteered to participate in the study (see Table 6.1). Three teachers had already been involved in designing TDLT (see Chapter 4), and were therefore assigned to the TDLT condition. The remaining teachers signed up for either TDLT or the control condition. To avoid contamination of conditions, teachers were involved in one of both conditions. Six teachers taught a TDLT class; four taught either one or two control classes. All TDLT teachers were female, who had on average 18.7 years of teaching experience (*SD* = 12.3). Five control classes were taught by females; one by a male teacher. Their experience (*M* = 13.3 years; *SD* = 5.6) did not differ significantly from TDLT teachers.

Teachers' classes were 10th grade classes in the higher general secondary education track, which prepares for higher vocational education but not for university. In both conditions, 166 students participated (*N* = 332). Conditions did not differ significantly in gender (53.6% females in TDLT, 45.2% in control condition), average age (15.5 years old in both), and average grade for the subject Dutch language and literature (6.6 out of 10 for both). In addition, we assessed students' Familiarity with fiction and Trait empathy (see Section 2.4 in

this chapter); no significant differences between conditions were found. Students' parents received an informed consent letter and could object to their child's participation. None of them withheld their consent.

Table 6.1. Participating teachers

Condition	Teacher ID and status		School	Location	Classes	Students
TDLT	101	Involved in TDLT design	A	Provincial town	1	30
TDLT	102	Involved in TDLT design	A		1	29
TDLT	103	Involved in TDLT design	B	Major city	1	26
TDLT	201	Signed up for TDLT	B		1	28
TDLT	202	Signed up for TDLT	C	Provincial city	1	25
TDLT	203	Signed up for TDLT	D	Provincial city	1	28
Control	301	Signed up for control	D		1	26
Control	302	Signed up for control	D		1	26
Control	303	Signed up for control	E	Major city	2	27, 28
Control	304	Signed up for control	A	(see above)	2	32, 27

2.3 *Intervention*

TDLT consisted of one preparatory and five reading-and-dialogue units. In total, TDLT included about 300 minutes of classroom work; teachers scheduled the units in 50- or 60-minute lessons. In addition, students completed homework assignments. Short stories were read that centered around "justice and injustice" (see Table 4.3, p. 112). Teachers involved in designing TDLT classified the stories as literary texts in terms of language use that was unconventional for students (Van Peer, Zyngier, & Hakemulder, 2007) and gaps readers needed to fill in (Iser, 1980). We included canonical and more recently published stories.

The primary aim of TDLT was for students to learn to express, orally and in writing, a) the responses that stories evoked in them, b) which new insights into themselves, others and social life these stories offered them, and c) which literary devices evoked these responses and insights. To achieve these aims, students were taught strategies for both internal and external dialogues. Table 6.2 presents an overview of the teaching and learning activities in each unit (see Appendix D for full TDLT overview). In the preparatory unit strategies for external dialogues were introduced. Students observed and evaluated videos of peers talking about a story, received explicit instruction about the strategy –

which was summarized on a "first aid card" they used throughout TDLT – and applied the strategy in a small-group dialogue about famous quotes about literature and reading that were printed on small cards (e.g., "A good book has no ending", R.D. Cumming).

In all subsequent reading-and-dialogue units, external dialogues were applied in combination with internal dialogues; together, they formed the two-step basic structure that was central in TDLT (see Table 6.2).

Internal dialogues remained implicit in unit 1 and 2, were explicitly introduced in unit 3, and were applied during reading in units 3 to 6. The first aid card also included strategies for dealing with difficulties during reading that the teacher introduced in unit 3, for example, writing down question marks, pausing to think, and asking for help. Moreover, from unit 3 onwards, internal and external dialogues focused on transformative reading experiences: students considered, for example, experiences of imagery and sympathy. The activities in the units were miscellaneous, short, and high-paced to keep students engaged and motivated. Students were stimulated to monitor their progress by working with a rubric (see Appendix D, p. 280).

Teachers were given guidelines for providing students with feedback and guiding their dialogic processes, such as prompts and questions for stimulating dialogues in a student group (e.g., "What else does this story make you think about?"; "Could someone have another opinion?"; "I hear you struggling with this. Let's talk about how to solve that issue").

2.4 *Instruments*

Table 6.3 provides an overview of all questionnaires and subscales used to measure various indicators of students' insight into human nature (e.g., transformative reading experiences, empathy for characters, moral competence), their reasons for reading, strategy use, and motivation for literature education, including example items, internal consistency, scoring scales, and references. We randomized the order of items included at two or more measurement occasions. We used existing, validated questionnaires, except for the Transformative Reading Experiences Questionnaire (TREQ), which was developed based on Fialho's (2018) transformative reading model. Descriptives for quantitative data are included in Appendix F (see p. 288).

Table 6.2. Operationalization of internal and external dialogues, in sequence (1, 2, …)

Unit	Internal dialogue	External dialogues
1	1. Implicit	2. Learning-by-observation: video of peers talking about story 1 3. Explicit instruction 4. Practice
2	2. Implicit	1. Apply to theme: talk about "justice and injustice" 3. Apply to theme and story 2: talk about injustice in story, opinion about story, and support with literary devices
3	1. Preparation: write response to moral statement relevant to story 3 2. Explicit instruction 3. Learning-by-observation: teacher thinks aloud, annotates part of story 3 4. Apply to rest of story 3: annotate responses, reflect on prominent responses	5. Apply to story 3: small-group talk, deepen prominent responses 6. Apply in class: share experiences, teacher-led
4	1. Apply to part of story 4: annotate responses, reflect on prominent responses 3. Apply to part of story 4: write story ending as response 5. Apply to end of story 4: annotate responses	2. Apply to part of story 4: imagine characters' position, small-group talk about just and unjust story ends 4. Apply to written response: share feedback on story endings in pairs 6. Apply in class: teacher-led talk about justice and injustice in original and written story endings
5	1. Recall of previous internal dialogues	2. Apply to stories 2-4: compare reading experiences, justice and injustice, formulate life lesson in small groups 3. Apply in classroom: share life lessons, teacher-led talk
6	1. Apply to story 5: annotate responses 3. Apply to story 6 (homework): annotate responses, write dialogue with imaginary peer	2. Apply to story 5: speed dates in pairs about character, about responses and literary devices; about injustice

Note. For an overview of all phases in each unit, see Appendix D.

Table 6.3. Variables and quantitative effect measures: Subscales, example items, number of items, internal consistency, per measurement occasion

Variable	Instrument	Subscale: Example item	Items	Cronbach's α		
				T1	T2	T3
Human nature: self, fictional others, real-world others	Transformative Reading Experiences Questionnaire (developed for this project; in Dutch; see Chapter 5)[a]	*Imagery* When I'm reading, I clearly picture in my mind the setting where the story takes place.	3	.82	.77	.75
		Identification When I'm reading, I recognize something of myself in the protagonist or other characters.	4	.79	.80	.77
		Experience-taking When I read stories, I see, think, and feel what a character sees, thinks, and feels.	4	.78	.79	.88
		Character evaluation When I read stories, I notice that I evaluate characters positively or negatively.	3	.80	.78	.79
		Sympathy If something bad happens to a story character, that doesn't do much to me.	3	.87	.81	.78
		Aesthetic awareness During reading, particular words or sentences really stand out for me.	3	.79	.79	.77
		Self-insights I have the idea that I understand myself better because of story reading.	5	.86	.85	.81
		Insights into others Story reading offers me more insight into how other people are.	4	.85	.82	.80
Human nature: fictional others	Literary Response Questionnaire (Miall & Kuiken, 1995; translation by Van Schooten, 2005)[a]	*Empathy for characters* Sometimes it is as if story characters almost become real people that I know.	7	.77	.83	.84

Variable	Instrument	Subscale: Example item	Items	Cronbach's α T1	T2	T3
Human nature: real-world others	Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (Moely et al., 2002; our translation)[a]	*Diversity attitudes* [†] I like meeting people who have a totally different background than I have myself.	5	.63	.66	-
Human nature: self, real-world others	Moral Competence Test (Lind, 2016; translation by Duriez & Demarez, 2000)[b]	Two moral dilemma scenarios; indicate agreement with decision made in scenarios; evaluate acceptability of six pro and six contra arguments for the decisions.	26	Pretest-posttest only; α not applicable		
Reasons for reading	Literary Response Questionnaire (see above)[a]	*Story-driven reading* [†] I like it when events build tension in the story.	8	.72	.67	.56
	Motivations for Reading Scale (Oliver & Raney, 2011; translation and adaption for literary reading by Koopman, 2016)[c]	*Eudaimonic reasons* I like books that focus on meaningful human conditions.	6	.89	.88	.86
		Hedonic reasons It is important for me to have fun when I read a story.	6	.75	.68	.73
Strategy use	Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; our translation and adaptation for story reading)[a]	No subscales I stop from time to time to think about what I'm reading.	10	.76	.77	-
Motivation for literature education	Basic Need Satisfaction Scale (Van den Broeck et al., 2010; our translation and adaptation for literature education)[a]	*Autonomy* In literature class, I feel free to express my ideas and opinions.	6	.87	.71	-
		Competence I master the skills I need in literature class, like reading and discussing stories and doing response tasks.	5	.76	.83	-
		Relatedness In literature class, I feel part of the group.	8	.72	.78	-

Note. [a] 5-point scales; [b] 7- and 9-point scales; [c] 7-point scales. [†] Excluded due to insufficient Cronbach's alpha.

Correlations (see Appendix F, p. 287) suggested that TREQ subscales might represent underlying components. Via principal components analysis with Varimax rotation for the three measurement occasions, two components were extracted (see Table 6.4). Factor 1, Insight beyond story worlds, distinguished itself by high factor loadings of self-insights, insights into others, and aesthetic awareness. Generally speaking, it seemed to represent reflections that go "beyond" story worlds. Identification loaded on both factors, but clearly higher on Factor 1. Factor 2, Experiences within story worlds, represented reflections on experiences "within" story worlds, that is, imagery, experience-taking and evaluations of how characters think, feel and behave. Sympathy loaded on both factors, without clearly higher factor loadings for either of both factors. Factor scores were used for subsequent analyses.

Table 6.4. Factor loadings of PCA for TREQ scales, per measurement

	T1		T2		T3	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
Imagery		.87		.87		.83
Identification	.72	.51	.75	.41	.76	.39
Experience-taking		.70		.76	.63	
Character evaluation		.64		.63		.69
Sympathy	.54	.57	.34	.64	.62	.42
Aesthetic awareness	.73		.73		.65	
Self-insights	.91		.92		.90	
Insights into others	.85		.79	.34	.83	
Eigenvalue	4.18	1.17	4.11	1.19	3.90	1.01
Variance explained (%)	52.2	14.7	51.4	14.9	48.7	12.7

Note. Factor 1 = Insight beyond story worlds; Factor 2 = Experiences within story worlds. Factor loadings < .30 not displayed. Sampling adequacy and sphericity assumptions were met: KMO values .84, .85 and .85; Bartlett's test of sphericity all *p*'s < .001.

To look for additional indicators of insight into human nature, we analyzed students' final TDLT task (see Appendix D, p. 279). Control teachers administered this writing task at the end of the control period. Students wrote a dialogue with an imaginary peer in response to a story they read, which they selected from four options. The instruction read: "Imagine you are having a dialogue about the story with a classmate. You talk, for example, about how you experienced the story, about its theme, the characters, things you found unclear… Write this dialogue on the next pages, as a comic. You start with the

sentence that is already given. Try to make it a real dialogue, not a question-and-answer interview. Use at least two pages." The dialogue started with: "What part of the story really stood out to you?" Students completed this task individually; they did not actually talk to a peer.

2.5 *Background variables*

As background variables, we assessed familiarity with fiction and trait empathy. Familiarity with fiction was assessed by administering an Author Recognition Test (Stanovich & West, 1989), as adapted by Schrijvers et al. (2016). Students scored relatively low, although there were considerable differences among individual students (M = 4.3, SD = 3.0; range -2 to 13). We measured trait empathy with two scales of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983): *Empathic concern*, which assessed students' feelings of sympathy and concern for unfortunate others (e.g., "I am often worried about people who are less well off than I am", Cronbach's α = .79), and *Perspective-taking* (e.g., "When someone upsets me, I try to put myself in his or her position for a moment", Cronbach's α = .74) which assessed their tendency to adopt the point of view of others. Items were scored on a 7-point agreement scale.

2.6 *Procedures*

Pretests were administered one week prior to the start of the lessons, posttests maximum one week after intervention or control lessons had finished, and delayed posttests approximately four months after the posttest. Instruments were administered on paper during regular hours of Dutch class, by the first author or a trained research assistant.

2.7 *Implementation Fidelity*

Implementation fidelity is important to examine the extent to which teachers implemented an intervention as intended, and to assess whether implementation differences might influence the study's outcomes (O'Donnell, 2008). We measured implementation fidelity via teacher logs and time on task observations.

Teachers were asked to complete an online log after each TDLT unit. In total, we administered 36 logs (6 classes * 6 units). The response rate was 94%. The logs were organized according to the phases of each unit as described in the teacher guidelines (in total 31 phases in 6 units). For each phase, teachers

indicated whether it was completed, partly completed or not completed. Teachers also evaluated the partly and fully completed phases on 5-point scales, from *completely disagree* to *completely agree*.

Furthermore, we conducted time on task observations twice in each TDLT class. These functioned as an indicator of the proportion of available learning time that students are engaged in the tasks assigned to them (e.g., Karweit, 1984). Students' behavior was coded "on task" if they worked on the given task or subject matter and did what was asked of them, for example, listening to the teacher or a peer, talking about a task, reading a story, talking to the teacher, or asking questions. It was coded "off task" when students were not working on given tasks or subject matter, but were, for example, looking at cell phones, talking about something else than their task, being disruptive, or waiting for a next task. If a students' task behavior could not be determined, for example, when another student got into the line of sight, we coded it as "unclear". We randomly selected six students in the classroom and observed them in multiple rounds. In one round, each student was observed twice for twenty seconds. After a one-minute break, the next observation round started. This process continued until the end of the lesson. In total, we collected 877 observations in 12 lessons.

2.8 *Control Condition*

The control condition involved regular literary instruction, focused on identifying literary devices by analyzing literary texts. Control teachers completed an online log for each class at the end of each week of the study. In total, 36 logs (6 classes * 6 weeks) were administered; the response rate was 94%. On average, each control class was taught 5.7 lessons during the study, compared to 6 lessons in the TDLT condition.

In the logs, control teachers reported what they taught. Their descriptions indicated that they focused, as they announced before the study started, on learning to identify and apply literary devices by analyzing stories, for example, perspective, characters, chronological structure, motives, story lines, and gaps. In four classes, a textbook was used, combined with online resources and self-developed teaching materials; in two classes, online resources and self-developed materials but no textbook were used.

Teachers mainly worked with literary short stories and, occasionally, with excerpts from literary novels. In two classes, a story was used that was also read in the TDLT condition (*Blood*, by Gerard Reve). Mostly, students answered analytically oriented questions after reading a text, for instance, about perspec-

tive, setting, and focalization. Some argumentative and oral skills were practiced, such as substantiating an evaluation of a story, analyzing a literary review, and exchanging answers to assignments in small groups or in teacher-led classroom conversations. Teachers also indicated that students read a self-selected novel at home.

2.9 *Data Analysis*

2.9.1 Quantitative data

To detect outliers, we first inspected boxplots of dependent variables across measurement occasions. We then applied casewise diagnostics, using regression analyses and graphs to plot students' scores (T1 on T2; T2 on T3), with Condition as a factor. Cases deviating more than 3 SD from the regression line were considered outliers. Across variables and measurement occasions, we identified 18 outliers (5.4% of total *N*, varying from 0,3 to 1% per variable). For each variable, we created a filter variable for outlier exclusion.

Indicators of insight into human nature (Insight beyond story worlds, Experiences within story worlds, and Empathy for characters) and reasons for reading (Eudaimonic and Hedonic reasons) were analyzed using mixed models growth curve analysis, with Student as subject variable for correlated random effects and Time as repeated variable for correlated residuals within random effects. We also tested models with Class as random factor. As its inclusion did not significantly improve the model fit, we excluded Class from the models to optimize statistical power. For each variable, we tested three linear models: (1) a model with Time as fixed effect, to test whether change over time occurred regardless of condition; (2) a model in which we added Condition as a fixed effect, to check whether intercepts of the two conditions differed significantly; and (3) a model in which we added a Time*Condition interaction effect, to examine whether change over time differed between conditions.

For variables measured at T1 and T2 only (Moral competence, Strategy use, Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness), we applied linear mixed models analysis. Again, Student was the subject variable for correlated random effects. We tested four models: (1) a basic null model, intercept only; (2) a model in which we added Pretest as a fixed effect, to test to which extent pretest scores explained posttest scores; (3) a model in which we added Condition as a fixed effect, to test whether average posttest scores differed between conditions; and (4) a model in which we added a Pretest*Condition interaction effect, to test if effects of condition on posttest scores depended on pretest scores.

Next, we tested whether strategy use and motivation mediated TDLT effects on dependent variables at T2. We specified dependent variables in separate mediation analyses, with Condition as independent variable and Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness, and Strategy use as parallel mediators. Pretest scores of the dependent and mediating variables involved in the analysis were added as statistical controls.

2.9.2 Qualitative data

Students' written dialogues were assumed to contain indicators of insight into human nature and/or other transformative reading experiences. However, the total response rate was rather low (69%): not all TDLT students handed in their task and only four out of six control classes completed the task due to scheduling issues. Group sample size was therefore unequal. We checked for significant differences on relevant variables between TDLT (n = 134) and control (n = 94) subgroups. The groups did not differ in gender (χ^2 = 2.74, p = .10), Familiarity with fiction and Trait empathy (Wilk's Λ = .997, p = .91), pretest scores on dependent variables (Wilk's Λ = .973, p = .48), and pretest scores on mediating variables (Wilk's Λ = .990, p = .75). We inferred that the data were admissible for analysis.

Students' written dialogues consisted on average of 267 words (SD = 121; for two examples of dialogues, see Appendix F, p. 289). Dialogues were split into segments: whenever a new topic was addressed, we distinguished a new segment. In total, we distinguished 1,686 segments. Segments were coded for relevant response types, such as indicators of insight into human nature and other transformative reading experiences (see Appendix F, p. 291, for the coding scheme). Each segment could contain multiple response types and could thus be assigned multiple codes. An independent researcher coded 100 segments (6% of the data). Agreement was acceptable: κ = .72 (for calculation procedure, see Appendix F, p. 295). We compared for both conditions the number of student dialogues in which a response type occurred at least once, using chi-square analyses, and how often each response type occurred overall, using t-tests. Further, we analyzed numbers of words and segments, as indicators of extensiveness of students' responses.

3 RESULTS

3.1 *Implementation Fidelity*

TDLT was, overall, well-implemented. According to teachers' logs, 77.6% of the TDLT phases was completed as planned; 14.4% was partly completed, and 8% was not completed. They indicated that phases were feasible to teach (M = 4.1, SD = .7), proceeded orderly (M = 3.9, SD = .8), were clear for students (M = 4.0, SD = .7) and were interesting and engaging for students (M = 3.7, SD = .8).

Of the 877 time on task observations collected in 12 lessons, students were off task in 14.7% and on task in 85.2% of the cases, which was above the standard of 80% (e.g., Muijs & Reynolds, 2010; one observation was coded as "unclear", 0.1%). More specifically, for teacher-led activities (83.3%), individual student activities (86.4%) and story reading (84.6%), there was little variation in the on task percentage. For whole-class activities, it was slightly lower (76.0%), whereas it was clearly higher for dialogic activities in pairs or small groups (90.1%). Control teachers' logs showed that some oral and argumentative skills were practiced (e.g., supporting opinions about stories, analyzing literary reviews, sharing answers in small groups or the classroom), but that this mostly focused on analysis of literary devices.

3.2 *Effects of TDLT*

Table 6.5 presents model comparisons for all dependent variables, with parameter estimates for significant best-fit models. Looking at indicators of insight into human nature, Model 3 fitted the data best for Insights beyond story worlds, Experiences within story worlds, and Eudaimonic reasons for reading. Significant interaction effects indicated that the intervention affected change over time on these indicators of insight into human nature (see Figures 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4). At T2, effects were medium for Insights beyond story worlds (d = .59) and Eudaimonic reasons (d = .54), and small for Experiences within story world (.19). At T3, all effects were small (d = .23 for Insights beyond story world, d = .24 for Experiences within story worlds, and d = .34 for Eudaimonic reasons). We found no effects on Empathy for characters, Hedonic reasons, and Moral competence.

Table 6.5. Mixed growth curve (MGC) and linear mixed (LM) model comparisons, with parameter estimates and effect sizes for significant best-fit models

Variable	Analysis	Model	-2LL	N_{pars}	Comparison				Parameter estimates			Cohen's *d*	
					Models	χ^2	*df*	*p*	β	*SE*	*p*	T2	T3
Insight beyond story worlds	MGC	1 Time	2111.45	5									
		2 Conditional	2105.78	6	2 vs 1	5.67	1	.017					
		3 Interaction	2097.97	7	3 vs 2	7.81	1	.005	.139	.05	.005	.59	.23
Experiences within story worlds	MGC	1 Time	2120.34	5									
		2 Conditional	2117.43	6	2 vs 1	2.91	1	.088					
		3 Interaction	2113.44	7	3 vs 2	3.99	1	.046	.106	.05	.046	.19	.24
Empathy for characters	MGC	1 Time	1704.43	5									
		2 Conditional	1704.37	6	2 vs 1	.06	1	.810					
		3 Interaction	1704.34	7	3 vs 2	.03	1	.856					
Eudaimonic reasons	MGC	1 Unconditional	2475.82	5									
		2 Conditional	2469.07	6	2 vs 1	6.78	1	.009					
		3 Interaction	2457.00	7	3 vs 2	12.04	1	.001	.205	.06	.001	.54	.34
Hedonic reasons	MGC	1 Unconditional	1948.50	5									
		2 Conditional	1948.11	6	2 vs 1	.39	1	.533					
		3 Interaction	1945.89	7	3 vs 2	2.23	1	.136					

Variable	Analysis	Model	-2LL	N_{pars}	Comparison				Parameter estimates			Cohen's *d*	
					Models	χ^2	*df*	*p*	β	*SE*	*p*	T2	T3
Moral competence	LM	1 Null	2070.83	3									
		2 + pretest	2007.31	4	2 vs 1	63.52	1	.000					
		3 + condition	2006.43	5	3 vs 2	.35	1	.347					
		4 + interaction	2002.54	6	4 vs 3	3.88	1	.500					
Strategy use	LM	1 Null	447.11	3									
		2 + pretest	313.41	4	2 vs 1	133.71	1	< .001					
		3 + condition	300.49	5	3 vs 2	12.91	1	< .001	.206	.06	< .001	.37	
		4 + interaction	299.88	6	4 vs 3	.62	1	.430					
Autonomy	LM	1 Null	454.28	3									
		2 + pretest	422.48	4	2 vs 1	31.80	1	< .001					
		3 + condition	360.41	5	3 vs 2	62.07	1	< .001	.541	.06	< .001	.98	
		4 + interaction	360.03	6	4 vs 3	.38	1	.537					
Competence	LM	1 Null	541.35	3									
		2 + pretest	443.68	4	2 vs 1	97.70	1	< .001					
		3 + condition	428.45	5	3 vs 2	15.23	1	< .001	.290	.07	< .001	.57	
		4 + interaction	428.45	6	4 vs 3	.001	1	.975					
Relatedness	LM	1 Null	400.52	3									
		2 + pretest	307.53	4	2 vs 1	93.00	1	< .001					
		3 + condition	273.34	5	3 vs 2	34.19	1	< .001	.330	.05	< .001	.64	
		4 + interaction	272.76	6	4 vs 3	.58	1	.445					

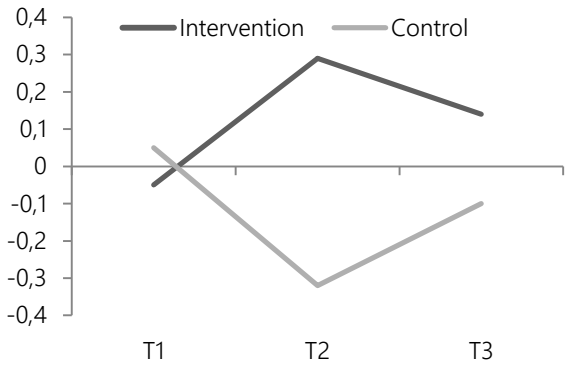

Figure 6.2. Factor scores for Insights beyond story worlds.

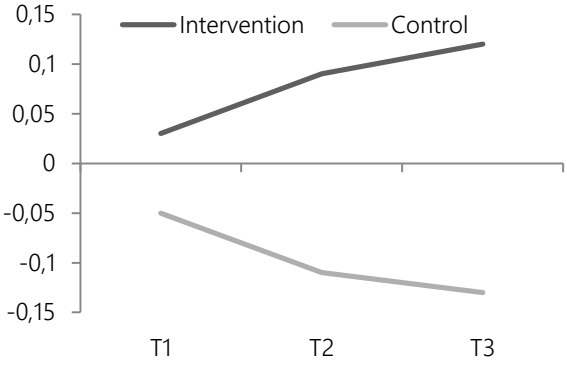

Figure 6.3. Factor scores for Experiences within story worlds.

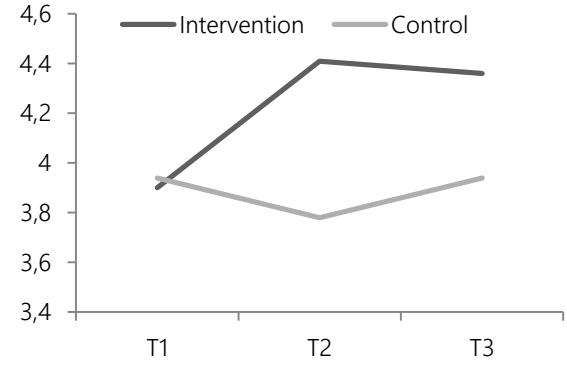

Figure 6.4. Adjusted mean scores for Eudaimonic reasons for reading.

Furthermore, TDLT students wrote more extensive dialogues, M = 295 words, SD = 134, than control students, M = 227, SD = 87 (t (225) = 4.58, p < .001). No difference was found for the number of segments (TDLT M = 7.1, SD = 3.3; control M = 7.8, SD = 3.4). Students in both conditions thus addressed equal numbers of topics, but TDLT students appeared to do so more elaborately. Descriptive-evaluative statements, such as reiterations of story events, simple evaluations, or expressions of incomprehension without attempts to solve it, occurred most frequently (see Table 6.6), but significantly less often in TDLT than in the control group. Two reasoning response types closely related to insight into human nature occurred more often in TDLT: Reasoning to understand and interpret characters' acts, thoughts, feelings and motives, and Moral reasoning confined to the story world (see Table 6.6). In addition, Reasoning to substantiate evaluations, and Reasoning to understand and interpret story events occurred significantly more often in TDLT than in the control group. Finally, four transformative reading experiences – Character evaluations, Aesthetic awareness, Imagery, and Identification – occurred more often in TDLT students' dialogues than in those of control students, although the latter two were, overall, mentioned rather infrequently.

For Strategy use, Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness, main effects of condition were found (see Table 6.6). Non-significant interaction models indicated that these effects did not depend on pretest scores. The intervention had a small effect on students' self-reported Strategy use (d = .37), a large effect on satisfying their need for Autonomy (d = .98), and medium effects on Competence (d = .57) and Relatedness (d = .64).

3.3 *Strategy Use and Motivation as Mediators*

We performed mediation analyses on dependent variables for which we found an effect of condition. The mediation model for Insight beyond story worlds explained 58% of the variance in students' scores (R^2 = .58, F = 31.72, p < .001). Results indicated partial mediation. There was a direct effect of Condition (β = .539, p < .001) as well as indirect effects of three mediating variables: Competence (β = .127, 95% CI [.06, .22]), Relatedness (β = -.083, 95% CI [-.19, -.01]), and Strategy use (β = .052, 95% CI [.01, .13]).

Table 6.6. Response types in students' written dialogues

Response type	% of dialogues where response occurs at least once		χ^2-value (*p*-value)	*M* occurrences per dialogue		*t*-value (*p*-value)
	TDLT	Control		TDLT	Control	
Descriptive evaluative statements	79.1	92.6	7.69 (.006)	2.60	4.61	1.70 (.000)
Reasoning						
Evaluative	65.7	34.0	22.17 (.000)	1.14	0.38	6.46 (.000)
To understand and interpret characters	58.2	40.4	6.99 (.008)	1.04	0.68	2.45 (.015)
To understand and interpret story events	30.6	8.5	15.97 (.000)	0.38	0.12	3.76 (.000)
Moral: story world	31.3	10.6	13.45 (.000)	0.43	0.13	4.15 (.000)
Moral: beyond story world	12.7	11.7	n.s.	0.16	0.12	n.s.
Hypothetical	11.9	14.9	n.s.	0.13	0.19	n.s.
Transformative reading components						
Character evaluation	51.5	37.2	4.53 (.033)	0.80	0.59	n.s.
Aesthetic awareness	17.9	6.4	6.43 (.011)	0.19	0.06	2.88 (.009)
Imagery	9.0	2.1	4.47 (.035)	0.10	0.02	2.45 (.015)
Identification	7.5	0.0	7.34 (.007)	0.07	0.00	3.28 (.001)
Sympathy	31.3	21.3	n.s.	0.37	0.28	n.s.
Experience-taking	16.4	8.5	n.s.	0.20	0.10	n.s.
Referentiality						
Self-references	25.4	26.6	n.s.	0.40	0.41	n.s.
Real-world	13.4	8.5	n.s.	0.15	0.09	n.s.
Content-irrelevant						
Other	35.8	45.7	n.s.	0.40	0.70	2.72 (.007)
Unclear	1.5	1.1	n.s.	0.01	0.01	n.s.

Note. For examples of response types, see Appendix F (p. 291).

The second mediation model explained 55% of variance in Experiences within story worlds (R^2 = .59, F = 28.29, p < .001). Whereas in mixed growth curve analysis a direct effect of condition on Experiences was found, it disappeared in the mediation model (β = .006, p = .97), which indicated complete mediation via other variables. Strategy use was the only significant mediator (β = .095, 95% CI [.04, .18]).

Finally, the mediation model for Eudaimonic reasons explained 59% of variance (R^2 = .59, F = 32.36, p < .001). The relationship between Condition and Eudaimonic reasons was partly mediated: in addition to a direct effect (β = .609, p < .001), Competence functioned as a mediator (β = .072, 95% CI [.01, .17]).

3.4 *Summary of Results*

Our first hypothesis was largely confirmed: TDLT positively affected students' insight into human nature and eudaimonic reasons for reading, although effects were not fully consistent across all indicators insight into human nature that we assessed. The second hypothesis was confirmed: TDLT enhanced students' self-reported strategy use and motivation for literature education. Our third hypothesis was partly confirmed: Competence, Relatedness and/or Strategy use mediated effects of TDLT on Eudaimonic reasons for reading and indicators of insight into human nature.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 *Comparing TDLT to "Business as Usual"*

In this quasi-experimental intervention study, we compared the effects of Transformative Dialogic Literature Teaching on 10th grade students' insight into human nature to a "business as usual" approach that mainly focused on learning to identify literary devices in analyzing short stories. Analysis of students' questionnaire data and writing task data indicated that TDLT fostered insight into human nature, which included insight into themselves, fictional others, and real-world others. For example, TDLT had a medium effect on Insights beyond story worlds, the first TREQ component that included the scales Self-insights and Insights into others.

However, results for insight into moral dilemmas that people may face were ambiguous. No conditional differences were found on the Moral Competence Test, but written imaginary dialogues suggested that moral reasoning confined

to the story world occurred more frequently in TDLT than in the control condition. For example, a TDLT student wrote:

> "The end really struck me. What about you?
> Yes, me too. It's not just. [*referring to a father who slaps his son*]
> Oh? I thought it was quite fair.
> Ooh, why then?
> Well, the boy should just know that such things aren't allowed, so he deserved it.
> He only made a joke.
> Yes, I think that's disrespectful.
> So, therefore it's okay to slap your child?
> Well, okay, it could have gone differently.
> Yes, the father shouldn't slap his child because of this.
> Why do you think that?
> You wouldn't slap your child for a joke he made days ago, right?
> Yes, but the father wanted to make clear he doesn't allow that behavior.
> Come off it, that's the wrong way to raise his child."

The effects on Insight beyond story worlds, Experiences within story worlds, and Eudaimonic reasons sustained up until four months after TDLT, although T3 effects for Insight and Eudaimonic reasons became smaller than at T2. As Figures 6.2 and 6.4 illustrate, this may partly be explained by the control condition, where scores dropped at T2 and – nearly – returned to pretest level at T3. Thus, focusing on identifying literary devices by analyzing short stories may have negatively affected students' insight into human nature, whereas TDLT seemed to foster it.

This finding does not imply that identifying literary devices had no value. On the contrary: TDLT students also identified literary devices, as a means to reflect on transformative reading experiences and insight into themselves, others, and moral considerations. This is illustrated by an excerpt of a dialogue written by a TDLT student, who refers to "psychological suspense" to reason about a character's thoughts and feelings, resulting in insight into "why a character does something":

> "Did you also think this story had much suspense? Because I noticed some sort of suspense, but I'm not sure how.
> I think you mean psychological suspense, because you really feel along with the thoughts and emotions of the protagonist. You notice he gets different feelings about the man who is executed, and that it confuses him.
> Yeah, that's what I meant. Because of that, I really get a sense of knowing why a character does something. If I wouldn't have known the protagonist's thoughts, I wouldn't have understood why he is so kind to the convicted man."

This excerpt also exemplifies the extensiveness of TDLT students' dialogues. We found that those more elaborate dialogues contained significantly less descrip-

tive-evaluative statements than the dialogues of control students. Such rather trivial statements, thus, did not seem to function as "fillers" in TDLT students' more extensive dialogues, which might indicate that their explorations of social-moral themes were more in-depth than those of control students. Moreover, in the excerpt above, the student mentions to "feel along" with the protagonist, which indicates experience-taking. Although no differences were found for Experience-taking and Sympathy, other transformative reading experiences were mentioned more often by TDLT students than by control students. As such experiences have been shown to precede self-other insights in adult readers (Fialho, 2018), these findings are promising in terms of fostering adolescents' insight into human nature.

Furthermore, we considered Eudaimonic reasons for reading to be a relevant indicator of students' willingness to develop insight into human nature in the literature classroom. TDLT students more strongly agreed to read for meaningful insights into human conditions than control students. This did not mean that reading for pleasure and enjoyment decreased: for Hedonic reasons, no difference was found. Thus, once TDLT students became more aware of the potential of eudaimonic reasons, both types of reasons appeared to coexist. This finding adds to Oliver and Raney's (2011) work on reasons for watching movies, by expanding their conclusion to another type of media and research population. In addition, we have shown that adolescents seem to benefit from instructional guidance to develop eudaimonic reasons for reading. TDLT appeared to guide students toward recognizing and endorsing that they may read literary texts "to search for and ponder life's meaning, truths, and purposes" (Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 985).

4.2 *The Role of Strategy Use and Motivational Factors*

We further investigated students' strategy use for dealing with difficulties in literary reading and their motivation for literature education in relation to TDLT. Whereas the effect on strategy use was small, effects on motivation were medium to large. TDLT thus appeared to alleviate prominent challenges in literature teaching. These findings are in line with other studies that found positive effects of reader- and affect-oriented approaches on student engagement in literature classrooms (e.g., Eva-Wood, 2004; Fialho et al., 2012; Janssen et al., 2009; Levine & Horton, 2013).

As an indicator of motivation for literature education, Autonomy did not function as a mediator. Strategy use, Competence, and Relatedness explained the effect of TDLT on insight into human nature and eudaimonic reasons for read-

ing to a small extent; β's indicated that mediating effects were small compared to direct effects. For Insights beyond story worlds, the role of a mediator was most obvious: in addition to a prominent direct effect (β = .539), students' feelings of Competence played a mediating role (β = .127). Thus, the more competent students felt after TDLT, the higher their Insight posttest scores. This suggests we should be responsive to students' abilities in the literature classroom. In TDLT, this was operationalized by explicit strategy instruction about internal and external dialogues, by use of support tools such as a first aid card, and as illustrated by the rubric in Appendix D (see p. 280), by monitoring progress when moving toward new and challenging ways of interacting with and about literary texts.

4.3 *Limitations and Directions for Future Studies*

As in most intervention studies, conclusions concern TDLT as a whole. Future experimental studies may investigate the effects of text selection, internal dialogues, and external dialogues in separate conditions. Likewise, the effect of attending to transformative reading experiences could not be assessed separately from other intervention elements, but this study is a first step in validating the transformative reading model (Fialho, 2018) for adolescents.

Furthermore, outcomes of this study can neither be generalized to other educational tracks, grade levels, or foreign literature curricula, nor to other genres than short stories, such as novels or poetry. Future work may address how TDLT can be adapted to other educational contexts and other text genres. For example, as it may be beneficial to develop insight into human nature prior to adolescence, research may focus on how to accommodate TDLT to reading activities in primary school.

In addition, conditions were taught by different groups of teachers. Therefore, although students in both conditions were well-comparable, teacher differences may have affected the outcomes of this study. When we explored potential differences among classes on six relevant background variables, using analyses of variance, differences were found for students' average for grade for Dutch class (p = .032) and their familiarity with fiction (p = .048). However, for both, post-hoc Bonferroni analyses revealed no significant differences between particular classes. Therefore, differences among classes appeared to be negligible, which somewhat counterbalances the lack of random assignment to conditions. To avoid undesirable teacher effects altogether, future studies may, for example, apply a switching replications design.

Finally, written dialogues were collected at T2 only. Therefore, the question remains whether effects would have sustained at T3. Nonetheless, written dialogues added to the quantitative data we collected, as students explicated their thoughts in response to a story. In addition, transformative reading experiences and other response types were well-distinguishable in the dialogues. The instrument may be of added value for future studies that aim to explicate students' thinking in response to fictional and literary texts.

4.4 *Conclusion and Implications*

In societies facing globalization, migration, and polarization, it is perhaps more important than ever for people to reflect on what it means to be 'human'. In this paper, we have shown that literature education may be a promising domain for affecting adolescents' insight into human nature. This study suggests that TDLT may guide students toward developing such insight. The instructional differences between the experimental and control condition imply that we may want to move away from formalist, knowledge-oriented instruction that may still exist in literature classrooms, as aptly described by Wilhelm (2016):

> "Teachers [...] may emphasize knowing and recognizing literary devices, getting at the "internal logic" of a text's construction [...], and relating a work's central "organic" meaning to how this meaning was expressed. There may be an emphasis on "rightness" of literary interpretation. Interpretative questions about the text will be answered after reading [...], and discussions mediated by the teacher, who acts as the authority on the text" (p. 25).

If developing insight into human nature is acknowledged as one of the objectives of literature teaching, such a formalist, knowledge-oriented approach appears not to be helpful. In contrast, as in TDLT, instruction should encourage students to explore their personal responses in dialogic interactions with and about literary texts, by completing purposefully designed combinations of pre-, during- and post-reading tasks in which analysis of literary devices is a means to reason about reading experiences, themes, characters, and moral implications.

As a reader- and affect-oriented approach, TDLT further appears to alleviate reccurring challenges in the literature classroom, in terms of students' motivation and the ways they handle difficulties in literary texts. All in all, if the demonstrated effects are supported or expanded in future studies, TDLT may be a promising approach for fostering students' insight into human nature, their awareness and use of reading strategies, and their motivation for literature education.