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SHARED RESPONSE AND YOUNG ADOLESCENT READERS'

COMPREHENSION AND RE-INTERPRETATION OF

PICTURE BOOKS

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the relationship between shared response and the comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books with four members of a response group of students in a grade 7/8 class during the implementation of a seven-week unit on picture books. A key construct in the study was Kiefer's (1995) classification of verbal response to picture books which includes four functions of language: informative, heuristic, imaginative, and personal.

Six themes emerged from the analysis of data: patterns of shared response to picture books; verbal response to picture books; intertextual connections; aesthetic response to picture books; integrity of text and pictures; and students' perceptions of picture books. Although many of the response group members' verbal responses could be classified under Kiefer's framework, the categories did not accommodate the intertextual relationships evoked by readers during engagement with and re-interpretation of picture books. Factors which influenced students' comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books included: the organization of the unit which provided time, structure and flexibility; opportunities for shared response, which enabled social constructions of meaning; opportunities to re-interpret texts through symbolic systems such as art and drama; and a group project on text sets in which students worked collaboratively to select a "text set", identify the connections across the picture books, and illustrate these in some form.

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CHAPTER ONE

Overview of the Study

This study describes the nature of shared response of young adolescent readers in a grade 7/8 classroom through their comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books. Respondents were a purposive sample of four students who constituted one response group in the classroom. The study was part of a larger study of response (Courtland, 1996) in which the thirty-one students in the grade 7/8 class participated in a six-week unit on picture books.

The study was qualitative and the design was emergent (Neuman, 1991; Patton, 1990). Data were collected through participant and non-participant observations, informal discussions with the respondents and analysis of texts produced by students in journals, as well as individual and group presentations, art work and drama. During this picture book unit, students had the opportunity to read and respond privately, and to share their personal interpretations in response groups consisting of four students in each group. The study involved two phases. Phase I took place over the first three weeks and focused on the whole class. Data collected during this phase were analyzed to select a purposeful sample of response groups for Phase II. Phase II focused on three response groups and the individuals in these groups. This study described the nature of shared response with four individuals in one response group. The group included two boys, one in grade 7 and one in grade 8, and two girls, one in grade 7 and one in grade 8.

Rationale

Reader response theory describes and explains the transactions between readers and texts as readers engage in and respond to text (Beach, 1993; Hancock, 1993; Probst, 1988; Rosenblatt, 1978). Rosenblatt (1978) was a pioneer in conceptualizing the idea of transactions between the reader and text. She suggests that engagement in and response to literature is a meaning-making act. The reader brings to the text his/her knowledge and past experiences. His/her responses are unique and original.

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Rosenblatt (1978) explains: "The range of potential responses and the gamut of degrees of intensity and articulateness are infinitely vast, since they depend not only on the character of the text but even more on the special character of the individual reader" (p. 49).

Rosenblatt (1978) suggests that during the act of reading a reader can focus attention on any text in two different ways. This focus of attention, described as the reader's stance, may be efferent or aesthetic. During an efferent reading, the reader focuses attention on the information provided by the text for the purpose of analysis. During an aesthetic reading the reader's personal experience and response are evoked. An aesthetic response to a text has the capacity to evoke a unique personal relationship between reader and text.

A number of studies have shown that through sharing of responses students learn from each other (Dias, 1988; Purves et al., 1995; Probst, 1988). The sharing process enables the students to reconsider their initial responses, modify and reject views, and create new interpretations (Karolides, 1992). Despite these findings national surveys of current practices in the teaching of literature suggest that the predominant instructional approach is traditional, in which the teacher is seen to guide the student to a common theme interpretation (Langer, 1992). In this view, personal interpretations of a literary text are not a significant act and the reader's role lies in deriving the author's meaning of the work.

Cox and Many (1992) used Rosenblatt's definitions of efferent and aesthetic stances as theoretical constructs in observing the teaching of literature in twenty-seven elementary classrooms. They found a significant lack of opportunities for aesthetic reading. Literature was primarily a vehicle for teaching reading skills, finding and analyzing information. The researchers suggest that there is a need for instruction that will invite children to read aesthetically and to develop personal interpretations of the books they have read.

Sumara (1995) also insists that the act of reading in schools must be understood as an

interpretive act, and that reading response should form a "focal practice" in the school curriculum. He explains that the reader in transaction with the text "re-interprets past experiences" and in so doing is able to "understand present and projected experiences" (p. 1). The reading act includes the relations among reader, the text and the contexts of reading. The contexts of reading involves a reader's previous experiences and his/her new experiences evoked from the present reading. Reading of a text in this context helps establish relations between previously read literary texts and the reader's experiences. Sumara (1995) has developed a strategy for "focal reading practice" that takes into account intertextual relations. Courtland et al. (1996) implemented focal reading practice through a novel study with four readers in a graduate seminar. In this action research study, shared response played a significant role as the readers interpreted and re-interpreted the text in relation to their lived experiences. The authors identified the need for further research that describes the implementation of focal practice in the classroom. The unit developed for this study was based on reader response theory and is an extension of Courtland's research on focal practice.

Researchers have studied readers' responses to a variety of literary genres such as short stories, drama, non-fiction, poems and picture books with readers of different ages (Dias & Hayhoe, 1988; Holland et al., 1993; Kiefer, 1995). Although visuals in picture books enrich interpretations and responses to the text, Kiefer (1995) argues that the picture book genre has been largely neglected. Kiefer (1995) studied the responses to picture books of elementary school children in grades 1 to 5. She has found picture books to be capable of producing in readers "an effect greater than the sum of the parts" (p. 8). On the basis of her findings she contends that picture books have the potential to evoke aesthetic understanding not only in young children, but also in young adults as well. She notes that language arts researchers who have studied children's response to picture books have placed more emphasis on the verbal and written aspects of the picture book than on the meaning of the illustrations and language as an integral whole. Thus, there is a need for research which describes the nature of

response to picture books with older elementary learners.

Research Questions

1.   What is the nature of the relationship between shared response and young adolescent readers' comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books?

1.1.   What intertextual relationships are evoked through private reading and response to picture books?

1.2.   How does shared response influence young adolescent readers' re-interpretation of picture books?

2.   In what ways does reading focal practice contribute to the evocation of intertextual relationships and readers' meta-literacy?

Definition of Terms

In this study the following definitions are employed:

Efferent reading and aesthetic reading

Rosenblatt (1978) discusses two stances a reader can adopt during the act of reading, efferent and aesthetic. In efferent reading, the attention of the reader is "directed outward, toward concepts to be retained, ideas to be tested, actions to be performed after the reading" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 24). In aesthetic reading, "the reader's attention is centred directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 25).

These two stances allow a reader to read a text both efferently and aesthetically. Rosenblatt (1978) offers an example of this instance in the reading of "Ode on a Grecian Urn", where the reader takes an aesthetic stance during the reading, and an efferent stance when he/she analyzes the syntax.

Reading focal practice

Sumara (1995) defines focal practice as an "activity which functions to render visible the usually invisible interpersonal and intertextual relations. As well, a focal practice announces a location

for an inquiry into personal and cultural histories that have preceded our involvement in any focal practice" (p. 10). Focal practice involves some form of re-reading or a "re-memorying of the experience of reading the text in relation to unfolding events" (p. 10) which continuously adds to the reader's repertoire of "past, present and projected experiences" (p.1 4). Focal practice evokes a deeper understanding of a text through personal relationships, re-interpretation of the text and intertextual connections.

Intertextuality

Sumara (1995) uses the term intertextuality as suggested by Julia Kristeva (1984) in defining "the relations sponsored by readings of literary texts" (p. 2). He explains that through reading and sharing of books in school students get "involved in a complex system of interaction and interrelation that Julia Kristeva (1984) has called intertextuality" (p. 2). Intertextuality involves the "relations of reading as these co-exist with other relations in the school curriculum" (p. 2). Reading in this context does not end "upon the completion of a book; each time the reader thinks about what has been read in relation to new thoughts and experiences an important kind of re-reading occurs" (p. 3).

Meta-literacy

Meta-literacy, a term suggested by Courtland et al. (1996) refers to the "meta-cognitive awareness of the processes initiated through literary engagement" (p. 28). This encapsulates Sumara's (1995) notion of "rendering visible usually invisible relations" (p.10). This process helps the reader to develop an awareness of the intertextual connections s/he makes among previously read literary texts and his/her lived experiences and past knowledge.

Research Design and Methodology

As a part of a larger study of reader response, four respondents in one response group were observed as they engaged in private and shared responses to picture books. The design of the study is

qualitative (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990). Data were collected through participant and non-participant observations, informal discussions and analysis of texts produced in student journals, individual and group presentations, art work and drama. The study involved two phases. Phase I took place over the first three weeks and focused on the whole class. Data collected during this phase were analyzed to select a purposeful sample of response groups for Phase II. This study described the nature of shared response with four individuals in one response group. The group included two boys, one in grade 7 and one in grade 8, and two girls, one in grade 7 and one in grade 8. Prior to beginning the study, the principal researcher and co-researcher met with the classroom teacher and the vice-principal of the school whose area of expertise is visual arts to design the unit and plan the implementation. The principal researcher obtained permission from the school board and the principal to conduct the study. She met with the class a week before the study was scheduled to explain the purpose of the study and invite the students to participate. Appendix I contains the verbal explanation given to students, the letter sent to parents, and consent form. Twenty-nine of the thirty-one students participated in the study. The researchers were in the classroom for approximately 90 minutes per day four days a week for seven weeks. Extensive field notes were recorded in a journal. Data triangulation occurred through the use of different sources of data (Patton, 1990) such as the principal researcher's record log and the co-researcher's journal, student journals and student artifacts that consisted of individual presentations and one group project. Consistency was checked over time through constant comparative references to the record logs, two written student interviews and student journals. Kiefer's (1995) descriptive framework was used as a lens to categorize students' verbal and visual responses. The research design and methodology are described in detail in Chapter Three.

Significance of this Study

This study offers insights into the experiential nature of response to picture books of young adolescent readers. Secondly, the study illuminates the potential of picture books in the evocation of

response with young adolescents. It also provides a model for the design and implementation of a picture book unit with young adolescents. The study contributes to our understanding of the social construction of meaning through shared response.

This chapter provided an overview of the research problem, rationale, research design and methodology, along with several key definitions that bear relevance to the construction of meaning in reader response theory. Chapter Two reviews the literature on reader response theory to picture books. The research design and methodology are discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four presents the findings and interpretation. Chapter Five discusses the conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Chapter Two deals with selected aspects of reader response theory that are related to this study. These are organized into two broad sections. The first section describes reader response theory; the second section reviews research on picture books.

Reader Response Theory

Rosenblatt first articulated the transactional nature of the act of reading in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978) and in *Literature as Exploration* (1976). She describes the text as a set of linguistic symbols that allow the reader to identify something beyond the words (Rosenblatt, 1976). The reader is regarded as an active agent who constructs his/her own responses to the text. Rosenblatt points out that this meaning-making process is not constructed in a linear fashion but is a back and forth movement that allows the reader to readjust meaning and come to a synthesized understanding. Texts include literary works such as picture books, novels, plays or short stories. The text is a kind of "blueprint" that allows the reader to select, reject and order his/her understanding of the text.

Rosenblatt (1978) suggests that active involvement of the reader with the text creates the "poem." She compares the engagement between the reader and the text to a "live circuit" that creates the poem. Thus the meaning-making process involves both the writer's text and the reader's creation of it. Rosenblatt, however, cautions that the reader's responses must be connected to the text. Sumara (1995) also points out that students must be made to understand that "any response they have to a text is always linked to the texts and contexts of reading" (p. 13). This study focused on the responses of the four group members to picture books and to their "contexts of reading."

A number of factors influence the quality of a reader's response to a text. The response is influenced by his/her moral and religious code, philosophy from family and community background, past experiences and other literary experiences (Rosenblatt, 1978; Smith, 1985; Sumara, 1995).

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Rosenblatt (1978) explains:

> The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text. (p 31)

Based on Rosenblatt's reader response theory researchers such as Cox and Many (1992), and Dias (1988) and Hancock (1993), have conducted studies investigating the nature of students' responses to literature. Cox and Many (1992) conducted a series of studies of response that investigated how readers at a range of grade levels responded to texts. They conceptualized their research on Rosenblatt's definitions of aesthetic and efferent stances to reading. They categorized the responses of children from fifth through eighth grade into three categories. In the first category "imaging and picturing" (p. 31), the readers describe how they see the story in their minds as they read or describe what it would be like to be a character. In the second category "hypothesizing and extending" (p. 31), the readers enter into the character's world and explain and justify the character's situation. They may go a step further and hypothesize how the story could have been different. In the third category "relating associations and feelings evoked' (p. 31), the readers relate to the text life experiences that generated similar feelings and emotions to those evoked by the story.

Hancock (1993) analyzed the journal responses of sixth grade students to four books of realistic fiction. The responses were divided into three broad areas. The first category, "personal meaning-making," (p. 468) includes four options: "monitoring understanding," "making inferences," "making, validating, or invalidating predictions," and "expressing wonder or confusion" (p. 469). Responses in this category represented readers' constructions of meaning as they tried to understand the characters and made predictions as they progressed through the story. In the second category, "character and plot involvement" (p. 469) readers display empathy for understanding of the story and evaluate the character's actions. In the final category, "literary criticism" (p. 470), readers play the

role of a critic where they praise or criticize the author's story or compare it with previously read books. Hancock (1993) points out that these response categories encourage students to expand personal response to literature in the classroom. Hancock's study describes response from the perspective of the individual reader and does not address the social construction of meaning.

Beach (1993) describes five theoretical perspectives that reader response theorists use to explain the act of reading: textual, experiential, psychological, social and cultural (p. 8). Textual theorists focus on a textual situation where the reader attends to the conventions of a text through the use of specific genre conventions. Experiential theorists look at the process whereby the reader relates to the characters and images and constructs meaning in relation to his/her own experiences to the text. Psychological theorists focus on readers' cognitive or subconscious processes and observe the variation in these processes in relation to individual personalities. Social theorists study the social role and perceptions of readers in a social context. Cultural theorists focus on how cultural attitudes and values influence responses. Beach (1993) suggests that it is the textual and experiential perspectives that deal with the reader's knowledge of text conventions and his/her "engagement or experiences with texts" (p. 8). This study investigated adolescent readers' engagement with and response to picture books as a literary genre from both textual and experiential perspective. Sumara (1996) explains the act of reading as a relationship the reader develops with a work of fiction. He notes that "the literary fiction has the ability to invoke and condition the imagination of the reader, creating possible worlds that become part of the reader's experience of living" (p. 43). He stresses that the "meanings readers evoke are not located in the text or the reader, but in the engagement between text and reader" (p. 48). Thus, "all texts are read in relation to the contexts of reading. And so, understanding the act of reading cannot be accomplished without an inquiry into the relations among forms, readers, and overlapping contexts of reading" (Sumara, 1996, p. 1). These "contexts of reading" include connections the reader makes between the text being read and past experiences with

literary texts. So the act of reading involves an "intertextual ecology of relations" (Sumara, 1995, p. 12). Sumara (1996) explains: "It is within this co-emergent fabric of relations that the reading of the literary fiction can be located. Reading requires moving, locating, and relocating one's self in relation to a co-emergent world. It is a continual bridging of newly opened spaces-gaps-that make themselves present in the ever-emerging intertextual fabric of lived experience" (p. 78). Sumara (1995) suggests that "reading does not really end upon the completion of a book; each time the reader thinks about what has been read in relation to new thoughts and experiences an important kind of re-reading occurs" (p. 3). It is a process of "continuing interpretations" achieved through reading, re-reading or reflecting upon the reading experiences.

Sumara (1995) argues that much of the reading of literary texts in schools involves touring, a fast glimpse of texts without genuine engagement with text. He has articulated a strategy, reading as a focal practice, to promote readers' engagement with text. Focal practice involves "reading experiences which are subject to interpretation and re-interpretation" (p. 10). Reading experiences become focal practices when they are "considered in relation to other readings and or other experiences" (p. 10).

Sumara (1995) worked with a grade 5/6 teacher and her class on a novel study of Lowrey's (1993) *The Giver*, to describe the intertextual relations generated by readers as they used focal reading practice. At the start of the unit students were asked to keep track of their responses to *The Giver* by writing in the margins of the book, in spaces at the end of chapters as they shared and re-read the text, or in a journal. Sumara (1995) found that "for the students this led to a deep understanding of reading, of personal response to reading, and to the intertextual nature of reading one's personal response in relation to others' responses and to their continually evolving experience" (p. 7). In this study, the notion of intertextuality was a key construct.

Where Rosenblatt (1976, 1978) focuses on the personal meaning-making processes, Sumara (1995) describes response within a "complex fabric of intertextual relations" (p. 10) that takes into account private and public meanings. Shared response involves individual readers coming together to share personal responses and texts. The process encourages personal review and revision and enables readers to discover more than one valid interpretation of the text. This helps them understand their own interpretive process, and how their interpretations of text differ from others. The unit incorporated independent reading, journal writing and sharing books with response group members.

Purves et al. (1995) and Probst (1988) articulate a number of reasons for promoting shared response. Probst notes that shared response provides the context wherein it becomes possible to work with a variety of insights and responses. Like "ripples in a pond" (p. 82), shared responses have the potential to encompass more information. He also suggests that shared response makes it possible for the ideas of a timid student to be heard. Purves et al. (1995) point out that shared response becomes an "event in which sharing, baring, stumbling, formulating, changing and reflecting are practised, rehearsed and performed publicly, not only in the class but across space and time" (p. 57). They explain that talk in response-based classrooms is described as "exploratory" rather than "final draft" talk (p. 92). In exploratory talk ideas are half formed and then revised based on what other people say and do. When the group communicates and shares responses, "there is a real possibility that by pooling their experiences they achieve a new level of understanding beyond that which they had before" (p. 92).

Dias (1988) studied patterns of response to poetry with grade nine and ten students where twenty-five students from each grade were organized in target groups. The study involved two phases. The first phase consisted of ten sessions of undirected small group discussions of selected poems. A purposive sample of individuals participated in the second phase. The second phase consisted of individual "Responding-Aloud-Protocols" (p. 23). In these sessions the groups voiced their responses verbally to two poems. Dias found that the sharing of ideas in undirected small group discussions

encouraged independent thinking among the group members who were willing to take risks in voicing their opinions. Dias (1988) also found that when students shared connections from their personal life experiences evoked by the text with each other the discussion furthered their understanding of the poem. He noted four patterns of response by individuals in the second phase of the study.

Short (1995) studied the meaning-making processes of third and sixth grade students through shared responses to text sets--collections of books that are related by similar concepts, themes, or author. Text sets can be used by small groups of students to promote discussion and sharing of ideas across books. The students in Short's study chose their own groups. Short found that patterns for sharing responses differed across groups. Groups where students had read previously one or two books in the set tended to listen to each other carefully while looking for similarities and differences across the books they had read. Groups where members had read previously most of the books tended to make connections across several books at the same time. One group which dealt with the theme of war and peace, read and discussed one book from the set at a time. This group made connections to other books in the set as they progressed in their reading list. The Chris Van Allsburg group focused on details related to the author's life. The problems faced by characters in certain text sets enabled the group to make connections to their own life experiences. For example, in the Betsy Byars group, the members identified with the problems the characters faced with parents and friends. The study revealed the power of shared responses as readers made connections across texts. In the process of making connections, Short (1995) explains that students became active and critical instead of "passively responding to the ideas of powerful others" (p. 300). She found that when the group members shared and discussed their experiences on the same texts they "tended to focus in depth on their different interpretations of that book" (p. 286). The discussions also included "more retellings and searches for connections across their books" (p. 286).

The use of text sets in phase II of the study was based on Short's (1995) idea of text sets. In phase II, response groups had the freedom to choose a text set based on three or more books which shared a common theme. One of the mini class discussions focused on the process and ways of choosing a text set. The response groups in this study had to articulate the connections in their text sets and develop a plan of how they would study and present their text sets.

Picture Books

Kiefer (1995) describes the picture book as "a unique art object, a combination of image and idea that allows the reader to come away with more than the sum of the parts" (p. 6). She notes that the picture book is characterized by the "integrated nature of picture and text" (p. 11) and has the capacity to promote "literary and aesthetic understandings" (p. 7). Bator (1983) explains that the picture book is a collaborative effort of the writer and the artist. In this collaboration "both author and illustrator attempt to communicate the elements of a rich and lively story. Each uses his own unique medium" (Bator, 1983, p. 165).

Kiefer (1995) notes that the picture book genre has been neglected and that misconceptions about the picture book as an entity exist. There are two prevailing and contrasting points of view regarding the definition of a picture book. Reviewers in reading and language arts have focused on the verbal dimension of the picture book where reviewers in the arts have focused on illustrations. "Picturebooks are not literature (i.e., word dominated things), but rather a form of visual art.... The picturebook must be experienced as a visual/verbal entity if its potential values are to be realized" (Marantz, in Kiefer, 1995, p. 6). Art critics like Marantz regard the picture book as a visual narrative where the pictures are viewed separately from the text. He insists that since "the picture book is much more a visual art object than a piece of literature, book selection should focus more on the visual attributes than on the text" (Marantz, in Kiefer, 1995, p. xv).

Kiefer points out that researchers in reading and language arts have failed to recognize the integrated nature of the picture book. She contends that research on picture books has focused on studies of preference and has not taken into account the complex nature of aesthetic response. On the other hand, reviewers in reading and language arts review picture books as pieces of literature in which the text is enhanced by the illustrations. Bator (1983) argues that this group of reviewers consider the pictures to be "a mere decoration for the text" (p. 157). Neither of these viewpoints deals effectively with the uniqueness of the picture book. Both approaches fail to recognize the unique quality of the picture book where meaning is created through an integration of art and text.

Kiefer (1995) is also critical of research on picture books because it has ignored the role of picture books in evoking aesthetic responses in a reader. She studied first and second grade children's responses to picture books in a classroom setting, where the children had opportunity to interact with a variety of picture books. She also conducted observations in grades three/four and grade five, and found picture books to be "rich sources for learning and response in all classrooms" (p. 18). She noticed developmental differences in responses of the children as they responded to the stylistic factors in picture books. Kiefer (1995) suggests these differences in response can be used by teachers to develop children's "critical aesthetic awareness" (p. 18) to picture books. Based on her research findings, Kiefer (1995) developed a descriptive framework which describes how children choose and respond to picture books (Fig. 1).
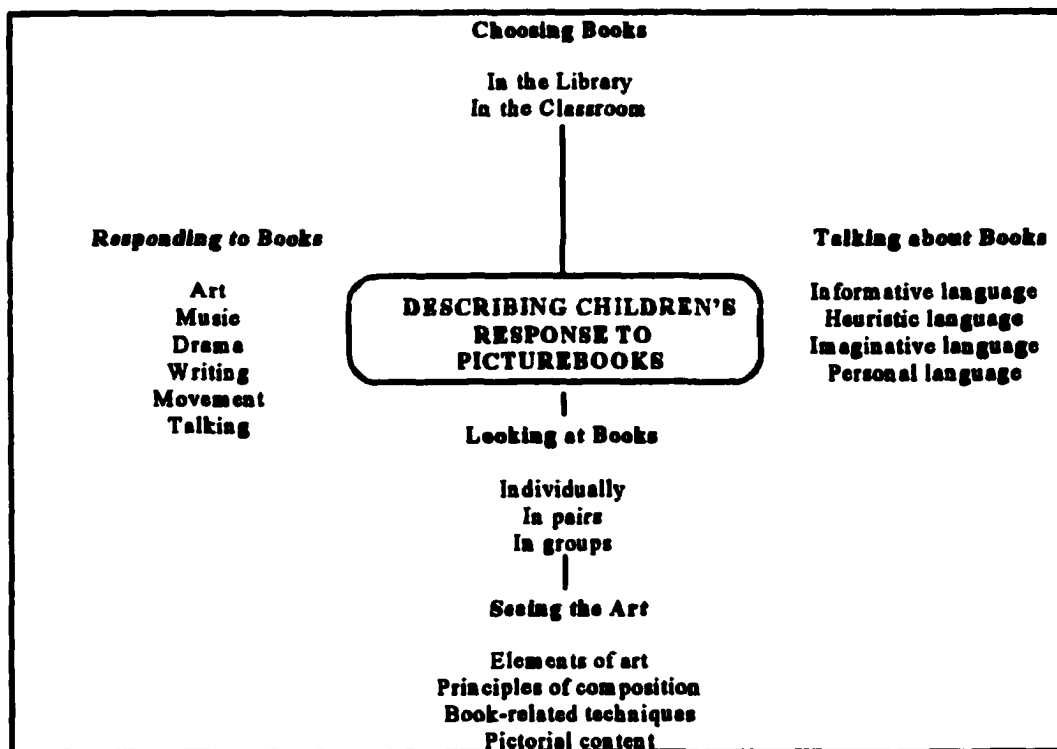
Figure 1. Descriptive framework of how children choose and respond to picture books. (Source: Kiefer, 1995, p. 19)

Kiefer's (1995) theoretical framework for picture books makes use of language learning theory, reader response theory and the principles of art appreciation (pp. 12-13). Kiefer found that children's verbal responses were consistent with four of the functions of language articulated by Halliday (cited in Kiefer, 1995, p. 24) : informative, heuristic, imaginative and personal. Children used informative language when they described what they could see in the pictures and also compared the illustrations to other books they had read. They also used informative language to discuss illustrators' techniques and the content of the pictures. Heuristic language was used when children read meanings into the pictures and asked questions to clarify issues and make inferences or predictions. They used imaginative language through participation in the story and use of figurative language. Children used the personal language function when they made connections between the pictures and their own lives

and feelings. She also developed a categorization of verbal responses to picture books that describes children's verbal responses to picture books (Table 1). These different ways of responding to picture books help students to develop critical thinking about cognitive and aesthetic factors. Kiefer (1995) suggests that in order to develop all these strands of responses to picture books the reader needs to go back to these books "to deepen and extend initial reactions" (p. 65). This is consistent with Sumara's view of reading as focal practice where the reader re-visits or re-reads a literary text.

Kiefer (1995) notes that in a picture book the interaction between the verbal and the visual aspects is an important factor in the construction of meaning. Both the author and the artist contribute to the meaning of a picture book. The author uses "sounds and words, the phonetic and morphemic systems of language" (p. 117), and the artist makes use of "line, shape, colour, value and texture, the elements of art" (p. 117). In describing the art, Kiefer notes that there are both syntactic and semantic dimensions of the illustration. The "syntactic properties of art", (p. 117) refer to "organization of lines and colour" while the "semantic properties" (p. 117) of these lines and colour communicate metaphors of a wide array of feelings associated with warmth, anger, joy, and so on. Thus, picture books are capable of evoking emotion and both the author and the artist are involved with "composition" involving "balance, rhythm and pattern" (Kiefer, 1995, p. 117). In Kiefer's theory of visual criticism the interaction between the verbal and visual aspects of a picture book is an important factor in the construction of meaning. The illustrator's "choices of the elements and principles of art" contribute to the aesthetic impact of a picture book and the aesthetic experience to a picture book intensifies when the "artist brings something extra to the scene" (Kiefer, 1995 p. 134).

Table 1. **Verbal responses to picture books. (Source: Kiefer, 1995, p. 25)**

Primary Function	Subcategories	Examples
1. *Informative:* Provides information, a pointing or telling function.	1.1. Reports the contents of the illustration. 1.2. Provides information about art styles or techniques. 1.3. Describes or narrates pictured events. 1.4. Compares contents of the illustrations to something in the real world. 1.5. Compares one book to another.	"There's the witch." "He used brown." "You just see them sleeping there and the witch leaving and then you see her talking to them." · "This looks like wood." "This looks like *Jumanji.*"
2. *Heuristic:* Problem-solving function, includes wondering about as well as offering solutions.	2.1. Wonders about the events or contents of the illustrations. · 2.2. Makes inferences about events, the setting, or a character's personality, motives, or actions. 2.3. Makes inferences about cause and effect or possible outcomes. 2.4. Makes inferences about the preparation of the illustrations—what the artist did. 2.5. Makes inferences about the illustrator's intentions.	"Couldn't they just sell the bed and buy food?" "This looks deep." "She looks mean." "If they stepped on a twig they would of got real hurt." "It looks like he used a little pencil line to just do little sketches for it." "He liked to use darker colors."
3. *Imaginative:* Recalling, creating, or participating in an imaginary world.	3.1. Enters into the world of the book as a character or onlooker. 3.2. Creates figurative language. 3.3. Describes mental images.	"The father looks like he's saying, 'Why do we have to leave them?' and she's going, 'Hah hah.' " "These [leaves] look like tropical birds." "This doesn't look the same as I thought."
4. *Personal:* Connecting to individual experience, reporting emotions, stating opinions.	4.1. Relates personally to events, setting, or characters. 4.2. Expresses feelings or describes personal effects of art elements. 4.3. Expresses opinions or evaluates the illustrations.	"I wouldn't of went up there with a snake up there." "Here she's yelling. My mom does that." "That makes me sad" "Darker colors give you a feeling of being scared." "He shoulda put a wart on her nose." "The pictures don't look so good here—it looks like he repeated. He just used orange and a grey."

In this study the picture book unit titled "The Picture Book: Exploring and Imaging" as developed by the principal researcher provided the group members with a context to respond aesthetically to picture books. During independent reading time the group members had the opportunity to read picture books of their choice. As part of the daily activities they also wrote responses to the picture books they had read in their journals. The group members then shared the picture books they had read with the group.

This chapter has provided the review of related literature on reader response and aesthetic responses to picture books that have allowed the research questions to be addressed in this study. Chapter Three discusses the research design and methodology, and the data analysis process.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes the research design, the unit on picture books, and the methods used to examine and describe the nature of shared response of young adolescent readers and their comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books. The respondents in this study were a purposive sample of four students who constituted one response group. The study was part of a larger study of response (Courtland, 1996) in which thirty-one students in the grade 7/8 class participated in a seven-week unit on picture books.

Design

The design of the study was qualitative and emergent (Newman, 1991; Patton, 1990). The picture book unit in this study provided the students of grade 7/8 with opportunities to respond to picture books in various ways. Their responses offered the context to observe aesthetic responses to picture books, intertextual relationships, and the power of shared responses in the comprehension and re-interpretation of the texts and their own lived experience. These various strands of responses evolved as the group members read picture books, wrote responses in their journals, and shared their reading experiences with group members and prepared for their individual presentations and the group project. While the group members of this response group shared their views and made intertextual connections to picture books, patterns and themes emerged as the study progressed over the seven weeks. Data collection and analysis in this study moved from a broad focus to a narrower focus based on the research questions. Relevant findings were related to research questions and connections were made to the existing literature.

The study involved two phases. Phase I took place in the first three weeks of the study. During the first three weeks the whole class, individuals and response groups were observed with the intent to select a purposive sample. The purposive sample consisted of three response groups and the

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individuals in these groups. This study described the nature of shared response with four individuals in one response group. Response Group I consisted of two boys, one in grade 7 and one in grade 8, and two girls, one in grade 7 and one in grade 8.

Setting

The school was a neighbourhood school located in a working class area of an urban school system in a city in northern Ontario. The school had a population of 410 students and classes from Junior Kindergarten through grade 8. There were classes at each grade level as well as combined classes where needed to keep class sizes down. The respondents for the larger study were a split grade 7/8 class. Ten students were in grade eight; twenty-one in grade seven. There were 15 boys and 16 girls in the class. Most of the students had attended the same school since kindergarten. This study focuses on one response group from the class.

Sample

Group I was comprised of four students, two girls and two boys. Winston was in grade 7. He described himself as keeping on task and being organized. Rebecca was in grade 8. Her group regarded her as the artist among them. She loved reading and had a dislike for any non-fiction books. She commented that math, geography, and science were not her favourite subjects. Margaret, a grade 7 student, regarded herself as a slow worker who took more time to do things. She liked reading but would take a longer time to read a picture book compared to the other members of the group. On occasion she took books home to catch up on her reading and writing responses. She liked pondering as she read, and spent a lot of time looking at the pictures. Ozzy, a grade 8 student, was an avid reader who tended to keep to himself. He was perceived by the rest of the group as having a keen eye for detail and a knack for understanding difficult concepts. Winston, Rebecca and Margaret often asked his assistance to understand details in the illustrations and stories. All four individuals were proficient readers. The art teacher and classroom teacher had introduced the class to many visual techniques

during the first four months of the school year. Thus, these students also had a strong art background and were familiar with various media artists use to create works of art.

The Picture Book: Exploring and Imaging

Overview

The theoretical framework underlying the planning, development, and implementation of the unit was based upon holistic theories of language learning (Courtland, 1994), reader response theory, in particular, Sumara's (1995) conceptualizations of intertextuality and response to reading as a focal practice, and Kiefer's (1995) theory of criticism.

The six-week unit was intended to provide students with opportunities to read and respond to picture books through a variety of symbolic systems. Approximately two hundred picture books were made available to students. The books included a range of themes such as modern and variant fairy tales, folktales from many cultures, intergenerational stories, humour, biography, and information books.

The unit was designed to provide both structure and flexibility. The unit was implemented four days a week in periods of eighty minutes. Each day students engaged in the following activities:

- Read aloud (5-10 min.)

  The classroom teacher read picture books aloud to the class, during the reading, and shared her evocation of the text.

- Independent reading/response (20 min.)

  Students selected picture books to read independently and responded in their journals.

- Literature response groups (20 min.)

  Students met with their response groups to discuss the picture books they had read.

- Studio time (20 min.)

The term "studio time" was selected to signify a connection to the arts and to the processes in which readers engage as they re-interpret texts. During weeks # 2, 3, and 4 response groups took turns rotating to learning centres where they experimented with media and techniques used by illustrators such as plasticine art, multi-media collage, and techniques for creating backgrounds. Members of the response groups who were not at centres had the option of continuing to read or to work on interpretive activities.

Whole class discussion (10 min.)

Whole class discussion time was built into the unit to provide time for reflection on a daily basis. Time constraints limited these discussions to twice weekly.

Time was set aside once a week for presentations of response activities. Students signed up when they were ready. Following each presentation, students' classmates were invited to respond.

Physical setting

The physical setting of a literature-based program plays a significant role in enhancing language activities (Graves, 1991; Holdaway, 1988; Harste et al., 1988). This is manifested in the layout of the classroom, seating plan, arrangement of books, and access to resources. This section describes these aspects of the classroom setting observed in this study.

The desks were arranged in clusters of four so the discussion was facilitated for response group members. An outline of the classroom layout has been included in Figure 2. During the picture book unit the classroom had close to two hundred picture books from local public libraries, and from the personal collections of the principal researcher, the classroom teacher and the art teacher. The books were displayed in two areas: on the shelf surface that occupied the back of the classroom and on a table in the front of the room. The books were placed in a standing position so that covers were visible to students.

BLACKBOARD	FILING CABINETS

BOOK DISPLAY

TEACHERS' CHAIR & TABLE

RESPONSE GROUP #1

RESPONSE GROUP #2

RESPONSE GROUP #3

RESPONSE GROUP #5

RESPONSE GROUP #4

RESPONSE GROUP #7

RESPONSE GROUP #6

RESPONSE GROUP #8

ART CENTRE

BOOKS DISPLAYED ON COUNTER

DOOR
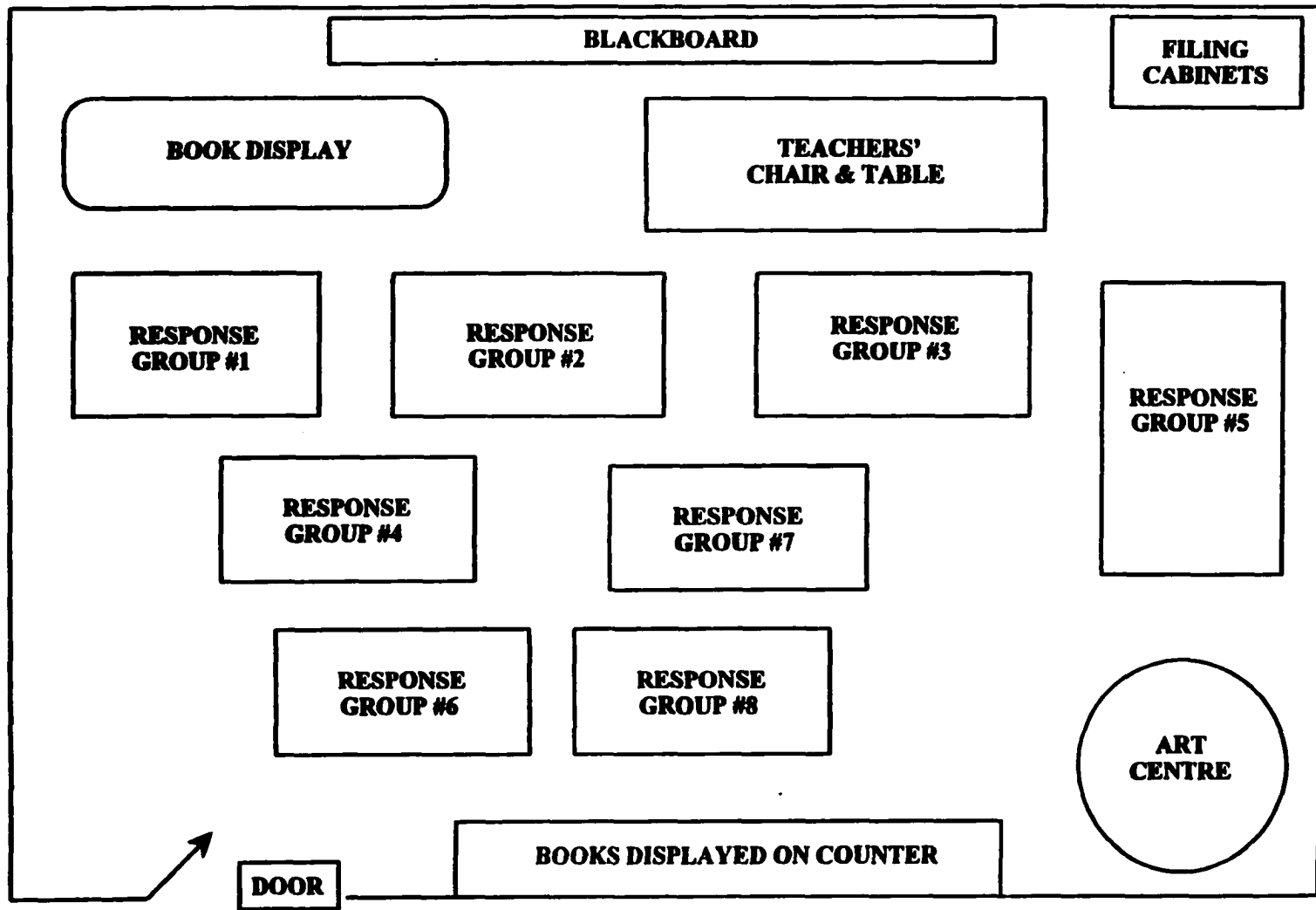
Figure 2.　　Classroom Layout, Weeks 1-4

An art station was set up in the east corner of the room where tables were arranged in a circular format. It contained art supplies to allow students access to various art media during the picture book unit. Supplies included : plasticine, acrylic and water colour paints, crayons and pencil crayons, paper of different textures and sizes, and materials for collages. During the last two weeks of the unit the tables were set against the wall so that students could easily access the art supplies for their group presentations.

Implementation of the unit

Initially, the unit was designed to take place four days per week over six weeks. As the unit progressed students needed more time to complete and present their text set projects. As a result, the unit was then extended for a seventh week. The first three days of Week # 1 were spent on introductory activities so that students would begin to understand the expectations and each aspect of the daily routine. Time was provided during each period for the following activities:

- read aloud

- independent reading

- journal writing

- response groups

- studio time

The principal researcher "walked" the students through each of the above activities. On the first day she read aloud Van Allsburg's (1988) *Two Bad Ants* in which the pen and ink illustrations represent objects familiar to humans from the perspective of the two ants. She moved about the room among the response groups to show them each illustration. Using a modified directed-thinking approach, she invited students to make predictions and to confirm or reject earlier predictions. The classroom teacher, the art teacher and the principal researcher also responded orally and shared their responses aloud in order to model the process for group discussion.

The researcher presented each student with a spiral-bound 5" by 8" journal in which to record

responses. The principal researcher generated a web with the class which illustrated the range of

responses students might make in a journal. Figure 3 was the result of the brainstorming session:

```
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │  Questions   │
                          └──────┬───────┘
                                 │
┌─────────────────────┐  ┌───────┴────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Aesthetic responses:│  │                │  │ Ideas about book:   │
│ • Poem              │  │                │  │ • feelings          │
│ • New ending        │──│                │──│ • predictions       │
│ • Letter to a       │  │                │  │                     │
│   character         │  │ Journal Entries│  │                     │
└─────────────────────┘  │                │  └─────────────────────┘
                         │                │
┌─────────────────────┐  │                │  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ How ideas change    │  │                │  │ Connections to:     │
│ when you share with │──│                │──│ • other books       │
│ other people.       │  │                │  │ • people            │
│                     │  └───────┬────────┘  │ • experiences       │
└─────────────────────┘          │           └─────────────────────┘
                          ┌───────┴────────┐
                          │ Reflection on  │
                          │ style/illustration │
                          └────────────────┘
```
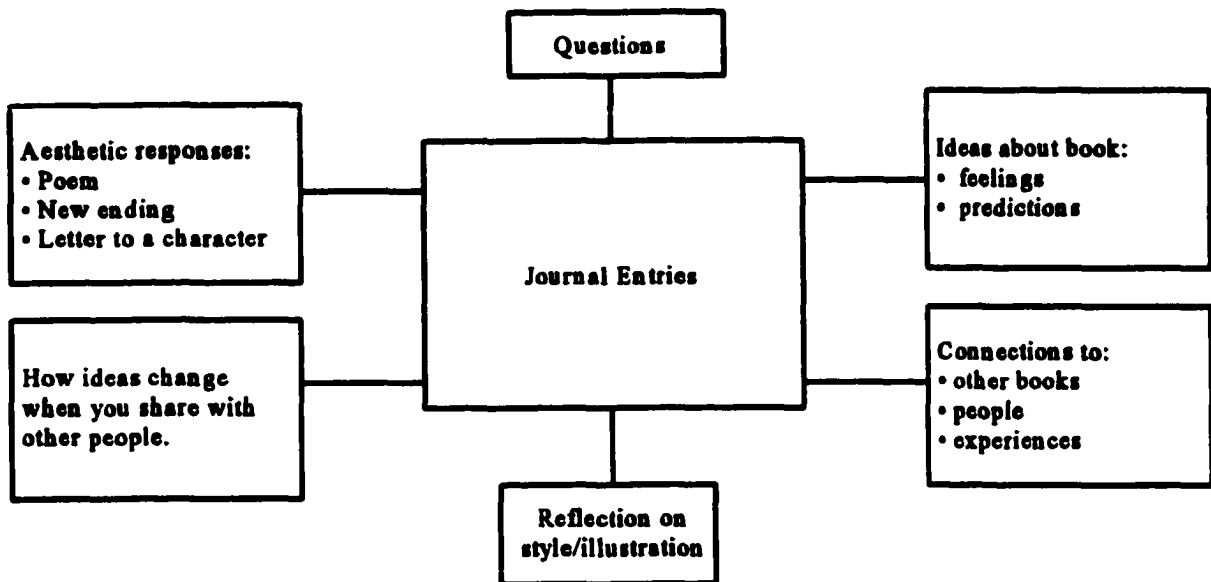
Figure 3. Brainstorming ideas for journal entries.

The art teacher discussed the visual elements of *Two Bad Ants* with the class. For instance, the

first illustration depicted a crystal which was a granule of sugar. The second illustration, depicting a

"brown lake,"was a cup of coffee in which the ants nearly drowned. The class discussed how the

illustrator created an effect through which we could see the world from a much different perspective.

On the second day, students listened to Scieszka's (1989) *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* read

aloud by the principal researcher and then participated in a variety of creative dramatic activities in

their response groups. These included a skit, a commercial, writing and performing a rap, and

composing a new song to a familiar tune. These response activities were intended to broaden students'

understanding of ways to respond through drama. On the third day, students engaged in writing

activities based on the teacher's oral reading of Ahlbergs' (1986) *The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters*.

The typical schedule began on the fourth day. During studio time the art teacher introduced students to a variety of techniques and forms used by illustrators to represent meaning. She discussed the use of pastel colours to create a soft and translucent appearance in some picture books and showed them an example in Innocenti's illustrations of Galluz's (1990) *Rose Blanche*. She also showed the use of plasticine art in Barbara Reid's books that make the objects stand out against the background. She discussed how pop up books are designed and how to create a collage. As response groups discussed illustrations, the art teacher circulated to confer with them about art techniques illustrators used in the picture books they were reading. In the whole class discussion which followed, she asked certain groups to share their books. In this way, she highlighted collages in Baker's (1995) *The Story of Rosey Dock* and the misty tones used to portray feeling in Kaldhol's (1987) *Goodbye Rune*.

Student response groups rotated through four learning stations to experiment with a variety of art techniques. The rotation continued for three weeks. The techniques introduced included plasticine art, pastel colours, multi-media collage art and pop up books. Each group completed one station before beginning a second. This strategy provided the students with a knowledge of the various art techniques which they could later use in their individual presentations and group projects. When the students experimented with plasticine, they learned how simple tools like fingers and a clip could shape the medium to create a three-dimensional feeling in illustrations. The illustrations were built on a cardboard base. Some of the students took plasticine home to work with and created detailed works of art. During studio time while groups were experimenting with art forms, other students were working on a variety of response activities for independent projects.

Each day the class teacher read a picture book aloud for five to ten minutes. She circulated through the room to show the illustration to response groups. During this reading, she described her

lived-through experience of the text. The next twenty to thirty minutes consisted of independent reading and journal writing. The students were expected to read picture books and to respond twice in their journals. The first response was made halfway through the book and a second, after they had finished reading the book. They then shared their books and discussed ideas and intertextual connections with their response group for the next twenty minutes. The classroom teacher and the principal researcher sat in on response group discussions and held informal conferences with students during studio time.

Whole class discussions were usually held on Thursdays. They provided insights into the understandings and views the students had about picture books, and helped to bring closure to the week's activities and to build the classroom community. During the second week of the unit the class was asked about their impressions of and suggestions for the picture book unit.

Weeks # 2, 3, 4 focused on independent response activities such as reading picture books, writing a response to the picture book in their journal, and sharing the picture book with the group members. Weeks # 5, 6, 7 focused on text sets and group projects. Each student was expected to complete two response activities : one piece of writing (revised and edited), and one response activity in another symbolic system. Many students chose to create illustrations based on a picture book; however, some opted to use drama or music in their re-interpretations of the picture books. Each week students who were ready to present signed a sheet which was posted in the room. Each Thursday, those students who had "signed up" presented their response activities to the class.

The classroom teacher and principal researcher circulated daily to response groups and held conferences with individuals and groups. Mini lessons were developed to address instructional needs or clarify points. For example, after students had been introduced to the idea of text sets and the project was discussed, students had difficulty understanding what to do. A mini lesson was developed to address the following points: (1) the meaning of a text set; (2) ideas for group projects; (3) planning the project.

Weeks # 5 and 6 focused on the selection of text sets for response group projects. The text set had to consist of three or more books having a common theme or a number of common themes. The group members in a response group then had to decide how they wanted to present their text set. During this phase the response groups selected text sets, planned, and developed their projects. Because the groups had not completed the work in week # 6, a decision was made to extend the unit to a seventh week.

Response groups had to decide on the kind of information they wanted to include and the format in which they wanted to convey the information. Some suggestions given included a visual display of an author's biography and work and a panel show. The principal researcher distributed to each response group a copy of the evaluation rubric for the project (Appendix II). The picture book unit was accompanied by an evaluation rubric based on language and art outcomes for grades seven and eight. This was developed by the principal researcher in consultation with the class teacher.

Methodology

Methods used in this study included (1) participant and non-participant observations, (2) informal interviews, and (3) analysis of documents. These documents consisted of the four respondents' journals, their writing samples and art work as depicted in the individual presentations and the group project, student surveys and their letters of response, and the observer's journal. All observations during the various response activities were recorded in a journal.

Participant and non-participant observation

Observation provides the opportunity to understand a program from an holistic perspective. Observation may be visualized on a continuum which moves from complete involvement as a full participant to one where the observer is completely detached from the setting and looks on as a spectator. The ideal lies in combining participation and observation in such a way as to understand the program "as an insider while describing the program for outsiders" (Patton, 1990, p. 207).

As a participant observer the researcher "enters the world of the people he or she plans to study, gets to know, be known, and trusted by them, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 2). This research study provided the context for both participant and non-participant observations. As a participant observer I attempted to enter the world of four group members in Response Group I. I kept a written record of observations and relevant dialogues as the members of the Response Group I responded to picture books. The principal investigator was involved primarily in the role of participant observer who planned the study unit along with the class teacher. I was a co-researcher and assumed the stance of non-participant observer during Phase I of the data collection process. In Phase I, as an "onlooker", I observed the activities of the setting and recorded the observations. In Phase II of the study, I was both a non-participant and participant observer. Here I participated in response group discussions and engaged in informal conversations with the group members while they shared responses and talked about picture books.

Informal interviews

Informal interviews, in the form of conversations, occurred with the participants throughout the study. Through these conversations I was able to collect information on respondents' perceptions and feelings about picture books. Informal conversations enabled us to describe the intertextual connections the group members made as they shared their experiences. For instance, after Rebecca described Bogart's (1994) *Gifts* to her response group, another member asked her which country her grandmother was visiting at that time. This question revealed a connection between the situation in *Gifts* and the difficulty of choosing a gift that was representative of the culture the person had experienced. Informal interviews also included the teacher-student conferences which occurred during studio time.

Document Analysis

Documents collected during the study included : the fieldnotes and journals written by the co-researcher and the students, individual and group presentations and the products generated, one

questionnaire completed by students after week # 4 and the final letter response. The information from these documents was analyzed on the basis of emerging themes and patterns found relevant to the research questions.

Each student did two individual presentations and one group project with their group members based on a text set. An extract from the observer's journal records the following information on an individual presentation.

> There was one presentation today on the book, *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*. Winston drew a picture of the bad pig and told the class he wanted to make the pig look very mean, so that the class looking at the picture will want to read about it. A few of the students wanted to know if the story was similar to the original tale of *The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf*. Winston gave an outline of the story but not a detailed one and told the class to read it. The class showed a lot of interest in wanting to read the story for themselves. (OJ, p. 66)

The following example illustrates the response shared in Group I.

> Rebecca liked the story *The King's Equal* especially the part of "how smart the princess was. Pictures are very nice as each of them seem to be framed with the background added on." Winston read *The Magic Tapestry* as he likes folk tales about other countries and the other group members having read it, he wanted to see for himself and found the story "to be very interesting." He liked the pictures the best "as there is much detail to them." Ozzy chose the book *Freedom Child* mainly by the cover as it looked "mysterious" and he found the story to be "very interesting." At this point the other members very eagerly asked him what the story was about. He mentioned in brief that it was about slavery and freedom and was kind of a myth. Margaret shared the book *How the Manx Cat Lost Its Tail*. She chose the book after hearing Rebecca's response to it and also because a similar incident happened to her cat. The window had fallen on her cat's tail and the cat now only has a stump left. She liked the story as it "is funny and the pictures are very lively."

The students wrote personal responses to picture books in their journals as part of their daily activities. Entries included personal responses to picture books, feelings about the picture book unit and their group activities, lists of books read and rankings in terms of their feelings, likes and dislikes. Journals were collected every two weeks by the principal researcher who responded to each journal entry. On *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* Rebecca wrote, "I've heard this story before but I sort of didn't understand it because the person that was reading it to me didn't show me the pictures. I believe the wolf's version of the story."

In response to Rebecca's journal entry the principal researcher commented, "You captured the essence of a picture book in your comment that you didn't understand *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* when you did not see the illustrations. Both pictures + text = picture book." In response to *The Wednesday Surprise*, Rebecca remarked, "I thought this book was good. I was thinking that the grandma was teaching the girl to read the whole time." The principal researcher agreed, "Yes! We don't think of illiteracy among adults. A neat book."

Ozzy, another member of the response group, responded enthusiastically to *The Three Golden Keys*: "Wow! This book's artistry is absolutely amazing. Did you catch the hidden pictures? Like on the page after he gets the first key did you see the two figures on the hedge wall? This book is fantastic. I rate this book better than excellent." The principal researcher responded to his entry and on his first book presentation-a radio play based on *It Happened in Pinsk*: "... I shall have to look more closely at the illustrations in *The Three Golden Keys*. You have a knack for really seeing the details in illustrations (as you did with *Smokey Night*). Your play was great! It was thoughtfully prepared and performed creatively."

During Phase I of the unit, each student completed two individual assignments based on books of their choice. Group I responses included: a narrative poem, a diorama, extended statement to the story, a fantasy production on tape and a riddle poster on Base's *Animalia*. During Phase II each response group did a group project on a text set. Group I focused on Chinese legends. During the fourth week of the picture book unit the students responded to an open-ended written interview. Through this survey it was possible to learn about their perceptions and feelings about picture books.

Margaret's initial feelings about picture books changed during the course of the unit and she wrote, "Picture books have bigger words in them than I thought they did and the pictures in most are not just pathetic little cartoon drawings, but they are beautiful detailed drawings that would take more than five minutes." On the last day of the picture book unit the class responded in the form of a letter

written to a friend or relative stating their feelings about the picture books they had read, and any significant connections they had made in the reading process. The letters showed some of the significant connections students made to certain picture books. For instance, Winston's letter to Erika reflects his feelings as he re-interprets Roots' (1985) *Moon Tiger*:

> Dear Erika,
>
> One of my favourite books I read during this project was *Moon Tiger*. I liked it because it reminds me of you. You're always getting me in trouble! As soon as I read this book I thought about how true it is in my case.
>
> It's about a girl who dreams she is riding a flying tiger and she wishes that the tiger could eat up her little brother because he is always getting her in trouble. It's the opposite with us. Then she remembers all of the good times she had with her brother and realizes she doesn't want the tiger to eat him. That's how I feel when I think about you.
>
> Maybe when you're older, I'll read this book to you and then you'll be able to understand this letter a bit better.
>
> Yours truly,

Research Process

Entry

The research proposal was developed by the principal investigator. A seven week unit entitled "The Picture Book: Exploring and Imaging" was developed in consultation with the classroom teacher and the vice-principal of the school, an experienced art teacher. The proposal was submitted to the university Ethics Committee and the school board. After gaining approval from these sources the principal researcher and the grade 7/8 classroom teacher discussed the unit with the school principal to obtain his permission to conduct the research within the school. My role in this study was as a co-researcher who assisted in the collection of data.

Informed consent

The principal researcher explained the picture book unit verbally to the class prior to the beginning of the unit and distributed the informed consent letters that needed to be signed by the

students and their parents (verbal explanation to students and letter of consent to parents included in Appendix 1). The letter mentions: (1) the benefits of participating in the unit; (2) that there were no risks involved; (3) it assures confidentiality of all information; (4) the participant's right to withdraw at any time and; (5) storage of data for seven years. Twenty-six students agreed to participate. Students who did not return the consent form participated in the unit as part of the regular curriculum. Their response activities were not included in the data collection process.

Data collection

Phase I: General observations. During Phase I of the study all the individuals and the eight response groups were observed. Each response group included at least one grade eight student, one self-directed individual along with one who needed guidance, and gender balance.

Phase II: Purposive sample. Three groups comprised the purposive sample for the larger study. Criteria included the following: Groups in which individuals were frequently absent were excluded. As well, groups in which individuals had not signed a consent form were also not included. Groups 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 were excluded. Group 1 in this study was selected on the following criteria: (1) individuals in the group tended to expand upon their responses by including more detail and making intertextual connections as they responded to picture books; (2) individuals discussed the techniques used by illustrators and the mood conveyed through the use of colour; (3) and individuals demonstrated the interchange of ideas within their group. Group 1 is the response group described in this study. The members in this group were proficient readers and writers who were task- oriented and worked well co-operatively.

Triangulation of data sources

Smith (1991) describes triangulation as "the use of a variety of methods, techniques, tools, and theories to arrive at a closer approximation of the truth" (p. 697). Patton (1990, p. 187) identifies four types of triangulation: (1) data triangulation—that makes use of different sources of data; (2)

investigator triangulation_that makes use of more than one researcher or evaluator at the research setting; (3) theory triangulation—that makes use of more than one perspective to study a single set of data; (4) methodological triangulation—that makes use of multiple methods to research a single problem. In this study triangulation occurred through investigator, theory and multiple data sources and multiple methods.

The students recorded their responses to picture books in their journals. The principal researcher and co-researcher recorded student responses to picture books. The student surveys revealed student views about picture books. The individual presentations and group project reflected their aesthetic responses to picture books. The survey and letter responses highlighted their perceptions about picture books. These different sources of data validated their various responses to picture books.

The findings were interpreted in relation to literature on response. A key construct for the analysis of verbal and visual responses was Kiefer's (1995) classification of verbal response.

Data analysis

The transcribed data were collated and pages were numbered. Photocopies of the data set were made. The first letter from the data sources were used to develop the codes referred to in this study. This simplified the identification process while referring to the vari..us data sources. The following codes were used to identify the sources of data:

- Co-researcher's fieldnotes in the journal = CJ

- Student journals = SJ

- Individual presentations = IP

- Group presentations = GP

- Student surveys = SS

Kiefer's (1995) framework (Table 1) was used to classify students' responses to picture books. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the verbal responses in this framework have been categorized into informative, heuristic, imaginative and personal levels. Responses in the student journals were placed in these categories. Table 2 in Chapter Four illustrates the classification of data in Kiefer's categories. Other themes emerged which could not be accommodated in Kiefer's classification scheme. These included: patterns of shared response through which group members constructed meaning; intertextual connections; aesthetic response - the artefacts generated by students and modes of response; integrity of pictures and text; and perceptions of picture books. These themes are discussed in Chapter Four.

This chapter described the research design, an overview of the picture book unit and qualitative methods used in data gathering, and data analysis. The following chapter presents the findings and interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Interpretation

Chapter Four presents the findings and interpretation of the study. The first section presents the findings. Six themes emerged from the analyses of data: patterns of shared response to picture books, verbal response to picture books, intertextual connections, aesthetic response to picture books, integrity of text and pictures, and students' perceptions of picture books. The second section discusses the interpretation of these findings.

Themes

Six themes emerged from the data analysis: patterns of shared response to picture books; verbal response to picture books; intertextual connections; aesthetic response to picture books; integrity of text and pictures; and students' perceptions of picture books. Each is presented below.

Patterns of shared response

The patterns of shared response are discussed in the following categories: sharing books, personal preference, assisting comprehension, noting and valuing the art in illustrations, and collaborative planning.

Sharing books. During independent reading time the group members chose books that had been recommended by the other members of the group. Winston would show them the list of the books he had read. Rebecca and Margaret, in turn, showed the long lists written at the back of their journals. Ozzy took a keen interest in the details of the pictures in each book he read. Usually, after he had finished reading a book once, he would return to the illustrations to review them critically (OJ, p.11).

The group members developed a procedure for sharing picture books. They discussed the medium used by the artist and the use of colour before talking about the text (OJ, p.15). During these "book talks" the other members wanted to look at the pictures and listen attentively to the story. Even though the "book talk" had introduced them to the book, most of the time the other members read the

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book at the next available opportunity. For example, after Rebecca shared Steven's (1990) *How the Manx Cat Lost Its Tail*, Margaret read the book. Rebecca who disliked science chose to read Lasky's (1994) *The Librarian Who Measured the World* after listening to Ozzy's responses to the book (OJ, p.15). Winston enjoyed folk tales and stories of different countries. After Ozzy and Margaret had shared Demi's (1994) *The Magic Tapestry*, Winston read the book for himself. He explained that the pictures he liked had a "lot of detail" (OJ, p. 18). Rebecca read Bogart's (1994) *Gifts* even though the teacher had read it to the class. She remarked that she wanted to have a better look at the illustrations.

The group members shared books when the story had great appeal. Rebecca shared Locker's (1989) *The Young Artist* and explained that she liked the theme of the story in which the artist, who is not mercenary even though he is poor, wants to paint a picture of real beauty. Her response prompted Margaret to choose *The Young Artist* for her next reading. Rebecca explained that she found the mouse in Henrietta's (1995) *A Country Mouse In The Town House* funny because the mouse prefers berries and peas even when a banquet is spread on the table. Margaret liked the illustrations and took time to read the information at the beginning which instructed readers on how to find the mouse in every picture (OJ, p. 34). Ozzy, who had read the book previously, mentioned that he found the clues to finding the small field mouse through the trail of peas to be a very "quaint idea" (OJ). Winston told the group that there was more than one version of the story where the city mouse visits his friend in the country.

During studio time, the members of the response group took advantage of other opportunities to discuss books. For example, Winston would take a picture book from the shelf, and show it to Ozzy. He would then read the book, look at the illustrations, and point out the pages he liked.

Personal preference. Three members of Response Group 1 chose books based on their own preferences. Rebecca preferred stories that depicted strengths and weaknesses of human nature. She would become involved emotionally with a story and identify with the characters. For instance, in Henrietta's (1995) *A Country Mouse in The Town House*, she responded warmly towards the mouse

who wanted his peas and berries all the time. In Potter's (1993) *The Tale of Jemima Puddle Duck*, she liked the human attributes of the duck who lacked patience to sit on her own eggs and whose nature refused to believe that her friend the fox actually wanted to eat her eggs. In Patterson's (1992) *The King's Equal* she admired the qualities of the poor girl who later became the queen.

Ozzy preferred realistic stories, those which focused on social issues, and fantasy. He enjoyed the magic in Snyder's (1985) *The Changing Maze* and the fantasy in Yorink's (1983) *It Happened in Pinsk*. He reflected on social issues such as the impact of war in Maruki's (1980) *Hiroshima no Pika*.

Winston preferred picture books about the different customs and the spirit of a people such as Say's (1991) *Tree of Cranes* and Van Allsburg's (1985) *The Polar Express*. He commented on the Chinese art in Demi's (1994) *The Magic Tapestry*, and the rites in Service's (1986) *Cremation of Sam McGee*.

Assisting comprehension. The group members assisted each other in comprehending the illustrations and text. During sharing time, if anyone had had difficulty in understanding a story or illustration, another member who had read the picture book would attempt to clarify the confusion. When Margaret said she had difficulty understanding the conclusion in Van Allburg's (1993) *The Sweetest Fig*, Ozzy explained the irony to her. Sometimes when group members had difficulty making sense of a picture book, discussion enabled them to resolve the concerns. During one sharing session, Margaret noted that she found Blake's (1995) *Clown* difficult to understand. This picture book consisted of illustrations that showed the clown involved in a series of acts. Winston, who had read it previously, agreed with her that in a first reading, it was difficult to follow what the clown was trying to accomplish.

Winston likewise had difficulty in understanding why Cassie was moving from place to place to escape to Canada in Ringgold's (1992) *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad In The Sky*. The picture book shows Cassie who is a black slave hiding in different places before she can escape to

Canada. Winston , Ozzy and Rebecca looked at the illustrations and together tried to figure out the background of the story. They resolved that the plot and setting focused on slavery in the United States as in Uncle Sam's cabin (OJ, p. 39). Together, they were able to develop an understanding of the picture book.

Noting and valuing the art in illustrations. The group members took an interest in the art medium used in the picture books, and discussed the integration of pictures and text of the story. In discussing Stevens (1990) *How The Manx Cat Lost its Tail,* Margaret and Rebecca thought the artist used oil paint and liked the way Noah and his wife were portrayed as a "jovial old couple" (OJ, p.15). In Patterson's (1990) *The King's Equal,* Margaret was critical of an illustration that did not show in detail the jewels that were offered to the prince by one of the princesses. In contrast, Rebecca liked the way the picture had been illustrated as it left room for the reader's imagination. Ozzy noted that in Snyder's (1985) *The Changing Maze* pictures and the text complemented each other. He also liked the way the illustrations complemented the diary of the mouse in Oakley's (1986) *Diary of a Church Mouse.* He noted, "This is by far the best book I've read so far. Illustrations are great, very funny. I rate this book perfect" (SJ).

Collaborative planning. The members of the response group each made two individual presentations and one group project. The individual presentations helped the members of this group to appreciate each other's strengths in language arts as well as each other's talents and hobbies. For example, Rebecca was the artist in the group; Ozzy had a music background and eye for detail; Winston was able to research and organize information; and Margaret had contact with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. She had pen pals in five countries and wrote to them regularly.

The group began planning for their group project by brainstorming a strategy for selecting a text set. Winston recorded the points listed in Figure 4 on a large poster.

Group Project

- Choose 1 book the group agrees on

- pick a format

- gather information on author/illustrator

- each member has to contribute at least 2 ideas

- appoint certain duties to group members such as recorder,
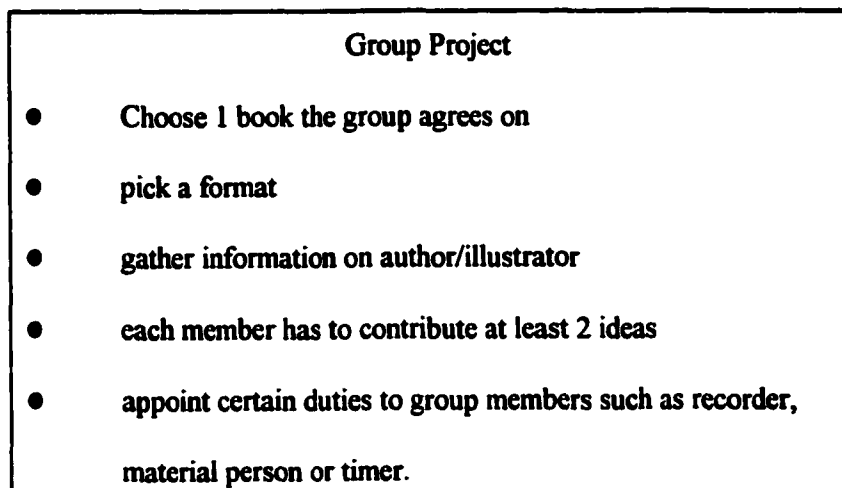
  material person or timer.

Figure 4. Strategy for selecting a text set.

This group arrived at a consensus on a text set after four sessions. First, they generated and then rejected a number of alternatives. Ozzy and Winston wanted to select a text set on trains but were unable to find three or more books on trains. Margaret and Rebecca suggested that they do the project on dogs, but the other two members were not interested in the topic. The group then agreed to select a text set on war and the aftereffects of war based on Maruki's (1980) *Hiroshima No Pika*, but were unable to find additional books that dealt with these issues. They then brainstormed the possibility of different versions of folktales on oriental culture. They reached a consensus to do a presentation on legends from the land of China based on the following text set: Lawson's (1992) *The Dragon's Pearl*, Demi's (1994) *The Magic Tapestry* and Yee's (1996) *Ghost Train*.

The group analyzed the text set to determine common themes. Winston noted that the text set dealt with children who were trying to help their parents, and in each case, family values were featured. Ozzy raised the idea that a dragon appeared in each book. Rebecca and Winston reminded him that *Ghost Train* did not have a picture of a dragon. Ozzy turned to the page which illustrates the girl who had left Canada to return to China with her father's ashes. She is depicted burning the remains on high

ground overlooking the village plains. Ozzy pointed out the shape of a dragon in the smoke. After studying, the illustration, Rebecca and Winston also were able to see the shape of a dragon.

The group then decided on common themes and wrote the following plan:

> We chose *The Dragon's Pearl, Ghost Train,* and *The Magic Tapestry* because they all have something to do with Chinese legends. The pictures in each book are very interesting and they made us want to find out more about Oriental culture. We chose these books because they all have something to do with greed, children helping out and connecting with their families. There is at least a dragon in each book. The least noticeable one is the dragon in *The Ghost Train.* On this page if you look carefully you can see the outline of a dragon (GP).

The idea of creating a poster of a large dragon evolved through discussions. Margaret had the flu and missed the initial stages of discussion. At the initial stage, the other group members wanted to incorporate within the dragon's body the map of China, the Chinese people, meandering rivers and the rice crop. Later they decided to create a collage in which the colours represented the rice crop and silt in the river (OJ, p.32). Rebecca, Winston and Ozzy developed the presentation outline and conducted the research. Rebecca created the poster of the dragon. The group collected information from the school library. The day before the presentation, the group met at the nearest public library to sort out their information and develop the presentation.

The presentation, "Legends from the land of China," opened with Chinese music. Ozzy presented some information on Chinese music and mentioned that the dragon is a common theme in the stories (OJ, p. 43). They contrasted the evil characteristics portrayed by the European dragons with the benevolence associated with the Chinese dragons. At the end of the presentation, the group distributed fortune cookies. The class liked the poster of the dragon and noted that the large collage must have taken a long time to make. In her response to the presentation, the principal researcher remarked that the project was "well integrated with the different themes"; the class teacher commented that it was "a multi-media presentation" incorporating art, music and food (OJ).

Verbal Response to Picture Books

The students responded to picture books in a variety of ways. As part of the daily schedule they wrote their responses to picture books in their journals and shared picture books with group members during sharing time. They formulated their verbal responses based on the visual aspects of picture books. These responses have been categorized according to Kiefer's (1995, p. 25) classification of verbal responses to picture books : informative, heuristic, imaginative and personal. Table 2 provides examples of how members of Group I used language in relation to Kiefer's framework. The group members did not respond to all the subcategories in Table 1. It should also be noted that there is some overlap across categories.

Table 2. Verbal responses of Response Group I

PRIMARY FUNCTION	SUBCATEGORIES	EXAMPLES
Informative: Provides information, a pointing or telling function.	1.1. Reports the contents of the illustration.	The pigs in *Oink* stand out. (Winston, SJ)
		Like how the pink pigs stood out from the black and white background .(Margaret, *Oink*, SJ)
		Look at the mouse near the pea. (Rebecca, *A Country Mouse in the Townhouse* OJ)
		This book's artistry is absolutely amazing. Did you catch the hidden pictures? Like on the page after he gets the first key did you see the two figures on the hedge wall? (Ozzy, *The Three Golden Keys*, SJ)
		I really think that it is kind of interesting the way they have the letters right in the book. (Margaret, *The Jolly Postman and Other Peoples Letters* SJ)
	1.2. Provides information about art styles or techniques.	I love the illustrations, how everything is coloured with a shade of grey giving it a scary yet lifelike quality. (Ozzy, *Night of the Gargoyles*, SJ)
		The pictures are so full of detail and colour I'm still actually spending most of my time not reading this book but mostly looking at the pictures. (Margaret, *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, SJ)

		The pictures look like oil paintings. (Rebecca, *How the Manx Cat Lost Its Tail*, SJ)
	1.3. Describes or narrates pictured events.	I like the pictures in *The Napping House*, how one character falls asleep on the other. (Margaret, OJ) Collage art in *Smokey Night* shows the things robbers robbed from a grocery store. (Ozzy, SJ).
	1.4. Compares contents of the illustrations to something in the real world.	The ancient librarian is a genius. He only fell short of 250 miles of the exact measurement. I can't believe this is a non-fiction biography. (Ozzy, *The Librarian Who Measured the Earth*, SJ). I like this book but it's hard to believe that a cat could survive swimming through gigantic waves like that. (Margaret, *How the Manx Cat Lost Its Tail*, SJ) The pictures in this book look like they are native paintings. (Winston, *The Cremation of Sam McGree*, SJ)
	1.5. Compares one book to another.	I like the realism in it. This is a very good book, I like how it deals with other fairy tales. (Ozzy, *The Frog Prince Continued*, SJ) *The Napping House* reminds me of *The House Crack Built*. (Margaret, OJ) *Bentley and Egg* remind me of *Two Bad Ants*. (Ozzy, SJ) I like this kind of book. It's sort of like *The Old Woman Who Swallowed the Fly*. (Rebecca, *The Napping House*, SJ)
Heuristic: Problem solving function, includes wondering about as well as offering solutions.	2.1. Wonders about the events or contents of the illustrations.	I was curious why the girl looked so sad on the cover, and found the dolls got drowned in a sea of mud. (Rebecca, *The Mud Family*, OJ) I like the author because she makes your skin crawl. It makes you wonder what is out there at night. (Winston, *Night of the Gargoyles*, SJ)
	2.2. Makes inferences about events, the setting, or a character's personality, motives, or actions.	

	2.3. Makes inferences about cause and effect or possible outcomes.	
	2.4. Makes inferences about the preparation of the illustrations, what the artist did.	The pictures in *Tales of a Gambling Grandma* looks like they are in oil pastels or acrylic paint. (Rebecca, SJ) The pictures in *Ghost Train* look as if made from charcoal. (Margaret, OJ) I find this book very interesting. Not because the story is really interesting but because of the pictures, they are amazing. I think it would be very hard to do the pictures in this book and it would take a lot of time. (Margaret, *The Story of Rosey Dock*, SJ)
Imaginative: Recalling, creating, or participating in an imaginary world.	3.1. Enters into the world of the book as a character or onlooker. 3.2. Creates figurative language.	
	3.3. Describes mental images	I like the way it expresses the joy and miracle of Christmas. (Winston, *The Polar Express*, SJ)
Personal: Connecting to individual experience, reporting emotions, stating opinions.	4.1. Relates personally to events, setting, or characters.	Abigail the girl who first gets the quilt is kind of like me because when I was born one of my mom's friends made me a quilt which I called my "blankie" and brought my blankie everywhere. (Margaret, *The Quilt Story*, SJ) It makes me remember all of the times when my mother would buy clothes I didn't like. (Winston, *The Hockey Sweater*, SJ) This book is very interesting. The pictures are so real it makes me think about the war in the 40s. (Winston, *The Tieman's Miracle*, SJ) This book really relates to me how he wants to be other people, and when he gets his wish he wishes he was himself again. (Ozzy, *It Happened in Pinsk*, SJ)
	4.2. Express feelings or describe personal effects of art elements.	It is neat how the author and illustrator combine cartoon pictures and real pictures to make one big picture. (Winston, *Dogzilla*, SJ)

| | | The pastel colours in *Rose Blanche* give the feeling of sadness and shows Rose Blanche to be in tears. (Margaret, OJ)

I loved this book, the pictures are all in pastels, it looks like. I am happy that Bentley took care of the egg and didn't let it break. (Rebecca, *Bentley and Egg*, SJ)

East of the Sun and West of the Moon has simply amazing artistry and colour and has a good plot line, I can't wait to see what happens. (Ozzy, SJ) |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| | 4.3. Expresses opinions or evaluates the illustrations. | This book is interesting. The pictures are well drawn. I like the way this book is funny. I like the way the characters outsmart the pirates. (Winston, *Grandma and the Pirates*, SJ)

This book is really neat. I can't believe that this is a non-fiction biography. I thought it would be a boring book but it is amazing. (Winston, *The Librarian Who Measured the Earth*, SJ)

This book is very good. It seems like a mystery to me. I really enjoy looking at the pictures. (Winston, *Ghost Train*, SJ)

Wow! I was impressed how good this book is. I really enjoy the rhymes. This is one of the best books I have ever read! (Winston, *A Country Mouse in the Town House*, SJ)

This is a very good book, I like the realism of it. I like how it deals with other fairy tales. (Ozzy, *The Frong Prince Continued*, SJ)

This book isn't bad, but it lacks the force of the first book. (Ozzy, *The Last Quest of Gilgamesh*, SJ)

The story is a picture book in mime, and I think it is really neat because you can make up the story in your own words as you go along. (Margaret, *Sing Pierrot Sing*, SJ)

One thing I didn't like about this book is that Plain Jane had to wish for the Prince to love her instead of the Prince realizing how nice she really was no matter how she looks. (Margaret, *Sleeping Ugly*, SJ)

I like this story because it is sort of like a modern version of a book of fairy tales. I like how there is an envelope with a real letter inside. (Rebecca, *The Jolly Postman and Other Peoples Letters*, SJ) |

Informative category. In the informative category students provided information on the contents of the illustration, on art styles or techniques used in illustrations, and described the pictured events in the picture book. The students in Group I responded critically to picture books from the authors' and artists' points of view. They used the informative function of language to describe the media illustrators used in the illustrations, how the colours blended in with the tone of the story, and the minute detail in pictures that sometimes made up for the absence of text. Rebecca mentioned, "the pictures look like oil paintings" in *How The Manx Cat Lost Its Tail*. Ozzy remarked "how everything is coloured with a shade of grey giving it a scary yet lifelike quality" in *Night of the Gargoyles*. They also compared one book to another. In describing *The Napping House*, Margaret said, "I like this kind of book. It's sort of like *The Old Woman who Swallowed the Fly*." Ozzy mentioned that *Bentley and Egg* reminded him of *Two Bad Ants*.

Heuristic category. In the heuristic category the students expressed wonder about the events, and made inferences about the setting and the character's motive in the story. Heuristic language was used when the students speculated on pictures and text. After reading Sis' (1993) *The Three Golden Keys*, Ozzy responded "Wow! This book's artistry is absolutely amazing. Did you catch the hidden pictures? Like on page after he gets the first key did you see the two figures on the hedge wall?" After reading Bunting's (1994) *Night of the Gargoyles*, Winston remarked, "It makes you wonder what is out there at night." Ozzy and Winston predicted the events through pictures and speculated about the illustrations. Schnur's (1995) *The Tieman's Miracle* and Hoffman's (1991) *Amazing Grace* had a special appeal for Margaret; Winston was touched by the magic spirit of understanding in Say's (1991) *The Tree of Cranes* and Van Allsburg's (1995) *Polar Express*. Ozzy seemed to be overwhelmed by the sense of mystery in Sis (1994) *The Three Golden Keys* and Synder's (1985) *The Changing Maze*. Rebecca relished the jovial side of Noah and his wife in Steven's (1990) *How the Manx Cat Lost Its*

Tail, and took immense delight at the little mouse in Henrietta's (1995) *A Country Mouse in a Town House* who always wanted her berries.

Imaginative category. In the imaginative category the students described mental images. Children use imaginative language "to enter the world of the book or to transform the illustrations in imaginative ways" (Kiefer, 1995, p. 29). The students entered the story world as a character or onlooker. The group members noted the artwork and tried to create a picture in their own minds. Rebecca was curious about James' (1994) *The Mud Family* when she noticed the cover. She wrote, "I was curious why the girl looked so sad on the cover. I'm wondering what country they live in"(SJ). About Van Allsburg's (1985) *The Polar Express* Winston remarked, "I like the way it expresses the joy and miracle of Christmas."

Personal category. In the personal category the students related personally to events in the picture book. They used personal language to make connections to their lives and feelings and to express opinions about picture books and illustrations. For example, Winston made a personal connection while reading Carrier's (1984) *The Hockey Sweater* to "all of the times when my mom would buy clothes that I didn't like."

The group also expressed strong opinions about illustrations in picture books. After reading Yolen's (1980) *Sleeping Ugly*, Margaret wrote, "One thing I didn't like about this book is that Plain Jane had to wish for the prince to love her instead of the prince realizing how nice she really was no matter how she looks" (SJ). On Paola's (1983), *Sing Pierot Sing* she commented, "This story is a picture book in mime, and I think its really neat because you can make up the story as you go along." She observed the impact of Galluz's technique in Innocenti's (1990) *Rose Blanche*: "The use of pastel colours in *Rose Blanche* give the feeling of sadness and shows Rose Blanche to be in tears"(SJ). After reading Ahlberg & Ahlberg's (1986) *The Jolly Postman and Other Peoples Letters*, Winston wrote that

he liked "the way the illustrator makes the letters look like a little girl wrote them. I wish more books would be like this. It is interesting" (SJ).

Personal response also involved a process of recollection based on intertextual connections (Sumara, 1995) evoked by the story. These responses have been elaborated in the context of intertextual connections.

Intertextual connections

Kiefer's framework incorporates some intertextual relationships under the personal language function where the student relates to connections to a picture book. Other intertextual relationships emerged from analysis of student journals and group discussions.

Margaret readily shared personal connections to picture books. Her mode of sharing made other members feel comfortable about sharing their own intertexual connections with the group. For instance, Margaret noted that Johnson's (1996) *The Quilt Story* reminded her of her own "blankie" that she planned to give to her child one day. After listening to Margaret, Winston mentioned how *The Hockey Sweater* reminded him of the times his mother bought clothes that he disliked wearing to school.

Margaret, Rebecca and Winston shared intertextual connections to family members. Bogart's (1994) *Gifts* reminded Rebecca of her grandmother who also visited different parts of the world and brought back gifts for her. At that time her grandmother was preparing to go on a journey to Belize. There was a map on the wall behind this group. Rebecca got up to look at the map to find the location of Belize (OJ, p. 32). Winston mentioned how Root's (1985) *Moon Tiger* reminded him of the rivalry between his brother and himself. Scieszka's (1991) *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* offered "a whole new perspective" and also evoked memories for Winston of the time when his mother used to read the story of *The Three Little Pigs* to him.

Several picture books evoked intertextual relations for Margaret. She identified a picture in *Hiroshima No Pika* which portrays a woman carrying her husband on her back and holding the child

by the hand while trying to flee the disaster. Margaret explained how major disasters made people lose their minds and attempt the impossible. Here she made a connection to her own experience. She told the group about an incident where her family was barbequing when they heard a police siren and saw a man being chased by a police car down the back street. The man jumped into their backyard and her mother reacted instantly. Margaret marvelled how fearless her mother was because the man could have been armed. "It all happened in a flash," she said (OJ, p. 40). The illustration in *Hiroshima No Pika* made her realize that people react differently in times of danger. Margaret read *How The Manx Cat Lost Its Tail* after listening to Rebecca's responses. A similar incident had happened to her cat when a window fell on its tail. From then on the cat had half of a tail. *The Quilt Story* reminded Margaret of her getting a quilt from her mom's friend when she was a baby. She calls it her "blankie" and keeps it folded on her bed. They have changed houses five times but she still keeps it folded at the foot of her bed and plans to give it to her own baby one day.

It Happened in Pinsk reminded Ozzy "how I want to be other people, and when I get my wish I wish I was myself again" (SJ). In his final response letter to his friend he recalled his experience of reading *It Happened in Pinsk* and doing a play on it. He mentioned that he created the play by using "the basic outline, then changed it completely in a strange kind of way then mixed in a Monty Python vibe to it, put it on tape with some guitar accompaniment by yours truly." Through the letter to his friend Ozzy re-visited and reflected on his earlier experiences with the text.

Aesthetic response to picture books

In this picture book unit the group members had the opportunity to respond in a variety of ways to picture books. The members of Group I responded aesthetically through the media of art, poetry, drama and prose. After reading Allsburg's (1985), *The Polar Express*, Winston responded poetically to this picture book:

There was a boy in bed

Resting his hands on his head

It was late at night

But when he opened his eyes, oh what a sight

Outside there stood a ghostly train.

The boy stood outside in his stocking feet

Wishing that there was some sort of heat

Suddenly a loud voice shouted "All aboard!"

The poem was an evocation of his own feelings as he became part of *The Polar Express*.

Ozzy created his own version of a play based on Yorink's (1983) *It Happened In Pinsk*. He taped a dramatic reading of the book in which he used different voices for speakers and played guitar music in the background. He reflected in his journal that he had made a connection between the book and Monty Python which, in turn, inspired his interpretation of the picture book. For his second presentation Ozzy reproduced in water colour the book cover of Lasky's (1994) *The Librarian Who Measured the Earth*. During a group discussion, he mentioned his amazement at the librarian in such an early civilization who only fell short by "250 miles of the exact measurement of the earth's circumference"(OJ). Rebecca created a poster-size alphabet puzzle based on Base's (1988) *Animalia*. She painstakingly illustrated each letter of the alphabet on bristol board. Each letter was accompanied by a riddle to be solved. The answers to the riddles were located in pockets glued to the back of the poster. The style paralleled Graeme Base's alliterative style. For example, for the letter D, she wrote "Dirty dogs dig deep ditches for Delicacies." For M, she composed "Morton Mouse makes Marionettes and Mushrooms."

Margaret re-visited Hoffman's (1991) *Amazing Grace* . She painted a water colour portrait of Grace whose character appealed to her. In her response she wrote, "It tells that whoever you are,

whatever race, or sex you are, you can do anything. You should be proud of yourself and live with great dignity and grace" (IP).

In the group project on "Legends from China" the group members created a collage on bristol board. The multi-media presentation has been described under Collaborative Planning.

Integrity of text and pictures

The picture book has "two different codes or systems of communication," one in the "realm of purely visual" and the other in the category of "purely verbal criticism" (Kiefer, 1995, p. 116). Both these realms must be taken into consideration for a true appreciation of the picture book. The students in this picture book unit were aware that the picture book is the creative work of both the writer and the artist.

The students considered picture books to be the collaborative efforts of both the illustrator and writer. Winston liked the idea of how the "author and illustrator include letters and pictures in *The Jolly Postman and Other Peoples Letters*, and the way the illustrator makes the letters look like a little girl wrote them" (SJ). After reading *The Tieman's Miracle*, Margaret wrote "The pictures are nice and the story is good so it must be the combo that makes the story so good" (SJ). Winston mentioned the collaboration of the author and illustrator in *Dogzilla:* "It was neat the way the author and illustrator combined cartoon pictures and real pictures to make one big picture" (SJ). Winston found *The Magic Tapestry* an interesting story. "The pictures which had a lot of detail complemented the story and gave an idea of China and the Chinese people" (OJ, p. 17).

Rebecca mentioned how, in *The King's Equal*, each illustration is framed with the background added on. "The background shows details that tell of a particular period and the mood of the story. This blends in with the idea of the story that show the princess to be a smart and wise person" (OJ). To Ozzy, *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* was a superb book as it combined a perfect blending of "artistry, and colour and a good plot line" (SJ). He also mentioned that illustrations were designed "to

fit the time period in *Gilgamesh and The King*"; and that "the pictures and text complement each other" in *The Changing Maze* (SJ). Margaret liked the text in *Ghost Train* and the idea that the pictures are made to look like charcoal. This " blend of art and words shows the sadness of the tale"(SJ). She also liked *Rose Blanche* "because of the illustrations and words used" (SJ). Margaret found the illustrations and the story in *The Tree That Grew to the Moon* a perfect match where "the illustrations and the story go along" in explaining an important message about trees (SJ).

Perceptions of picture books

During the second week of implementation of the unit, the following views were expressed orally by the members of Group I during a large group discussion.

- The unit was informative, provided a new look on picture books. They are not only for kids for some are difficult to understand like the book *Waters* where nothing happens, just talks about moving into the lake (Winston).

- Illustrators take time in putting detail and using a lot of techniques. It is a challenge for the artist as he has to use new techniques to express ideas well (Rebecca).

- In *Smokey Night* I saw more information in the pictures than the words expressed. The pictures sometimes give books more information than what gets expressed in words (Ozzy). I like being given choices about the books I like to read and the activities I want to do (Margaret).

During the fourth week, the principal researcher invited the class to discuss their perceptions of how the unit was progressing. Examples of the feedback included:

- I feel the unit is going on well and will use today's collage idea for the book presentation (Rebecca).

- I like the idea of everything moving to schedule and being able to do a task I prefer (Winston).

- I like the idea of being given a choice in all the activities (Margaret).

- Some picture books have deep messages like *The Polar Express* that reflects some kind of reality as to getting one into the Christmas spirit (Winston).

During the fourth week of the picture book unit the students responded to an open-ended written interview designed to elicit their perceptions about picture books. The responses illustrate assumptions about picture books. Ozzy was absent that day. Margaret, Rebecca, and Winston commented on their initial assumptions about picture books:

- Winston : I thought studying picture books in grade 7/8 would be kind of weird because I haven't really heard of older kids reading picture books.

- Margaret: I thought it was a good idea because it would take up some of the hard work we usually have to do.

- Rebecca: I thought it might be boring because I did not know that there was art involved.

Their perspective on picture books changed after they started the unit:

- Winston : Creating picture books take hard work for both author and illustrator not just physically but mentally too. I also learned that the author and illustrator have to communicate frequently.

- Margaret: Picture books have bigger words in them than I thought they did and the pictures in most are not just pathetic little cartoon drawings, but they are beautiful detailed drawings that would take more than five minutes.

- Rebecca: Picture books can be read by anybody not just little kids. Some books are really long, like *The King's Equal* and *East of the Sun And West of the Moon*. I've learned that just because there are big pictures in a book it doesn't mean that they are for kids.

By the fourth week, they had revised their initial assumptions:

- Winston: Studying picture books at this level is fun and interesting. Now I don't even know why I said it would be weird.

- Margaret: I think picture books are more for older kids than younger kids, also think the picture book unit is work, but it's fun!

- Rebecca: I love doing this because there are so many books to read, and I love reading. Also, I like it because I find books that my six year old brother would like as well as me.

Initially, the group members believed that picture books were written for younger children. As they read picture books, they began to discover that a number of picture books appealed to older students. Margaret also thought that the project would be a diversion from the "hard work" they normally had to do. As well, their appreciation of the genre changed over time.

Interpretation

The study took place within the context of a unit on picture books. The organization of the unit as well as the nature of the assignments invited and supported students' engagement with and response to picture books. The organization of the unit built in time as well as structure and flexibility for promoting response. Both the daily block of time and length of the unit enabled students to read picture books, to respond in their journals, to dialogue with peers in response groups, and to re-visit or re-interpret texts during studio time. The study supports research on the value of readers sharing responses to text in small group discussions (Dias, 1988; Purves, 1995; Probst, 1988; & Short, 1993).

Studio time provided a vehicle for focal practice, defined by Sumara (1995) as a "particular activity which functions to render visible the usually invisible interpersonal and intertextual relations" (p. 10). He points out that "the realization of focal reading practice, requires that the complexity of interpretation sponsored by the reading of a literary text become somehow re-symbolized into a new form" (p. 11). The individual presentations and group project required re-reading of the literary texts before the students could create their own new texts. These forms of response support focal practice. Sumara (1995) notes that "Whenever there is a deliberate attempt to produce responses which show the co-emergence of the reader's personal identities, her or his involvement in collective identities, which include literate practices such as reading and writing, a focal reading practice has been generated" (p. 11). Ozzy's dramatic reading of It Happened In Pinsk was an "interpretive activity" which "transformed the act of reading and response to a focal practice" (p. 11). Similarly, the group project on text sets focused students' attention on intertextual connections across picture books.

Each reader created his/her own aesthetic response which was distinct from the forms selected by his/her peers. This suggests that students did not mimic the activities introduced in week # 1, but actively created re-interpretations consistent with the content and forms of the picture books they had read.

It should be noted that Sumara's (1995) description of a strategy for focal practice was based on the novel as a genre and involved making notes as evocations emerged during a first reading, group discussion, and later re-visiting or re-reading the novel to reflect on how comprehension has changed between readings. The strategy was adapted for this unit because the picture book format is different from a novel in that picture books are read quickly and combine text and pictures in a integrated whole. Journals and response group discussions were the primary vehicles for describing evocations to text and independent and group projects were vehicles for re-interpreting picture books although in the creation of projects students re-visited the picture books.

Given this curricular context, six themes emerged during data analysis: Patterns of shared response to picture books; verbal response to picture books; intertextual connections; aesthetic response to picture books; integrity of texts and pictures; and perceptions of picture books. The patterns provide insight into relationships between shared response and young adolescents' comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books.

Intertextual relationships were discussed as a separate theme, but were evident in every theme, supporting Sumara's (1995) notion that readers are involved in "a complex system of interaction and interrelation" (p. 2). The picture book unit provided the context for some to discover a part in themselves of which they were not aware. One example was Ozzy's response to *It Happened In Pinsk*. For Ozzy, the intertextual relationship evoked a process of self awareness. Through the character in this book he realized a part of himself that always wanted to be someone else and, when the wish was granted, he wanted to be his former self again. The evocation to *It Happened in Pinsk* made him

"collect his personal and cultural experience" in such a way that he was able to engage in a "deeper interpretation" of himself. The individual presentation led to a "deep understanding of reading, of personal response to reading, and to the intertextual nature of reading one's personal response in relation to others' responses" (Sumara, 1995 p. 7).

The group discussions enabled students to share their personal and cultural experiences which led to a "deeper interpretation of themselves and their relation to the world" (Sumara,1995, p. 2). For example, one discussion surrounding *Hiroshima No Pika* evoked a response to war. It prompted Margaret to consider the impossible feats human beings can perform in moments of danger. She was able to re-interpret a past experience in light of a new idea.

The analysis revealed the process in which members of the response group engaged as they talked about picture books. I found that initially they discussed the illustrations and then talked about the text. As each described his/her book, the others examined the illustrations. Few studies have described the nature of shared response to the picture book genre, particularly with older students.

Peer group members also assisted one another with comprehension. This finding supports the theory that meanings are socially constructed. The description of the collaborative planning illuminates the process whereby students developed a plan, searched for an appropriate theme and then implemented the plan.

Personal preference was a key factor in the selection of books. After hearing the responses of group members, the others often chose to read the book themselves. This is one of the threads of intertextuality which is evident in this study.

The group project on a text set illustrated the collaborative process through which the group searched for connections across books. As Short (1993) found, these readers developed strategies to make connections and construct meaning, such as generating potential projects, verifying whether these would work, and assigning tasks to stream-line the completion of the work. The study goes beyond

Short's work by illuminating the processes in which they engaged as they negotiated meaning. During the discussion phase of the group project, the members listened to each other's points of view in trying to make sense of the common themes and connections across the text set. This sharing process helped them discover more than one valid interpretation of the text and furthered their understanding of the themes (Dias, 1988; Sumara, 1995). These shared responses were like "ripples in a pond" (Purves et al., 1995, p. 82), for every discussion included new information on the text set. In their final discussion phase, the group had synthesized their accumulated information to a "new level of understanding beyond that which they had before" (Purves et al., 1995, p. 92).

Kiefer's framework for verbal/visual response to picture books was useful in categorizing much of the language students used when talking about picture books, particularly when the focus was on private reading. The framework did not readily accommodate all shared responses. Thus it fell short of capturing the other intertextual relationships developed among group members or the interpersonal relations with family and friends. Nor does the framework accommodate written or aesthetic responses students crafted as they re-visited and reinterpreted texts.

Rosenblatt (1982, 1993) perceived shared discussion as helpful, but not critical to constructing meaning: "comments by other children and the teacher, of course, also contribute to this imaginative recall of the experience" (p. 21) and "as students grow older, sharing of responses becomes the basis for valuable interchange. Discovering that others have had different responses, have noticed what was overlooked, have made alternative interpretations, leads to self awareness and self criticism" (p. 21).

The relations readers experienced in their private interactions with text are consistent with the theory proposed by Rosenblatt (1978) that readers bring to "the work their own personality traits, present needs and preoccupations", and "a particular mood of the moment" (p. 31). Similarly, the findings are consistent with the classification schemes proposed by Cox and Many (1992) and Hancock (1993). The problem is that these schemes were derived from analysis of individual reader's responses

to text and, like Kiefer's, are grounded in Rosenblatt's (1978) theory of response which focuses on the private dimension of reading. Similar to Kiefer's (1995) framework, they neglect the social or shared constructions of meaning and the complex web of intertextual relationships which are intertwined and continuous with evocation and lived-through experience and response. Thus the findings from this study go beyond studies of private response to illuminate the process of shared response and its role in the construction of meaning.

The members of Response Group 1 recognized the complementarity of pictures and text. They appreciated the art concepts embedded in the works and the contributions to meaning which were evoked by the artists' choice of technique and form. The picture book as a literary genre was appropriate for study in a grade 7/8 class. The uniqueness of the genre, incorporating text and illustrations, may well have provided models for response which contributed to the diversity of response.

The perceptions of the students in Response Group I towards picture books changed over the course of the unit. Initially, they assumed that picture books were for younger children, but these initial assumptions changed with the progression of the picture book unit. They realized that picture books were not only meant for young children but had the potential to be enjoyed by older children as well.

In Chapter Four, I have described the context of the study, the themes which emerged from the analysis of data, and the interpretation of the findings. The final chapter presents the conclusions, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

The study investigated the relationship between shared response and the sense making and re-interpretation of picture books of four young adolescent readers in one response group in a grade 7/8 classroom. The study was qualitative in design and took place over a seven-week period during which the unit on picture books was implemented.

Six themes emerged from the analysis of data: patterns of shared response to picture books; verbal response to picture books; aesthetic response to picture books; integrity of pictures and text; and students' perceptions of picture books. The findings contribute to our understanding of reader response theory as well as to the planning and implementing of a reader response-centred language arts curriculum. The conclusions and implications are discussed below.

Conclusions

The **patterns of response** of the response group members provided insights into the processes in which the young adolescents engaged as they discussed picture books and how shared response informed each individual's comprehension. These patterns included developing a systematic procedure for sharing books in which they took turns presenting their books to the others. They focused initially on the art and secondly on the text. The students also assisted one another with comprehension. Although personal preference was considered in the selection of books, the students read books recommended by the other group members. The students also alerted one another to the effects of medium and style in the meanings of picture books. This conclusion is supported by the examples in Table 2 which portray how the response group members talked and wrote about the visual aspects of picture books. Collaborative planning involved generating and exploring the feasibility of several text sets before deciding on one that they thought would work. Upon reaching the decision, they divided the

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work to facilitate its completion. These patterns suggest that the response group is a powerful configuration for encouraging shared response.

The focal point of the data analysis was students' verbal response to picture books in relation to Kiefer's (1995) descriptive framework of verbal response. Consistent with her research findings, the response group members used informative, heuristic, imaginative, and personal language to talk about texts and illustrations. It was found, however, that Kiefer's (1995) framework did not accommodate the nature of the dialogue about intertextual relationships.

In this study intertextual relationships included not only connections to lived experiences but connections across texts, authors, illustrators, and intertextual relations with family, friends, and other members of the response group. It is important for teachers to develop strategies and assignments which promote the search for connections. One strategy used in the unit which promoted intertextuality was the project on text sets. Another, which was described briefly, was the task given to students upon completion of the unit to write to someone with whom they shared an intertextual relationship, to tell the person which picture book was most meaningful and explain why. It provided an alternative to the journal for promoting metacognitive awareness.

Although this study emphasized the nature of verbal response to picture books, students' aesthetic responses were described. Focal practice, the re-interpretation of texts, was accomplished through written response as well as drama, art, and multi-media.

Initially, students' perceptions of the picture book were that the genre was intended for younger children, that it would provide a diversion from the "hard work" they normally did in grades 7/8, and that it would be boring. Over time they grew to appreciate the appeal and challenge picture books held for older students as well as the creativity and effort which goes into the writing and design of high quality picture books. The genre is an appropriate focus of literature study for young adolescents. More research is needed on the engagement and response of older students to this unique genre.

Implications

While the study described the processes in which one group engaged, it raises the question of what patterns would emerge across groups. Would each be as unique as the particular combination of individuals working cooperatively within it? Would similarities emerge across groups? In this study, insights into the relationships between shared response and each individual's comprehension and re-interpretation of text were gleaned implicitly because of these young adolescents' stages of intellectual development.

One of the implications for planning a response-centred language arts program is the need to incorporate reader response groups or cooperative learning groups to provide students with a vehicle for dialogue and the social construction of meanings of texts. For students who have not worked in response groups, teachers should provide guidance on how to discuss books and on the foci/content which might be included in discussions. Both mini lessons in which students brainstorm possible procedures and content, and teacher modeling through participation in response group discussion, are important components of such a program. In the latter instance, teachers might "nudge" a dialogue to a more critical level. For example, in this study, the response group did not comprehend the underlying issues in *Ghost Train*. Teacher intervention might have led to a discussion of the working conditions of the crews who built the Canadian Pacific Railway and, more generally, how Canada treated newcomers to her shores at the time of Confederation.

The language arts program should encourage focal practice by incorporating opportunities to engage in and respond to texts through a variety of symbolic systems. Studies should be conducted to investigate how aesthetic forms of response promote and illustrate the nature of readers' engagement and response. Such research might well inform reader response theory and broaden existing conceptualizations of response (Rosenblatt, 1978; Kiefer, 1995; Cox & Many, 1992).

As mentioned in the Interpretation section, the unit plan provided a model for developing a curriculum which supports readers' engagement and response. Among the factors which promoted response were the following: organization of the unit; a regularly scheduled block of time which enabled students to read and respond; sufficient length of time to allow students to engage in focal practices to re-visit and re-interpret texts, and to reflect; response group discussion; studio time; access to resources such as picture books, art supplies, and library resources; and assignments which encouraged personal choice and invited response through language and other symbolic systems. In this study, the group project on text sets supported the collaborative search for connections. Without further research on adolescents' response to picture books our knowledge on intertextual relationships and focal practice evoked by picture books remains limited. The findings of this study may be used to further illuminate the importance of relations between shared response and the comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books by young adolescents.

The following section presents recommendations.

Recommendations

Future research

The following research questions might inform reader response theory and the planning and development of literature response-based approaches to language teaching and learning:

1. What are the processes in which young adolescents engage as they negotiate meanings about picture books in response groups? What is the nature of the "talk" in these groups?

2. What factors influence students' appreciation of visual dimensions of picture books?

3. How do selected teaching strategies invite reflection and promote young adolescents' meta-cognitive awareness?

Curricular/Instructional

The following recommendations may prove helpful to educators in the planning, developing, and implementing of a picture book unit for young adolescents:

1. The unit should be theoretically-based. It is important to understand why certain strategies are included in the unit.

2. Select goals or outcomes from ministry or board guidelines.

3. Plan the unit for a sufficient length of time, approximately 4 to 6 weeks, to allow students to "get into" engagement, response, and reflection activities.

4. Organize the unit so that students can plan for a regularly scheduled block of time and a predictable sequence of activities. Build in time daily for reading aloud, silent or independent reading, personal reflection, response group discussions, work or studio time and whole class meetings where students share their aesthetic responses, and whole class discussions.

5. Incorporate assignments which allow for personal choice and invite response to picture books in a variety of forms and symbolic systems.

6. Introduce students to the expectations, methods of evaluation, and new activities.

7. Observe students as the unit is being implemented. If they have concerns, plan student-teacher conferences to address these or plan a mini lesson for the whole class. It is difficult to anticipate all problems or concerns that may arise. Be flexible.

8. Select picture books carefully. A librarian or teacher-librarian would be a good source of recommendations for picture books for older readers.

9. The art studio might be introduced prior to the beginning of the picture book unit. This would allow time during the unit for the response groups to "dwell" in picture books and elaborate upon shared responses.

In summary, this study described the relationship between shared response and the comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books with four members of a response group of students in a grade 7/8 class during the implementation of a seven-week unit on picture books. A key construct in the study was Kiefer's (1995) classification of verbal response to picture books which includes four functions of language: informative, heuristic, imaginative, and personal.

Six themes emerged from the analysis of data: patterns of shared response to picture books; verbal response to picture books; intertextual connections; aesthetic response to picture books; integrity of text and pictures; and students' perceptions of picture books. Although many of the response group members' verbal responses could be classified under Kiefer's framework, the categories did not accommodate the intertextual relationships evoked by readers during engagement with and re-interpretation of picture books. Factors which influenced students' comprehension and re-interpretation of picture books included: the organization of the unit which provided time, structure and flexibility; opportunities for shared response, which enabled social constructions of meaning; opportunities to re-interpret texts through symbolic systems such as art and drama; and a group project on text sets in which students worked collaboratively to select a "text set", identify the connections across the picture books, and illustrate these in some form.

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APPENDIX I

VERBAL EXPLANATION- STUDENTS

Have you read any picture books lately? One of my favourites is Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. If you look carefully at Lane Smith's illustrations, they help us to understand the whole story. [I shall read the story to the class.]

There are many interesting and unique picture books just waiting to be discovered. Your teacher and I have developed a six-week unit entitled **The Picture Book: Exploring and Imaging.** You will have opportunities to read picture books, to discuss them with a response group, to write, and to do interpretive activities related to the books such as drama, experimenting with artistic techniques used by illustrators, and creating dioramas or mobiles.

While you are working on the unit, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study on how readers in grades 7/8 read and interpret picture books on their own and how their comprehension changes when they discuss the books with their response groups. There are no risks involved to you should you consent to be a respondent in the study. If you agree to participate in the study, you have the right to withdraw at any time. I shall be an observer in your class, participate in response groups, talk to you about your ideas, collect samples of journal entries, writing, and arts. I shall change your name when I write about the research (anonymity) and exclude any personal details about who you are (confidentiality). I shall store the data securely in my home for seven years.

The benefit of this research is that it will help researchers and teachers to understand more about how readers comprehend texts. Teachers would then be able to use this knowledge in planning their language arts programs.

At the end of the unit we shall invite your parents to an event where you can show them what you have accomplished. I shall tell them what we have been learning about reading comprehension.

Please bring your letter home and discuss it with your parents. Return the form to your teacher with your own and your parents' signatures. If you indicate that you do not want to participate in the research, I shall not collect any information on your work in the literature unit.

Mary Clare Courtland

Dear Parents:

I am a professor in the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University where I teach courses in language arts methods, curriculum, and research.

_____ and I have developed a six-week unit entitled *The Picture Book: Exploring and Imaging*. The unit is based on outcomes in language arts and art and the language standards of the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. The learning experiences and activities have been developed to promote language proficiency and visual literacy (art appreciation).

I am planning to conduct a research study on how readers in grades 7/8 read and interpret picture books on their own and how their comprehension changes when they discuss the books with response groups. I ask your permission to include your son/daughter as a respondent in the study. When the students are working on the unit, I shall be observing in the classroom, participating in response groups, interviewing students, and collecting information on reading comprehension such as journal entries, and artwork. If you do not grant permission, I shall not collect any information on your son's/daughter's work.

The educational benefit of this research is that it will help researchers and teachers to understand more about how readers comprehend texts. Teachers would then be able to use this knowledge in planning their language arts programs. Personal benefits for students include opportunities to further develop their language proficiency and to develop an appreciation of and ability to evaluate art.

If you give your consent, it is important that you understand the following:
- There are no risks involved to the students in participating in the study.
- You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.
- Your son's/daughter's anonymity and confidentiality will be protected.
- In accordance with the Lakehead University *Research Integrity Policy*, I shall store the data securely in my home for seven years.

At the end of the unit, we shall invite you to an event where you can see your child's accomplishments. I shall also discuss the preliminary findings with you. I shall provide a summary of the findings to _____ in Fall 1997. You may contact her to request a copy.

I have met the class and described the study to the students. I have asked them to discuss their participation with you and to sign the attached form.

If you have any questions, please contact _____ (   ) or me (   ).

Sincerely,

Mary Clare Courtland, PhD
Professor

<center>PERMISSION SLIP</center>

I have read the letter informing me of the research study which Dr. Courtland is conducting.

Should I give my permission for my son/daughter to participate, I understand the following:

- There are no risks to my son/daughter.
- She/he has the right to withdraw at any time.
- Her/his anonymity and confidentiality will be protected.
- The data will be stored securely in Dr. Courtland's home for seven years.

My child _____ may participate/may not participate in the study (Circle your answer.)

_____
Parent's Signature

_____
Date

I consent/do not consent to participate in the study. (Circle your answer.)

_____
Student's Signature

_____
Date

APPENDIX II

GROUP PROJECT

NAME: _____

RESPONSE GROUP: _____

TEXT SET: _____

	SELF	PEER	TEACHER	GRADE

1. Description/analysis of text set
• explains concrete/abstract ideas in texts:
  ▸ plot   ▸ setting
  ▸ characterization ▸ mood
  ▸ style/figurative language
• explains how illustrations contribute to meaning (line, shape, colour, texture, space)
• describes images/feelings evoked				

_____ _____ _____				
2. Planning/working cooperatively • participates in group discussions • offers alternative solutions • works collaboratively/independently to generate ideas and complete tasks				
_____ _____ _____				

3. Project
• plan describes text set and final project
• plan outlines responsibilities of group
• project reflects what group learned in #1
• project demonstrates
  ▸ appreciation of the art in the text set
  ▸ effective use of form, media, and language to communicate ideas, experiences and feelings
  ▸ writing is revised, edited, polished
  ▸ art is drafted and revised				

_____ _____ _____				

Figure 9.2. Evaluation form - group project.