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Research Article

Metaphors of *Reading* and *Teaching Reading*: Adult and College Educators' Readerly and Teacherly Identities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore possible implicit models of reading that drive curriculum and instruction in adult and postsecondary developmental reading contexts. This qualitative investigation explored faculty conceptualizations of reading via linguistic metaphors. Forty-six reading education professionals completed an online survey that gave two options for describing *Reading* and *Teaching Reading*: create an elicited metaphor through an open-ended statement or choose from a prescribed list of metaphors. Using metaphor analysis procedures, we identified conceptual metaphor categories. Results indicated interesting differences within the conceptualizations of these participants' readerly identities compared to their teacherly identities.

Keywords: metaphor, conceptualizations, reading

Almost a decade ago, Miller et al. (2010) wrote about the advances as well as the challenges that remain in adult literacy research, with a specific focus on adult *learners*. This is but one part of the equation, however, as a scholarly focus on adult literacy educators is equally important.

A key emphasis within this area is on educator beliefs, which have "an implicit influence on a teacher's practice" (Mishima et al., 2010, p. 769) and therefore directly impact the learner experience. In a review of literature on adult educators' beliefs, we discovered that instructors partially built their conceptual framework based on curriculum documents, while their personal beliefs, attitudes, and values were a much more significant influence in their instruction and decision-making (Kendall & McGrath, 2014). Similarly, Chapman and McHardy (2019) interviewed 19 adult reading teachers to understand their perspectives on why their adult students had reading difficulties. They discovered

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four origins for the teachers' beliefs: the teachers' own personal experiences; their experiences as a teacher; their knowledge about teaching reading; and their knowledge about reading frameworks and theory.

Although these and other recent studies show how important one's beliefs are to teaching, there is limited inquiry in this area, and particularly so within the realm of adult literacy. This focus on instructor beliefs is especially valuable to adult literacy education because prior research has shown a deficit orientation in adult literacy (Perry et al., 2017) that centers on basic skills instruction perhaps to the detriment of other more contextualized aspects of literacy (Perry et al., 2017). Further, understanding how instructors conceptualize reading and teaching reading may lead to more productive and critical professional development that may nudge teachers toward identifying gaps between what they believe about reading versus how they are actually teaching reading. With these gaps in mind, the present study was designed to contribute to the existing knowledge on adult and college literacy educators' beliefs.

Metaphor Analysis

In the present study, teachers' conceptualizations were gathered through the use of metaphor analysis. Metaphor analysis is a methodological approach that is still relatively new to U.S.-based studies within literacy education. Even so, metaphor analysis studies in other forums and in other fields have demonstrated the utility of providing this methodological tool for explorations of student and educator metaphorical conceptualizations. For instance, some scholars have collected spontaneous and elicited metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLEs) and analyzed them as metaphorical representations of participants' conceptualizations of complex concepts like teaching and learning in general. For example, in de Guerrero and Villamil's (2002) investigation of metaphors for ESL teachers, nine separate conceptualizations emerged, including a knowledge-provider, a nurturer, and a tool-provider. And, more specific to literacy, several metaphor studies have explored both learner conceptualizations of literacy (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Shaw & Mahlios, 2014) and educator conceptualizations of literacy (e.g., Konopasky & Reybold, 2014; Shaw & Mahlios, 2015).

It is in this latter space—educators' conceptualizations of *reading* and of *teaching reading*—that we focused the present study. According to Martinez et al. (2001), "Metaphors may stimulate the teachers to explore new conceptual territories visible from an alternative point of view, a perspective of classroom practice which they might not have otherwise considered" (p. 974). Indeed, metaphors offer educators an opportunity to express their roles and responsibilities in classrooms. One example of this type of research is Konopasky and Reybold's (2014) multiple-case study employing interviews of five adult educators (three part- time instructors and two full-time administrators), specifically focusing on their identity at significant junctures such as entering or exiting the adult education profession. The researchers analyzed the results thematically in three stages: stories, rhetorical moves, and metaphor. Results showed both uniqueness and commonality focused on access and space. "Access" referred to giving resources, information, and world access to the adult students. The adult educators served as gatekeepers with social power. Two adult educators also used 'space' as a metaphor to indicate they were the caretakers for their overwhelmed students. Interestingly, the authors

expected to find dissonance, but instead found cohesion. The five educators used metaphors to draw together the "dissonant contexts of their lives" (Konopasky & Reybold, 2014, p. 2).

Fenwick (1996) solicited learning and knowledge metaphors from 65 adult educators with a variety of positions who were taking university classes in adult and continuing education. The educators' assignment was to write a metaphor of practice. The educators then discussed the metaphors with guiding questions: "How are different learners viewed in this picture, and what is their role? What is the role of the educator? How is the learning process understood? What kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing are most valued?" (Fenwick, 1996, pp. 6-7). Metaphorical themes included being a tour guide, firestarter, outfitter, caregiver, and dispenser.

The Study

The present study is an exploration of educators' implicit models of *reading* and of *teaching reading* as interpreted through their metaphorical language. Our focus was on reading professionals who teach at the post-PK-12 level, and included college/developmental reading faculty and adult literacy educators affiliated with an adult literacy program, whether at a community college or a community center. For the purpose of concision, in this manuscript, our focal population will be referred to as "adult/college reading educators."

The study, a qualitative investigation utilizing metaphor analysis protocols (i.e., Cameron & Low, 1999; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), was driven by the following research questions:

1. What conceptual metaphors of *reading* do adult/college reading educators hold based on their stated MLEs?
2. What conceptual metaphors of *teaching reading* do adult/college reading educators hold based on their stated MLEs?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was built upon assumptions surrounding the connections between language and cognition (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981), especially that language is one avenue for exploring conceptualizations. More specifically, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) allows the conceptualization of individuals' beliefs to be expressed through the use of metaphors (Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Conceptual metaphors (CMs), by this perspective, are the cognitive structures that drive our understanding of the world by allowing us to understand one concept or domain through another (Cameron, 2010). According to Saban et al. (2007), "Metaphors act as powerful mental models through which people understand their world by relating complex or unfamiliar phenomena to something previously experienced and concrete" (p. 123). "Metaphors are the larger constructs under which people organize their thinking and from which they plan their actions on the multiple environments in which they participate" (Mahlios et al., 2010, p. 50). Specific to educational research this includes, to some extent, how faculty teach and work with students (Hardcastle et al., 1985; Kövecses, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Methodology

Forty-six reading education professionals who work with post-PK-12 learners in the south-central part of the United States participated in the study. Eighteen educators were volunteer literacy tutors at a public library; 13 were certified teachers at a school district with an adult education program; and 15 educators

taught college/developmental reading courses at a community college. The participants were asked to complete an online survey that solicited their metaphor for *reading* and for *teaching reading*. The reason we selected to solicit both metaphors is the possibility that some may view the process of reading themselves differently than the process of teaching reading to others.

The survey began with an overview of metaphors, including the value of metaphors and how we use metaphors in life. Also included were an explanation and two sample metaphors. It was our goal that survey respondents could use these samples to generate their thoughts about *reading* and *teaching reading* and then effectively articulate those thoughts in metaphors. The survey did not ask the participants to focus either on their own reading or their students' reading, as it was assumed that the participants would generate/select their metaphor for the collective experience (personal and teaching) of what *reading* and *teaching reading* is.

The survey gave participants two options for *reading* and for *teaching reading*: they could create their own elicited metaphor through an open-ended statement (later described as an elicited metaphor or EM), or they could choose from a list of metaphors that had been developed based on a decade of research (i.e., Shaw & Mahlios, 2014) (later described as a prescribed-choice metaphor or PCM). Both options, described further below, involved a "because clause" (also called an extension in metaphor literature) in attempts to uncover participants' reasoning behind their metaphor choices, and to further shed light on their intended meaning (Shaw & Mahlios, 2015). Participants could peruse the entire survey before choosing to either generate their own EM or select a PCM.

Elicited metaphors (EMs). If participants chose to create their own metaphorical linguistic expression (MLE), they completed the statement "*Reading* is like...because..." followed by the statement "*Teaching reading* is like...because." In this scenario, participants generated their own language for both the metaphor and the extension. To illustrate the data yielded, below are a few sample EMs and extensions provided by participants in the study:

- ***Reading* is like** reading a map **because** it sometimes tells you how to get where you want to go, but you've got to figure it out, and everyone is using the same map to go to different places.
- ***Teaching reading* is like** planting seeds **because** one can offer skills and insights, but it takes time and nurturing for those skills and insights to grow into actual abilities.

Prescribed-choice metaphors (PCMs). The second option for respondents on the survey was to choose from a list of pre-written MLEs for *Reading* and for *Teaching Reading*. These options had been carefully crafted from systematic research studies that elicited metaphors from participants on *reading* and *teaching reading* (Shaw & Mahlios, 2014). The prescribed options were as follows:

Reading is like…

___ Growing a tree

___ Putting together pieces of a puzzle

___ Opening a door

___ Learning to walk

___ Climbing a mountain

Teaching reading is like…

___ Planting a seed

___ A juggling act

___ Being a tour guide

___ Coaching a sports team

Although respondents chose from this pre-populated list of MLEs, they were still prompted to provide an explanation for their chosen MLE in the form of a 'because clause.' To illustrate the data yielded, below are sample PCMs and extensions provided by study participants:

- [***Reading* is like** growing a tree] **because** you learn so much when you read.

  Every time you read a book it's like adding another rung to the trunk. Your schema gets larger and the information connects.

- [***Teaching reading* is like** being a tour guide] **because** an instructor must point out the most significant sights to see (the main idea, topic, supporting details).

Following data collection, we initiated the analysis process by first separating the MLEs gathered into four groups: EMs for *Reading,* PCMs for *Reading*, EMs for *Teaching Reading,* and PCMs for *Teaching Reading.* We created separate coding sheets for each grouping prior to initiating analysis, as described in the next section.

Data Analysis

We carefully considered issues of rigor and reliability throughout our entire analysis process by following Low's (2015) "practical validation model" for metaphor analysis studies, which emphasizes five points:

- The process of eliciting explicit metaphors presents challenges that need to be addressed;
- A carefully crafted procedure is needed for participants to identify their metaphors;
- Researchers need to justify the grouping and labeling of metaphors;
- Matching theories to metaphors does not align in a perfect one-to-one fit so classifications and justifications need to be clearly stated; and,
- If a participant says a metaphor, it does not always mean the metaphor is believed or practiced, so attributions need to be justified.

Our overall metaphor analysis process allowed for categorizing and grouping the MLEs into CMs, or the underlying cognitive structures that guide how we understand abstract or unfamiliar concepts (targets) in terms of more concrete or familiar ones (sources) (Kövecses, 2010). This multi-step protocol began with identifying the target and source for each metaphor provided, and then mapping features of the source onto the target. This process led to entailments, which are the characteristics that emerge from the mapping of source features onto a target; in other words, entailments are the 'conclusions' of the mapping process (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). We undertook this analysis separately for the EMs and the PCMs.

Armstrong's (2007) analysis protocol guided us through this process:

1. Identify source and target for each elicited metaphor, including extension of the metaphor
2. List source features for each elicited metaphor
3. Map source features onto targets
4. Examine entailments
5. Group variants together into conceptual metaphors
6. Categorize the conceptual metaphors

The first three steps were completed independently by each member of the research

team. The last three steps were conducted independently by the lead researchers. To ensure intercoder agreement (Saldaña, 2015) we had one team member who was a "checker" of our work. We also met as a research team to discuss each step of the process including any divergences in our identification of sources, targets, extensions, entailments, and CMs.

Results

Throughout this document, and particularly as we report our results, the following typographical conventions will be used in attempts to be consistent with the extant metaphor analysis literature: Words in *regular italics* indicate the focal targets (in the case of this study, there are two: *Reading* and *Teaching Reading*); ***bold italics*** indicate the participants' provided sources, both elicited and prescribed-choice; and ALL-CAPITALS indicate the suggested conceptual categories underlying the metaphorical linguistic expressions (MLEs).

Results for *Reading* will be presented prior to results for *Teaching Reading* in the following organization: EMs first, then PCMs, and then synthesis of results across these data sets.

Reading Elicited Metaphors (EMs)

Following the procedures outlined previously, we examined each MLE with an initial goal of inferring a corresponding CM for each. The results of this procedure for all EMs provided for *Reading* are presented in Table 1. One example is the MLE of "*Reading* is like ***opening a door to an unknown room*** BECAUSE even if you think you know what you are about to get yourself into, you never really know til you are there." We categorized this conceptually as READING IS ANTICIPATING THE UNKNOWN. Another example is the MLE "*Reading* is like ***looking through a kaleidoscope*** BECAUSE everyone sees something uniquely different. Like the reflective lenses used to create imagery in a kaleidoscope, readers rely on their own reflective lenses of background knowledge and lived experiences to create meaning in reading." We labeled this as READING IS VISUALIZATION for the CM.

Following analysis leading to CMs, we grouped these CMs into categories aiming to find convergences or divergences in the EM data set. We identified four broad categories for the CMs (n=13): discovery/exploration, journey, growth/health, and interpretive process.

The discovery/exploration categorization includes the following CMs: READING IS ANTICIPATING THE UNKNOWN, READING IS CLUE-SEEKING, READING IS A VALUABLE DISCOVERY, and READING IS NEW POSSIBILITIES. This categorization captures patterns in the CMs that included MLEs focused on activities involving seeking and finding, including not only discovering things (such as treasures), but also exploration of the unknown.

The journey categorization includes the following CMs: READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES, READING IS INFORMED NAVIGATION, READING IS A JOURNEY, and READING IS THE UNKNOWN. This categorization captures patterns in the CMs that included MLEs that were focused on travel and movement-related activities.

The growth/health categorization includes the following CMs: READING IS NOURISHMENT, READING IS EXERCISE, and READING IS GROWTH. This categorization captures patterns in the CMs that included MLEs that were focused on sustaining and nurturing necessary processes for life and growth.

The interpretive process categorization includes the following CMs: READING IS A SOLITARY ACTIVITY and READING IS CREATING A VISUAL. This categorization captures patterns in the CMs that included MLEs focused on solitary or individual attempts toward interpretation.

Reading Prescribed-Choice Metaphors (PCMs)

As with the EM data set, we started by analyzing each MLE to infer a CM. The results of that first phase of analysis are shown in Table 2. An example MLE, "[*Reading* is like ***growing a tree***] BECAUSE you learn so much when you read. Every time you read a book it's like adding another rung to the trunk. Your schema gets larger and the information connects" is matched conceptually with READING IS GROWTH.

We also grouped the CMs derived from the PCMs into categories aiming to find convergences or divergences in the PCM data set. However, a major difference in this process is that because there were only four PCM options, all of which were pre-written by the researchers, there were fewer to categorize. However, anticipating the desire to look across these two data sets, we moved forward with this analysis. We identified three broad categories for the majority of CMs (n=11): exploration, process, and growth.

The exploration categorization included one CM: READING IS EXPLORATION. The metaphor of ***opening a door*** relates conceptually to seeing what is on the other side, and exploration of new possibilities and places.

The process categorization included two CMs: READING IS A PROCESS and READING IS GOAL-ORIENTED. ***Learning to walk*** is a process that takes time. It begins with movements such as crawling, then standing. Finally, walking is a natural process and children become comfortable with walking and then they start to run. Likewise, reading involves learning basics such as sounds and letters then putting them together to read fluently. ***Putting together a puzzle*** and ***climbing a mountain*** are processes that result in an achieved goal. Likewise, reading is putting puzzle pieces together (reading words, fluency, comprehension), and can be challenging and requires hard work (mountain climbing). The end result is always worthwhile.

The growth categorization included only one CM: READING IS GROWTH. Planting a seed to grow a tree then requires the nurturing of care to ensure it grows. Likewise, for a person to become a reader, it often takes a nurturing educator who shares the joy of reading with the student.

Reading Full Data Set

Across both the EM and PCM data sets, we noted similarities in the categories, even though these categories were created separately. Indeed, the category of growth appeared in both data sets. Growth and nurturing metaphors are prevalent in metaphor analysis research that focuses on education, so this is not a surprise. As well, both data sets included an exploration (collapsed with discovery for the EM data) category. And, although the prescribed data set included a process category, this was slightly different for the EMs and categorized more specifically as interpretive processes. This offers some evidence that, at least for these reading professionals, reading is conceptualized as generative, not static or passive, in nature. Whether reading is conceptualized as movement, growth, exploration, or otherwise as a process, the continued-movement element of these CM categories is unmistakable.

Teaching Reading Elicited Metaphors (EMs)

We first analyzed each MLE in order to provide

an accompanying CM, as shown in Table 3. One sample is "*Teaching reading* is like ***teaching a child how to learn new concepts*** BECAUSE a child needs guidance to proceed." We labeled it with the CM of TEACHING READING IS GUIDING. We identified three broad categories—guiding, solving, and growing—for the CMs (n=10).

The guiding categorization includes the following CMs: TEACHING READING IS GUIDING, TEACHING READING IS TEACHING SELF-RELIANCE, TEACHING READING IS BEING A GUIDE, and TEACHING READING IS BEING A BEACON. This categorization captures patterns in the CMs that included MLEs focused on activities involving offering guidance or coaching, and that emphasized the *teaching* part of teaching reading.

The solving categorization includes the following CMs: TEACHING READING IS SOLVING A PUZZLE, TEACHING READING IS A NEVER-ENDING CHALLENGE, and TEACHING READING IS A LEARNING PROCESS. This categorization captures patterns in the CMs that included MLEs focused on the problem-solving nature of teaching reading to adults.

The growing categorization includes the following CMs: TEACHING READING IS GARDENING. This categorization captures patterns in the CMs that included MLEs focused on planting and growing something.

Teaching Reading Prescribed-Choice Metaphors (PCMs)

We first analyzed each MLE in order to provide an accompanying CM, as shown in Table 4. For example, one participant's MLE was

> [*Teaching reading* is like ***coaching a sports team***] BECAUSE adult students need a lot of support. They need encouragement, patience, as well as instruction. While there is some nurturing (planting a seed) there is more instruction (like playing a sport). So I chose this one because it really is about building relationships with students to teach them. I want their peers in the class to be like a team of support and to share knowledge and insights with them through discussions about their reading.

We coded this conceptually as TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]. We identified three broad categories for the majority of CMs (*n*=11): supporting readers, leading readers, and growing readers.

The supporting readers categorization included one CM: TEACHING READING IS SUPPORTING [READERS]. When "***coaching a sports team***" the coach often provides scaffolded instruction starting with what the players know, then teaching them new skills, and helping them be successful. In similar manner, teachers of reading scaffold, instruct and teach, and support the success of their students.

The leading readers categorization included one CM: TEACHING READING IS LEADING [READERS]. "***Being a tour guide***" is described as leading people through a learning opportunity that is exciting and full of exploration.

The growing readers categorization included one CM: TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]. "***Planting a seed***" does not result in growth. Instead the sower must tend to the seed. Likewise, teachers provide readers with encouragement, positive feedback, opportunities, and support to develop.

Teaching Reading Full Data Set

Across both the EM and PCM data sets for *Teaching Reading*, just as with the *Reading* data set, we noted similarities. Stated simply, the category of growth appeared in both data sets with similar reference to planting and nurturing the seed. A more complex similarity was the idea

guiding (EM), supporting (PCM) and leading (PCM). Although we differentiated them, the commonality was that of guidance and support.

One categorical difference was noted, showing itself in the EMs but not the PCMs. Some educators created metaphors that focused on teaching reading as a problem-solving process. We took note of this because although the majority of these participants seemed to view the teaching of reading as one of growth and support, some educators responded about the reality of challenges, which will be unpacked further in the next section.

Discussion

This research extends the extant literature on conceptualizations of teachers (e.g., Chapman & McHardy, 2019; Kendall & McGrath, 2014) and on conceptualizations of literacy (e.g., Shaw & Mahlios, 2014) by connecting the two areas to provide an understanding of the perspectives that adult/college reading educators have about reading and teaching reading. Our analysis of these instructors' CMs for *reading* offer some evidence that they conceptualized reading as generative, not static or passive, in nature (what we previously referred to as continued-movement metaphors). We noticed that when asked about *reading*, the participants offered language that described positive, open, active, and engaged readers, and thus reflected their readerly identities. They spoke of open possibilities and newness of the unfamiliar that reading affords them. Here, they were unfettered, so positive and free that one could see their excitement. See Tables 1 and 2 for examples such as "*Reading* is like the dawn of a new day because it sheds lights on ideas...gives brightness…" and "*Reading* is like putting together pieces of a puzzle...once everything fits, everyone is happy!"

Similar to the *reading* responses that emphasized openness and discovery and a positive level of uncertainty, the *teaching reading* responses also expressed uncertainty, but in a more anxiety-laden way. The word choice made them seem far less freeing and positive, particularly the ECMs. See Table 3 and 4 for examples such as "*Teaching reading* is like leading students through a dark forest because students are confused and scared," and "*Teaching reading* is like coaching a sports team because adult students need a lot of support." This entailed their self-imposed teacher responsibility to help their students realize their potential for the future. Hence, one contrast we noted here was that they may view the teaching of reading as a problem-solving process. Indeed, when compared to the MLEs for *reading,* these MLEs stood out as having a very different tone.

We asked them about the act of teaching reading, which one might assume would elicit responses focused on the process of teaching or the emotions of a teacher. Instead, these participants shifted their responses to focus on their impact on students. In general, this tended to come through the nurturing or caregiver-type CMs; this is not surprising, as this has been identified in previous research as well (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2002; Fenwick, 1996). On the surface, this indicates that the majority of these participants seemed to view the teaching of reading as one of growth and support; however, there was an underlying, implicit deficit orientation (e.g., "there are more who need you;" "I have no idea what is going to happen with what I teach my students three years from now;" "most of my students have such a negative view of academic reading") that appeared to drive their responses. Specifically, their metaphors lacked a focus on what adult readers bring to the classroom. Instead, the MLEs focused on students' need for guidance and help.

Indeed, the provided MLEs tended to mimic growth/gardening, but they also had somewhat of a deficit tone because these educators seemed to express what they know/assume their students need (e.g., "you have all the materials/supplies you need to start planting the seed") and the teachers will go help them and change them. It should be noted that the MLEs were not overtly negative, but rather had suggestions of deficit orientations that, for example, do not take into account that adults have life and literacy experiences that can be leveraged; rather, there is a start-at-the-bottom, basic-skills assumption threaded throughout several of these. We would have gladly seen comments such as, "My students have learned/experienced XYZ through their limited travel and I can build on these strengths."

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The survey was given to the participants with open perusing between the prescribed choice and elicited metaphors. It is possible that by allowing participants to review the entire survey before selecting a response approach, the elicited metaphors might have been influenced by their review of the prescribed-choice options. Also, we did not specifically ask the participants to identify their personal reading metaphor. This was assumed. With a limited number of participants in each of the adult education areas, we did not aggregate findings based on their teaching assignment. Neither did we solicit any background information on the teachers such as their theoretical beliefs. Finally, the survey was not context or content-dependent so if a participant would choose different metaphors for reading based on tasks (such as reading a bus schedule versus a novel), the participant was only allowed to choose/generate one metaphor overall for *reading* and another metaphor for *teaching reading*.

Next Steps

We offer methodological recommendations because this line of inquiry requires further attention before practical implications can be clarified. First, prior research (Massengill Shaw & Mahlios, 2011; Shaw & Mahlios, 2014) has concluded that adult/college students have diverse conceptualizations about reading and writing and oftentimes the instructor's or program's views are mismatched to students' views. Future research should take a broader approach by simultaneously exploring learners' and educators' conceptualizations to further examine differences in underlying understandings, as well as the resultant actions or non-actions. We believe such a study would yield interesting findings to inform our field. Additionally, a suggested study is to observe instructors in action to see if there is a link between their beliefs and teaching strategies. For example, would we see a connection between their "underlying implicit deficit orientation" and a skill/drill teaching style? Connecting their beliefs with practice could significantly inform the selection of and professional development of adult/college literacy educators. From our perspective, such inquiries should continue to elicit metaphors for both *reading* and *teaching reading*, as we see value in more closely examining the connection. For example, why did the participants in this study give positive metaphors for *reading* but less positive metaphors for *teaching reading*? It would be helpful to conduct interviews with the participants to gain a more in-depth understanding of how metaphors influence educators' dissonance (Konopasky & Reybold, 2014) and identity (Fenwick, 1996). Finally, as this line of inquiry continues to get fleshed out, practical implications can be developed to drive what educators do in the case of misaligned conceptualizations between students and educators.

Conclusion

Our study has afforded a glimpse into adult/college literacy educators' perspectives about *Reading* and *Teaching Reading*. We discovered metaphorical themes that connected to previous research, yet we also discovered unique differences, particularly in how teachers viewed their readerly and teacherly identities. We advocate for understanding how instructors conceptualize reading and teaching reading because this conceptualization through metaphors may lead to better pedagogical practices when teaching reading. It may also help teachers identify gaps between knowledge of what they believe about reading versus how they are actually teaching reading.

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Table 1: MLEs and corresponding CMs for Reading EMs

MLE	CM
Reading is like **opening a door to an unknown room** BECAUSE even if you think you know what you are about to get yourself into, you never really know til you are there.	READING IS ANTICIPATING THE UNKNOWN
Reading is like **the key to Pandora's box** BECAUSE reading introduces you to everything and its (i.e., everything's) doppelganger. For example, a viewpoint and then the opposite of that viewpoint.	READING IS ANTICIPATING THE UNKNOWN
Reading is like **reading a map** BECAUSE it sometimes tells you how to get where you want to go, but you've got to figure it out, and everyone is using the same map to go to different places.	READING IS INFORMED NAVIGATION
Reading is like **traveling the world** BECAUSE you never know where it will take you, what you will encounter, or what new things you will learn.	READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES
Reading is like **treasure hunting** BECAUSE treasure hunters gather clues to discover the location of the treasure as readers gather clues through the reading process to discover the author's meaning and purpose. The better one is equipped on a treasure hunt, the more likely one is to discover the treasure. A complete novice is unlikely to discover anything.	READING IS CLUE-SEEKING
Reading is like a **never-ending journey** BECAUSE every time you read something, you travel to a place of new learning, participating in an activity, or enjoying something.	READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES
Reading is like **a trip to an unknown place** BECAUSE you may not know what to expect.	READING IS THE UNKNOWN
Reading is like **creating a visual image** BECAUSE readers can see an image which relates to their thoughts.	READING IS VISUALIZATION
Reading is like **eating** BECAUSE eating feeds and nourishes the body, while reading feeds and nourishes the mind and soul.	READING IS NOURISHMENT
Reading is like **eating healthy food** BECAUSE it will benefit your soul and body.	READING IS NOURISHMENT
Reading is like **exercise for the mind** BECAUSE it requires your mind to use different skills such as word recognition, comprehension, and critical thinking.	READING IS EXERCISE
Reading is like a **walk deep in the woods** BECAUSE I am alone with thoughts and interpretations.	READING IS A SOLITARY ACTIVITY
Reading is like **driving down a street or highway** BECAUSE the information read allows the reader to view in their mind a scene based on the words being read. As the pages of a book are being read, the landscape may vary throughout the story to the end of the journey.	READING IS VISUALIZATION

(continued on next page)

MLE	CM
Reading is like **a journey into interesting places** BECAUSE each author tells their stories from their own perspective as influenced by where they have lived and their sometimes exhaustive research.	READING IS A JOURNEY
Reading is like **the dawn of a new day** BECAUSE it sheds new light on ideas and comprehension and gives brightness and light to the world of words and stories and their beauty as the sun dawning on a new day does for the earth.	READING IS NEW POSSIBILITIES
Reading is like **looking through a kaleidoscope** BECAUSE everyone sees something uniquely different. Like the reflective lenses uses to create imagery in a kaleidoscope, readers rely on their own reflective lenses of background knowledge and lived experiences to create meaning in reading. Additionally, like in a kaleidoscope, a slight adjustment in perspective can change the perceived image.	READING IS VISUALIZATION
Reading is like **opening a door** BECAUSE it takes me places I could never imagine.	READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES
Reading is like **traveling** BECAUSE it takes you to new places.	READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES
Reading is like **traveling** BECAUSE it can take you places around the world and allow you to experience new things through details and imaginative pictures.	READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES
Reading is like **an unlimited adventure** BECAUSE the reader can go so many places and see so much.	READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES
Reading is like **travelling the world** BECAUSE a book can transport you anywhere.	READING IS TRAVELING TO NEW PLACES
Reading is like **a box of chocolates** BECAUSE you do not know what you are going to get. You have an idea of how the story is going to go either by word of mouth or the cover. It is not until you start reading do you find out what you get.	READING IS THE UNKNOWN
Reading is **finding a treasure** BECAUSE with reading valuable information is discovered.	READING IS A VALUABLE DISCOVERY
Reading is **planting a seed** BECAUSE at first progress seems slow, but with consistent work over time significant, lasting progress is made.	READING IS GROWTH

Table 2: MLEs and corresponding CMs for Reading PCMs

MLE	CM
Reading is like **growing a tree** BECAUSE you learn so much when you read. Every time you read a book it's like adding another rung to the trunk. Your schema gets larger and the information connects.	READING IS GROWTH
Reading is like **learning to walk** BECAUSE like learning to walk, it starts with the most basic movements; learning the letters/sounds is like learning to stabilize the body enough to crawl; then crawling is like learning the basic words; then walking is like actually learning to read fluently. The final step is running, which is akin to using reading for learning and to use reading for enjoyment.	READING IS PROCESS
Reading is like **opening a door** BECAUSE it opens a whole new world to the learner. Every sign, news feed, pamphlet, etc. is another door opened. They are no longer afraid to open that door with fear they may not be able to handle what is on the other side. They will continue to open doors and slowly walk through any door using the tools they have developed as their guide. There is celebration on the other side.	READING IS EXPLORATION
Reading is like **learning to walk** BECAUSE the more you practice and work at it, the better you get.	READING IS PROCESS
Reading is like **opening a door** BECAUSE you are privy to all that is inside the door.	READING IS EXPLORATION
Reading is like **opening a door** BECAUSE my father would say "there's the door it leads all parts of the world" reading is the same.	READING IS EXPLORATION
Reading is like **opening a door** BECAUSE reading gives one insight to new and different experiences. One can gain new knowledge or one can expand their imagination. Reading is like opening a door and stepping into a new adventure or getting a breath of fresh air.	READING IS EXPLORATION
Reading is like **climbing a mountain** BECAUSE every step you take gets you closer to your goal.	READING IS GOAL-ORIENTED
Reading is like **opening a door** BECAUSE it will provide the individual with many opportunities in the future.	READING IS EXPLORATION
Reading is like **putting together pieces of a puzzle** BECAUSE it seems simpler than it is, one has to have all the "pieces" to see the full picture, and once everything fits, everyone is happy!	READING IS PROCESS
Reading is like **learning to walk** BECAUSE the development is a process whereas you have to crawl before you walk.	READING IS PROCESS

Table 3: MLEs and corresponding CMs for Teaching Reading EMs

MLE	CM
Teaching reading is like **teaching a child how to learn new concepts** BECAUSE a child needs guidance to proceed.	TEACHING READING IS GUIDING
Teaching reading is like **doing a maze** BECAUSE student's skills can be at varying levels.	TEACHING READING IS THE UNKNOWN
Teaching reading is like **opening a door** BECAUSE you are showing the students how to "open" the meaning of something.	TEACHING READING IS TEACHING SELF-RELIANCE
Teaching reading is like **planting seeds** BECAUSE one can offer skills and insights, but it takes time and nurturing for those skills and insights to grow into actual abilities.	TEACHING READING IS GARDENING
Teaching reading is like **trying to unravel the Gordian knot** BECAUSE no matter how many you help realize their potential, there are more who need you.	TEACHING READING IS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK
Teaching reading is like **planting a seed** BECAUSE I have no idea what's going to happen with what I teach my students three years from now.	TEACHING READING IS GARDENING
Teaching reading is like **ice skating** BECAUSE as soon as I get comfortable or think I know what I am doing, something happens and I crash or fall, but I continue to get back up and try something new.	TEACHING READING IS A LEARNING PROCESS
Teaching reading is like **leading students through a dark forest** BECAUSE students are confused and scared; they want and need someone to listen to their fears and then point them in the right direction as well as to trust someone when what they've known to this point is distrust and/or disengagement with their needs.	TEACHING READING IS BEING A GUIDE
Teaching reading is like **trying to turn the light on into that room** BECAUSE most of my students have such a negative view of academic reading. They might as well be standing in the dark as to how much power they already have to conquer their tasks.	TEACHING READING IS BEING A BEACON
Teaching reading is like **driving a stagecoach** BECAUSE horses have differing dispositions and speeds that must be adjusted so that they run together as a team.	TEACHING READING IS GUIDING

Table 4: MLEs and corresponding CMs for Teaching Reading PCMs

MLE	CM
Teaching reading is like **coaching a sports team** BECAUSE adult students need a lot of support. They need encouragement, patience, as well as instruction. While there is some nurturing (planting a seed) there is more instruction (like playing a sport). So I chose this one because it really is about building relationships with students to teach them. I want their peers in the class to be like a team of support and to share knowledge and insights with them through discussions about their reading.	TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]
Teaching reading is like **being a tour guide** BECAUSE I can watch the joy of opening new worlds.	TEACHING READING IS LEADING [READERS]
Teaching Reading is like **coaching a sports team** BECAUSE it takes the inexperienced and walks them through the basic steps of their sport, helps them to master the nuances of the game, and leads them to the finish line and their goal where they can feel like winners.	TEACHING READING IS SUPPORTING [READERS]
Teaching reading is like **planting a seed** BECAUSE you have the materials/supplies you need to start planting the seed. Teaching phonics, word syllables and comprehension are all parts of the growing process. Once the seed is planted, it will continue to grow with repetition and their vocabulary will multiply.	TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]
Teaching reading is like **being a tour guide** BECAUSE you are also trying to make the process of learning an exciting exploration.	TEACHING READING IS LEADING [READERS]
Teaching Reading is like **planting a seed** BECAUSE you are presenting many ways to make your seed grow. The seed must be nurtured and cared for in order to gain the fruit of the seed.	TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]
Teaching Reading is like **planting a seed** BECAUSE you reap what you sow!	TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]
Teaching Reading is like **planting a seed** BECAUSE it needs to be nurtured and have continued care to reach maturity.	TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]
Teaching Reading is like **coaching a sports team** BECAUSE a coach starts off teaching each player the basics of the game. Once the player knows the basic moves/plays, then the coach can expand or modify the plays as needed to win the game. Teaching reading begins with teaching the basics, followed by bringing in more challenging words or ideas that expand on what the reader now knows from the basics.	TEACHING READING IS SUPPORTING [READERS]
Teaching reading is like **planting a seed** BECAUSE it takes lots of patience and care to see the results.	TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]
Teaching reading is like **planting a seed** BECAUSE the more you water it the greater it grows.	TEACHING READING IS GROWING [READERS]