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Beyond just reading the words: Interacting with text using literature response journals

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Abstract

This paper describes a ten-session professional development project on the effective use of literature response journals intended for teachers of kindergarten through sixth grade students. Beginning with an in-depth literature review on reader response theory and research on the practical application of reader response theory in the classroom, the project provides a rationale for the importance of the use of literature response journals to increase students' reading comprehension. The project sessions are designed to guide teachers through reader response theory into effective implementation of literature response journals in the classroom over time.

Beyond Just Reading the Words:

Interacting with Text Using Literature Response Journals

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Lisa L. La Rue Sage

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This Project by: Lisa L. La Rue Sage

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has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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6-9-10

Date Approved   Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

DEDICATION

To my fourth grade students in 2005-2006

Thank you for sharing your thinking about what you read

Your responses inspired me to learn more about literature response journals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Deborah Tidwell who went above and beyond the role of first reader. Without her guidance and extended long-term support, this research project would not have been possible.

My husband, Mark Sage, deserves innumerable accolades for the support he provided during the many years I worked on this research project. Words seem inadequate to describe the gratitude I feel for the sacrifices he made and the plans he put on hold in order for me to complete this master's degree.

Special thanks to my parents, Craig and Dianne LaRue, for introducing me to the wonderful world of reading, for instilling in me the love of learning, and for encouraging me in all of my academic endeavors.

Abstract

This paper describes a ten-session professional development project on the effective use of literature response journals intended for teachers of kindergarten through sixth grade students. Beginning with an in-depth literature review on reader response theory and research on the practical application of reader response theory in the classroom, the project provides a rationale for the importance of the use of literature response journals to increase students' reading comprehension. The project sessions are designed to guide teachers through reader response theory into effective implementation of literature response journals in the classroom over time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Good readers are able to hear a voice in their head and process the material. Poor readers merely see the words and do not synthesize the information. … poor readers read and read and read and never know they don't know. They don't notice that they are getting no meaning from the text… They word-call in their minds, but they are non-readers in the real sense of reading. (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1992, p. 10)

Whether reading for pleasure or reading for information, comprehension is at the heart of the reading process. The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) stated that comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (p. 11). Successful readers are actively engaged in the processes of comprehension before, during, and after reading. Poor readers tend to not think about the text while reading. These struggling readers do not retain information and have a difficult time discussing, writing, or otherwise applying what they have read.

Literature response journals are one way to facilitate reader response in order to increase students' reading comprehension (Anson & Beach, 1995; Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002; Hancock, 1992; Skeans, 2000). However, to engage struggling readers who easily disconnect from text, a focus on comprehension alone is not sufficient. In order to create a stronger connection to a text, readers must also make an affective response. Responding to a text must be explicitly taught and modeled, and students must be given guided and independent practice to share their thinking first in oral and then in written form. Literature response journals make visible for teachers' their students'

thinking processes and instruction can then be adapted to students' strengths and needs (Bowman, 2000).

This paper presents a professional development program developed specifically for preparing teachers to effectively use literature response journals in their teaching. The paper is organized into five sections, beginning with an in-depth literature review on reader response theory, application of reader response theory through the use of literature response journals, types of student responses and teacher replies in literature response journal letters, implementation procedures, and evaluation of literature response journals. The literature review is followed by a methodology section explaining the process used to research and develop the proposed professional development program. The third section of the paper is an overview of the project which provides broader context for the specific professional development sessions to follow. The fourth section of the paper is the actual professional development project consisting of ten professional development sessions each described in detail. The final section of the paper is the conclusion, providing a closing summary of the project and the potential for its use in future contexts.

Reader Response Theory

The meaning-making process is influenced by the approach to reading taken by the reader. Rosenblatt (1978) describes two approaches to reading: efferent and aesthetic. The difference in these approaches lie in where the reader's attention is focused (Ramsden, 2002). In an efferent approach, the attention "is directed outward... toward concepts to be retained, ideas to be tested, actions to be performed after the reading"

(Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 24). This type of reading is externally driven with the purpose often being to locate information or facts in order to respond to questions given by the teacher. In contrast, in an aesthetic approach "the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (p. 25, Rosenblatt, 1978). Aesthetic reading involves the feelings and images created in the reader's mind during reading. Reader response theory generally refers to an aesthetic approach, however efferent and aesthetic stances are not mutually exclusive. Reader response theory purports that "reading is a dynamic process featuring changing purposes as a reader interacts with the unfolding text" (Hancock, 2004, p. 14). Readers may fluctuate between reading for details and information, an efferent approach, and for pleasure and personal connections, an aesthetic approach (Hancock, 2004).

Traditional expectations of school as a place to "learn to read" has created a focus on the mechanics of reading at the expense of students' aesthetic responses to literature, especially during the early elementary years. Broad (2002) suggests that reading instruction should develop not only decoding skills, but also encourage students to engage aesthetically with text. "Reader response approaches allow young readers to see literature as something they can experience at a personal level, rather than something disconnected that is to be endured and completed" (Broad, 2002, p. 27).

Reader response theory asserts that text alone does not contain meaning and that reading involves more than just decoding words on a page. According to this theory, the reader plays an active role in constructing meaning from the text. Each reader creates a

personal meaning based on his or her prior knowledge, experiences, and selective attention. Selective attention refers to aspects of the text to which the reader chooses to focus attention and how the reader assimilates that information into the meaning being created. Because of this, each reader will create a unique interpretation of a text rather than identifying one definitive meaning lying within the text (Rosenblatt, 1986).

Benefits of a Reader Response Approach

Due to the open-ended nature of a reader response approach, students see that they are involved in the meaning-making process and that multiple responses to what the author has written are expected. By making their own interpretations of the text through their responses, students feel a sense of ownership about reading (Bowman, 2000; Spiegel, 1998). "This may facilitate a sense of control and therefore confidence that is lacking with more traditional, closed tasks" (Spiegel, 1998, p. 45). Increased confidence helps students view themselves as successful readers. Viewing themselves as successful readers helps children enjoy reading more, read more, and be more engaged in reading (Swift, 1993). With this motivation, students are "more likely to apply more strategies and work harder at building meaning" (Pardo, 2004, p. 273).

To build meaning, students must use a variety of strategies such as predicting, visualizing, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing (Pardo, 2004). Gilles (1990) found that students in response-based reading programs developed rich understandings of literary elements and were able to talk about the strategies they used to construct meaning. "Greater involvement with literature leads to a deeper interaction with story,

characters, and theme" (Hancock, 2004, p. 16). Students engaged in reader response approaches were better able to clarify their ideas (McMahon, 1994) and made gains on standardized reading achievement tests (Atwell, 1987; Swift, 1993;). Bowman (2000) observed increased comprehension, more insightful writing, increased participation in class discussions, improved grades in all subject areas, and more positive attitudes toward school and learning when she adopted a reader response approach to her high school English classes."Students who participate in reader response approaches have been shown to become more reflective and more critical readers and to move to higher levels of thinking and richer understandings of literature" (Spiegel, 1998, p. 45). Students are better able to make connections between what they read, their own lives, and the world around them (Gilles, 1990).

The active nature of reading and responding leads to "ongoing thinking, constant reflection, and monitoring of emotions that serves as a model for a lifetime of reflective thinking through the reading process" (Hancock, 2004, p.16). Students begin to think about what they have read, instead of merely feeding back what the author wrote or memorizing facts from the reading for a test (Bowman, 2000; Farnan & Kelly, 1993).

<div align="center">Literature Response Journals</div>

One instructional tool that utilizes the reader response approach is a literature response journal. A literature response journal is a place where students write about what they read or what has been read aloud to them. It is not a book report, retelling, or summary of what was read. Rather, it involves critical thinking; it consists of students'

written thoughts that have occurred while reading (Fuhler, 1994). Writing these thoughts allows students to connect with the text and to reflect on what they have just read (Barbe-Clevett et al., 2002).

Common response journals take the form of letters between student and teacher (Atwell, 1987; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Werderich, 2002; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). "Writing a letter encourages students to visualize an audience and allows for a personal voice as students relate their involvement with a text" (Moutray, Pollard & McGinley, 2001, p. 31). Based upon what they have read, students can predict events, ask questions to resolve meaning, compare books, react to characters, plot structure or other literary elements, comment on authors' writing styles, note difficulties with vocabulary, or explore book themes or themes beyond the text. Primary students may use stapled sheets of lined or unlined paper for their response journals while spiral notebooks work well with older students. Wollman-Bonilla (1991) recommended the use of a spiral notebook for older students to keep the response letters chronologically grouped together so students can review past responses. Students can also create and save response journal entries on the computer, if frequent access is possible. After students have written about their thinking, their teacher replies by sharing her own ideas and responses, providing information, modeling elaboration, or challenging students to think in new ways (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). What results is an informal, written conversation between two readers who write specific responses to each other's thoughts and questions and create shared meanings and understandings.

Literature response journals can be used in a variety of settings and subjects with all types of texts. When selecting a text, teachers need to choose reading material that is at a level appropriate for students' reading abilities. The text must also be interesting enough that it will elicit a response from students and personally engage them (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). When Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) used literature response journals with first graders, they expected the first graders' best responses would come from serious texts or texts with a moral. Instead, they found that realistic books, humorous fantasy, and non-fiction evoked more personal engagement and response.

Students' responses vary in length and in the amount of personal feelings revealed. The length of writing and personal response to reading can be influenced by sociocultural background and learning style and by student self-immersion in text versus reading as an outside observer (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). Students also vary in the types of responses they make to literature.

Types of Student Responses

In her book *Response Journals*, Wollman-Bonilla (1991) described common types of student responses to what they have read. Students write their opinions about characters, events, or information in the text. They may express their feelings about what was read: perhaps enjoyment or boredom during reading, surprise or anger related to events, or feelings of empathy for characters. In their response journals, students may write about connections they make between the text and themselves or their lives. They commonly make predictions about what will happen next or write their questions about

vocabulary, plot, character actions, or the author. In other common response types, students may comment on the author's style, language, or literary techniques. They may also reflect on their own reading process and the self-monitoring strategies they used.

When Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1999) introduced response journals to a class of first graders, they noticed that the responses were more text-centered at first. Text-centered responses relate to the information or events that are in the book. Examples include retelling, making predictions, asking questions about the characters or events, and expressing understanding of the characters' thoughts and feelings. This is a "... natural place for students to begin because such responses are relatively safe" (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, p. 567). As students gained proficiency with writing in literature response journals, their responses tended to be evenly split between text-centered responses and reader-centered responses. Reader-centered responses consist of the reader's thoughts and feelings not only about the content of the book, but also about the experience of reading the book. Reader-centered responses include making personal reactions to the text, relating own experiences, and placing of self in the story.

By examining the types of responses students make, one can determine how students are making meaning from the text. In Hancock's (1993) work with sixth graders, she was able to categorize their responses into three broad types: immersion, self-involvement, and detachment. Immersion responses resulted when the reader tried to make sense of the text through personal interpretations of the characters and plot, or when the reader reflected on the characters' feelings, thoughts, and motives. Making,

checking, confirming, and revising predictions are also examples of immersion responses. So are responses where the reader's questions show confusion, doubt, or disbelief about what they have read.

Self-involvement responses were Hancock's (1993) second category of student response types. In these types of responses, students demonstrated personal involvement by placing themselves in the character's position or within the plot of the text. Such responses may take the form of expressing empathy for characters, sharing related personal experiences, or judging the character's actions. These self-involvement responses may also include personal reactions to the setting, events, or sensory aspects of the story.

Hancock (1993) labeled a third category of student response types as detachment responses. When students make these types of responses, they assume a more evaluative role from outside the text. Examples include "praise or criticism of the author and his or her writing style, writing techniques … or ability to maintain reader interest. Responses may compare or contrast the book, author, or genre with others know to the reader" (p. 345). Another type of response Hancock placed in the detachment category is reader/writer digression. This includes not only statements that are off-topic from the reading, but also general comments about reading and writing in the literature response journal.

Hancock (1993) discovered that students developed their own unique style and patterns of responding. Some students had a certain pattern consistent across responses

while others had a meaning-making process that changed with each text. Similar to Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo's (1995, 1999) work with first graders, all of Hancock's students used both text-centered and reader-centered responses.

Benefits of Using Literature Response Journals

Using literature response journals allows educators to teach reading and thinking strategies and to have students apply them in meaningful situations (Barbe-Clevett et al., 2002). "The journals represent a concrete application of Vygotsky's theory that learning... occurs through the learner's cooperative participation in accomplishing tasks with a more experienced partner" (Staton, 1988, p. 199). Journaling provides a chance to reflect upon ideas from text with an adult. The teacher and student "engage in inquiry" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p. 166) through their dialogue to create socially shared meanings. Each student receives personal attention from the teacher. This boosts self-confidence in reading and builds trust in the teacher-student relationship. Children are then able to share personal thoughts, beliefs, and experiences (Hancock, 1992; Wollman-Bonilla, 1989; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995).

As the content of a literature response journal is whatever attracts each child's interest from the reading, this type of response allows for children's creativity and for a variety of responses (Wollman-Bonilla, 1989). A related advantage to journal writing is that students of all abilities can work at their own pace and skill level to make individualized literature responses (Fuhler, 1994; Fulps & Young, 1991). With this child-centered approach, students use their own schema to construct personal meaning

from the text and to make personal connections. In fact, being able to choose what one wishes to write about has been demonstrated to be a powerful motivator in writing (Fulps & Young, 1991; Runkle, 2000).

Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo's (1995) research supports the motivating effects of response journals. All students, especially the less-proficient readers, were more engaged than students in Werchadlo's previous classes where response journals were not used. It was also easier for the quieter students in class to express their thinking through this written mode rather than during class discussion. Responses are valued from every student, not just the most verbally outgoing. Hayes and Bahruth (1985) found that dialogue journals, in which the student and teacher engaged in written dialogue, motivated reluctant writers by building their confidence. That motivation was found to transfer to other writing tasks. Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo reported similar results in 1999.

Literature response journals can also enhance classroom discussions. "By writing in their journals before or during discussions, students can formulate their thoughts so that they can share them in small and large group discussions" (Anson & Beach, 1995, p. 47). This preparation may facilitate more substantive talk during the discussion. Furthermore, the children who are less comfortable speaking extemporaneously have more confidence to share their thoughts with the group. During discussion, these students can refer to what they wrote in their journal or even read aloud what they wrote. By using literature response journals as a springboard for discussion, the class discussion becomes

more child-centered and less teacher-dominated. In fact, Wollman-Bonilla (1989) found that fourth grade students using response journals asked their own questions and generated their own answers in greater frequency than when the teacher asked the questions and looked for predetermined answers.

Developing writing fluency is another benefit of journal writing. Many of today's students are accustomed to writing short answers on worksheets and tests. Through journaling, students have the opportunity to express their own ideas, synthesize new information with existing schemata, and develop their ability for extended writing (Anson & Beach, 1995). Hayes and Bahruth (1985) found that using dialogue journals increased fifth grade students ability to write more extensively. For many of the students, their first journal entries consisted of one sentence to one paragraph. As the school year progressed, the students' daily entries increased to one or more pages. In Nystrand and Gamoran's (1991) work with eighth grade English students, they discovered that students who engaged in extended writing of more than a page were better able to interpret literature than those who did little extended writing.

One of the strongest benefits of literature response journals is their use as a tool for increasing students' concentration while reading. "Response journals are well suited to the active nature of the reading process" (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, p. 11). Elbow (2004) echoed this when he wrote that reading can be a passive activity while writing is more physically active. He believes "students are more awake and involved after they write than after they read" (p. 10). By writing down their thoughts, reactions,

and ideas related to the text, students are better able to focus on the meaning of what they have read. Elbow stated that students are more attentive to what the author writes if they are first asked to write their own thoughts about a topic. Anson and Beach (1995) similarly found that students are more likely to sustain thinking about a topic or issue by writing about it. Comprehension is increased because students have not simply memorized information from or about the text, but have "construct(ed) their own knowledge and formulate(d) their own beliefs and ideas" (Anson & Beach, p. 38). By "defining their beliefs and ideas about [a topic] in a journal, a student achieves a deeper understanding of that concept" (Anson & Beach, p. 40). Taking time to write thoughts during the reading process helps readers to explore their thinking well enough to make personal reactions or to construct deeper meanings (Hancock, 1992).

Skeans (2000) as well as Barbe-Clevett et al. (2002) also indicated that students had stronger reading comprehension when they wrote about what they read. The sixth grade students with whom Barbe-Clevett et al. worked retained more information when they used response journals and increased their metacognitive reading strategies and skills. Skeans noted that writing about personal connections, observations, and wonderings during reading helps students to "reflect on what they understand and ask themselves questions to clarify misunderstandings" (p. 69).

When students write responses, teachers also gain insight into the meaning-making process their pupils are using as they read. The act of writing about their thinking makes students aware of their own thought processes while reading. "Most students can

see how writing is a process of slowly constructed meaning, often socially negotiated through feedback" (Elbow, 2004, p. 13). This knowledge helps students understand that reading is a process of creating meaning from textual cues. Response journal writing encourages children to be reflective about their thinking and reading and to be reflective on the meaning constructed as they interact with text. Because of the time it takes to write one's thoughts, ideas can be organized and reflected upon during journal writing. Unlike oral responses, with written responses, students can see their ideas on paper and revisit them (Wollman-Bonilla, 1989; 1991). "The act of making thoughts tangible and visible engenders new thinking which leads to new text" (Anson & Beach, 1995, p. 23).

Replying to Students' Literature Response Letters

Utilizing the literature response journal in the form of dialogue between student and teacher yields a multitude of benefits that would not be achievable with private journal writing alone. Receiving responses keeps journal writers motivated. Most students are excited that someone values their ideas and will provide feedback on their thinking (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). Reyes (1991) found that middle school students wrote longer entries in their journals and stated they enjoyed journal writing more when the teacher wrote a response to each student. Additionally, with the individualized responses, teachers can support readers who are less confident in their own ideas and abilities (Wollman-Bonilla, 1989). In her work with fourth grade readers, Wollman-Bonilla realized that "replying allowed me to collaborate with students, support their efforts and also help them to understand and recognize what they could not grasp alone"

(p. 118). Similarly, Dionisio (1991) asserted that when students have their ideas and writing affirmed by the teacher's responses, they will be more willing to continue taking risks in their writing and in sharing their thoughts. This willingness to take risks can facilitate the development of writing fluency. In fact, Johnson and Hoover (1989), found that supportive teacher responses helped learning disabled and "highly anxious" students feel more self-confident about future journal writing.

In addition to the motivation and support teacher responses provide, the commonly-used letter format for a literature response journal also creates "authentic communication between student and teacher" (Werderich, 2002, p. 748). "With each student's dialogue journal, the teacher plays an important role in engaging the student in a reciprocal process of dialogue about literature and the act of reading" (Werderich, 2006, p. 47). Having the teacher as an audience also inspires writers to make their ideas clear (Fenwick, 2001). Hannon (1999) found this to be true with her kindergarten students. Before she used dialogue with student journals, Hannon did not see growth in her students' journal writing. Entries from the beginning of the school year were similar to entries in January. When she added the component of teacher-student dialogue to the journal writing, Hannon's students applied new writing skills and widened their use of writing forms. She believed her students gained a new purpose for journal writing when they had a audience and knew they would receive a response from the audience. Writing for an audience, such as the teacher, helps children realize the importance of using conventional grammar and spelling skills so their ideas can be interpreted by others

(Wollman-Bonilla 1989; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999). In their responses, teachers can also model conventional writing and spelling whereby students can integrate what the teacher models into their future journal entries. Bode (1989) termed this an *indirect editing process*. She found that first graders began to modify their own spelling entries and "adjust their writing to match the journal partner" (p. 570). Through the written dialogue, students engaged in an integrated reading and writing process, and as a result, their literacy achievement increased.

Furthermore, the teacher's writing provides a model for students demonstrating how to elaborate upon ideas using details from the text to support opinions, predictions, etc. (Runkle, 2000; Wollman-Bonilla, 1989). "Since construction of meaning is determined by the reader, the role of the teacher is significant in guiding students' understanding of text" (Werderich, 2006, p. 51). Teachers can guide students' comprehension and prompt deeper thinking by asking questions to provoke thought, to encourage elaboration on responses, to scaffold students' thinking, or to reinforce learning strategies related to class mini-lessons (Werderich, 2002). When teachers reply to students' written thoughts in a literacy response journal, it is a form of individualized reading instruction. For example, specific student interests can be addressed with book and genre recommendations from the teacher. Through this response process, teachers get to share in personal discoveries students make while reading, and by modeling their own responses, teachers can help children see that reading is a personal way of making meaning.

Types of Teacher Responses to

Student Literature Response Letters

When teachers dialogue with students about their response to literature, the written feedback can take on many forms. One type of response involves supporting or encouraging the writer. This may take the form of praise or affirmation of the student's strengths. The goal here is to let the student know he or she has done a good job (Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000) and to build a trusting relationship between the student and teacher. Some responses may involve a statement that indicates understanding. According to Fenwick (2001), "The responder's task is to accept and appreciate the writing, affirm the writer and the process, and share in turn." (p. 40).

An extension of the encouragement response is affirmation-direct instruction (Chin, 2006). In this type of response, the teacher affirms and reinforces child's response followed by direction instruction. The direct instruction may involve making suggestions or informing students on how to improve their responses. It could also provide information to develop students' awareness of reading strategies they are using or literary techniques the author employs (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991).

Another type of response is one that Chin (2006) termed *constructive challenge*, sometimes referred to as the provoker (Fenwick, 2001). In this type of response, the teacher responds to what the student has written with a comment followed by a question to elicit further student thinking. This may involve probing and analyzing the student's writing (Todd, Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001) or challenging the student's logic

and assumptions. According to Chin, extension by responsive questions is a similar type of response. Here, the teacher asks a series of related questions that build on previous ones to probe or extended student thinking. Fenwick cautioned that when taking on the role of a provoker, teachers must do so "gently and carefully" (p. 41) so as not to be so critical that trust between the student and teacher is destroyed.

With an elaborative response, the teacher extends the child's response with her own thoughts. This model allows for further child response or elicits new ideas and contributions from the student. Fenwick (2001) called this "friend-in-dialogue" (p. 41), describing how the responder shares personal thoughts in conversational discourse. By sharing their own ideas and feelings, teachers build upon the student's response and create an authentic written dialogue (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991).

Fenwick (2001) also discussed two other roles of the responder, as a mirror and as a learning director. As a mirror, the teacher points out or "reflects" the themes that occur within the student's responses or questions. When acting as a learning director, the teacher may note "lessons… that are emerging in the writing" (p. 41) or comment on how the student responses have evolved over time. With this type of response, the teacher may make suggestions for future learning as well.

In other types of responses, teachers may agree with what a student has written or thank the student for his or her response. Teachers may make recommendation of books or genres for future student reading through an adding informational response (Todd et

al., 2001). These types of responses, however, are less powerful influences upon students' writing and thinking.

Whatever the type of response a teacher writes, Fulps and Young (1991) urged teachers to write specific responses to what students communicate in their letters. A general comment such as "I agree", "Great" or a smiley face (Fulps & Young, 1991) at the end of a journal entry is not sufficient. It is much more effective to write a response that refers to the content of what the student wrote. Three or four sentences that relate specifically to what the child has written elicit more interest, enthusiasm, and future responses from students than a one-word comment or phrase (Strackbein & Tillman, 1987). Todd et al. (2001) found in their work with university students that students perceived responses that gave suggestions, added information, or offered support as the most useful. Anson and Beach (1995) also sought feedback from university students about the type of responses they preferred to receive. Those students indicated that they preferred comments "written in an informal, conversational mode... includ(ing) self-disclosure, personal experiences, or specific reactions" (p. 180). Students did not value responses that were "pro-forma, ritualistic, vague" (p. 180) or generically evaluative.

An important dynamic in journal responses is that they require students to utilize critical thinking skills, such as interpretation and synthesis, to discuss their own understandings and meaning making rather than just retelling and recalling what they read (Runkle, 2000). Because of this, it is important to respond to students in a meaning-based way, focusing on students' opinions of the text. In this way, teachers are able to

help students realize their thinking is valued instead of a summarization of a text's plot (Anson & Beach, 1995).

Both Wollman-Bonilla (1991) and Fenwick (2001) emphasized the importance of cultivating a relationship of trust between student and teacher in the literature response journal. Wollman-Bonilla stated that showing an appreciation for student's ideas will facilitate trust, which in turn, promotes a willingness on the student's part to explore responses to literature. She recommended that teachers first validate student ideas, thoughts, and feelings, and then offer a different perspective if they do not agree with what the student has written. Similarly, Fenwick cautioned teachers to avoid judging comments as they can discourage future response writing. In fact, Bardine et al. (2000) found in their research with high school students that "one point the student made very clear through their interviews was that they believed the main reason teachers respond to students' writing is to tell them what they are doing wrong" (p. 96). Fenwick indicated that the trust relationship is crucial to making insight and perspectives valuable to the student. Fenwick further described the role of the teacher-responder as a "balancing act" indicating that there is no clear-cut formula for writing responses to students. "If the responder offers too many comments or suggestions, writers may become overwhelmed, losing their own voices or the opportunity to work through a thinking dilemma themselves" (p. 42).

This influence of adult response was evident in Novinger's (2003) literacy class of college students and their letter exchange with first grade pen pals. About half of the

college students, all preservice teachers, wrote letters in which they initiated the majority of the topics, asked many questions, and responded minimally or not at all to the topics initiated and the questions posed by the students. In response, the first grade students who were paired with these college students wrote short letters consisting of replies to the adults' questions. In fact, the first graders' letters became increasingly shorter throughout the semester without any noticeable relationship to their general writing abilities. Novinger termed a *discourse of shared authority* as a second style of interaction where both the first graders and the college students became equal participants in the written dialogue. In this scenario, the college students responded to topics the first graders initiated, shared personal ideas, and limited the amount of questions they included in each letter. As a result, these first graders' letters were longer, more elaborative, and included a broader range of topics than the first graders whose pen pals had a more adult-directed approach to the written responses. Thus, the way in which a teacher responds to her students' literature response journals can impact the length and quality of the students' future responses. Furthermore, the type of dialogue that occurs in these journals, whether adult-directed or student-led, "does much to shape and constrain what children come to learn about writing and themselves as writers and people" (Novinger, p. 434).

Implementation of Literature Response Journals

Wollman-Bonilla (1991) suggested four components for introducing students to literature response journals. First, students need to understand that the purpose of a literature response journal is to write about their reactions to what they have read rather

than to just summarize or report what they read. They will be communicating their ideas

and receiving replies to what they have written. Secondly, to make the purpose visible to

students, Wollman-Bonilla recommended that students be shown samples of response

journals with many possible response types. Ideally, the responses should be to a text or

texts that are familiar to the students. In the third component, students collaborately

brainstorm a list of possible responses. The list might include what students liked or

disliked about the book and why, their opinion of characters, feelings or questions they

had while reading, or what students wish would have happened in the text. It is important

to emphasize that there is no one "correct" type of response and that many possibilities

exist for writing in their literature response journals. Finally, Wollman-Bonilla

emphasized that students must know their responsibilities and teacher expectations for

writing responses. For example, students should be provided with information on how

often they are expected to write in their literature response journals, if responses should

be written at home or at school, and how their responses will be evaluated. When

expectations are clear, students will be able to focus on their thinking related to reading.

As this is often a new and challenging task for many students, teachers need to provide

models for sharing one's thinking in response to literature.

Modeling through Think-Alouds

One of the most important steps for teachers to take when implementing literature

response journals is to model their own responses for the students. This can first be done

through what has been termed a *think-aloud*. A think-aloud involves modeling for

students how one gathers meaning from text. The purpose is to explicitly show students the comprehension process used to understand the author's message (Baumann, Jones, & Seifert-Kessell, 1993). Modeling a think-aloud helps students realize the difference between reading the words and understanding the text. Poorer readers often read passively, focused mainly on decoding words. Think-alouds help students understand how to be actively engaged in the reading process, making meaning rather than just focusing on literal information and decoding (Wilhelm, 2001). Poor readers do not often monitor their comprehension or realize what strategies they could use to help them comprehend (Farr & Conner, n.d.). When they see their teacher modeling not only how, but also what to think about while reading (predictions, questions, personal reactions, etc.), students better understand what it means to be a good reader. Through modeling and guided practice of think-alouds, students become aware of their own thinking while reading (Wilhelm, 2001).

The Iowa Department of Education (2006) identified five essential moves of a think-aloud:

1. Introduction

   • Announce the reading comprehension process or strategy you will model and its purpose.

2. Read passage

   • Text may be as short as a title and first line or as long as several paragraphs.

3. Set up demonstration

- Describe again the process or strategy you will be modeling.

4. Demonstrate using the reading comprehension process or strategy

5. Review why the process or strategy is useful (p. 1)

Wilhelm (2001) also outlined a plan for using think-alouds to teach active reading strategies. 1) The teacher selects a short section of text or a short text. The text should be one that students will be able to read with the teacher's help, but would have difficulty reading on their own. Either give each student a copy of the text or use transparency sheets to display the text on an overhead projector. 2) The teacher decides on the reading strategy to model. After explaining to students how a think-aloud works and what reading strategy will be modeled, the teacher asks the students to brainstorm why and how this reading strategy will be helpful in their own reading. 3) The teacher states the purpose of reading that particular text and asks the students to pay attention to the reading strategy being used. 4) The teacher reads the text aloud, stopping frequently to share her thinking processes and use of the targeted reading strategy. 5) The teacher has students identify which words or phrases in the text helped her use the target reading strategy. For example, certain phrases may help one to infer character traits or to make predictions about future events in the text. 6) The teacher then asks the students to list signal words or phrases that prompted use of the targeted reading strategy. 7) The teacher encourages students to think of other real life and reading situations in which the same targeted strategy could be used. Wilhelm noted that this assists students in transferring the strategy

to and from other contexts. For example, if the targeted reading strategy is inferring character traits, Wilhelm suggested asking students how they decide what a person is like or how they decide if they like a person upon first meeting him or her. This can help students notice clues in a text for character inferences as well as help students realize the application of reading strategies in other situations. 8) The teacher reinforces the think-aloud with follow-up lessons on the targeted reading strategy. This may involve more think-alouds or practice with a different text. Wilhelm recommended a gradual release model beginning with the teacher using the strategy while the students watch, progressing to teacher and students using the strategy together, and culminating in the students using the strategy while the teacher watches and evaluates.

Oster (2001) employed a similar process of utilizing the think-aloud strategy to show students how readers make meaning from text. She noted that "the think-aloud puts the responsibility on learners to become aware of how they make meaning and to be aware of when their strategies are not working" (p. 64). The written think-aloud also allows teachers to know the reading comprehension strategies students are using. The instructor then can use students' written comments to plan instruction, addressing weaknesses and building upon strengths. Even if children's think-alouds are very literal or include obvious information at first, Oster urged educators to praise the students' comments so the students would view the think-aloud strategy as beneficial. Barbe-Clevett et al. (2002) echoed this recommendation as they acknowledged the positive impact of think-alouds on their students' reading comprehension.

Group Responses

When first implementing literature response journals, group responses are another way to provide scaffolding for students. Oral responses in a group support readers who are not as strong in their reading skills or lack confidence in their ability to construct their own meaning of the text (Gordon, 2000). Responding to text in a group setting also helps to create an environment that values conversations about books. (Broad, 2002; Hancock, 2004). Through these conversations, students learn that they each "bring meaning to and take meaning from the text" (Hancock, 2004, p. 220). When students are able to hear each other's thoughts about what was read, they are then exposed to other ways of thinking. They "discover that they can take an idea from someone and use it to develop their own thinking" (Gordon, 2000, p.42). Through the model provided in group responses, students are able to learn how to go beyond simple recall or summarizing of a text to share their experiences as they read or listened to the text being read. In this way, the teacher can encourage aesthetic responses and provide assurance that all responses are valid. Orally sharing responses to reading helps students to become more conscious of their own thinking, to identify and discuss what they don't understand about the text, and to gain a deeper understanding of the text by considering other students' interpretations of what was read (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Kelly (1990) found similar benefits of orally responding to literature in a group setting. In her work as a teacher-researcher, she noted that all of her third-grade students were able to articulate meaningful responses regardless of reading ability. Kelly also

found that by starting with group responses in which the teacher records student responses, it "provides a frame work and guided practice for future opportunities to respond to literature" (Kelly, 1990, p. 467). She determined that the familiarity with the process of responding to literature provided through the group oral responses allowed students to make an easy transition to written responses.

Transitioning to Written Response

Contrary to what many educators may believe, absolute freedom to write about whatever a child wants is not necessarily the best way to elicit student response. In fact, "the apparent freedom can often result in limited exploration" (Watt, 2002, p. 155). Watt has found that when students are instructed to respond to what they have read in whatever way they want, the subsequent responses exhibit little variety in type or form. Despite the freedom given, students tend to produce responses that they believe will meet the teacher's expectations. In contrast, students who are provided with direction and instruction actually create more personal responses as they learn a variety of ways in which to "explore and articulate their thoughts" (Watt, 2002, p. 155).

Traditional prompts. Prompts are sentence stems or open-ended questions that guide students in making responses to what they have read (Hancock, 2004). Prompts challenge children "to stretch their thinking without distorting their natural response to a book" (Hancock, 2004, p. 215). Sumara (2002), in his work with students ranging in age from elementary school to graduate school, found that prompts are a "liberating constraint." Well-crafted prompts are open-ended enough to allow for a variety of student

responses and personal construction of meaning, yet they also avoid the dilemma of being too broad. (Sumara, 2002; see also Fulps & Young, 1991). Anson and Beach (1995) suggest using prompts that encourage children to respond in a way that goes beyond a description of what happens in a text to include "emotional reactions and experiences with a text" (p. 122). The following are examples of teacher prompts that encourage such responses: "What did you notice in the story? How did the story make you feel? What does the story remind you of from your own life?" (Bleich, 1978); "How would you feel if you were (character name)? What do you think will happen to (character name)? What advice would you give (character name) at this point in the story?" (Hancock, 2004, p. 237-238); and "I don't understand... I wonder about... Something I like/don't like..." (Kooy, 1992, p. 17). Hancock (2004), in her 1995 study with Irish and American children, found that four types of prompts were the most successful in eliciting responses. These prompts encouraged students 1) to use their own background experience; 2) to share their feelings; 3) to make predictions or solve problems; and 4) to develop personal interpretations and judgments. Hancock advises that whatever prompts are used, they must be "meaningfully designed and will elicit thoughts worthy of written response" (p. 243).

Graphic organizers as prompts. A graphic organizer can be used as a type of prompt to elicit aesthetic responses to literature. Skeans (2000) used a graphic organizer she termed a "think-link chart" which consisted of three sections, "Observations (I noticed...), Wonderings (I wonder...), and Connections (This reminds me of...)" (p. 71).

Like other prompts, graphic organizers are intended for use during reading to help

students in "self-monitoring their understanding of text and…. to make personal

connections with what they are reading" (p. 71).

Prompts, including graphic organizers, help establish a framework for

constructing meaning and responding aesthetically to what is read. Prompts are intended

as a scaffold to guide students in their responses, not to restrict or limit their responses.

Once students become experienced with responding to text, the need for prompts should

diminish. In fact, Hancock (2004) highlights the importance of diminishing prompts and

cautions against their overuse: "… a steady diet of the same prompts can become just as

inhibiting as closed-end comprehension questions at the end of a basal reader story" (p.

215). While the use of prompts creates a frame for students to respond to text and to

transition from spoken response to written response, the text itself can also be used to

help transition to writing.

Coding. Coding is another tool that can be used to assist students' transition to

written responses. It involves the use of symbols written in the text or on self-adhesive

notes to indicate the students' thoughts as they read.

Barbe-Clevett et al. (2002) had students use a system of coding responses based

upon the one described in Keane and Zimmerman's *Mosaic of Thought* (1997). Students

used coding symbols to record their thoughts during independent reading. For example,

when students were surprised about an event or a character's reaction, they would mark

an "S" next to that text passage. If students were confused during reading, they marked a

"?" near the confusing part of the text. "O" indicated *old information* the students had

heard before, "N" indicated *new information*, and "I" indicated what the students deemed

as *important information.* Students also used "B" to mark *boring* passages, "☺" to

indicate funny passages, and "V" to show new or important *vocabulary.* Finally, "A" was

written near parts of texts with which students agreed and "D" near parts with which they

disagreed. If it was not possible for students to write in the text (library book, school

textbook, etc.), they used self-adhesive notes to mark their thinking."The coding system

forces students to think constantly while they are reading" (Barbe-Clevett et al., 2002, p.

38). Such a system keeps students actively engaged in monitoring their own

comprehension (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997).

      Coding can be introduced to students using a short reading passage on the

overhead. Both Fountas and Pinnell (2001) and Keene and Zimmerman (1997) suggest

that the teacher provide a model of coding using think-alouds as she is orally reading and

marking the text according to her personal responses. Students then practice coding their

own responses to a different reading passage and share their responses in small groups.

After discussing examples and sharing different styles of thinking, the students use self-

adhesive notes to mark two or three pages where they had questions or thoughts. These

notes are then used to write the first individual response letter. At the same time, the

teacher models the letters by writing to the students about the book she is reading.

      Barbe-Clevett et al. found that "coding increased discussion levels because

students had tangible marks to help them locate specific areas of the text they wanted to

discuss" (Barbe-Clevett et al., 2002, p. 81). Students in the Barbe-Clevett et al. research project learned the coding system very quickly and were highly motivated to use it. Like prompts, Barbe-Clevett et al. suggesting coding should only be used for a temporary period of time until the thinking strategies become automatic for students.

Visuals. Werderich (2006) developed another implementation model to introduce students to literature response journals. In this model, four components termed response facilitators guide students' literacy development: 1) visual aids, 2) modeling, 3) questioning and requesting, and 4) feedback. Werderich suggested that many visual aids be used when students first begin writing their literature responses. To support students initial writing attempts, Werderich recommended that teachers have an introductory letter as an example for students to use as a reference, overhead transparencies of example letters, and tips or sample letters posted in the room on chart paper. As needed, teachers can refer to these visual aids when students need reminders on format and expectations for the literature response journals. With the second component, Werderich emphasized the importance of modeling not only the format for the literature response journal, but also how to write about one's thinking, use of reading strategies, and response to what was read. These elements can be modeled in large-group examples as well as in individual responses to students' entries in their literature response journals. Questioning and requesting are the third techniques Werderich suggested for use with literature response journals. Similar to prompts, Werderich found the teachers who used visual support commonly included written questions (another form of visual) to clarify students'

understanding, to redirect, and to extend students' thinking, which "improve[d] a reader's capacity to evoke meaning from text" (Werderich, 2006, p. 62). Werderich indicated that "asking students to consider the teacher's written questions and requests appeared to be an essential strategy to guide students' thinking about literature (p. 62). Finally, the fourth component of Werderich's implementation model involves feedback from the teacher. Werderich believes that encouragement and positive feedback fuel the "reciprocal conversation that is inherent in dialogue journals" (p. 63). Feedback can also include answering students' questions and offering recommendations of topics, authors, and genres for future reading. As teachers use these response facilitators to scaffold literacy instruction in the response journals, Werderich noted that all four components, visual aids, modeling, questioning and requesting, and feedback became integrated components that occur simultaneously. She recommended that teachers use the four response facilitators in a varied and balanced manner in order to best meet each students' literacy needs.

Implementation of Literature Response

Journals at the Upper Elementary Level

While think-alouds, group responses, prompts, coding, and visuals can be used with all students, there are specific differences in the implementation process with upper elementary school students.

Dionisio (1991) began the process of implementing literature response journals by giving book talks. She read an excerpt from a novel to engage students' interest and then

shared her own responses to the book as a model. After the students had opportunities to orally respond to the text through think-alouds, they began to share their thoughts in writing. As previously stated, it is important for the teacher to model a written response, to provide students with open-ended, high-quality questions or prompts, and to provide the students with a variety of choices (Runkle, 2000). Dionisio used passages of literature to conduct mini-lessons on the literary elements authors use, such as setting, conflict, or theme. After modeling and providing examples, she asked the pupils to notice any instances where the focus literary elements were used in their self-selected independent reading books. At the end of the class period, students shared examples from their texts. Dionisio found increased reference to literary elements in students' written responses when she conducted more mini-lessons.

Barbe-Clevett et al. (2002) described another literature response journal implementation process with intermediate grade students. Their process began with the instructor modeling the think-aloud strategy during oral reading. Students practiced think-alouds as a whole group, had opportunities for small group sharing, and finally, wrote their thoughts independently. Barbe-Clevett et al. used this same procedure of scaffolding to teach students how to code their responses to literature. When students became proficient at think-alouds and coding their responses on self-adhesive notes, Barbe-Clevett et al. introduced a graphic organizer entitled *Reflection Connection*. This was a teacher-developed form in which students wrote about what they enjoyed while reading, what was confusing to them, and the connections they were able to make beyond

the text. The *Reflection Connection* allowed students to respond to literature in a more structured way, but not as in-depth as in a literature response journal. Students met in discussion groups to share their reflections. After the group sharing of *Reflection Connections*, Barbe-Clevett et al. determined that students were ready to write their own responses in a literature journal. Again, Barbe-Clevett et al. planned for a gradual release of responsibility approach. They modeled written responses to literature first, gave students opportunities to write responses in small groups, and then in pairs. Finally, the students wrote individual responses in a literature response journal format. At each stage of the process, students reflected orally on their thinking and strategy use.

With any implementation of literature response journals, upper elementary students need ample time to read and discuss their thinking (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Runkle, 2000). They may take notes as they read, or they may write their responses intermittently throughout a given reading session. A response may be written at more than one sitting during independent reading sessions or before group discussions. In fact, it can be beneficial to have older students write their reactions and thoughts first in order to have ideas to share in discussion (Elbow, 2004; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995). Teachers can then use the students' journal responses as the basis for class discussion.

Implementation of Literature Response

Journals at the Primary Level

While literature response journals were initially used with upper elementary students, Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) suggested that even though lower elementary students are in the process of learning to read, their thinking and comprehension must be developed as well. Based on research studies with first graders, Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1999) asserted that lower elementary students were capable of more thoughtful responses when they were given appropriate scaffolding. Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo developed an implementation process that consisted of a teacher reading aloud to students, followed by modeling responses orally and in writing. Students practiced responding orally before beginning to write their responses. This step was key as oral response is essential with primary-age children. Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) found that a higher level of thinking and deeper responses resulted when younger students had opportunities to discuss their thoughts first. Then during the writing time, teachers met individually with students to provide them with oral and written feedback.

Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995, 1999) suggested that the process of implementing response journals with young students can begin with the instructor reading aloud from a chapter book. A chapter book was recommended rather than a picture book, as the longer text provides more opportunities for responses and allows for

the development of meaning and reflection in-between successive responses. After modeling a think-aloud from the chapter book, the teacher writes a short response on chart paper, perhaps one sentence. The response length should parallel what the children are developmentally able to write. At this point the students do not write their responses, but may share orally after the teacher writes a response.

Once the children have seen the process of writing responses to literature modeled and have practiced responding to the text orally, they can begin to write their responses. Prior to reading aloud, the teacher instructs the children to think about what they might write while listening to the text and reminds them that they will write in their journals about their thinking. Children may be prompted to write what they think about a chapter or what they think will happen next. In fact, Fuhler (1994) found that predicting events was the easiest type of response for the students to share. Broad (2002) found that students might also use illustrations to represent their thinking, especially at the beginning of first grade. Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) noted that students wrote responses with an average length of seven words during the first two months of school and then drew pictures to accompany their responses. Some children, however, have more thoughts than they are developmentally able to write. For students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts on paper, Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo suggested that the teacher write the children's dictated responses and have them copy these dictated responses into their journals.

Using Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo's model (1995, 1999), the teacher conducts individual conferences during writing time. Students read aloud their responses and are provided with immediate feedback through a written response from the teacher. The teacher then asks each child oral questions related to what was written. The teacher-student discussion helps build shared meaning through a sociolinguistic approach. After the writing time, students can read their journal entries out loud to the class. This gives students an awareness of communicating to an audience and allows the teacher to point out aspects of the responses that are good models for other students' future responses (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999).

Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1995) noticed students' written responses were longer as they learned more writing skills and learned more about elaboration. They discovered that they needed to request elaboration as the students did not spontaneously do so initially. One-word answers were typical responses to teacher questions. Prompts such as "Why do you think so?" and "Tell me more" resulted in increased student response. After several weeks with this type of feedback, student responses showed more elaboration (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999). Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo discovered that using the response journals only three times a week eventually led to longer, higher-quality responses. Hancock (1993) made similar discoveries with older students, recommending the use of response journals in moderation. Her pupils tired of daily response journal writing and the way it "interrupted" their reading (p.366). Fountas and Pinnell (2001) suggested one entry per week of about one page in length for third

through sixth graders. In this way, the quality of the students' journal entries is maintained.

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo (1999) recommended introducing new ways of responding to text as a way to maintain students' motivation and to increase the quality of students' literature response journals. As students become comfortable with the process of writing in literature response journals, new responses styles can be periodically modeled by the classroom teacher in mini-lessons before the read-aloud sessions. In Wollman-Bonilla and Werchandlo's research (1999), the first grade students' oral and written responses tended to mirror the type of response the teacher had modeled or explicitly shown in the mini-lesson. Throughout the school year, every child tried a variety of responses rather than continuing with one of two types of responses.

Implementation of Literature Response Journals

with Less Proficient Readers and Writers

Research on literature response journals has shown them to be an effective way to engage students in the meaning-making process of reading. In fact, using literature response journals with struggling readers and writings is especially beneficial due to their motivational effect (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995), individualized format (Fuhler, 1994; Fulps & Young, 1991), active nature (Elbow, 2004), and comprehension facilitation (Anson & Beach, 1995; Barbe-Clevett, et al., 2002; Bowman, 2000; Skeans, 2000).

Sudduth (1989) used literature response journals with third grade remedial readers. She suggested having all students read the same book orally or silently, with the teacher actively participating in discussion to model thinking about the text and responding to the text. Think-alouds were an essential part of Sudduth's modeling. Sudduth wrote group entries in discussion using guided statements such as "I was surprised when _____" or "This story reminds me of the time I _____" (p. 42). Teachers can help students elaborate upon their thinking by asking questions and adding their own thoughts to the writing. As some reluctant readers do not know how to engage themselves with a text, prompting from the teacher can assist students in the type of thinking required for literature response journals (Wollman-Bonilla, 1989).

After the group writing session, Sudduth's students copied the group entry into their own logs. Sudduth proposed gradually decreasing the amount of modeling by the teacher, but continuing with group discussion to elicit ideas. Her students generated a list of possible journal responses to have next to their notebooks when they began to write independently. Sudduth advised teachers to set a timer for 10 minutes of writing time to help provide structure for the students. This also helps students focus on fluency rather than accuracy (Hayes and Bahruth, 1985). Sudduth also recommended allowing one or two days a week for sharing journal responses. "Group interaction is needed for activating thinking" (Sudduth, 1989, p. 452). Through the group sharing, students may gain a new understanding of a text or develop ideas for future writing.

Many students have difficulty writing a response related to their thinking about or reaction to the literature. Oftentimes, students will write summaries of what they have read. When this occurs, Wollman-Bonilla (1991) stated that teachers' responses should guide students to develop personal involvement. To accomplish this, teachers can ask specific questions in their replies that encourage communication of personal ideas about what was read. Furthermore, Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1999) suggested having a group of struggling students and their teacher read the same book independently. In their research with first graders, Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo found that children were less apt to retell the plot and focus more on sharing their thinking when they knew that the other students and teacher had read the same information.

For students who have difficulty writing response to literature, Wollman-Bonilla (1991) recommended three approaches. When invented spelling makes a student's response journal too challenging to read, teachers can have the student orally read the response in an individual reading conference. At that time, the teacher can write a response to the child's journal, saying the message as it is written. In a second approach, a student meets with a volunteer, teacher associate, or older student to orally read his literature response journal entry. Underneath the child's original message, the helper can write the same message in conventional form. The teacher will then be able to read the child's literature response journal at a later time and respond to the child's message. Finally, Wollman-Bonilla advised that students who have difficulty with the motor skills of writing use a computer for their literature response journals. Freeing students from the

physical difficulty of writing allows them to concentrate on the meaning they want to communicate. If students lack the skills to type on the computer, Anson and Beach (1995), suggested that students orally record their thoughts into a tape recorder.

When implementing literature response journals, problems may arise with students who are capable, but reluctant readers and writers. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) recommend that teachers need to check in daily with reluctant readers to make sure students have a book to read. Many students are not engaged either because they have selected a book that is too difficult for them to read or they have not found a book that captures their attention (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). In that case, some pupils may need assistance selecting a book at an appropriate reading level or in an area of interest. Additionally, in journal response letters to the students, teachers can suggest books for reading, ask questions to reinforce thinking, and through their own enthusiastic comments about books, provide a model of an engaged reader (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Whether students struggle with reading and writing due to reluctance or skill deficits, Wollman-Bonilla (1991) advised teachers to make all students feel competent. This can be accomplished by letting students know that "success with response journals is unrelated to students' reading abilities" (p. 48). If students are slower readers, Wollman-Bonilla suggested that teachers allow them to read at their own pace without specifying the completion of an entire book or chapter before writing a response to the literature. Valuable responses can be made to small sections of text. The learner-centered nature of literature response journals allows teachers the flexibility to make individual

adjustments as needed to ensure success for all students. For struggling writers, emphasizing the quality of the response rather than the length is a way to increase their feelings of competence and motivation.

Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

Competence and motivation of all students will also be increased by evaluating the depth of thinking displayed in a student's literature response journal rather than evaluating the mechanics of a student's journal writing (Anson & Beach, 1995; Fulps & Young, 1991; Staton, 1998; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991).

Because of the informal, exploratory nature of response journals, students often write quickly. Their ideas and questions seem to flow onto the paper. As a result, it is common to find words and letters left out, misspellings, lack of punctuation, and nonstandard grammar (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991, p. 28-29).

Without a meaning-based approach to evaluation, Fulps and Young (1991) asserted that "there is no real request for reflection, but instead the journal becomes a vehicle to display the student's mechanical knowledge" (p. 114). Similarly, Staton (1988) stated that journals "...allow students to develop more coherent self-expression and a personal 'voice' - both essential aspects of writing which are often lost as basic composition skills are stressed" (p. 198).

Anson and Beach (1995) also emphasized a focus on students' thoughts related to the text when evaluating literature response journals. "Strong evaluations at the early stages of students' journal writing will likely squelch the freedom to explore different

ideas and to practice different discursive strategies" (p. 178). Anson and Beach found that non-evaluative, encouraging dialogue best helped students' response development. By responding to students' literature response journals in a meaning-based way, students understood that their thinking was valued. Anson and Beach suggested teachers let students know the expectations for the literature response journals, model these expectations, and then evaluate students' performance across time.

Teachers may decide to evaluate student literature response journals by creating rubrics. Fenwick (2001) recommended evaluating student response journals for evidence of growth. She suggested rating students' responses for thoughtful reflection, connection making, critical thinking, and questioning. Other factors to consider for evaluation of literature response journals include evidence of application of comprehension strategies presented in mini-lessons, support of opinions with evidence from text, and adherence to previously set expectations for completion.

Another option teachers may consider is a credit/no credit grading system. Gordon (2000) found that "removing grade pressure boosts students' confidence and enjoyment while they practice asking questions, exploring issues, and reflecting on experience" (p. 42). Without the worry of traditional grades, students may take more risks in expressing their thoughts rather than just writing what they believe the teacher wants them to write. This allows students to make authentic affective responses to literature.

Even if students will be given a score on a rubric or assessment scale, Fenwick advised teachers to still respond through dialogue: "Point out areas of growth… or areas the writer might be encouraged to explore further" (p. 45). Fenwick emphasized the most important aspect of the evaluation is "honoring the writer's process and intent" (p. 45) and further facilitating dialogue about the text.

Literature response journals are a valuable tool to facilitate both efferent and aesthetic transactions with text. They are a way to ensure that students will be actively thinking while they read. Through the use of explicit instruction, modeling, guided practice with feedback, and the creation of contexts for sharing, educators can help students of all ages and ability levels go beyond just reading the words to interacting with text and reflecting on their thoughts in writing.

Methodology

The initial step in the methodology process was an in-depth literature review of reader response theory and literature response journals. The literature review began with an electronic database search of ERIC (EBSCO), Education Full Text (Wilson), ERIC (U.S. Department of Education), PsycINFO (EBSCO), and UNISTAR. The initial search utilized key terminology (literature response journals, dialogue journals, reading-writing connection, thinking-writing connection, reader response theory, and reading comprehension). As the literature review developed more key words and phrases were derived from articles and other sources culminating in a final literature review topics of reader response theory, literature response journals, types of student responses, benefits of using literature response journals, replying to students' literature response letters, types of teacher responses to student literature response letters, implementation of literature response journals, and evaluation of literature response journals.

After completing the literature review, I decided that the amount of content regarding theory, implementation, and evaluation of literature response journals would necessitate a year-long professional development project. My first step was to develop an outline that divided the literature review into a sequential and manageable way for the professional development participants to gain knowledge about literature response journals. The initial outline included the target audience and major topics for each professional development session. I created power point presentations for each

professional development session based on the outline and the content in the literature review.

Throughout the development of this project the target audience, elementary school teachers, was taken into consideration. As I developed the project, my writing took on a recursive rather than linear process. I took content from the literature review and adapted it for the context of the professional development sessions. Key components were determined for the presentation for every session. This was done by summarizing essential elements from literature that researchers deemed necessary for effective literature response journal application.

Revisions to the power points and the project narrative occurred as I worked ahead on subsequent sessions or revisited the literature review and project outline. The handouts emerged from content provided in the professional development session power points. Some additional handouts emerged as suggestions from my first reader, Dr. Tidwell, associate professor of Literacy Education. She acted as a vital element in this recursive process as she provided feedback on the what, how, and why, which brought me back to thinking about the what again. This recursive process generated ten power points designed for ten months of professional development.

Project Overview

Literature response journals were introduced to the elementary school teachers in my school district approximately ten years ago. Some participants still use literature response journals in their classrooms; others have abandoned them; and still others have received no professional development regarding literature response journals. The purpose of this professional development project is to inform all elementary participants in my school building of the benefits of literature response journals, the implementation process for using literature response journals in their own classrooms, and the evaluation of student literature response journals.

This project is a year-long professional development plan consisting of ten sessions. The initial two sessions provide participants with the big ideas related to literature response journals. Both of these sessions will take place during the first month of school. The next two sessions, held during the second month of school, will focus on specific procedures for implementing literature response journals. The fifth, sixth, and seventh professional development sessions will be held monthly. Each meeting will provide information on additional implementation procedures as well as implementation follow-up. The eighth and ninth monthly sessions will detail the ways in which participants can evaluate their students' literature response journals. Evaluation follow-up will also occur. The final meeting, during the eighth month of school, will be a time for reflection and discussion about future use of literature response journals at our school. For a complete overview of these sessions, see Table 1.

Table 1

Professional Development Schedule

Month	Participants	Topic
August	All staff	Types and benefits of literature response journals
September	All staff	Teacher responses to student literature response journals
October	All staff	Think-alouds to model reader responses
October	All staff	Group responses to literature
November	Kindergarten – Grade 2	Transition to written response
November	Grades 3 – 6	Transition to written response
December	All staff	Use of literature response journals with less proficient readers and writers
January	All staff	Types and benefits of teacher responses to student literature response journals
February	All staff	Evaluation of literature response journals
March	All staff	Evaluation of literature response journals
April	All staff	Reflection and future planning for use of literature response journals

Professional Development Sessions

Professional development participants will be provided with a copy of each session's power point presentation in order to take notes. They will also be given a list of references for optional further reading on topics presented and additional handouts related to content as appropriate.

Professional Development Session 1: Types and Benefits of Literature Response Journals

The focus of the first session is to provide information about literature response journals for professional development participants. The following agenda, embedded in the power point for Session 1, will be shared with the participants.

Agenda

- Overview of a Reader Response Approach

- Literature Response Journals

- Types of Student Responses

- Benefits of Using Literature Response Journals

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix A), participants will receive a handout of student response types (see Appendix B), a handout of example student literature response letters (see Appendix C), and a reference list for further reading (see Appendix D).

Following the agenda overview, I will begin with a quote about the difference between what good and poor readers do while reading (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1992). This quote was chosen in order to guide professional development participants to think about readers' engagement with the text (see Appendix A, slides 3-5). I will then ask participants to partake in a Think-Pair-Share (Lyman, 1981). First, participants should think of readers they know and how those readers' engagement with the text affects the level and type of meaning they make. Following a minute or two of reflection time, participants will be asked to share their thoughts with an individual sitting near them. After about two minutes of discussion time, volunteers will share their discussion with the large group. Their discussion of student engagement will create the segue for me to introduce the idea of engaging readers through reader response (Rosenblatt, 1978).

As the purpose of the first session is for participants to gain information about literature response journals, I will speak about engaging readers through reader response theory and the difference between efferent and aesthetic approaches to reading (see Appendix A, slides 6-8). Participants will again be asked to Think-Pair-Share (Lyman, 1981) about examples of efferent and aesthetic approaches in their own classrooms (see Appendix A, slide 9). Following the Think-Pair-Share activity, I will describe the theory of reader response and speak about the benefits of creating learning situations that allow students to make aesthetic responses to literature (see Appendix A, slides 10-14).

After sharing engagement and approaches to reading, participants will be introduced to the frame and formats for response journals. I will explain about the most

common format of literature response journals (see Appendix A, slides 15-16), share why the letter format has been so successful (see Appendix A, slide 17), and provide examples of three formats for the literature response journal (see Appendix A, slide 18). Sample response letters are embedded in the power point (see Appendix A, slides 21-27), and I plan to use those example letters to explain the types of responses students can make in their literature response letters. As I discuss the sample literature response letters, I will remind participants to refer to their handouts (see Appendices B and C) listing the variety of response types and copies of the student response letters.

The purpose of the final portion of the professional development session is to provide participants with information about the benefits of literature response journals (see Appendix A, slides 38-34). I will speak about the positive effects literature response journals have on student comprehension, engagement, and metacognition.

At the end of Session 1, each professional development participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to the information presented. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Professional Development Session 2: Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

The focus of the second session is to provide an overview of teacher responses to student literature response letters. The following agenda, embedded in the power point for Session 2, will be shared with the participants.

Agenda

- Review of Literature Response Journals

- Questions and Comments

- Replying to Student Literature Response Letters

- Sample Teacher Responses

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix E), participants will receive a handout with sample student literature response letters and teacher replies (see Appendix F), and a reference list for further reading (see Appendix G).

To review the concepts from the first professional development session, participants will be asked to discuss the following questions with nearby colleagues: *What are literature response journals?* and *Why are they beneficial?* When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, volunteers will be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or confusions. This same

reading? What did you notice about your comprehension of the text? How do you think

writing your own response first affected the discussion with your partner?

Volunteers will be asked to share their comments about this experience with the

large group. Participants will then Think-Pair-Share (Lyman, 1981) about how this type

of literature response activity would be beneficial for their own students.

Since literature response journals are commonly used in a letter format between

student and teacher, the next portion of this professional development session will focus

on replying to students' literature response letters. My goal is to provide the big picture

on how reciprocity works within literature response journals. Detailed types of teacher

responses will be the focus of Professional Development Session 7. In this session I will

focus specifically on the benefits of writing teacher replies to students' literature response

letters (see Appendix E, slide 8). Samples of student literature response letters will be

shared along with the corresponding replies teachers made to those letters (see Appendix

E, slides 9-13 & Appendix F). As we examine those replies, I will point out examples of

specific responses, meaning-based responses, and relationship-building responses. These

three types of responses are the qualities of teacher responses that have been found to

most benefit student learning (see Appendix E, slide 14).

At the end of Session 2, each professional development participant will be given

an index card in order to list questions they have related to the information presented

about teacher responses to student literature response letters. In addition to questions,

participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear

that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Professional Development Session 3: Modeling Through Think-Alouds

The objective of the third session is for participants to learn how to begin implementing literature response journals with their students. The first step of the implementation process involves modeling the thinking that good readers do. The following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Review of Literature Response Journals

- Questions and Comments

- Introducing Literature Response Journals to Students

- Implementation

    o Modeling Using Think-Alouds

    o Example of a Think-Aloud

- Try It Out!

        o   Implementation by Modeling through the use of Think-

            Alouds

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix I), participants will receive a handout listing steps to planning and conducting a think-aloud (see Appendix J), and a reference list for further reading (see Appendix K).

To review the concepts from the previous professional development session, participants will be asked to discuss the following questions with nearby colleagues: *When teachers reply to students' literature response letters, what are the benefits for students?* and *What types of replies might teachers make?* When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, volunteers will be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or confusions.

After reviewing the major concepts from Session 2, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of the previous professional development session. As in the previous session, I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at the previous professional development session. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix I, slide 4).

While the first two professional development sessions were intended to provide participants with an overview of literature response journals, this session will begin to

provide detail on the implementation of literature response journals. I will begin by sharing some important elements to consider when introducing literature response journals to students (see Appendix I, slide 5). I will suggest that during implementation sessions with their students, participants first explain the purpose of a literature response journal, then model responses with familiar text. It is important to convey to students that there are many possible ways to respond to literature through modeling and examples. It is equally important to communicate the expectations for the written responses that students will be making in future months.

As writing responses to literature is often a new and challenging task for many students, I will emphasize to participants the need to focus first on providing models for sharing one's thinking in response to literature (see Appendix I, slides 6-7). I will share information regarding the purpose of modeling one's own responses to literature and how this modeling will demonstrate to students not only how, but also what to think about during reading.

After defining a think-aloud (see Appendix I, slide 8) and sharing specific procedures for conducting a think-aloud (see Appendix I, slides 9-10), I plan to demonstrate a think-aloud to the professional development participants. I will use *Kiss the Cow!* by Phyllis Root to demonstrate the comprehension strategy of determining the big idea (see Appendix L). After the think-aloud demonstration, I will recommend that participants provide plenty of modeling for their students with a variety of genres. It is

important that participants also model a variety of response types in their think-alouds with students.

Professional development participants will be invited to try several think-alouds in their classrooms over the next month. Before leaving this session, participants will be prompted to select a date and time to begin using think-alouds as well as to write down at least one text or reading strategy they could use to model their thinking for students. Participants can refer to the think-aloud handout (see Appendix K) to assist them in their planning. As participants spend 5 to 10 minutes planning, I will circulate to provide clarification and affirmation to participants. We will then reconvene as a large group where I will let participants know that they will be sharing the results of their think-aloud implementation in small discussion groups at the next professional development session.

To close this session, each participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to the think-aloud demonstration or the information presented about think-alouds. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

her think-aloud experiences in small groups with nearby colleagues. Discussion should focus on successes as well as concerns about modeling responses to literature through the use of think-alouds. When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, volunteers will be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or confusions.

To further clarify concepts about modeling responses to literature through the use of think-alouds, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of the previous professional development session. As in the previous session, I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at the previous professional development session. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix M, slide 4).

Once participants have used think-alouds to model how to respond to literature, the next step in the implementation process is for the students to make large group responses. I will share information about the value of involving students in group responses (see Appendix M, slide 5), the purposes of group responses (see Appendix M, slides 6-7), and how group responses provide scaffolding for students when they are learning to share their aesthetic responses to literature (see Appendix M, slides 8-9).

Following this presentation of information on the value and purpose of group responses, I will engage the participants as students in their own group responses to

literature. Using the book *14 Cows for America* (Deedy, 2009), I will read aloud, stopping at predetermined points in the text to elicit responses from the group (see Appendix O). The rationale for a group response is for the professional development participants to get a feel for how a group response works and to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be involved in a group response to literature.

Professional development participants will be invited to try several group responses to literature in their classrooms over the next month. Before leaving this session, participants will be prompted to brainstorm where in their curriculum group responses to literature could occur during the next four weeks. They will be asked to select a date and time to begin using group responses as well as to write down at least one text they could use with students. As participants spend 5 to 10 minutes planning, I will circulate to provide clarification and affirmation to participants. We will then reconvene as a large group where I will let participants know that they will be sharing the results of their students' group responses in small discussion groups at the next professional development session.

To close this session, each participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to the demonstration of group responses to literature or the information presented. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional

development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Professional Development Session 5: Transitioning to Written Response

This session will focus on helping students transition from making oral responses to literature to making written responses. As students' writing abilities vary developmentally, separate meetings will be held for participants who work with students in kindergarten through grade two and for those participants who work with students in grades three through six. In this way, teaching strategies specific to those age levels can be addressed.

Kindergarten through Grade Two. The following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Small group sharing: Group Responses

- Questions and Comments

- Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

  o Drawing and Dictation

  o Prompts

  o Visuals

- Try it Out!

          o Continue Implementation by Transitioning to Written

            Response

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix P), participants will receive a reference list for further reading (see Appendix Q).

At the end of the previous professional development session, participants were asked to continue the process of implementing literature response journals in their classrooms by having students make group responses to literature. During the first part of this session, each participant will be invited to share her experiences in small groups with nearby colleagues. Discussion should focus on successes as well as concerns about making group responses to literature. When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, volunteers will be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or confusions.

In order to further clarify concepts about group responses to literature, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of the previous professional development session. I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at the previous professional development session. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix P, slide 4).

While learning how to read is the focus of primary grades reading instruction, I will emphasize that students' comprehension skills must be simultaneously developed (see Appendix P, slide 5). I will remind participants of the read-model-share process used thus far in responding to literature (see Appendix P, slide 6). This same process will be used when guiding students in their transition to written responses to literature.

When transitioning to written responses to literature, absolute freedom to write about whatever a child wants is not necessarily the best way to elicit student response (Watts, 2002). I will share Watt's research about providing structure to students' written responses to literature as I think it will challenge some of the participants' previous thoughts about writing (see Appendix P, slide 7). With this information, I will provide the purpose for learning about the use of prompts and visual aids when students begin to write their responses to literature.

Just as teaching students to orally respond to literature began with modeling so does the process of teaching students to respond to literature in writing. I will share information not only about modeling written responses, but also when and how to transition to written responses, and the importance of allowing primary-aged students to discuss their responses before writing (see Appendix P, slides 8-11). I will emphasize that expectations for written responses must be developmentally appropriate. Students that are not yet able to write can use drawings and dictation in order to convey their thoughts about what has been read (see Appendix P, slide 12).

93

As prompts are a way to scaffold primary-aged students as they transition to making written responses to literature, I will explicitly define prompts, explain the purpose of prompts, and list examples of prompts (see Appendix P, slides 13-15). I will also provide information about successful prompts and the necessity of decreasing prompts as students gain proficiency in responding to text (see Appendix P, slides 16-17). Visual aids are helpful to students in their transition to written response so I will explain how those can be used as well (see Appendix P, slide 18).

Participants will then meet with grade-level colleagues to discuss the information presented about transitioning to written responses (see Appendix P, slide 19). They will be given ten minutes to discuss which prompts and visual aids may work well in their classrooms, to determine if any students will need to draw or dictate their responses, and to plan which texts they may use for students' initial written responses.

After the grade-level discussions, we will reconvene as a large group. I will then share recommendations related to having students write their responses to literature. These recommendations will address individual student conferences, large group sharing of journal entries, prompts for elaboration, the frequency in which individuals write their responses to literature, and ways in which to promote a variety of response types (see Appendix P, slides 20-25).

Professional development participants will be invited to start the transition to written responses to literature in their classrooms over the next month. Before leaving this session, participants will be prompted to think about how they will begin the

transition process in their own classrooms. They will be asked to make a plan for when they will begin, if they will use drawing or dictation, and which prompts or visuals aids they will use (see Appendix P, slides 26-27). As participants spend five to ten minutes planning, I will circulate to provide clarification and affirmation to participants. We will then reconvene as a large group where I will let participants know that they will be sharing the results of their students' written responses in small discussion groups at the next professional development session.

To close this session, each participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to the information presented about transitioning to written response. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Grades Three through Six. The following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Small group sharing: Group Responses
- Questions and Comments

- Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

    o Traditional Prompts

    o Graphic Organizers as Prompts

    o Coding

    o Visuals

- Try it Out!

    o Continue Implementation by Transitioning to Written Response

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix R), participants will receive two graphic organizers (see Appendix S), a coding examples handout (see Appendix T), and a reference list for further reading (see Appendix U).

At the end of the previous professional development session, participants were asked to continue the process of implementing literature response journals in their classrooms by having students make group responses to literature. During the first part of this session, each participant will be invited to share her experiences in small groups with nearby colleagues. Discussion should focus on successes as well as concerns about making group responses to literature. When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, volunteers will be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or confusions.

In order to further clarify concepts about group responses to literature, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of the previous professional development session. I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at the previous professional development session. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix R, slide 4).

When transitioning to written responses to literature, absolute freedom to write about whatever a child wants is not necessarily the best way to elicit student response (Watts, 2002). I will share Watt's research about providing structure to students' written responses to literature as I think it will challenge some of the participants' previous thoughts about writing (see Appendix R, slide 5). With this information, I will provide the purpose for learning about the use of prompts, coding, and visual aids when students begin to write their responses to literature.

As prompts are a way to scaffold students as they make transition to making written responses to literature, I will explicitly define prompts, explain the purpose of prompts, and list examples of traditional prompts (see Appendix R, slides 6-8). I will explain how graphic organizers can be used as prompts and then show examples of two different graphic organizers that students can use to record their responses to literature (see Appendix R, slides 9-11). I will also provide information about successful prompts

and the necessity of decreasing prompts as students gain proficiency in responding to text (see Appendix R, slides 12-13).

Participants will then meet with grade-level colleagues to discuss the information presented so far about transitioning to written responses (see Appendix R, slide 14). They will be given ten to fifteen minutes to discuss which traditional prompts and graphic organizers may work well in their classrooms and to plan which texts they may use for students' initial written responses.

After the grade-level discussions, we will reconvene as a large group. I will introduce coding as another way to help students transition to written literature responses. I will define coding, share examples of coding, and explain how to introduce coding to students (see Appendix R, slides 15-19). I will speak about the purpose of coding, and I will remind participants that, like the use of prompts, coding should only be used for a temporary period of time until students become proficient at making written responses to literature (see Appendix R, slides 20-21). I will also discuss how visual aids can aid students' transitions to written responses (see Appendix R, slide 22).

Following this segment of information sharing, participants will again meet with grade-level colleagues to discuss how the use of coding and visual aids might look in their classrooms (see Appendix R, slide 23). After about ten to fifteen minutes of small group discussion time, we will reconvene as a large group.

In the final portion of this professional development session, I will share recommendations related to students' written responses to literature (see Appendix R,

slides 24-26). These recommendations will address the frequency in which individuals write their responses to literature as well as ways in which to promote a variety of response types. I will also speak about how participants can further extend the written responses as students gain proficiency (see Appendix R, slide 27).

Professional development participants will be invited to start the transition to written responses to literature in their classrooms over the next month. Before leaving this session, participants will be prompted to think about how they will begin the transition process in their own classrooms. They will be asked to make a plan for when they will begin and which prompts, graphic organizers, codes, or visuals aids they will use (see Appendix R, slides 28-30). As participants spend five to ten minutes planning, I will circulate to provide clarification and affirmation to participants. We will then reconvene as a large group where I will let participants know that they will be sharing samples of their students' written responses in small discussion groups at the next professional development session.

To close this session, each participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to the information presented about transitioning to written response. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes.

Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Professional Development Session 6: Using Literature Response Journals with Less Proficient Readers and Writers

The purpose of the sixth professional development session will be to share information about how to help less proficient readers and writers use literature response journals successfully. The following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Small Group Sharing of Written Responses

- Questions and Comments

- Literature Response Journals for Less Proficient Readers and Writers

- Try it Out!

  o Supporting Less Proficient Readers and Writers

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix V), participants will receive a reference list for further reading (see Appendix W).

At the end of the previous professional development session, participants were asked to make a transition from having students respond to literature orally to having

students write their responses. During the first part of this session, each participant will be invited to share examples of her students' written responses in small groups with nearby colleagues. Discussion should focus on successes as well as concerns about making written responses to literature. When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, volunteers will be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or confusions.

In order to further clarify concepts about transitioning to written literature responses, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of the previous professional development session. I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at the previous professional development session. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix V, slide 4).

As many students who are less proficient in reading and writing may have difficulty writing their responses to literature, the main focus of this professional development session will be ways in which participants can ensure all students experience success with literature response journals. I will begin by highlighting the reasons why literature response journals are extremely beneficial for struggling readers and writers (see Appendix V, slide 5). I will also reiterate the importance of modeling through the use of think-alouds as less proficient readers may need more modeling than other students (see Appendix V, slide 6).

Less proficient readers may also need more scaffolding as they write their responses to literature. I will describe a process of scaffolding written responses by beginning with group written responses and progressing to students writing independently in their literature response journals with a list of journal response ideas next to them (see Appendix V, slides 7-8). To provide clarity on how this might look, a sample literature response letter will be shared (see Appendix V, slide 9). It was written by a less proficient reader and writer using a list of journal response ideas. I will also share recommendations about structuring a focused writing time, promoting writing fluency, and sharing journal responses (see Appendix V, slide 10).

As an additional resource for the professional development participants, I will share some ideas to address specific problems that may arise when students struggle with writing their responses: if students are summarizing what they have read rather than making aesthetic responses; if the physical act of writing impedes student response; if inventive spelling prevents teacher response; and if students are capable of reading and writing, but are reluctant to do so (see Appendix V, slides 11-15). I will also share further recommendations to ensure that all students feel competent to write in their literature response journals (see Appendix V, slide 16).

Professional development participants then will be invited to utilize additional supports for less proficient readers and writers over the next month. Before leaving this session, participants will be prompted to think about how they will provide that support for students in their own classrooms. They will be asked to make a plan for when they

will begin, which additional supports they will use, and for which students will those additional supports be provided (see Appendix V, slides 17-18). As participants spend five to ten minutes planning, I will circulate to provide clarification and affirmation to participants. We will then reconvene as a large group where I will let participants know that they will be sharing examples of their less proficient students' written responses in small discussion groups at the next professional development session.

To close this session, each participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to the information presented about using literature response journals with less proficient readers and writers. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Professional Development Session 7: Types and Benefits of Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

During the seventh professional development session, participants will be reminded about the benefits of responding to their students' letters, and they will learn effective types of teacher responses. The following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Small Group Sharing: Supporting the Written Responses of Less Proficient Readers and Writers

- Questions and Comments

- Review: Replying to Student Literature Response Letters

- Types of Teacher Responses

- Managing Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

- Try it Out!

- Replying to Student Literature Response Letters

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix X), participants will receive a handout detailing types of teacher responses (see Appendix Y), and a reference list for further reading (see Appendix Z).

At the end of Professional Development Session 6, participants were asked to plan ways in which to address the needs of their less proficient readers and writers. During the first part of this session, each participant will be invited to share examples of additional supports they used with students as well as samples of these students' written response to literature. In small group discussion, participants will be prompted to share successes and concerns about supporting less proficient readers and writers' use of literature response journals. When it becomes clear that participants are finished with

their discussion, volunteers will be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or confusions.

In order to further clarify concepts about transitioning to written literature responses, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of the previous professional development session. I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at Professional Development Session 6. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix X, slide 4).

Since the previous four professional development sessions focused on the implementation process of modeling how to respond to literature, making group responses, transitioning to written response, and providing additional supports for less proficient readers and writers, I plan to review the commonly used letter format and the value of teacher replies to student literature response letters (see Appendix X, slides 5-6). Participants were provided with a big picture of the student-teacher dialogue within literature response letters during Professional Development Session 2. In this session, the focus will be on the different types of responses teachers make as they respond to what students have written (see Appendix X, slides 7-12). I will explain a total of six different response types and share sample teacher letters in which each of those response types were used. As I discuss the teacher response types, I will remind participants to refer to their handout (see Appendix Y) listing the variety of response types and excerpts from

letters presented in the power point. In addition to effective types of teacher responses, I will also share three types of responses that have been found to be the least effective in eliciting further student response. (see Appendix X, slide 13).

After detailing types of teacher responses, I will remind participants that, as discussed in Professional Development Session 2, specific responses, meaning-based responses, and relationship-building responses are the types of teacher responses that have been found to most benefit student learning (see Appendix X, slide 14).

Once participants have learned about effective teacher responses to student literature response letters, they will have the opportunity to apply that knowledge. Participants will work with a partner to reply to a sample student letter (see Appendix AA). Approximately ten minutes of work time will be given. After it is clear that most of the participants have had sufficient time to write a response, they will be asked to share their replies in small groups at their tables. Volunteers will be asked to share with the large group examples of specific, meaning-based, or relationship-building responses they heard shared within the small group setting.

Naturally, participants may be concerned about the time commitment involved in replying to twenty-some student literature response journals. I will invite participants to share their ideas for managing teacher responses to a whole class of students' letters. As they brainstorm ideas, I will share that students benefit most from quality responses made less frequently than from more frequent, less effective types of responses (see Appendix X, slide 16).

Professional development participants then will be invited to devise a plan for replying to their own students' literature response letters. Before leaving this session, participants will be prompted to think about when they will start replying to their students' letters and the frequency of their responses. They will also need a plan to ensure that all students will receive teacher replies (see Appendix X, slide 17). As participants spend about ten minutes planning, I will circulate to provide clarification and affirmation to participants. We will then reconvene as a large group where I will let participants know that they will be sharing their teacher replies to student literature response letters in small discussion groups at the next professional development session.

To close this session, each participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to types of teacher responses. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes, comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Professional Development Session 8: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

The focus of the eighth professional development session is the evaluation of literature response journals. The following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Small Group Sharing: Teacher Replies to Student Literature

  Response Letters

- Questions and Comments

- Review: Purpose of Literature Response Journals

- Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

- Try it Out: Evaluation Plan with Grade-Level Colleagues

- Questions and Comments

In addition to the power point handout (see Appendix BB), participants will

receive a reference list for further reading (see Appendix CC).

At the end of Professional Development Session 7, participants were asked to

devise a plan for responding to their students' literature response letters and to begin

writing responses to their students. During the first part of this session, each participant

will be invited to share examples of their replies to students. In small group discussion

participants will be prompted to share successes and concerns not only related to the

content of teacher responses, but also to the management of replying to all students.

When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, volunteers will

be asked to share with the large group. As needed, I will clarify any questions or

confusions.

In order to further clarify concepts about teacher replies to students' literature response letters, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of the previous professional development session. I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at Professional Development Session 7. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix BB, slide 4).

With full implementation of literature response journals completed, new learning for this session will focus on the evaluation of literature response journals. I plan to begin this section of the professional development with a quote related to the way in which students record their thoughts in literature response journals (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991). I selected this quote to prompt participants to think about how evaluating spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and grammar is not aligned with the purpose of literature response journals. While students certainly are to be encouraged to apply the mechanical knowledge they already possess, literature response journals are not an avenue to teach or evaluate mechanics of the written language. In fact, the evaluation of mechanics may prevent some students from freely writing about their thinking and limit them to the constraints of their mechanical knowledge (see Appendix BB, slides 5-7).

After reviewing the purpose of literature response journals (see Appendix BB, slide 8), I plan to discuss meaning-based evaluation and how it aligns with the aesthetic approach of literature response journals (see Appendix BB, slides 9-10). I will share ideas

for evaluating students' responses through the use of rubrics or a credit/no credit option (see Appendix BB, slides 11-12). I will also emphasize the value and importance of providing students with a written response in addition to any evaluative tool utilized (see Appendix BB, slide 13).

Professional development participants then will be invited to collaborate with their grade-level teams to create a plan for evaluating their students' literature response letters (see Appendix BB, slide 14). As participants spend about twenty minutes collaborating, I will circulate to provide clarification and affirmation to participants. We will then reconvene as a large group where I will prompt participants to select a time for sharing the evaluation information with students (see Appendix BB, slide 15). Over the next month, participants should begin evaluating student literature response letters. They will have the opportunity to share and reflect upon their evaluation tools in small discussion groups at the next professional development session.

To close this session, each participant will be given an index card in order to list questions they have related to evaluation of literature response journals. In addition to questions, participants will be encouraged to write comments, ideas, or confusions. Once it is clear that participants are finished writing, the index cards will be collected. Three questions will be randomly selected from the index cards to address in the large group immediately. Prior to the next professional development session, these collected questions will be read and examined for common themes. Common question themes,

comments, and ideas will be summarized and shared with the large group at the next session.

Professional Development Session 9: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

As in the eighth professional development session, the ninth professional development session will focus on the evaluation of literature response journals. During this session, ample time will be provided for participants to collaborate with their colleagues on what aspects of evaluation have worked well and what aspects still need revision. The following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Large Group Sharing: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

- Questions and Comments

- Multiple Grade-Level Team Collaboration

- Questions and Comments

At the previous professional development session, participants were asked to begin evaluating their students' literature response letter using a meaning-based evaluative tool. During the first part of this session, a representative from each grade level will be invited to share how the grade level team evaluated literature response journals during the past month (see Appendix DD, slide 3).

In order to further clarify concepts about the evaluation of literature response journals, I will address the questions participants wrote at the end of Professional

Development Session 8. I will have read and examined the questions for common themes beforehand. After addressing these questions, I will also share other relevant comments and ideas from participants at the previous professional development session. Those questions and comments will be included in the power point in the slide labeled Questions and Comments (see Appendix DD, slide 4).

Professional development participants then will meet in assigned multi-grade-level teams (see Appendix DD, slide 5). They will be prompted to share samples of the evaluative tools they used over the past month and to discuss successes and concerns related to evaluation of literature response journals (see Appendix DD, slide 6). This small group meeting format will also serve as a time when participants can brainstorm ideas to address concerns and to revise evaluative tools as needed. During this collaboration time, I will circulate to provide clarification, to answer questions, and to share ideas with participants.

To close the session, we will reconvene as a large group to address any additional questions or comments. Participants will be encouraged to implement any changes to their evaluative system and to be prepared to share examples at the next professional development session.

Professional Development Session 10: Reflection and Application Plan for Future Use of Literature Response Journals

The purpose of the final session is to reflect on the year-long professional development project and to make plans for future use of literature response journals. The

following agenda, embedded in the power point, will be shared with the participants at the beginning of the session.

Agenda

- Small Group Sharing: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

- Large Group Questions and Comments

- Grade-Level Team Reflection and Application Plans

- Questions and Comments

At the previous professional development session, participants were asked to continue evaluating their students' literature response letter using a meaning-based evaluative tool. During the first part of this session, participants will again meet with one or two other grade levels as assigned (see Appendix EE, slide 3) to discuss successes and concerns regarding the evaluation of literature response journals. When it becomes clear that participants are finished with their discussion, we will reconvene as a large group where I will clarify any questions or confusions as needed. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to share any other desired comments about evaluating literature response journals.

Since this is the final session in a year-long professional development project, participants will be asked to engage in a summative evaluation of literature response journals. They will meet with their grade-level teams to discuss their thoughts related to the following prompts: *How did your students benefit from the use of literature response journals? How will the implementation timeline change for next year? In what ways does*

the use of literature response journals relate to the Iowa Core Curriculum? and *What additional assistance, support, and/or resources do you need related to literature response journals?* (see Appendix EE, slide 5). During these grade-level discussions, each team will be asked to select a member to record their ideas on the Grade-Level Team Reflection and Application Plans for Future Use of Literature Response Journals form (see Appendix FF). I will circulate to provide clarification, to answer questions, to prompt reflection and to give input on planning ideas.

To close the session, we will reconvene as a large group in order to reflect as one cohesive team of teachers. Each grade-level team will be asked to select a member to summarize their discussion to report to the large group. As each grade-level team shares their reflections and future application ideas, I will use markers and chart paper to note any trends in successes, concerns, and recommended changes that emerge from the large group sharing time. The Grade-Level Team Reflection and Application Plans (see Appendix FF) will be collected and saved for future use.

Conclusion

The intent of this project is to inform and guide elementary school teachers through the process of implementing an effective literacy instructional practice with their students. As Fulps and Young (1991) stated "reading response journals provide a teacher with a means of looking inside students' minds to view their understanding of what was read" (p. 115). As teachers implement literature response journals with their students, these children learn how to become engaged readers who understand that reading is a meaning-making process that requires thinking about what has been read. This reading-thinking-writing connection not increases comprehension, but through student choice, it increases motivation as well.

In creating this project, the recursive process I used in constructing the professional development sessions (reading, creating, thinking, and reshaping) helped me to think more deeply about effective ways to connect theory to the practical context of the classroom. I have already begun to share the resources from this project with teachers in my building who are interested in revisiting literature response journal use with their students. Currently, our building collaboration time is focused on how our students' reading comprehension can be improved. Many teachers in our building have had no professional development on the use of literature response journals as a way to increase comprehension. Our building leadership team is interested in considering this project as a professional development focus for next year, either as a formal professional development program or as an informal professional development opportunity for

interested teachers in the building. This professional development project could be used in a similar manner at the district level.

The applicability of this project is that it is content-specific rather than location-specific. This project is not dependent on a specific school site or a particular context or background but is a professional development experience that can be brought to schools and to professional learning opportunities, such as state and national education conferences. What this means is that providing teachers with professional development about reader response theory and literature response journals can address the literacy needs of students across the state and the nation, in urban, suburban, and rural communities, across socio-economic and cultural contexts.

While this is not a new approach to literacy instruction (reader response has been a part of effective teaching for over 30 years), more recently schools have been focused on efforts to address current assessment demands. For many schools, the demand from assessment data to focus instruction on specific skills has limited the opportunity for many students to read and respond to literature. This professional development series can help teachers bring back to the schools authentic experiences for students with text.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Professional Development Session #1 Power Point Handout

Types and Benefits of Literature Response Journals

Beyond Just Reading the Words

*Interacting with Text Using
LIterature Response Journals*

Professional Development
Session #1

Types and Benefits of Literature Response
Journals

Agenda

- › Overview of a Reader Response Approach & the Benefits of this Approach
- › Literature Response Journals
- › Types of Student Responses
- › Benefits of Using Literature Response Journals
- › Questions and Comments

2

"Good readers are able to hear a voice in their head and process the material. Poor readers merely see the words and do not synthesize the information..."

3

"Poor readers read and read and read and never know they don't know. They don't notice that they are getting no meaning from the text..."

4

"They word-call in their minds, but they are non-readers in the real sense of meaning."

Bellanca & Fogarty, 1992, p. 10

5

Engaging Readers through Reader Response

- › Meaning-making is influenced by the approach to reading

- › Efferent versus Aesthetic
  · Different, but not mutually exclusive

Rosenblatt, 1978

6

Efferent Approach to Reading

‣ Attention "is directed outward... toward concepts to be retained, ideas to be tested, actions to be performed after the reading"

‣ Purpose: Locate information or facts in order to respond to questions given by the teacher

Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 24

7

Aesthetic Approach to Reading

‣ Involves feelings and images created in the reader's mind during reading

‣ Purpose: for pleasure, personal connection

Hancock, 2004; Rosenblatt, 1978

8

In your classroom...

Think of what you ask your students to do that requires an efferent approach to reading.

When are the students asked to approach reading aesthetically?

Efferent and aesthetic stances are not mutually exclusive!

Reader Response Theory

‣ Based on an aesthetic approach

‣ Readers play an active role in constructing meaning from text

‣ Each reader creates personal meaning based on prior knowledge and experiences

Rosenblatt, 1978

10

Benefits of a Reader Response Approach

‣ Reading and responding is an active process that requires students to think about what they have read

Bowman, 2000; Farnan & Kelly, 1993; Hancock, 2004

11

Benefits of a Reader Response Approach

‣ Students use a variety of comprehension strategies to create meaning

‣ Studies show increased comprehension of text

Atwell, 1987; Bowman, 2000; Gilles, 1990; Hancock, 2004; McMahon, 1994; Spiegel, 1998; Swift, 1993

12

Benefits of a Reader Response Approach

‣ Individualized response to text provides ownership of reading, facilitates a sense of control, increases confidence, and builds success

Bowman, 2000; Spiegel, 1998

13

Benefits of a Reader Response Approach

‣ Success motivates students to

Apply more strategies

Work harder at building meaning

Find reading more enjoyable and engaging

Pardo, 2004; Swift, 1993

14

Literature Response Journals

‣ Common Format

◦ Each student writes a letter to their teacher to share thoughts about what they read or what has been read to them

Atwell, 1987; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Moutray, Pollard, & McGinley, 2001; Werderich, 2002; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

15

Literature Response Journals

‣ Common Format

◦ Teacher replies by writing specific responses to what the student has written and by sharing her own ideas

Atwell, 1987; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Moutray, Pollard, & McGinley, 2001; Werderich, 2002; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

16

Why Letter Format Works Well

‣ Can be used with all types of texts in a variety of subject areas

‣ Provides an audience

‣ Creates shared meanings and understandings

Atwell, 1987; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Moutray, Pollard, & McGinley, 2001; Werderich, 2002; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

17

Journal Formats

‣ Journal can consist of spiral notebook, stapled sheets of paper, or entries typed and saved on a computer

Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

18

Literature Response Journals

› Length of response varies by age, learning style, sociocultural background, and level of immersion in text

Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

19

Types of Student Responses

20

Student Literature Response Letters

Samples
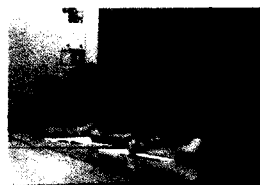
21

Dear Miss LaRue,   September 14, 2004

    I picked this book because it looked intresting and I'm tring to read all the Newberry Books. In this book I think that Kit (the main character) is going to spend to much time with the witch and one of her friends will tell on her and she will get acused of witch craft! This book is good so far.

                    Sincerely,
                    Becky

P.S. The book is called The witch of Blackbird pond.

22

The Bad Beginning by Lemony Snicket (the Series of Unfortunate Events)

Dear Miss LaRue,   March 11, 2005

    If I were Count Olaf I would be so nice to the kids. I would help them find their mony that way they can go and live by themselves. Because I thing they would be old enough to. If I had writen this book the title would be The Best Begening! It would ended a good way. I would never have a bad ending.

                Your friend,
                Sam

23

Dear Miss LaRue,   April 29, 2005

    I'm reading It's Music to My Ear in the seires of The Amazing Days of Abby Hayes. The auther is Anne Mazer. It's garue is relistic fiction. I think Abby's right that girls souldn't have to change there personality for boys to like them. My predition is that Abby is going to meet a guy and go boy crazy over him. I was right. My predition came true. Abby ran into a guy in the hall and really likes him. Abby saw her friend with the boy she liked.

                Your student,
                Amanda

24

Dear Miss LaRue, *April 29, 2005*

    I am reading <u>A Week in the Woods</u> by Andrew Clements. I think it is realistic fiction because people are not fling or doing anything like that. I think the main character, Mark, should listen to his mom about not getting anything dangerous for camping.

    I finished my book last night. I now think it was a little bit good that he did buy something to make a fire so when something bad happens he can use it. It was a very good book!

        Sincerely,
        Tom

25

Dear Miss LaRue, *April 6, 2005*

    I'm reading a Nancy Drew book that has cliffhangers after every chapter! Then I just have to read on! I sometimes like cliffhangers because then I'm always wondering what's going to happen or I'm excited to read in school or at home again. When you read Nightmare Mountain I liked the cliffhangers because it gave me something to look forward to at fuit break. I guess that's it for now.

        Sincerely,
        Macie

26

Dear Miss LaRue, *May 19, 2005*

    I read the book Secret of the Spa by Carolyn Keene. I think it's a mystery because all of the Nancy Drew books are mysterys.

    Nancy and George get free passes to the new spa. When they get there, there's a lot of people, even protesters. They finally get in the spa, but George is acting very strang. When they get settled unuasal things keep happening, like meat in vegatarian chili. (The spa has an all vegatarian menu.)

    The books On the Case and the Secret of the Spa have something different and the same. Madison Finn and Nancy Drew both solve the mysterys in the books. Except Madison dosen't actually really solve her mystery but Nancy solves her mystery. When Madison is solving her mystery, she uses a computer to take notes on the mystery, but Nancy dosen't use a computer, and dosen't take notes, she just remembers things. Nancy and Madison both are parts of BFF trios, only in Madison's case, on of her best friends is kind of made at her, but George Fayne isn't really helping Nancy and Bess solve the mystery either.

        That's it for now,
        Becky

27

Benefits of Literature Response Journals

‣ Students have stronger reading comprehension when they write about what they read

Skeans, 2000

28

Benefits of Literature Response Journals

‣ Students, especially less-proficient readers, were more engaged in reading than in classes where reading response journals were not used.

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995

29

Benefits of Literature Response Journals

‣ Taking time to write thoughts during the reading process causes readers to explore their thinking well enough to make personal reactions or to construct deeper meaning.

  It also makes them aware of their own thought processes while reading.

Hancock, 1992

30

Benefits of Literature Response Journals

› Knowing they will be writing about their thoughts, reactions, and ideas related to the text, helps increase students' concentration while reading.

Elbow, 2004

31

Benefits of Literature Response Journals

› The written format gives all students opportunities to share their thinking, not just the verbally outgoing.

Anson & Beach, 1995. Wollman-Bonilla, 1995

32

Benefits of Literature Response Journals

› The open style allows for a variety of responses. Students of all abilities can work at their own pace and skill level to make individualized literature responses.

Fuhler, 1994

33

Benefits of Literature Response Journals

› Students choose what to write about which is a powerful motivator.

Runkle, 2000

34

Questions and Comments

Appendix B

Types of Student Responses Handout

Student Responses to Literature

Text-Centered Responses

☆ Responses that relate to the information or events that are in the book

- Retelling or Summarizing
- Making predictions
- Asking questions about the characters or events
- Expressing understanding of the characters' thoughts and feelings.
- Questions about vocabulary, plot, character actions, or the author

Reader-Centered Response

☆ Responses that related the reader's thoughts and feelings not only about the content of the book, but also about the experience of reading the book.

- Making personal reactions to text
- Making connections to personal experience
- Placing of self in the story
- Sharing opinions about characters, events, or information in the text
- Describing feelings about what was read such as enjoyment, surprise or boredom

More Advanced Responses

☆ Reflecting on personal reading process and self-monitoring strategies used

- Commenting on the author's style, language or literary techniques
- Making text-to-text connections or text-to-world connections

Appendix C

Sample Student Response Letters Handout

Sample Student Response Letters

Dear Miss LaRue,

     I picked this book because it looked intresting and I'm tring to read all the Newberry Books. In this book I think that Kit (the main character) is going to spend to much time with the witch and one of her friends will tell on her and she will get acused of witch craft! This book is good so far.

                      Sincerely,

                      Becky

P.S. The book is called The witch of Blackbird pond.

September 14, 2004

The Bad Beginning by Lemony Snicket (the Series of Unfortunate Events)

Dear Miss LaRue,

     If I were Count Olaf I would be so nice to the kids. I would help them find their mony that way they can go and live by themselves. Because I thing they would be old enough to. If I had writen this book the title would be The Best Begening! It would ended a good way. I would never have a bad ending.

                      Your friend,

                      Sam

March 11, 2005

Dear Miss LaRue,

     I'm reading It's Music to My Ear in the seires of The Amazing Days of Abby Hayes. The auther is Anne Mazer. It's garue is relistic fiction. I think Abby's right that girls souldn't have to change there personality for boys to like them. My predition is that Abby is going to meet a guy and go boy crazy over him. I was right. My predition came true. Abby ran into a guy in the hall and really likes him. Abby saw her friend with the boy she liked.

                      Your student,

                      Amanda

April 29, 2005

Sample Student Response Letters

Dear Miss LaRue,

I'm reading a Nancy Drew book that has cliffhangers after every chapter! Then I just have to read on! I sometimes like cliffhangers because then I'm always wondering what's going to happen or I'm excited to read in school or at home again. When you read Nightmare Mountain I liked the cliffhangers because it gave me something to look forward to at fuit break. I guess that's it for now.

Sincerely,

April 6, 2005   Macie

Dear Miss LaRue,

I read the book Secret of the Spa by Carolyn Keene. I think it's a mystery because all of the Nancy Drew books are mysterys.

Nancy and George get free passes to the new spa. When they get there, there's a lot of people, even protesters. They finally get in the spa, but George is acting very strang. When they get settled unuasal things keep happening, like meat in vegatarian chili. (The spa has an all vegatarian menu.)

The books On the Case and the Secret of the Spa have something different and the same. Madison Finn and Nancy Drew both solve the mysterys in the books. Except Madison dosen't actually really solve her mystery but Nancy solves her mystery. When Madison is solving her mystery, she uses a computer to take notes on the mystery, but Nancy dosen't use a computer, and dosen't take notes, she just remembers things. Nancy and Madison both are parts of BFF trios, only in Madison's case, on of her best friends is kind of made at her, but George Fayne isn't really helping Nancy and Bess solve the mystery either.

That's it for now,

May 19, 2005   Becky

Appendix D

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #1

Types and Benefits of Literature Response Journals

References

Professional Development Session #1
Types and Benefits of Literature Response Journals

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Types and Benefits of Literature Response Journals

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Appendix E

Professional Development Session #2 Power Point Handout

Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using
Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #2

Teacher Responses to Student Literature
Response Letters

Agenda

‣ Review of Literature Response Journals

‣ Questions and Comments

‣ Replying to Student Literature Response Letters

‣ Sample Responses

‣ Questions and Comments

Turn and Talk:
Literature Response
Journals

ᵞ What are literature response journals?

ᵞ Why are they beneficial?

Turn and Talk:
Student Responses to Literature

ᵞ What types of responses do students make in their literature response journals?

Questions **and Comments**

from the previous session will be added here

Try It Out!

Respond to Text

Common Format of Literature Response Journals

▸ Letter between student and teacher

Atwell, 1987; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Moutray, Pollard, & McGinley, 2001; Werderich, 2002; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

7

Replying to Students' Literature Response Letters

▸ Provides Motivation

▸ Provides an Authentic Purpose

▸ Provides an Opportunity for Modeling and Differentiated Instruction

Bode, 1989; Fenwick, 2001; Hannon,1999; Reyes, 1991; Runkle, 2000; Werderich, 2002, 2006; Wollman-Bonilla, 1989,1991; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadio, 1999

8

Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

⋎ Samples
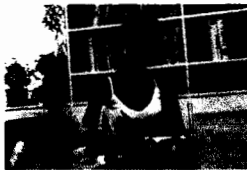
9

Dear Miss LaRue,
My book, The Coiled Viper by Tony Abbott is really good. It's a fantasy about a kid named Eric and his 2 friends, Julie and Neal. In Eric's basement a magic flight of stairs pops up and takes them to a magical place called Droon. With the helps of a princess named Keeah, a wizard named Galen, and a spider troll named Max, they're preventing an evil sorcerer named Sparr from getting an enchanted coiled viper in Eric's home town.
Sincerely,
Brian

September 14, 2004

Dear Brian,

Wow! You wrote a terrific summary of The Coiled Viper. The words you used were so descriptive, it made me more interested in this book! I'm most looking forward to reading your thoughts about the books you read though. In your next letter, please share questions, predictions, or connections you make during reading.
Your teacher,
Miss LaRue

September 16, 2004

10

Dear Miss LaRue,
I'm reading On The Case by Laura Dower a Madison Fin book. I think it's RF because all of the Madison Finn books are. I don't like it when authors don't answer all your questions. Then I am wondering about them so much. A conniton that I have is that Madison likes Msterys and so do I. I finished the book and I couldn't put it down it was so exiting!
Your student,
Melissa

March 18, 2005

Dear Melissa,
I love the feeling of having a book that's so exciting I can't stop reading. I recently read The Report Card by Andrew Clements. I was so interested to find out what happened with the main character's plan that I read the whole book in one night!

Sincerely,
Miss LaRue

March 23, 2005

11

Dear Miss LaRue
I am reading The Report Card by Andrew Clements. I think the genre is realistic fiction because the girl Nora does pretty normal stuff, but one thing that is not normal to me is she is like super smart almost like a genious but she tries to hide it by getting bad grades. I wonder why she doesn't want to show that she is smart? Well that's how far I've got to read so far.
Your student,
Kara

May 2, 2005

Dear Kara,
Thanks for your letter. I hope you enjoyed The Report Card as much as I did. It really got me thinking about grades and about being smart. I think, like you, that Nora is a genius. I think maybe she doesn't want to be different from the other students. How do you feel about this? Do you like everyone to know about your special talents or do you like to fit in and be the same as everyone else? I'm anxious to read your responses when you write back!
Your teacher,
Miss LaRue

May 11, 2005

12

Dear Ella,

I love books that are so good you just have to finish reading them right away! What books have you read that you just couldn't put down?

I finished reading The Bad Beginning this weekend. I was very surprised when Count Olaf admitted his plan to the audience. I thought he would want to keep that secret.

I think it's sad that the kids can't live with Justice Strauss. Why couldn't Mr. Poe ignore Mr. and Mrs. Baudelaire's will that states the children must live with a relative? I think that just because someone's related to you doesn't mean they would do the best job of being a substitute parent. What do you think about this?

Your teacher,
Miss LaRue

March 23, 2005

Dear Miss LaRue,

I will tell you right now that this is going to be a long letter. I think the reason why with some books you just can't stop reading is that there is a lot that happens in the book, or mabey you really like the kind of book. A book that I recommend is Sammy Keyes and the Search for Snake Eyes. Even if you think it's boring, at the beginning, don't abandon it because it gets really good.

Now to Count Olaf. I agree with you, just because Count Olaf is thier reletive dosen't meen he'd be best at being a subsitute parent. I think you should know the person that's going to take care of you. I wouldn't feel very safe if the person who was taking care was someone I didn't really know.

Your student,
Ella

March 28, 2005

13

Making Response Beneficial to Student Learning

▸ Specific

▸ Meaning-based

▸ Relationship-building

Anson and Beach , 1995, Fenwick, 2001;
Fulps and Young , 1991; Strackbein & Tillman, 1987;
Todd, Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

14

Questions and Comments

Appendix F

Sample Student Letters and Teacher Replies Handout

Sample Student Response Letters & Teacher Replies

Dear Miss LaRue,

My book, The Coiled Viper by Tony Abbott is really good. It's a fantasy about a kid named Eric and his 2 friends, Julie and Neal. In Eric's basement a magic flight of stairs pops up and takes them to a magical place called Droon. With the help of a princess named Keeah, a wizard named Galen, and a spider troll named Max, they're preventing an evil sorcerer named Sparr from getting an enchanted coiled viper in Eric's home town.

Sincerely,

Brian

September 2004

Dear Brian,

Wow! You wrote a terrific summary of The Coiled Viper. The words you used were so descriptive; it made me more interested in this book! I'm most looking forward to reading your thoughts about the books you read though. In your next letter, please share questions, predictions, or connections you make during reading.

Your teacher,

Miss LaRue

September 2004

Dear Miss LaRue,

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Your student,

March 18, 2005   Melissa

Dear Melissa,

I love the feeling of having a book that's so exciting I can't stop reading. I recently read The Report Card by Andrew Clements. I was so interested to find out what happened with the main character's plan that I read the whole book in one night!

Sincerely,

Miss LaRue

March 23, 2005

Dear Miss LaRue

    I am reading <u>The Report Card</u> by Andrew Clements. I think the genre is realistic fiction because the girl Nora does pretty normal stuff, but one thing that is not normal to me is she is like super smart almost like a genious but she tries to hide it by getting bad grades. I wonder why she doesn't want to show that she is smart? Well that's how far I've got to read so far.

                Your student,

                Kara

May 2, 2005

Dear Kara,

    Thanks for your letter. I hope you enjoyed <u>The Report Card</u> as much as I did. It really got me thinking about grades and about being smart. I think, like you, that Nora is a genius. I think maybe she doesn't want to be different from the other students. How do you feel about this? Do you like everyone to know about your special talents or do you like to fit in and be the same as everyone else? I'm anxious to read your responses when you write back!

                Your teacher,

                Miss LaRue

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I think it's sad that the kids can't live with Justice Strauss. Why couldn't Mr. Poe ignore Mr. and Mrs. Baudelaire's will that states the children must live with a relative? I think that just because someone's related to you doesn't mean they would do the best job of being a substitute parent. What do you think about this?

Your teacher,

Miss LaRue

March 23, 2005

Dear Miss LaRue,

I will tell you right now that this is going to be a long letter. I think the reason why with some books you just can't stop reading is that there is a lot that happens in the book, or mabey you really like the kind of book. A book that I recommend is Sammy Keyes and the Search for Snake Eyes. Even if you think it's boring, at the beginning, don't abandon it because it gets really good.

Now to Count Olaf. I agree with you, just because Count Olaf is thier reletive dosen't meen he'd be best at being a subsitute parent. I think you should know the person that's going to take care of you. I wouldn't feel very safe if the person who was taking care was someone I didn't really know.

Your student,

Ella

March 28, 2005

Appendix G

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #2

Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

References
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Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Journals

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Appendix H

Text for Professional Development Participants' Response to Literature

The Three Codependent Goats Gruff

*O*nce on a lovely mountainside lived three goats who were related as siblings. Their name was Gruff, and they were a very close family. During the winter months they lived in a lush, green valley, eating grass and doing other things in a naturally goatish manner. When summer came, they would travel up the mountainside to where the pasture was sweeter. This way, they did not overgraze their valley and kept their ecological footprint as small as possible.

To get to this pasture, the goats had to cross a bridge over a wide chasm. When the first days of summer came, one goat set out to cross the bridge. This goat was the least chronologically accomplished of the siblings and thus had achieved the least superiority in size. When he reached the bridge, he lashed on his safety helmet and grasped the handrail. But as he began to cross, a menacing growl came from beneath the bridge.

Over the railing and onto the bridge leaped a troll - hairy, dirt-accomplished, and odor-enhanced. "Yaaarrrgh!!" intoned the troll. "I am the keeper of this bridge, and while goats may have the right to cross it, I'll eat any that try!"

"But why, Mr. Troll?" bleated the goat.

"Because I'm a troll, and proud of it. I have a troll's needs, and those needs include eating goats, so you better respect them or else."

The goat was frightened. "Certainly, sir," he stammered. "If eating me would help you become a more complete troll, nothing would please me more. But I really can't commit to that course of action without first consulting my siblings. Will you excuse me?" And the goat ran back to the valley.

Next, the middle sibling goat came up to the bridge. This goat was more chronologically advanced than the first goat and so enjoyed an advantage in size (although this did not make him a better or more deserving goat). He was about to cross the bridge when the troll stopped him.

"Nature has made me a troll," he said, "and I embrace my trollhood. Would you deny me my right to live the life of a troll as fully and effectively as I can?"

"Me? Never!" exclaimed the goat proudly.

"Then stand still there while I come over and eat you up. And don't try to run away; I would take that as a personal affront." He began to invade the goat's caprinal space.

"However," blurted the goat, "I have a very close family, and it would be selfish of me to allow myself to be eaten without asking their opinion. I have respect for their feelings, too. I would hate to think that my absence would cause them any emotional stress, if I hadn't first... "

"Go then!" screamed the troll.

"I'll rush back here as soon as we reach a consensus," the goat said, "for it's not fair to keep you in suspense."

"You're too kind," sighed the troll, and the goat ran back to the valley. As his hunger grew, the troll began to feel a real grievance toward the goats. If he didn't get to eat at least one of them, he was determined to go to the authorities.

When the third goat came to the bridge, the troll discovered that he was nearly twice the troll's size, with large sharp horns and hard, heavy hooves. The troll felt his physical-intimidation prerogative fading fast. As fear turned his insides into jelly, the troll sank to his knees and pleaded, "Oh, please, please forgive me! I was using you and your goat siblings for my own selfish ends. I don't know what drove me to it, but I've seen the error of my ways."

The goat, too, got down on what passed for knees in goats and said, "Now, now, you can't take all the blame for yourself. Our presence and supreme edibility put you in this situation. My siblings and I all feel terrible. Please, you must forgive us."

The troll began to sob. "No, no, it's all my fault. I threatened and bullied you all, just for the sake of my own survival. How selfish I was!"

But the goat would have none of this. "We were the selfish ones. We only wanted to save our own skins, and we totally neglected your needs. Please, eat me now!"

"No," the troll said, "you must butt me off this bridge for my insensitivity and selfishness."

"I'll do no such thing," said the goat, "since we all tempted you in the first p lace. Here, have a chomp. Go ahead."

"I'm telling you," the troll insisted, standing up, "I'm the guilty one here. Now, knock me off this bridge and be quick about it!"

"Look, said the goat, rearing to his full height, "no one is going to take away my blame for this, not even you, so eat me before I pop you in the nose."

"Don't play guiltier-than-thou with me, Hornhead!"

"Hornhead? You smelly hairball! I'll show you guilt!" And with that, they wrestled and bit and punched and kicked as each sought to don the mantle of blame.

The other two goats bounded up to the bridge and sized up the fight. Feeling guilty at not accepting enough of the blame, they joined the others in a whirling ball of hair, hooves, horns, and teeth. But the little bridge was not built to carry such weight. It shook and swayed and finally buckled, hurling the troll and the three codependent goats Gruff into the chasm. On their way down, they each felt relieved that they would finally get what they deserved, plus, as a bonus, a little extra guilt for the fate of the others.

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Appendix I

Professional Development Session #3 Power Point Handout

Implementation: Modeling through Think-Alouds

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #3

Implementation: Modeling through Think-Alouds

Agenda

- Review of Literature Response Journals
- Questions and Comments
- Introducing Literature Response Journals to Students
- Implementation
  - Modeling Using Think-Alouds
  - Example of a Think-Aloud
- Try It Out!
  Implementation by Modeling through the use of Think-Alouds
- Questions and Comments

2

Turn and Talk:
Replying to Students'
Literature Response Letters

- When teachers reply to students' literature response letters, what are the benefits for students?

- What types of replies might teachers make?

3

Questions and Comments

from the previous session will be added here

Introducing Literature Response Journals to Students

- Explain the purpose
- Model with familiar text
- Many possible responses, not one 'right' way to respond
- Expectations for completion

Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

5

Purpose of Modeling Your Own Responses to Literature

- Modeling your own responses will help students understand

  How to actively engage in reading process

  How to monitor comprehension

Wilhelm (2001)

6

Purpose of Modeling Your Own Responses to Literature

▸ Modeling your own responses will help students understand

  ◦ What good readers do while reading .
  ◦ That reading is more than just decoding

Wilhelm (2001)

7

Think-Aloud

▸ Modeling for students how you gather meaning from text

▸ Explicitly telling or modeling for students the comprehension process or strategy you are using to understand the author's message

Calhoun, 2001

8

Think-Aloud Procedures

▸ Explain to students what a think-aloud is, how it works, and its purpose

▸ Ask students to pay attention to what kinds of things you think about during reading

Wilhelm (2001)

9

Think-Aloud Procedures

▸ Read a short text or short section of text, stopping frequently to share personal thoughts or feelings about what was read

▸ Have students brainstorm list of types of responses teacher made

Wilhelm (2001)

10

Modeling through Think-Alouds

Example

11

Recommendations

▸ Provide Plenty of Modeling
  ◦ Variety of Response Types
  ◦ Variety of Genres

12

Try It Out!

How will you begin the implementation process with your students?

Make a plan for when you will begin and what texts and/or comprehension strategies you will use.

Try It Out!

At the next session, plan to share details about modeling your responses to literature through the use of think alouds.

Questions and Comments

Appendix J

Think-Aloud Handout

Think-Alouds

Steps in Planning a Think-Aloud

1. Decide on the strategy you will be modeling.
2. Choose a short section of text or a short text.
3. Read the text ahead of time and pay attention to your thinking. It is beneficial to write down what thoughts you will be sharing with the students. Use of a think-aloud stem is recommended

Think-Aloud Stems

I'm thinking and ...

- it reminds me of... (schema)
- I think _____ is/is not important because... (determining importance)
- I'm picturing, seeing, smelling, etc. (visualizing)
- it might be... (inferring)
- I'm wondering... (questioning)
- I'm realizing... (synthesizing)
- I'm confused about... (monitoring)

Conducting a Think-Aloud

1. Tell your students what the purpose of the reading is. As you're thinking aloud, they should be paying attention to the strategy you're using.
2. Read the text aloud to your students and stop to think-aloud. Signals to students that you are thinking aloud could be putting the book down or using consistent stems to begin each think-aloud. ("I'm thinking"... or "Hmmm")
3. Have students share what they noticed about what strategies you used, why, how, and when you used them. Ask students to identify other reading situations in which they could use this same strategy.
4. Reinforce the think-aloud with follow-up lessons

Think-Alouds

Modeling What Good Readers Do

Conducting a Think-Aloud

1. Tell your students what the purpose of the reading is. As you're thinking aloud, they should be paying attention to the strategy you're using.

2. Read the text aloud to your students and stop at predetermined points to share your thinking processes and use of the targeted reading strategy.

   ☆ Signal to students that you are thinking aloud by putting the book down or using consistent stems to begin each think-aloud. ("I'm thinking"... or "Hmmm")

3. Have students share what they noticed about what strategies you used, why, how, and when you used them.

4. Plan follow-up lessons on the targeted reading strategy.

Appendix K

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #3

Implementation: Modeling through Think-Alouds

References
Professional Development Session #3
Implementation: Modeling through Think-Alouds

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Appendix L

Think-Aloud Demonstration

Think Aloud Demonstration

Comprehension Strategy: Identifying the Big Idea

Text: *Kiss the Cow!* by Phyllis Root

Procedure taken from Iowa Department of Education, 2006:

1. State the strategy that will be demonstrated and connect to curriculum concepts or earlier lessons.
   a. "Reading is more than just figuring out the words. It is also very important to understand the author's ideas. This is just like when you write in your writing journals; you want others to be able to understand your ideas. Today I am going to read a book and show you my thinking as I try to discover the author's big idea. A big idea is the idea the author really wants us to know, understand, and remember."

2. Demonstrate thinking before reading.
   a. Cover: "I'm thinking and wondering if this is a book about kissing cows. Could that be the idea the author wants to share with me? I will start reading and think about what the author's message is."

3. Read portion of text and stop to model thinking/comprehension process.
   a. p. 2: "I'm thinking and I'm wondering if this is Annalisa. She was on the cover too. She seems like she might be a main character. Sometimes main characters have to do with the big idea. I will think about what Annalisa does as I read on. That might help me find author Phyllis Root's big idea."

   b. p. 10: "I'm noticing that this author's big idea doesn't seem like it is about kissing cows. I'm still wondering about the big idea. So far I know (review plot). Maybe the big idea is about children disobeying their parents."

   c. p. 13 (after 1ˢᵗ paragraph): "I'm thinking the cow won't give milk because Annalisa didn't kiss it. But that doesn't seem like the big idea the author

wants us to know… kiss cows after you milk them? I'm still thinking the big idea might be that she disobeyed her mom."

    d. p. 13 (after 2nd paragraph): "I was right about why the cow didn't give milk."

    e. p. 16: "I'm looking at Annalisa and I'm thinking that it's surprising she doesn't care about her brothers and sisters being hungry and sad. I think she's being selfish. Maybe that's the big idea or lesson author Phyllis Root wants us to understand."

    f. p. 18 (after 1st paragraph): "I'm thinking that Annalisa is being stubborn. Even though it would help her family to kiss the cow, she won't do it."

    g. p. 23: "I'm thinking that if Annalisa kissed the cow again, it must not have been as bad as she thought. She liked the smell of the cow and the cow's nose felt silky. It wasn't gross like she thought."

4. Demonstrate thinking after reading.
    a. I'm thinking now about what author Phyllis Root really wants us to know and understand about this story. I think the big idea is related to how Annalisa didn't want to do something that she thought would be horrible. But when she tried it, she found out it wasn't so bad. I think that's a lesson that the author would want all of us to know about understand about life."

    b. "So this isn't a book just about a girl kissing a cow. This is also a story with the big idea of how a girl refused to do something because she thought it would be horrible, but when she actually did it, she kind of liked it."

5. Review why the strategy is useful.
    a. "We can know and understand what idea the author wants to share with us by thinking about the big idea while we are reading. It helps us to better understand the story and the world we live in.

Appendix M

Professional Development Session #4 Power Point Handout

Implementation: Group Responses

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using
Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #4

Implementation: Group Responses

Agenda

‣ Small group sharing: Think-Alouds

‣ Questions and Comments

‣ Implementation of Literature Response
Journals
  Making Group Responses to Literature
  Example

‣ Questions and Comments

‣ Try it Out!
  Implementation through use of Group
  Responses

2

Small Group Sharing:
Modeling through Think-Alouds

✴ Share your experiences:
Modeling your Responses to Literature
through the use of Think-Alouds

✴Celebrate successes

✴Share concerns

3

Questions and Comments

from the previous session will be added here

Involve Students in Group
Responses to Literature

‣ Creates an environment that values
conversations about books

‣ Encourages students to
  ◦ Be conscious of their own thinking about text
  ◦ Consider other readers' interpretations of text
  ◦ Identify and discuss confusions about text

Fountas & Pinnell, 2001

5

Purpose of Group Responses

‣ Exposes students to other ways of
thinking
  Students can use others' ideas to develop
  their own thinking

  Especially valuable for less proficient
  readers or for students who lack
  confidence in their ability to construct
  meaning

Cordon, 2000. Kelly, 1990

6

Purpose of Group Responses

▸ Shows students that each person brings meaning to the text

  ◦ Kelly (1990) found that all of her third grade students were able to share meaningful responses regardless of reading ability

7

Group Responses
Provide Scaffolding

▸ Guided practice with aesthetic responses (constructing personal meaning from text)

▸ Model how to go beyond summarizing or retelling to share thinking or experiences

Hancock, 2004; Kelly, 1990

8

Group Responses
Provide Scaffolding

▸ Creates familiarity with the process of responding to literature

  ◦ Allows for an easier transition to written response

Kelly, 1990

9

Making a Group Response

Example

10

Try It Out!

... will you begin making group responses to ... classroom?

... ... how you will begin and what ...

Try It Out!

At the next session, plan to share details about group responses to literature in your classroom.

Questions and Comments

Appendix N

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #4

Implementation: Group Responses

References
Professional Development Session #4
Implementation: Group Responses

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Appendix O

Group Responses Demonstration

Group Response Demonstration

Comprehension Strategy: Identifying the Big Idea

Text: *14 Cows for America* by Carmen Agra Deedy

1. Explain to participants that I would utilize a group response technique like this only after I had first modeled responding to literature through the use of a think-aloud procedure.

2. I will conduct the process for making group responses as I would with students; however, the discussion related to the text will be designed for adult learners.

3. Introduction
   a. "Last time when I read aloud, I showed you how good readers are always thinking before, during, and after reading. Reading is more than just figuring out the words. It is also very important to understand the author's ideas."

   b. "Today when I'm reading, I will sometimes stop and you will share your thinking with the group. When you are reading a book yourself, you can stop and think whenever you choose to. Today, when I read to the group, I have already picked out times for us to stop and share our thinking about what we're reading. You will know you can share your thinking when I stop reading and put the book in my lap like this. Good readers are always thinking so I know that you will have lots of thinking to share."

   c. The book we will be reading and thinking about today is called *14 Cows for America*. It's a true story about showing compassion and comfort during tragedy.

4. Read to portion of text and stop for students to share their questions, predictions, comments, and other thinking. When first making group responses, I recommend having prompts prepared to use if students have trouble expressing thoughts about reading.
    a. After page 8: "What are you thinking about Kimeli and his people?"
        i. If needed, prompt, "Why is the cow life to the Maasai people?"

    b. After page 12: "What are you thinking now?
        i. If needed, prompt, "How does the author's choice of the words 'it has burned a hole in his heart' illustrate Kimeli's reaction to September 11th?"

    c. After the last page: "What are you thinking now?"
        i. If needed, prompt, "What is the message in the final illustration and concluding words of the story: 'Because there is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort'?"
    d. After Kimeli's note and dedication: "What are you thinking now?"
        i. If needed, prompt, "How can we be the 'compassionate diplomats' that Kimeli speaks of?"

5. Review why the strategy is useful.
    a. "Today we have been stopping and thinking about the author's big idea. When we do this, we are really reading because reading is not just knowing the words. It is reading the words in order to understand the authors message and to think about how that affects us and the world in which we live."

Source for prompts: Rauch, M. (n.d.) 14 cows for America. *Children's literature: A resource for ministry*. Retrieved April 17, 2010 from http://storypath.wordpress.com/2010/03/08/14-cows-for-america/

Appendix P

Professional Development Session #5 Power Point Handout

Kindergarten through Grade Two

Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using
Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #5: Kindergarten – Grade 2

Implementation:
Transitioning to Written Response

Agenda

‣ Small group sharing: Group Responses

‣ Questions and Comments

‣ Implementation:
Transitioning to Written Response
  Drawing and Dictation
  Prompts
  Visuals

‣ Try it Out!
  Continue Implementation by Transitioning to
  Written Response

‣ Questions and Comments

2

Small Group Sharing:
Making Group Responses

ᵧ Share your experiences:
  Making Group Responses to Literature

ᵧCelebrate successes

ᵧShare concerns

3

Questions and Comments

from the previous session will be added here

Reading in the Primary Grades

Even though the focus of instruction is
learning to read, it is important to
develop comprehension and thinking
skills.

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995

5

Read–Model–Share

‣ Read aloud
  ○ Chapter book recommended

‣ Model oral response through use of
Think–Alouds

‣ Provide opportunities for children to share
  their responses orally in a group setting

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999

6

Transitioning to Written Response

‣ Absolute freedom to write about whatever a child wants is not necessarily the best way to elicit student response.

Results in little variety of form

Just try to meet teacher expectations rather than create personal responses

Watt, 2002

7

Model a Written Response

‣ Model a short written response

on chart paper.

The response length should parallel what the children are developmentally able to write.

‣ At this point the students do not write their responses, but may share orally after the teacher writes a response.

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999

8

When to Transition to Written Response

‣ Move to having students write their responses

After repeatedly modeling the process of writing responses

After providing many opportunities for children to share responses to literature orally

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999

9

How to Transition to Written Response

‣ When students begin to write their responses remind them before reading aloud that they will be writing about their thinking

‣ If students have difficulty thinking of a response, encourage them to predict what will happen next.

This is the easier type of response for students to make.

Fuhler, 1994; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999

10

Oral Response

‣ Allowing children opportunities for oral response is essential

Higher level of thinking and deeper responses resulted when younger students had opportunities to discuss their thoughts before writing

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995

11

Drawing and Dictation

‣ Used in kindergarten and beginning Grade 1 or with students having difficulty

‣ Make responses developmentally appropriate

Students can use illustrations to represent their thinking

Students can dictate their ideas to an adult

Students can write a sentence then draw a picture to represent other aspects of their response

Broad, 2002; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995

12

Prompts

- Sentence stems or open-ended questions that guide students in making responses to what they have read

- Well-crafted prompts are open-ended enough to allow for a variety of student responses and personal construction of meaning, yet they also avoid the dilemma of being too broad

Hancock, 2004. Sumara, 2002

13

Purpose of Prompts

- Help establish a framework for constructing meaning and responding aesthetically to what is read

- Intended as a scaffold to guide students in their responses, not to restrict or limit their responses

14

Sample Prompts

- What does the story remind you of from your own life?
- How would you feel if you were (*character name*)?
- What do you think will happen to (*character name*)?
- Something I like/don't like...
- I wonder...

Hancock, 2004; Kooy, 1992

15

Successful Prompts

- The most successful types of prompts encourage students to

  1) use their own background experience

  2) share their feelings

  3) make predictions or solve problems

  4) develop personal interpretations and judgments

Hancock, 2004

16

Decreasing Prompts

- Once students become experienced with responding to text, the need for prompts should diminish

- Hancock (2004) "... a steady diet of the same prompts can become just as inhibiting as closed-end comprehension questions at the end of a basal reader story" (p. 215)

17

Visuals

- Sample letter on chart paper

- Students can refer to these for reminder on format and expectations of a literature response letter

Werderich. 2006

18

Small Group Sharing and Planning

Discussion Ideas for Transitioning to Written Responses to Literature

- Which prompts or visual aids would work well for your students
- If drawing and dictation are appropriate for your students
- Possible texts to use
- Modeling written responses and incorporating oral responses

---

Conferencing

- Individual student conferences can be conducted during writing time

  - Student reads aloud their response

  - Teacher provides immediate feedback orally or in writing

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995; 1999

20

Sharing

- After writing time, students can read their journal entries out loud to the class.

  - This gives students an awareness of communicating to an audience

  - It also allows the teacher to point out aspects of the responses that are good models for other students' future responses

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999

21

Student responses become longer as they learn more writing skills and about elaboration.

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995; 1999

22

Prompts to Encourage Elaboration

- "Why do you think so?"
- "Tell me more."

- After several weeks with this type of feedback, student responses show more elaboration

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995; 1999

23

Frequency of Responses

- Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo discovered that using the response journals only three times a week eventually led to longer, higher-quality responses.

Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995; 1999

24

Promoting Variety

‣ Periodically model new ways of responding to text

  - Maintains student motivation

    Increases quality of students' literature response journals

‣ Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo's study with first graders (1999)

  - Throughout the school year, every child tried a variety of responses rather than continuing with one of two types of responses.

25

Try It Out!

How will you begin to transition the students to writing their responses to literature?

Make a plan for when you will begin, if you will use drawing and dictation, and which prompts and visuals you will use.

Try It Out!

At the next session, plan to bring and share samples of your students' written responses to literature.

Questions and Comments

Appendix Q

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #5

Kindergarten through Grade Two

Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

References
Professional Development Session #5:
Kindergarten - Grade 2 Implementation:
Transitioning to Written Response

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Appendix R

Professional Development Session #5 Power Point Handout

Grades Three through Six

Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #5: Grades 3 - 6

Implementation:
Transitioning to Written Response

Agenda

‣ Small group sharing: Group Responses

‣ Questions and Comments

‣ Implementation:
Transitioning to Written Response
- Traditional Prompts
- Graphic Organizers as Prompts
- Coding
- Visuals

‣ Try it Out!
Continue Implementation by Transitioning to Written Response

‣ Questions and Comments

2

Small Group Sharing: Making Group Responses

⋆ Share your experiences:
Making Group Responses to Literature

⋆Celebrate successes

⋆Share concerns

3

Questions and Comments

from the previous session will be added here

Transitioning to Written Response

‣ Absolute freedom to write about whatever a child wants is not necessarily the best way to elicit student response.

- Results in little variety of form

- Just try to meet teacher expectations rather than create personal responses

Watt, 2002

5

Prompts

‣ Sentence stems or open-ended questions that guide students in making responses to what they have read

‣ Well-crafted prompts are open-ended enough to allow for a variety of student responses and personal construction of meaning, yet they also avoid the dilemma of being too broad

Hancock, 2004; Sumara, 2002

6

Purpose of Prompts

- Help establish a framework for constructing meaning and responding aesthetically to what is read

- Intended as a scaffold to guide students in their responses, not to restrict or limit their responses

7

Traditional Prompts

- What does the story remind you of from your own life?

- How would you feel if you were (*character name*)?

- What advice would you give (*character name*) at this point in the story?

- I don't understand...

- Something I like/don't like...

- I wonder...

Hancock, 2004; Kooy, 1992

8

Graphic Organizers as Prompts

- Intended to be used during reading to help students in "self-monitoring their understanding of text and.... to make personal connections with what they are reading" (Skeans, 2000, p. 71)

- Model use of graphic organizers before asking students to use them

9

Think-Link Chart

- Skeans (2000) "Think-link chart"

Observations	Wonderings	Connections
I noticed...	*I wonder...*	*This reminds me of....*

10

Reflection Connection

- Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan's (2002) "Reflection Connection"

What was cool about what you read?
What was confusing about what you read?
What connections did you make to the reading?

11

Successful Prompts

- The most successful types of prompts encourage students to

  1) use their own background experience

  2) share their feelings

  3) make predictions or solve problems

  4) develop personal interpretations and judgments

Hancock, 2004

12

Decreasing Prompts

‣ Once students become experienced with responding to text, the need for prompts should diminish

‣ Hancock (2004) "... a steady diet of the same prompts can become just as inhibiting as closed-end comprehension questions at the end of a basal reader story" (p. 215)

13

Small Group Sharing and Planning

Discussion Ideas for Transitioning to Written Responses to Literature

• Which traditional prompts or graphic organizers would work well for your students

• How to model use of graphic organizer with students i.e. small groups, large group, overhead, chart paper

• Possible texts to use

Coding

‣ Involves the use of symbols written in the text or on self-adhesive notes to indicate the students' thoughts as they read

‣ Students use coding symbols to record their thoughts during independent reading

Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002; Keane & Zimmerman,1997

15

Coding Examples

‣ If students were surprised about an event or a character's reaction, they would mark an "S" next to that text passage

‣ If students were confused during reading, they mark a "?" near the confusing part of the text

‣ "A" was written near parts of texts with which students agreed

Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002; Keane & Zimmerman,1997

16

Coding Examples

D = parts with which students *disagreed*

  O = *old information* the students had heard before

  N = *new information*

  I = *important information*

  B = *boring*

  ☺ = *funny* passage

  V = new or important *vocabulary*

Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002; Keane & Zimmerman,1997

17

Introducing Coding to Students

‣ Use a short reading passage on the overhead

‣ Model coding using think-alouds

‣ Students then practice coding their own responses to a different reading passage and share their responses in small groups

Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Keane & Zimmerman,1997

18

Introducing Coding to Students

- After discussing examples and sharing different styles of thinking, have students use self-adhesive notes to mark two or three pages where they had questions or thoughts
- These notes are then used to write the first individual response letter

Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, Keane & Zimmerman,1997

19

Purposes of Coding

- Forces students to think constantly while they are reading
- Keeps students actively engaged in monitoring their own comprehension

Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002; Keane & Zimmerman,1997

20

Decreasing Coding

- Like prompts, coding should only be used for a temporary period of time until the thinking strategies become automatic for students

Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002

21

Visuals

- Display the sample letter on chart paper
- Tips and introductory letter as handouts for students
- Students can refer to these for reminder on format and expectations of a literature response letter

Werderich, 2006

22

Small Group Sharing and Planning

Discussion Ideas for Transitioning to
Written Responses to Literature

- Possible texts to use
- How the use of coding or visual aids look in your classroom
- Ideas to model the use of coding with students
- What visual aids would be helpful for your students

Recommendations

- Students need ample time to read and discuss their thinking
- Students may take notes as they read, or they may write their responses intermittently throughout a given reading session.
- A response may be written at more than one sitting during independent reading sessions

Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Runkle, 2000

24

Frequency of Responses

▸ Use literature response journals in moderation

  This maintains the quality of student responses

▸ Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo discovered that using the response journals only three times a week eventually led to longer, higher-quality responses.

Hancock, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadio, 1995, 1999

25

Promoting Variety

▸ Periodically model new ways of responding to text

  Maintains student motivation

  Increases quality of students' literature response journals

26

Responses to Proficency

▸ As students become more proficient in writing literature responses letters

  Conduct mini-lessons on literary elements such as setting, conflict, theme

  • After modeling and providing examples, ask students to comment on the focus literary elements in their self-selected independent reading books

Dionisio, 1991

27

Responses to Proficiency

▸ As students become more proficient in writing literature responses letters

  Use as a spring board for discussion

  • Students write their reactions and thoughts first in order to have ideas to share in class discussion

Elbow, 2004; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadio, 1995

28

Try It Out!

How will you begin to transition the students to writing their responses to literature?

Make a plan for when you will begin and which prompts, graphic organizers, codes, or visuals you will use.

Try It Out!

At the next session, plan to bring and share samples of your students' written responses to literature.

Questions and Comments

Appendix S

Graphic Organizers Handout

Reflection Connection
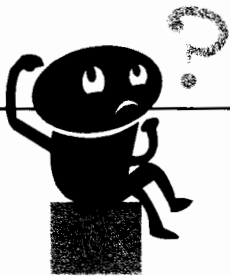
What was cool about what you read?

What was confusing about what you read?

What connections did you make to the reading?

Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002, page 137
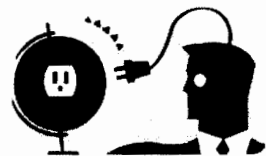
Think-Link Chart

Observations *I noticed...*	Wonderings *I wonder...*	Connections *This reminds me of....*

Skeans, 2000, page 71

Appendix T

Coding Handout

Coding Symbols

S   **Surprising**

Wow! I didn't think that would happen.

?   **Confusing**

I don't understand this.

A   **Agree**

I think this could probably happen.

D   **Disagree**

I don't believe this is possible.

O   **Old information**

I've heard this before.

N   **New information**

I didn't know this before.

I   **Important information**

This is a main point or big idea.

B   **Boring**

This is not interesting.

☺   **Funny**

This makes me laugh.

V   **Vocabulary**

This word is new to me or seems important.

Barbe-Clevett, Hanley, & Sullivan, 2002, page 134; Keane & Zimmerman, 1997

Appendix U

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #5

Grades Three through Six

Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

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Professional Development Session #5: Grades 3-6
Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

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Professional Development Session #5: Grades 3-6
Implementation: Transitioning to Written Response

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Appendix V

Professional Development Session #6 Power Point Handout

Using Literature Response Journals with Less Proficient Readers and Writers

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #6

Using Literature Response Journals with
Less Proficient Readers and Writers

Agenda

- Small Group Sharing of Written Responses
- Questions and Comments
- Literature Response Journals for Less Proficient Readers and Writers
- Try it Out!
  Continue Implementation by Transitioning to Written Response
- Questions and Comments

2

Small Group Sharing:
Students' Written Responses

⟨ Share samples of your students' written responses to literature

---

Questions and Comments

from the previous session will be added here

Using Literature Response Journals
with Less Proficient Readers

- Extremely beneficial
  - Motivational effect
  - Individualized format
  - Active nature
  - Comprehension facilitation

Elbow, 2004; Fuhler, 1994; Fulps & Young, 1991; Wollman–Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995

5

Modeling is Essential

- Think–Alouds
  - Small groups of less proficient readers may need more examples of think–alouds than the rest of the class

Sudduth, 1989

6

Start with Group Responses

› Provide Prompts or Sentence Stems

   I was surprised when …
   This story reminds me of the time I …

› Help students elaborate upon their thinking

   Ask them questions
   Add your own thoughts to the written group response

› If appropriate, have students copy the group
   response into their own journals

   Sudduth, 1989; Wollman–Bonilla, 1989

7

Additional Supports

› Gradually decrease modeling, but
   continue with group discussion before
   writing in order to help students elicit
   ideas

› Give students a list of journal response
   ideas to have next to their notebook
   while writing independently

   Sudduth, 1989

8

Dear Miss LaRue,

I'm reading Eye of the great bear by Bill Wallace. I think that the book
might be fantasy. Because this indina person tells him something that
will happened. I was supprised when Baily thought he smelled a bear but
it was racoons! Something that is confusing is that some of the sintises
don't make sense. My prediction is when Baily sees the bear he might will
be at the lake trying to cach some fish for dinner and he will here a nosie
and he turns around and he's eye to eye with the bear.

Your student,
Diana

9

Recommendations

› Provide structure by setting a time for 10
   minutes of focused writing time

› Stress idea fluency rather than mechanical
   accuracy

› Allow time each week for sharing journal
   responses

   Hayes & Bahruth,1985, Sudduth, 1989

10

Troubleshooting

› If students are summarizing rather than
   sharing their thinking about the literature

   ◦ Ask specific questions about personal ideas
   ◦ Teacher and a group of students read the same
     book

     • Less apt to retell plot if everyone has read the same
       text

   Wollman–Bonilla, 1991; Wollman–Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999

11

Troubleshooting

› If the physical act of writing impedes
   student response

   ◦ Student can orally record her responses on a
     tape recorder
   ◦ Student can type his responses on a
     computer

   Anson & Beach, 1995; Wollman–Bonilla , 1991

12

Troubleshooting

› If inventive spelling impedes teacher response

  ◦ Student can orally read the response to teacher

    · Teacher can write a response to the child's journal entry immediately

Wollman-Bonilla , 1991

13

Troubleshooting

› If inventive spelling impedes teacher's ability to respond

  Student can meet with a volunteer, teacher associate, or older student to orally read his literature response journal entry

  · Underneath the child's original message, the helper writes the same message in conventional form.

  · Teacher reads and responds to student's message at a later time

Wollman-Bonilla , 1991

14

Troubleshooting

› If student is capable of reading and writing, but is reluctant to do so

  Check in daily with those students to make sure they have an engaging and appropriately level text to read

  Support engagement through teacher response letters

  · Suggest books for reading

  · Ask questions to reinforce thinking

  · Provide a model of an engaged reader through your own enthusiastic comments about books

Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, Wollman-Bonilla , 1991

15

More Recommendations

› Help all students to feel competent
  Allow slower readers to read at their own pace without specifying the completion of an entire book or chapter before writing a response to the literature
  · Valuable responses can be made to small sections of text.

› Emphasize the quality of the response rather than the length

Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

16

Try It Out!

How will you provide literature response journal support to your less proficient readers?

Make a plan for when you will begin, which students you will work with, and what support you will provide for them.

Try It Out!

At the next session, plan to bring sample responses from those students you have targeted to receive additional support.

Questions and Comments

Appendix W

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #6

Using Literature Response Journals with Less Proficient Readers and Writers

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Professional Development Session #6
Using Literature Response Journals with
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Appendix X

Professional Development Session #7 Power Point Handout

Types of Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using
Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #7

Types of Teacher Responses
to Student Literature Response Letters

Agenda

- Small Group Sharing: Supporting the Written Responses of Less Proficient Readers and Writers
- Questions and Comments
- Review: Replying to Student Literature Response Letters
- Types of Teacher Responses
- Managing Responses to Student Literature Response Letters
- Try it Out
  Replying to Student Literature Response Letters
- Questions and Comments

2

Small Group Sharing:
Supporting the Written Responses of
Less Proficient Readers and Writers

- Share samples of your less proficient students' written responses to literature as well as additional supports you used
- Celebrate successes
- Share concerns

3

Questions and Comments

from the previous session will be added here

Review:
Common Format of
Literature Response Journals

- Letter between student and teacher

Atwell, 1987; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Moutray, Pollard, & McGinley, 2001; Werderich, 2002; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

5

Replying to Students'
Literature Response Letters

- Provides Motivation
- Provides an Authentic Purpose
- Provides an Opportunity for Modeling and Differentiated Instruction

Bode, 1989; Fenwick, 2001, Hannon,1999; Reyes, 1991, Runkle, 2000; Werderich, 2002, 2006; Wollman-Bonilla, 1989,1991; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999

6

Types of Teacher Responses

‣ Encouragement

  · Praise and affirmation of student's strengths

‣ Elaborative Response

  Extend the student's thoughts by adding your own thoughts or comments

  Allows for further response from student or elicits new ideas from student

Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000; Chin, 2006; Fenwick, 2001; Todd, Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

7

Encouragement and Elaborative Response

Dear Kathy,

You asked good questions while you were reading. You also showed that readers sometimes find answers to their questions when they read on, but sometimes the author doesn't answer all of the readers' questions. How do you feel about that? At first I was going to say that I like all of my questions answered. However, the books I keep thinking about, even after I've finished them, seem to be ones I'm still wondering about. It's good that authors make us think, but I still like that feeling of being satisfied at the end of a book.

When you write back, please tell me what you think about this.

Sincerely,

Miss LaRue

8

Types of Teacher Responses

‣ Affirmation-Direct Instruction

  · Affirm student's response, but then suggest how student can make their response better or provide addition information about a reading strategy

‣ Responsive Questioning

  · Ask a series of questions to extend student's thinking

Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000; Chin, 2006; Fenwick, 2001; Todd, Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

9

Affirmation-Direct Instruction and Responsive Questioning

Dear Chad,

You did a great job of sharing your thinking! Suprising and confusing parts are good to write about. So are predictions. How did your prediction compare to what happened? Did Bailey face the bear eye-to-eye at the lake?

Please write back and answer my questions. I hope you enjoy your next book as much as you did this one!

Sincerely,

Miss LaRue

10

Types of Teacher Responses

‣ Mirror

  ∘ Point out themes in student's responses or questions

‣ Learning Director

  ∘ Comment on how student responses have evolved over time

Fenwick, 2001; Todd, Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001;

11

Mirror

Dear Adam,

I've noticed that you have been making predictions each time you write in your literature response journal. Good readers are always thinking about what may happen next in a story. It's fun to read ahead to see if your prediction was accurate or if the author surprised you!

Sincerely,
Miss LaRue

Learning Director

Dear Kelly,

You have really learned how to make connections to the big ideas in fiction texts. Before you only made personal connections to pieces of information. Now you are able to make connections to life lessons! Great thinking during reading!

Sincerely,
Miss LaRue

12

Less Powerful
Types of Responses

‣ Agree with what a student has written

‣ Thank the student for response

‣ Informational Response such as book
  or genre recommendation

Fenwick, 2001; Todd, Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001.

13

Making Response Beneficial
to Student Learning

‣ Specific

‣ Meaning-based

‣ Relationship-building

‣ Balanced between student and teacher

participation (Shared authority)

Anson and Beach , 1995, Fenwick, 2001; Fulps and Young ,
1991; Novinger, 2003, Strackbein & Tillman, 1987; Todd,
Mills, Palard, & Khamcharoen, 2001; Wollman-Bonilla, 1991

14

Try it out

With a partner, read and reply
to a sample student
literature response letter

Managing Responses to Students'
Literature Response Letters

‣ Best to make quality responses less
  frequently

‣ Let student choose portion of literature
  response journal to which they want a
  response

16

Try it out

When will you start replying to your students'
literature response letters?

How often will you reply to student letters?

How will you ensure that all students receive
replies from you?

Questions and Comments

Appendix Z

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #7

Types and Benefits of Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

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Professional Development Session #7
Types and Benefits of Teacher Responses to Student Literature Response Letters

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Appendix Y

Types of Teacher Responses Handout

Teacher Responses to Students' Literature Response Journals
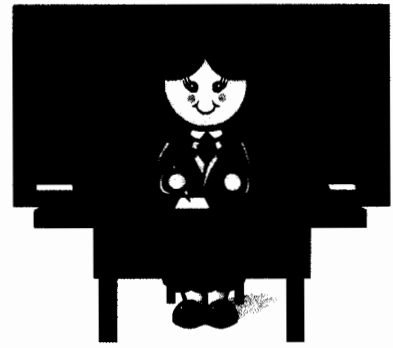
Receiving responses to what they've written keeps students motivated

Types of Teacher Responses

☆ Encouragement
- o Praise and affirmation of student's strengths
    - "You asked good questions while you were reading."

☆ Affirmation – Direct Instruction
- o Affirm student's response, but then suggest how student can make their response better or provide addition information about a reading strategy
    - "You did a great job of sharing your thinking! Surprising and confusing parts of a text are good to write about in your response letters. You could also write about your predictions."

☆ Responsive Questioning
- o Ask a series of questions to extend student's thinking
    - "How did your prediction compare to what happened? Did Bailey face the bear eye to eye at the lake?"

Teacher Responses to Students' Literature Response Journals

☆ Elaborative Response
- o Extend the student's thoughts by adding your own thoughts or comments
  - Allows for further response from student or elicits new ideas
  - "You wrote that you didn't like it when the author doesn't answer all of your questions. At first, I was thinking the same thing. However, when I thought about it more, all of the books I really keep thinking about after I have finished reading them, seem to be the ones I'm still wondering about. It's good that authors make us think, but it's also a good feeling to be satisfied at the end of a book. When you write back, please tell me what you think about this."

☆ Mirror
- o Point out themes in student's responses or questions
  - "I've noticed that you have been making predictions each time you write in your literature response journal. Good readers are always thinking about what may happen next in a story."

☆ Learning Director
- o Comment on how student responses have evolved over time
  - "You have really learned how to make connections to the big ideas in fiction texts. Before you only made personal connections to pieces of information. Now you are able to make connections to life lessons!"

Less Powerful Types of Teacher Responses
- Agree with what a student has written
- Thank the student for his response
- Informational Response such as recommending books or genres for future student reading

Appendix AA

Sample Student Literature Response Letter

Dear Mr. or Ms. Teacher,

I am reading <u>The Amazing Days of Abby Hayes</u> by Anne Mazer. I think it is realistic fiction because everything can happen in real life. I also think it is realistic fiction because I read other <u>Amazing Days of Abby Hayes</u> books.

How come Natalie can't go to the party? I think it would be discusting to eat a salty egg salad! I think Abby's costume is really cool and neat! I would take my little brother to the festable (*festival*) with my friends if I had one. I could never right as much as Abby dose! Because in the book amost every page is her righting! How can Zach and Tyler love computer so much? I hate computer! Abby go to go to the festable with her friend! Befor the festable Alex got steaches in his head! Abby still whent to the festable with her friends but Alex biked with them there!

Sincerely,

Malorie

Appendix BB

Professional Development Session #8 Power Point Handout

Evaluation of Student Literature Response Letters

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using
Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #8

Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

Agenda

- Small Group Sharing: Teacher Replies to Student Literature Response Letters
- Questions and Comments
- Review Purpose of Literature Response Journals
- Evaluation of Literature Response Journals
- Try it Out: Evaluation Plan with Grade-Level Colleagues
- Questions and Comments

Small Group Sharing:
Teacher Replies to Student
Literature Response Letters

- Share samples of your teacher response letters
- Celebrate successes
- Share concerns

Questions and Comments

from the previous session will be added here

Because of the informal, exploratory nature of response journals, students often write quickly. Their ideas and questions seem to flow onto the paper.

As a result, it is common to find words and letters left out, misspellings, lack of punctuation, and nonstandard grammar (Wollman-Bonilla, 1991; p. 28-29).

Evaluating Mechanics

› May prevent some students from freely writing about their thinking and limit them to the constraints of their mechanical knowledge

Anson & Beach, 1995

7

Purpose of Literature Response Journal

› Promote reflection, meaning-making, and self-expression

› Evaluation should also be meaning based

Fulps and Young,1991; Staton, 1988

8

Meaning-Based Evaluation

› Evaluating student literature response journals in a meaning-based way helps students understand that their thinking is valued

Anson & Beach ,1995

9

Meaning-Based Evaluation

› Evaluate growth over time
  - Related to expectations set for literature response journals

Anson & Beach, 1995; Fenwick, 2001

10

Rubrics

› Teacher-created
› Possible Criteria
  - Thoughtful reflection
  - Critical thinking
  - Application of comprehension strategies
  - Support of opinions with evidence from text
  - Adherence to expectations set for journal writing

Fenwick, 2001

11

Credit/No Credit Option

› Removing the pressure of traditional grades may allow students to take risks in expressing thoughts rather than writing what they believe the teacher wants them to write

Gordon, 2000

12

Recommendation

› Even if rubric will be used, still reply to student through dialogue

Provides Motivation

Provides an Authentic Purpose for Writing

Provides an Opportunity for Modeling and Differentiated Instruction

Bode, 1989; Fenwick, 2001; Hannon,1999; Reyes, 1991; Runkle, 2000; Werderich, 2002, 2006; Wollman-Bonilla, 1989,1991; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999

13

Try it out

With your grade-level team, decide how you will evaluate your students literature response journals

Try it out

Decide upon method of evaluation
Share evaluation information with students
Begin evaluating student response letters

Questions and Comments

Appendix CC

Reference Handout for Professional Development Session #8

Evaluation of Student Literature Response Letters

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Professional Development Session #8
Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

Anson, C.M. & Beach, R. (1995). *Journals in the classroom: Writing to learn.* Norwood,MA: Christopher-Gordon.

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Appendix DD

Professional Development Session #9 Power Point

Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using
Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #9

Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

Agenda

▸ Large Group Sharing: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

▸ Multiple Grade-Level Team Sharing

▸ Try it Out: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

▸ Questions and Comments

Large Group Sharing: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

✫ Share how your grade level has evaluated student literature response letters

---

Multiple Grade-Level Team Sharing

✫ Kindergarten – Grade One

✫ Grade Two – Grade Three

✫ Grades Four, Five & Six

Multiple Grade-Level Team Sharing

✫ Share Evaluation Specifics

✫ Discuss Success

✫ Share Concerns

✫ Collaborate on Ideas for Improvement

Recommendation

▸ Even if rubric will be used, still reply to student through dialogue

  Provides Motivation

  Provides an Authentic Purpose for Writing

  Provides an Opportunity for Modeling and Differentiated Instruction

Bode, 1989, Fenwick, 2001; Hannon,1999, Reyes, 1991;
Runkle, 2000; Werderich, 2002, 2006; Wollman-Bonilla,
1989,1991; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadfo, 1999

Try it out

With your grade-level team,
decide how you will evaluate your
students' literature response journals

Try it out

Decide upon method of evaluation
Share evaluation information with
students
Begin evaluating student response
letters

Questions and Comments

Appendix EE

Professional Development Session #10 Power Point

Reflection and Application Plan for Future Use of Literature Response Journals

Beyond Just Reading the Words

Interacting with Text Using Literature Response Journals

Professional Development
Session #10

Reflection and Application Plan for Future Use of
Literature Response Journals

Agenda

- ▸ Small Group Sharing: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals
- ▸ Large Group Questions and Comments
- ▸ Grade-Level Team Reflection and Application Plans
- ▸ Questions and Comments

2

Multiple Grade-Level Team Sharing: Evaluation of Literature Response Journals

- Kindergarten – Grade One
- Grade Two - Grade Three
- Grades Four, Five & Six

☆ Celebrate successes

☆ Share concerns

3

Large Group
Questions and Comments

Grade-Level Team Reflection and Application Plans

- ⟍ How did your students benefit from the use of literature response journals?

- ⟍ How will the implementation timeline change for next year?

- ⟍ In what ways does the use of literature response journals relate to the Iowa Core Curriculum?

- ⟍ What additional assistance, support, and/or resources do you need related to literature response journals?

5

Large Group Sharing of Reflection
and Application Plans

Appendix FF

Reflection and Application Plan for Future Use of Literature Response Journals

Grade-Level Team
Reflection and Application Plans
for Future Use of Literature Response Journals

☆ How did your students benefit from the use of literature response journals?

☆ How will the implementation timeline change for next year?

☆ In what ways does the use of literature response journals relate to the Iowa Core Curriculum?

☆ What additional assistance, support, and/or resources do you need related to literature response journals?