

**The Effect of Talk and Instructional Mode on Enhancing
Secondary English Students' Interpretation of, Response
to, and Appreciation for Short Fiction**

by

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requirements for the degree of
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A b s t r a c t

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Reading practices in high school English language arts should lead students to write richer, more developed responses to literature. Teacher-led, reflective, and performance-based instructional modes were combined with either talk or writing to produce six activities for enhancing response. A repeated measures design varied the order of the six learning activities for three classes (n=44) in a Midwest suburban high school. Later written responses were scored for interpretation, response, and appreciation. Pearson correlations revealed the task and criteria were reliable. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) found that for interpretation and response, talking led to higher achievement. Conversely, writing was nearly superior to talk for appreciation. Practice and feedback may be more significant than instructional condition for raising the quality of response.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Problem

English language arts teachers in secondary schools are faced with the complex task: what will lead students to produce richer, more developed responses to literature? High school students in my English language arts classroom have often struggled to rise above overgeneralizations or conventional interpretations in their written responses to fictive texts. Faced with these weak attempts to respond, I have tried many methods to help students write more complex, elaborated, imaginative and authentic responses. It has been somewhat disillusioning to find a dearth of responses that are competent or better on our descriptive scale.

I am not alone in my frustration with the lack of sophisticated responses in high school classrooms. Other researchers in other Western countries have encountered this phenomenon. Put simply, high quality responses to literature are few in number. For example, Purves (1992), commenting on a study of the reading and response abilities of one thousand American secondary students from three states, remarked that "...few ideal students exist in the sample we tested", and further that "the actual picture we found is not a flattering one" (p. 32). Thomsen (1987) developed a model of teenagers' reading and response from all of the 13- and 16-year old students from two Australian high schools. In his model, he claimed that the last two stages of his model were rare, and, in fact, a reflective quality that topped development in his model was not in evidence in any of the responses he collected. Many (2004 / 1990), working with eighth grade short story readers, reported

that “many of the analyses of the literary works tended to be shallow responses” (p. 918). Why do English language arts classrooms produce so few rich, complex responses to texts?

A specific example might illustrate how poorly students fare on the type of reading response task I have in mind. On the 1994 report of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), one open-response question targeted reading for literary experience. For that question, sixty-two percent of students did not reach a satisfactory rating on a four point scale. While eleven percent were either off-task or omitted the question, another forty-two percent were given a “partial” rating. Of the thirty-eight percent who did better, only three percent were given a rating of “Extensive” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

Personal and Theoretical Context

A personal context for the problem of encouraging more complex and elaborated reader responses is in order. As a classroom middle and high school English teacher, I have tried a number of approaches to promote student engagement with text. As a new teacher, my thinking sounded much like this:

Perhaps students don't know enough about literature in order to produce responses. If I teach the literary elements and provide some clear questions to scaffold their exploration of the text, maybe students will become more engaged and write more accurately about the real meaning of the text.

This thinking was likely influenced by my own schooling in literary criticism, an approach that also dominated the program at the high school where I worked alongside veteran teachers. Straw (1990) refers to this approach as a “Translation” approach, in which the locus of meaning is in the text and the classroom instruction focuses on developing specific literary critical skills (27). Unfortunately, my

students were not engaged, dreaded reading literature, and any responses that scored well were highly influenced by my own analysis of the literature that I had shared with the class. Students were more motivated to write what the teacher wanted to hear rather than think and construct their own meanings. Perhaps, too, students were responding the way they had historically done—met low expectations with responses they considered ‘good enough’ – and although I wanted more, giving more notes on the overhead was not working.

After attending conferences and reading journals, I quickly altered my approach to literary response. My thinking followed these lines:

Maybe I need to get students to connect with the text more personally and less analytically. I've heard of reader response journals – if students write a personal response for each chapter of the novel we're reading, that should promote a better connection with the text. When students find an emotional connection to the text, they'll have something to write about.

Prompting students for their personal, emotional responses to text seemed the very cure I needed for the dry, teacher-imitated analysis I had previously witnessed. Beach (1993) describes this line of thinking as congruent with an experiential theory of reader response, where the central focus is in “describing readers’ processes of engagement and involvement” as they respond (49). Unfortunately, while I had some success with some student journaling during this phase, I often read pages and pages of unengaged, underdeveloped personal responses. Some of these responses had little to do with the text, and resembled a personal diary more than an engagement with literature. I began to wonder how elaborate my own responses would be if someone kept interrupting me each chapter to prod me to write a lengthy response.

As I began study in a Masters program, I experienced yet another change in thinking about my literature teaching methodology. The italicized text that follows represents the new approach:

Students need to read whole texts, and their initial responses will not be elaborate. Students need time to interact with others and reconsider the text. However, I am just not certain what classroom activities can motivate a rereading of the text. Also, I don't know which strategies to use to get students to have real conversations about the text. The teacher's guide has some creative options outlined, such as role play and creative writing, but I don't know whether these are just 'airy-fairy' or whether they are valuable and productive.

This line of thinking took a closer look at reading processes, such as in considering whole texts, rereading for response and not rushing the development of a response. According to Straw (1990), this conceptualization of the response process might be termed “Interactive”, in that it better balances the role of the text and the role of the reader (69). However, perhaps more significant in my change in thinking was the recognition that the response is produced in a particular social environment, that response is, in effect, a conversation in a social and cultural context. This social constructivist orientation to the teaching of literature emphasizes that while meaning resides with the reader, that meaning is influenced by membership in and identity with a variety of social groups, as well as the particular social context (Beach, 1993, p. 105).

This study, then, will ground itself in a social and cultural understanding of reading and response. The following principles, explored more fully in the review of literature in chapter two, will guide the design of learning activities under study:

1. Readers must read with a literary orientation; that is, they must read with an imaginative openness to the possibilities in the text (Rosenblatt, 1978; Britton, 1970; Langer, 1995).
2. To develop a response, student should reread the text, alternating between personal engagement in and objective detachment from the text (Bogdan, 1990; Sumara, 2002).

3. Reading response is an active, embodied, social process (Gee, 2004; Langer, 1995).
4. Response develops through authentic, collaborative talk with others. (Marshall, Smagorinsky & Smith, 1995; Beach, 1993; Galda & Beach, 2004).
5. Responses develop incrementally as readers engage with, extend and ultimately reflect upon the text and experiences connected with the text (Langer, 1995; Vine & Faust, 1993; Wilhelm, 1997).

Purpose

This study will test these principles for reading and responding to literature under a variety of conditions. One condition will be the arrangement of the group. A whole-class teacher-led instructional format will be compared small group instructional conditions. In the collaborative condition students will engage in collaborative learning activities to reread the text and extend their initial response to the text. One purpose of this study, then, is to confirm other research that has shown that particular forms of collaboration can be effective in the reading response classroom.

This study will also distinguish how collaborative activities that are predominantly oral will compare to others that are mostly written. It seems plausible that predominantly oral activities would promote more collaboration and, therefore, would increase response. However, since the scored response will be written, a logical conclusion might be that collaborating around writing might lead to better writing. Perhaps, too, the study will show that no matter whether collaboration involves talk or writing, collaboration is the main variable at work.

In addition to a distinction between oral and written modes while collaborating, some activities will take a *reflective* approach; that is, students will collaborate to analyze and evaluate text. It seems sensible that such activities would lead directly to the written response expected at the end of the

study. On the other hand, other activities will take a more *performance-based* approach. These activities will require students to work imaginatively with the text, using drama or creative writing. Interestingly, a recent edition of *English Journal* (September 2005) devoted itself to an examination of drama in the English language arts. Several articles linked drama and reading. While practitioner experience and qualitative study have generally provided a solid theoretical frame for using such activity in conjunction with reading, little research with a quasi-experimental design has confirmed this frame. The comparison of reflective and performance-based variables in this study may shed some light on the relative effectiveness these activities in the response classroom.

The study will determine whether one combination of these conditions helps high school students write higher quality (more authentic, increasingly sophisticated ways) responses later on. Quality of response will be judged in three categories: interpretation, response, and appreciation. More discussion of the design of the task and scoring criteria will follow in chapter two.

Research Questions and Method

This study will be guided by the following questions:

1. Could an open-ended extended written response task for short fiction be reliably scored on the criteria of **interpretation**, **response**, and **appreciation**?
2. How do three instructional modes compare for promoting high quality written response to literature: **performance-based** collaborative mode, **reflective** collaborative mode, and **teacher-led** instructional mode?
3. Does it matter whether the learning activities are predominantly **oral** or **written**?

Based on the review of literature and the limited duration of the study, this researcher hypothesizes that the collaborative conditions will be superior to those that are teacher-led, no matter

whether the activities are oral or written. Further, the collaborative activities that are performance-based will be found equal to collaborative activities that are reflective.

Significance of Study

This study has implications for the way teachers design reading and response activities in English Language Arts curricula. If both performance-based and reflective conditions come out equal in their influence on later response, the study might legitimize activities sometimes regarded as frivolous (drama activities, for example). On the other hand, if one condition or the other has a greater effect, that clarification will inform the choices teacher make about response activities. Evidence that both of these conditions are effective should only reinforce existing evidence that collaboration and discussion deepen students' envisionments of texts. Finally, if neither condition has an effect, perhaps the engaging phase of reading needs rethinking, or other variables need consideration for their influence on results.

Scope of Study

The study compared responses from three classes of senior 4 (grade 12) students in a suburban school in the Midwest of Canada. The treatment took place over several weeks first semester of 2005. Thirty-nine males and thirty four females in three classes were invited to take part in the study.

The study was limited in several ways. Foremost, the study took place over a limited time period with focus on one genre of text, the short story. This time-limited design had the advantage of controlling for maturation of subjects as a variable affecting the results; however, if limited results are found it could be attributed to a lack of time given to instruction or learning. It is likely that the knowledge, skills, and strategies students have for responding to reading may be little changed by such

a short length of instruction. Attrition will also limit generalizability. A repeated measures design relies upon participants completing all of the responses. The ones most likely to miss class are sometimes those who are already weak academically.

The open-ended response also has distinct limits. While this form of assessment may be congruent with a constructivist theory of reading and response, the results may in many ways be a measure of their ability to write rather than their ability to respond to text. It may be the case, for example, that students' readers' theatre performances may reveal a more complex response to text than their written response. However, this study is limited to investigating how activities designed to extend reading response will translate into more articulate written responses.

The design of the study will not allow an adequate statistical consideration of gender or other blocking variables. Because several variables are already under observation (collaborative/teacher-led, oral/written, performance-based/reflective), it seemed unwise to subdivide results further by the addition of blocking variables. However, the design has taken gender into consideration. For example, two teachers, one male and one female, will deliver instruction. Among all subjects in the study, the balance of males and females in the groups is roughly proportional; however, each class is not balanced in the same way.

Definitions

Performance-based – in the performance-based condition, students will enhance their reading of a text by imagining, creating, and expressing ideas. Students will express ideas about the text orally, in a reader's theatre activity, or in written form, through creative writing.

Reflective – in the reflective condition, students will enhance their reading of a text by questioning the text and their responses to it. Students will express these reflections orally, in small group discussion, or in writing, using shared journals.

Imagination - Imagination, as a reading response construct, is an openness to the examination, often (and most effectively) a collaborative examination, of possible connections between texts, self, and the world. A synonym would be “literary orientation” (Langer, 1995). It is a value placed upon the associations, memories, and connections explored in relation to a text. Langer (1995) defines an imaginative stance to text as one where readers consider meaning in a way that is “open to a horizon of possibilities” (24).

Extended response – a free written response to text exploring three components: interpretation, response, and appreciation of the text.

Collaboration – activities that require an exchange of ideas in order to explore the meaning of a text, especially by comparing responses in small group setting. The collaborative conditions in this study will take two forms: reflective (i.e. shared, analytical discussion) and performance-based (i.e. working with others in a creative mode).

Teacher-led – Teacher-led activities in this study include whole class discussion with the teacher as facilitator and written response to textbook questions.

Interpretation – inferences made about important ideas that situation in a text might suggest. The expression of an interpretation subsumes comprehension – in other words, readers must work with the specific situation presented in the text before inferring a valid main idea.

Response – in this study, response will have multiple meanings. In a more general sense, the response is the student’s expressed envisionment of the text. In the present study, students will express this meaning will normally in an extended written response. However, response is

also a dimension of the extended task scoring criteria, a construct where students make connections between the text and the world at large, their own personal experiences, or imaginative worlds (i.e. other fictive texts). This study does not clearly distinguish sub-types of response, such as personal or topical response (Probst, 1988).

Appreciation – This term refers to a student’s analysis of the literary elements used to create an impression or communicate meaning in a text. Perhaps a synonym might be “critical response”.

Three-Phase approach to response (Vine & Faust, 1993)

- * *Engaging* – the first reading of a text conducted as independently as possible followed by brief written reflections on associations and impressions the text creates.

- * *Enhancing* – activities designed to share and enhance the students’ envisionments. The focus of this study is to determine which activities promote better written response.

- * *Evaluating* – This final phase of response features ways students can reflexively assess their own responses.

Oral – The activities in this study designated as oral will encourage students to enhance their responses to the text. These activities will not completely preclude the use of writing or representing, but discussion will dominate other language arts. Talk may be semi-formal, such as in small group or large group discussion, or more formalized, such as in the delivery of a reader’s theatre performance.

Written – The activities in this study designated as written will encourage students to write in order to enhance their response to text. These activities will not preclude other language arts, such as reading or representing, but writing will dominate. Writing activities in this study

may be semi-formal, as in the chain letter response, or more formal in the creative writing and textbook responses.

Short Story – a form of short, fictional prose. Typically, short stories feature a tight control of character, plot, and language to develop a single idea or effect. Typically, short stories develop a narrative with a central character, but may also be written to create an overall mood or idea.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Background

Before reviewing specific literature on reading and response learning activities, this background section will explore the study of literature from a reader response perspective. The argument will develop the idea that the study of literature promotes a particular epistemology, a particular way of knowing and experiencing the world, different from other domains of thinking and learning (Rosenblatt, 1978; Britton, 1972; Vine & Faust, 1993; Langer 1995). This way of knowing the world through literature might be characterized by openness, a tolerance for ambiguity, a willingness to explore, creativity, the consideration of multiple perspectives, and groundedness (Marshall, 2000). In many ways these characteristics are those of a healthy imagination. Perhaps central to a study on reader response, then, is a focused consideration of the role imagination plays in response and the classroom environment that can nurture it.

An Imaginative Orientation to Literature

Louise Rosenblatt (1978) has written a seminal work on the concept that reading and responding to literature requires an imaginative orientation to text. In *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*, Rosenblatt (1978) asserted that competent readers of literature should adopt an aesthetic stance as opposed to an efferent one. When reading literature, an aesthetic stance would attend to the experience of text – associations made, feelings aroused, attitudes challenged, ideas that are notable. On the other hand, a reader could adopt a stance to literature that is

more efferent; that is, focused on what one will carry away from the text (p. 24-25). Here, Rosenblatt (1978) emphasizes the difference:

At the extreme efferent end of the spectrum, the reader disengages his attention as much as possible from the personal and qualitative elements in his response to the verbal symbols; he concentrates on what the symbols designate, what they may be contributing to the end result that he seeks—the information, the concepts, the guides to action, that will be left with him when the reading is over.

At the aesthetic end of the spectrum, in contrast, the reader's primary purpose is fulfilled *during* the reading event, as he fixes his attention on the actual experience he is living through. This permits the whole range of responses generated by the text to enter into the center of awareness, and out of these materials he selects and weaves what he sees as the literary work of art. (27-28, original italics)

Rosenblatt's distinction sets literature and literary reading into a specialist realm, a subject with its own unique way of experiencing. Openness to the aesthetic experience characterizes this way of knowing.

Similar to Rosenblatt's efferent and aesthetic stance, James Britton (1972) conceptualized two roles people take when using language, a spectator and a participant role, and argued that when we read or write fiction, drama and poetry, we should adopt a spectator role. The participant role was characterized by the need to get things done in the world (inform, instruct, explain, persuade...), and when communicated in more formal and public writing, manifested itself in transactional texts, such as reports, speeches, proposals, and essays. On the other hand, in a spectator role language was used in a different manner (play, dream, narrate, relate...); in this role, our more expressive, informal language may be formalized into poetic texts, such as short stories, novels, plays, and films (p. 122).

Both Britton and Rosenblatt conceptualized a special orientation for reading literature. More recently, Langer (1995) reinforced these contrasting orientations toward meaning, which she termed a literary orientation and a discursive orientation. Langer characterized a literary orientation as one “...essentially of exploration, where uncertainty, and hence openness, is a normal part of the response and newfound possibilities provoke other possibilities” (26). In describing a reader’s emerging interpretation and response to literature, Langer stressed that when reading from a literary orientation “...there is no end...with each new possibility, our perspective changes and the horizon shifts, remaining elusive, just beyond our grasp” (27). To contrast this aesthetic stance, Langer defined a discursive orientation as one in which the reader decided upon a reference point and read in order to collect information in relation to that central premise.

While Langer echoed in large measure two different orientations to reading, another theorist Deanne Bogdan (1990) articulated a view of the dialectic in reader response. She contended that literature teachers often sought to create classroom experiences that recreated *stasis*, those “brief, spiritual flashes of literary experience often felt by committed readers” (p. 122). However, when responses were examined, too many were characterized by a lack of balance between engagement in the text and detachment from it (p. 123). A *stock* response, for example, was one which simply reinforced existing personal prejudices (p. 124), while another kind of response, which Bogdan termed *kinetic*, emanated from a compulsion to react to a text on the basis of its immediate emotional impact (p. 125). Both of these states are reactions to parts of the text rather than responses to the whole.

However, while avoiding the stock and kinetic responses that are somewhat knee-jerk reactions to texts, Bogdan (1990) also outlined a further stance which produced a limited response. She termed this stance a *spectator* response, not to be confused with Britton’s more positive use of the word. For Bogdan, the spectator response analyzed literary devices without any reference to the

content or impact of the text (p. 128). Compared to the stock and kinetic responses, faulty because they ground themselves too much in the reader's experience, the spectator response was equally undesirable, depending too much on literary features.

Ultimately, Bogdan characterized the notions in literature teaching of allowing the pure pleasure of reading to become the goal of instruction as romanticized and unrealistic; instead, she suggested literature teachers should favour a balanced, dialectic approach, the "alternation between engagement or participating response, and detachment or critical response" in considering the whole text (p. 129). Essential in this dialectic – this mental back and forth between engagement and detachment – is an imaginative stance, as Langer (1995) emphasized, "open to a horizon of possibilities" (p. 24).

Where Bogdan decried falling in love with literature as counter-productive for response, curriculum theorist Dennis Sumara might agree. Sumara (2002) took a critical view of the romanticized 'great themes' approach often taken in high school classrooms. Specifically, he attacked the idea that teachers design literature programs to help students discover universal truths about the human condition:

...the quest for essences and foundations must cease. Instead, I have become committed to emphasizing the importance of insight. ...what is interesting to people are not the big ideas that are believed to organize human experience. More interesting are the tiny plots and descriptions that circumscribe past, present, and projected worlds of experience. Created from these small stories, sometimes, is what we humans recognize as insight, as revelation, as something that prompts us to remark: "Yes! That's so true! I love you. I hate you. I'm sorry." (p. 4)

These insights are achieved, in part from close reading practices (attending to the details of a text, often ones outside of his engagement with the text), which Sumara admitted were practices he learned from New Critical approaches to literature. Most valuably, these practices taught him the necessity of rereading, and that his own learning to interpret initially depended upon interpretive assistance from teachers, an apprenticeship of sorts. These insights into reading practices ultimately led Sumara to emphasize the manner in which students should read literature in school:

...I have come to think of the experience of developing a deep relationship with a literary text as a *focal practice*—an interpretive event that occurs when one becomes committed to the making of something that provokes attention to detail, requires the development of interpretation and production skills, and sustains attention, energy and interest (p. 150, my italics).

Focal practice resembles in many ways the dialectic response process emphasized by Bogdan. There must be a period of engaging after reading, one that requires rereading and collaboration. Like Bogdan, throughout focal practice, Sumara (2002) emphasized that imagination is essential for achieving interpretation and insight:

To imagine, then, is to create interpreted bridges between what is held in memory, what currently exists, and what is predicted about the future. From this perspective, imagining is not a special act limited to certain persons or certain situations. Rather, imagining is central to human cognition. (p. 5)

Many researchers and theorists seem to agree: reading and responding to literature requires a particular orientation to the text: aesthetic stance, literary orientation, spectator role, dialectic response, focal practice. Langer observed that “educators’ approach to students’ thinking has been surprisingly

unidimensional; the focus has been on logical, discursive approaches to understanding... More attention needs to be paid to literary thinking..." (25-26).

Research has shown that it makes a difference that students take this literary orientation. For example, Many (2004 / 1990), studying student responses to short stories, found that "subjects focusing on the aesthetic stance were significantly more likely to interpret story events, to apply story events to life, and to draw generalizations about the world" (924). Another illustration of the positive effect of collaboration as it pertains to high school reader response was conducted here in Manitoba. The study compared a collaborative (small group, discussion strategies, oral peer response) approach to reader response to both a natural process approach (individual student dominated, journaling, written peer response, heuristics) The results for response to literature showed that the social collaborative condition produced better responses when judged on a four point holistic scale that rated maturity of response and a transmission model (teacher dominated worksheets and teacher questions) (Reimer, 2001).

For the context of the reader response classroom, then, imagination is not being swept away in the world of imaginative fiction. It is not simply being left alone in one's own corner of the mind to make of a work whatever one pleases. It is not necessarily a studied appreciation of the weighty themes or artistic genius that an imaginative text offers. Imagination, as a reading response construct, is openness to the examination, often and most effectively a collaborative examination, of possible connections between texts, self, and the world, openness through which ultimately one finds personal insight and recreates oneself.

Perhaps the next immediate question might be, "What kinds of learning activities would assist a reader to adopt and maintain an interpretive openness throughout the process of envisioning?" However, this question has been formed from considering only an individual's engagement with a text.

Before asking this question, it is important to explore the social and cultural context that might develop and support an imaginative reading and exploration of text.

Cultural Formation of an Imaginative Orientation

In order to understand reading and response to literature, it is essential not only to examine the student's relationship with text, but also the context in which that interaction takes place. Put plainly, many aspects of response may be explained through understanding how students are encultured as members of a certain gender or class (Beach, 1993, p. 126). As Gee (2004) argued, learning to read in school is primarily a cultural process of acquiring a specialist variety of the English language, namely, an academic variety (15-17). By extension, learning to respond to literature in high school is similarly a cultural process. 'Reader-response to literature' is a variety of academic discourse with particular semantic and syntactic demands. Students, in order to be rated highly by teachers, would have to be fluent in literary language practice, in other words. As Beach (1993) noted, "Readers respond according to 'subject positions' acquired from socialization from cultural institutions" (124). Rather than focusing on an individual's learning activities alone, then perhaps a better focus might target establishing a learning culture that creates, values, and sustains a literary orientation.

As Gee (2004) noted, learning to read is tied to one's cultural identity, and those that are successful at school are those who access the discourse variety that schools privilege while they are at home. In other words, these students have had a chance to be cultured in this discourse variety with modeling of the language by parents and extended family. Coming from the field of linguistics, Gee argued convincingly that less able readers, often from poor and/or minority backgrounds, were capable of complex discourse. To illustrate, Gee demonstrated the complexity of the semantic and syntactic patterns in the reading response of young African American child, but then noted that her

response did not match what the teacher expected or valued. While the child's variety of language exhibited complexity, it was not the kind of complexity rewarded at school (Gee, 2004, 28-38).

Another illustration of academic language being a cultural phenomenon was outlined by Fox (1992), who sought to understand the perception among professors at her university that many foreign graduate students had difficulty with critical thinking and analysis in their dissertation work. In trying to help these students, Fox found it difficult to find any suitable explanation in reference books of what critical thinking was or how to develop it. After asking the professors to show her examples of weak analysis, she found that many of the instances of weakness arose from culturally different methods for explaining ideas. While the professors wanted explicitness and detail, some foreign students saw that explicitness as insulting to the informed reader's intelligence. When the professors wanted students to challenge the validity of research, some students worried that it was not their place as a young student to question the established authorities on the subject. These differences arose from culturally different methods of scholarship. Ultimately, Fox provided her own definition of critical thinking:

Critical thinking made visible, that is, analytic writing, is a culturally specific world view that is individualistic, egalitarian, scientific...and is based on a direct, sparse communication style that relies on little shared knowledge between writer and audience. (Fox, 1992, p. 10)

Fox's foreign graduate students were accomplished in their own subject areas in their own countries, and some were even fluent in English. The point of relating this study is to emphasize that academic language practices in school environments are culturally constituted, and these practices are often taken for granted by those who are versed in such discourse. This point is as true of reader response to literature in high school as it is analysis in literature reviews in graduate school.

Not only does academic language vary among cultures in the world, it also changes by discipline. Cazden (2004, August), for example, contrasted a linguist's scientific analysis of a child's illustrated story with an English professor's. Cazden showed how the more scientific analysis categorized text features that were known to be significant or typical, while the literary interpretation noted features that expressed the uniqueness of the child's narrative. Cazden made the point that these different ways of knowing may complement one another and thereby provide insight when considered together, but also shows clearly that academic language practices reflect particular ways of knowing and of valuing the world.

In sum, taking Gee's example, we see that the value of response does not lie in the complexity of the discourse, but the closeness of the match between the pattern of discourse in the response and that valued by the school (often, that of the dominant culture). Further, since language practice changes *within* the same discipline when learned people come from different cultural backgrounds (as in the Fox example), and language practice changes *between* disciplines by trained professionals of the same cultural background (as in Cazden's), it is important to realize just how value-laden and culture-specific our expectations for a particular brand of academic discourse are. The question perhaps is not just about how imagination can help students respond, but how we can best describe what we value in this discipline in this localized culture. Further, if learning to respond is a process of becoming a part of the culture of literary engagement, then the mission is as much about the learning environment and social relations—developing a sense of identity and belonging—as it is in the cognitive nature of a particular learning activity. Since identity and belonging emerge from collaboration, as does language, the key is not only to outline the mental processes, but also to immerse students in a culture of response practice, to apprentice the reading and discussion patterns valued by the group. If one cannot simply assume that everyone knows what analysis looks like, it is likely doubly true that a shared

understanding of what constitutes high quality response to literature does not exist except in a localized academic context.

The conclusion to this discussion begs a definition of ‘response to literature.’ For this localized learning culture, reader response to text is a special form of written, analytic, academic discourse. The students must produce this written discourse with the expectation that they cannot assume shared knowledge between writer and audience. Specifically, the response should not assume the reader has read the text and should specifically outline the situation of the text. The reader will also expect that inferences, connections, or analysis of the text will be supported by explicit references – paraphrased or quoted portions of the story. The audience will expect the responses to be tied to the text; however, the response should be individualistic; that is, it should develop ideas, associations and emphases that the student himself or herself considers most important.

Responses are Deepened through Authentic Discussion and Collaboration

Having established a reader-response theorist’s orientation to literary texts, and having considered that this imaginative orientation is formed through immersion in a culture that can apprentice that subject-specific variety of discourse, it is time to more closely examine the features of that cultural space that might engender high level written responses to text.

Langer (2002) studied English programs that were effective in comparison with other schools with similar contexts that were less effective. One main finding of her research was the social nature of the effective English classroom:

In effective schools, English learning and high literacy (the context as well as the skills) are treated as a social activity, with depth and complexity of understanding and proficiency with conventions growing from students’ interaction with present and

imagined others. In contrast, in typical schools, students tended to work alone or interact with the teacher, and when collaborative work or group work occurs, the activity focuses on answering questions rather than engaging in substantive discussion from multiple perspectives. (p. 36)

Through authentic discussion, students can develop understanding and responses to texts, and, ultimately, also learn the meanings and language patterns necessary to develop interpretations on their own. As Galda and Beach (2004) put it:

Through participation in discussions, students acquire the language and genres that enhance their level of participation and their use of response strategies valued in different types of discussions—small group or whole-class, student- or teacher-led discussions. Research shows that many types of discussion are valuable, depending on the desired outcome. (p. 860)

If research has revealed student participation in discussion to be central to response, Marshall (in Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995), in analyzing the discourse in whole-class consideration of literature, showed that teachers often do much of the talking, controlling at least half the discussion, and give out a great deal of information about the book. The study also showed how teachers provided much of the context needed to make what students said meaningful, and in controlling the nature of the questioning, limited the ways that students could respond.

Further, Marshall found that the discussion of literature bore a “fundamental similarity” across ability levels (p. 56). If the students are any smarter, the pattern of discourse remains essentially the same – teacher in a dominant role, dictating the flow of conversation. Galda and Beach’s (2004) review of literature lamented that “Unfortunately, although research has affirmed the importance of authentic talk about text in the development of sophisticated, engaged readers, practice has lagged. Most

classrooms still rely on the repetitive pattern of teacher question, student response, teacher evaluation” (p. 861).

A reader response classroom should employ activities designed to ensure the teacher does not dominate discussion. This emphasis on discussion is important, as Britton (1972) might argue, because the uttered response has such an important impact on teen’s identity formation. Partly, students must be the ones talking because what we say becomes part of who we are. As Beach (1993) notes in explaining Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of the dialogic:

For Bakhtin, dialogue is central to existence. When persons make an utterance or respond to a text, they are ‘answerable’ for what they are saying. Because they are accountable for the potential social implications and effects of their utterances, they must consider the meanings that are constituted by their social interaction (p. 111).

Interaction in the form of an oral, articulated response, then, shapes our identity. Student responses to literature, if they are to develop, must be expressed to others. Langer highlighted the importance of reading literature in particular, asserting “[The lessons of literature] provide us with a set of mirrors in which to view our possible as well as our present selves. They also help us reconsider what we have done and imagine alternative values, beliefs, and emotions” (Langer, 1995, 18). Ultimately, students require imagination to successfully make the connections that make literature personally powerful and meaningful.

Gee’s (2004) work would substantiate the idea that social interaction is an important force in learning to respond. To add to the importance of authentic discussion as central to the development of reading response, Gee noted that “Academic language is not really lucid or meaningful if one has no embodied experiences within which to situate its meanings in specific ways” (p. 44). Gee (2004) also noted that situated cognition studies from cognitive psychology show “...language is tied to *people’s*

experiences of situated action in the material and social world. Furthermore, these experiences are stored in the mind/brain, not in terms of language, but in something like dynamic images tied to perception both of the world and of our own bodies' internal states, and feelings..." (p. 49, my italics). If language learning is indeed tied to action and stored with images, moods, and feelings, the response process must have students become more aware of the social and emotional nature of reading and responding.

Perhaps activities that are engaging (generate positive emotion and involve kinesthetic action) and interactive, such as drama activities, will enhance reading response. As Smagorinsky noted, students' responses became more authentic after participating in collaborative activities. Certainly, learning to respond means apprenticing oneself in a particular brand of academic discourse, an apprenticeship that must be cultured in active discussion of authentic responses to literature.

Examining the Evolution of a Response to Literature

A close examination of the evolution of a response is provided by Langer (1995). In her theory of reading and response processes, readers built what she termed an *envisionment*, her word for "the understanding a student (or teacher) has about a text ..., subject to change at any time as ideas unfold and new ideas come to mind" (p. 10). In essence, a reader could communicate a response to a text (i.e. envisionment) in some form after (or even during) an initial read. The response could deepen after discussion and other learning activity. Responses could change again after rereading or consideration of multiple texts. In other words, the student's collective understanding, interpretation, and appreciation, their 'response', evolves through time and interaction. By examining the work of Langer further, as well as the work of other researchers, the nature of an evolving response to literature can be more precisely defined. The theorists Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser might term this evolving response "The response up to now" (qtd. in Beach, 1993).

Langer's (1995) four stance model clarifies the mental processes students use as they experience a text. The four stances describe the processes of formulating what she calls an 'envisionment':

1. *Stepping in* – readers orient themselves to the textual world
2. *Being in and moving through* – readers call on previous knowledge to question and make sense of the text
3. *Stepping out and rethinking what one knows* – a stage where readers make connections between the text and their own understanding of the world
4. *Stepping out and objectifying the experience* – readers analytically focus on the form and theme of the text itself, making judgements of its value and connections to other texts

Initially, the reader begins an envisionment by calling on his / her prior knowledge of the topic and the text. The envisionment evolves with impressions and questions that are formed as the reader determines what the text says. The envisionment deepens when the student steps out of a text and makes connections with the individuals and events that the text offers. Envisionments further deepen if the student objectively analyzes the form and theme of the text itself. To cite Langer's concise summary, "In the first stance, we gather initial ideas; in the second, we are immersed in our text-worlds; in the third, we gain insights from our envisionments; and in the last, we reflect on what it all means, how it works, and why" (p. 19). Important here is the non-linearity of this model. All of the stances can be brought to bear at any time in the process of building an envisionment.

Other researchers have outlined the reading response in similar manner. Vine & Faust (1993) studied hundreds of responses to the same poem by study participants from different age groups, from younger readers to college students. From their study, they proposed a three-phase approach to reading literature: engaging, enhancing, evaluating. In the first phase, students engage in reading a text.

Then, they enhance comprehension through creative work with the text. Finally, students reflexively assess what they have learned from the text, and examine their reading processes. Jeffery Wilhelm (1997) names similar response dimensions: evocative, connective, and reflective.

For the purpose of this study, a student's response will be evaluated after an initial read, class discussion and other learning activity, and an opportunity to individually reflect in writing. The response will require an expression of what happened in the text, the meaning or impression the text created for the reader, connections to self, other texts or experiences in the world, and an analysis of how that meaning or effect was created. Because we might assume that this later written response developed incrementally through various ways of thinking through the text, the next section will review theory and research on the high school reader's development of response.

Engaging in a Literary Text – Before and During Reading

A closer examination of research on the development of a response begins as a reader engages in the reading experience. According to Langer (1995), the important work of teachers here is “..to invite students into the literary experience, providing a signal to them that the primary experience will be a subjective one involving horizons of possibilities rather than an objective one involving maintaining a point of reference” (88). Viewed from a cultural perspective, this invitation acts as a cue to learners about what kinds of responses are valued.

Essential in Langer's cue for considering possibilities stands is a caution against before-reading activities, variously named pre-reading activities, anticipatory sets, before reading reflections, or advance organizers. One pre-service text for English teachers, after giving examples of pre-reading journaling activities, cautioned that “the danger of even the most carefully constructed ‘Personal Trigger’ activity is that it leads students toward a preconceived and narrow reading of the text” (Milner

and Morcock Milner, 87). In Kelly's (1992) descriptive study of pre-reading journaling and discussion, she pointed out that the activities "can push the discussion in a direction suggested by the pre-reading to such an extent that students reject contrary views or do not deal with a section of literature than has them consider a different view" (p. 87).

Instead of intense pre-reading activities, Vine & Faust (1993) contended that readers should engage in the literary text in as natural a way as possible. They believed teachers limit student's initial responses to the text by extensively teaching background, drilling vocabulary, setting purpose, and telling students how great the book is (93). Students should read with less preparation, should articulate short, tentative, first impressions of the work, and should only later reread and reexplore the meaning of these first responses (122-123). Simply put, after an initial cue to set a literary orientation, the best advice may be to just let students read the whole text. On the other hand, some researchers have found that less able readers have more difficulty than more able readers entering the text world, and have suggested that certain pre-reading strategies are important scaffolds for these readers to enter the world of the text (Purcell-Gates, 1991 qtd. in Grossman, 2001; Wilhelm, 1997).

One caution is needed at an early stage of response. Hamil (2003, August) studied the ways teachers understand and articulate student understanding. In his qualitative work with three experienced English teachers, he noted that teachers used their own knowledge of the literature, based on pre-established, published interpretations of the work, as a reference point for interpreting their student's initial responses to the work (p. 76). Obviously, the initial positions of students on a text, when contrasted with an understanding derived from a pre-established teacher guide, will seem naïve; however, some teachers may attribute these half-understandings to a lack of ability, intelligence or interest. As Hamil (2003, August) has put it, "Literature study best involves apprenticing students to ways of interacting with texts, rather than to the already finished products of adult discourse" (p. 77).

Far from being a fully formed interpretation that might resemble the book notes for the literature, at this early point, the student's response has developed, assuming a literary orientation to text, from initial suppositions, associations, and instincts to develop gradually into a tentative understanding of the text. However, as of yet, these tentative understandings may not have been articulated or shared. Vine & Faust (1993) suggested at this stage that readers should articulate their initial responses with short, honest answers to three questions:

- 1) Without hesitating, what three things pop into your mind as you think back on the reading?
- 2) What thoughts and feelings do you have about the work?
- 3) What does the work remind you of? (p. 123)

Following the quick recording of these initial understandings, Vine & Faust recommended that students share and categorize these ideas into "thematic concerns" in order to imagine and explain the general situation of the text (p. 124). This suggestion will be taken up in this study's design in all six conditions.

Enhancing the Reading of a Literary Text – After Reading

Before and during the reading of a text, then, readers in the response classroom have formulated some tentative meaning, and, perhaps, have recorded initial impressions. Vine & Faust (1993) recommend a next stage to help students *enhance* their response. In this second phase, students are "asking questions about their developing sense of the particular situation" (124). Students might develop a focus for their thinking about the work, such as a focus on a particular character or issue. In exploring the particulars in the text related to this focus, students move beyond their first impressions and take responsibility for making meaning.

To illustrate what this might look like in a classroom, one study found in ERIC's database used mind mapping, brainstorming, creative writing, and discussions from other character's perspectives, to engage student understanding (Bay, 1985). This master's thesis study followed fourteen rural grade 12 students, seven in one graduating year and five in the next. Each class was given a pre-test and post-test the researcher had adapted called the language arts test of cognitive functioning. Using techniques largely inspired by Edward DeBono's (1972) *Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step*, the researcher examined the difference these enhancing activities would make in their responses to two novels. Ultimately, she found that gains on her cognitive functioning test were small, but the intervention did stimulate thinking, increased awareness and creativity, and made their writing more mature (Bay, 1985).

Bay's activities to enhance response were all generative / imaginative. However, two activities seem more reflective (mind mapping, brainstorming). They required students to think laterally, but in a reflective way. Two other activities could be called performance-based (creative writing, role play). These activities required students to work with their responses by the creation of a new text. In addition, while mind mapping and creative writing required written response, role play and brainstormed discussion required speaking. These activities are typical of ones suggested in anthologies and teachers guides. The consideration of Bay's imaginative activities will be put to the test in this study – which kind of the generative activity might work best – reflective or performance-based ones? Would it matter if the activity involved more talking or if it involved more writing?

Using reflective activities to enhance the reading of a text

Performance, whether it is oral drama activity or a creative writing, certainly provides one way to enhance response to text. However, could the same effect be achieved with activities that are collaborative, yet more reflective in nature? A good example of such an activity commonly used in the

classroom is the 'Think-Pair-Share' activity. In this procedure, students first think on their own, sometimes writing brief notes. After all students have had a chance to think, they share ideas with one other person. This gives students a chance to offer up tentative thoughts with minimal threat. After clarifying ideas, the two share with two more, and this larger group attempts to come to a consensus. Sometimes, groups appoint a reporter, and a history of the discussion is offered to the class.

While this example is predominantly oral, the reflective activities could also be written. One such activity is known as "Four Square". Students comment in writing on an aspect of the character's emotional journey and write their response on one quadrant of a large piece of chart paper. Others in the group do the same or a similar activity in their quadrant. After about five minutes, students are asked to rotate the chart paper. They read the response from the previous student, and build upon it. The procedure repeats every five minutes or so, until the first student gets a chance to read all the comments, and adds a conclusion.

Using Performance-based Activities to Enhance the Reading of a Text

Many voices have advocated for activities that involve some sort of performance-based dimension. For example, Britton (1972) encouraged the use of dramatic improvisations and creative writing as students explored fiction in a spectator role. Britton asserted that these activities aided adolescent students in their overriding quest for a separate identity (p. 225).

Vine & Faust (1993), in their chapter entitled "How might we empower reader response", explained that group discussion (literature circles, response groups) often serves as a vehicle for enhancing understanding; however, they also suggested performance-based activities for exploring student concerns in a text, such as visualizations, role-plays, improvisations, dramatizations, character interviews, journal entries in character, or exploring texts from other perspectives (p. 128). Again,

some of these activities involve creativity through an oral and kinesthetic mode, while others involve creativity in a written mode.

Some researchers have focused specifically on the way drama techniques might enhance the reading of a text. Beach and Marshall's (1991) review of research made the straightforward statement that "The use of dramatic techniques to teach literature can enhance students' responses" (p. 487). They specifically cited the benefit of dramatic techniques as helping students, claiming they "gain insight into the motivations of characters' actions" (494). It is important to specify here that drama does not mean polished performances of text, but rather "...interpretations and creations of texts [that] arise through improvised encounters which enable them to explore the ambiguities and possibilities of the text...no final performance is prepared: the process is the final product" (Wolf, Edmiston & Encisco, 1997, p. 494). Moffat (1990) claims that performing a text leads to "some of the best textual discussion possible in school...because the practical goal and social mean ground it, direct it, and motivate it" (p. 307).

Much of the research on the effect of drama on reading or literacy has been focused on younger readers, not late adolescents. In a broad review of research, however, Wagner (2003) observed that while "eighteen out of twenty-nine quasi-experimental studies show that drama improves story recall, comprehension, and/or vocabulary...eleven, representing almost all grade levels, did not show that drama has a positive effect on reading" (p. 1013). One study with a positive effect is written about by Wilhelm (1997), who used dramatic activities in a middle school classroom. He claimed that these activities helped students, particularly weaker readers, envision the world of the text and understand the feelings and motivations of the characters.

If some evidence has suggested that drama activities do help to enhance responses, perhaps they work because they increase student talk in the classroom. In his analysis of typical, whole-class

discourse patterns in English class, Marshall (1995) observed that, because the teacher domination of discussion is a practice that is difficult to change, and dramatic and other oral artistic activities might be effective ways to respond to text to break both teacher and student out of their familiar expectations for talk in the classroom (in Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995, p. 131). Perhaps, too, drama necessitates a transfer of power and authority from teacher to student. Beach's (1993) review of literature on reading response stated clearly:

Various forms of drama can bolster the social quality of classroom responses.... In drama activities, students break out of their classroom roles to experiment in alternative ways of behaving and speaking.... [Students should] engage in drama activities in which they have the authority to construct the situations, apply their own knowledge, and create their own interpretations. (p. 122).

The drama activity reorganizes patterns of talk and collaboration about text.

The problem with testing drama activities as a way of enhancing the reading response to a text is the vast array of such activities. For the purposes of this study, one drama activity, chosen because it is oral, performance-based, and well known, will be implemented to gauge its effect on later reader response.

Reader's Theatre

Reader's theatre is a collaborative oral performance of an interpretation of a text, such as a poem, short story, or novel excerpt (Tierney and Readence, 2000, pp. 250-255; Kelly, 1992, p. 88-91). It is conducted by first having groups of students select passages of a text to read / perform that are unified by a central interpretation. For example, after reading a short story students might decide to represent the emotional journey of the character by selecting key passages from the text that represent

the changing mood or emerging theme. Students might use gesture, voice, choral reading, tableaux, or simple movement to enhance their performance, but mainly it is a “Reading”. The group is free to employ one or more narrators, and to represent interior monologue with multiple voices.

Patricia Kelly (1992) provided some descriptive research on reader’s theatre in a high school classroom. Her introduction made her sense of the purpose of reader’s theatre clear:

To help students learn to reconcile the dissonance caused from multiple views, to see those views as useful, to make sense of a literary selection, and to assume more control for the discussion of literature, I use Readers Theatre. This reader-response approach not only provides oral performance possibilities for students but also encourages them to discuss in depth a literary selection in order to know what ‘interpretation’ they want to get across to an audience (p. 84).

Some research, albeit fairly dated, does provide support Kelly’s view that readers’ theatre enhances responses to text. Mayberry (1975 qtd. in Wagner 2003) “compared the effects of readers theatre and solo performance with silent reading. He found that for comprehension and appreciation, readers’ theatre ... [was] the most powerful in effect” (pp. 1015-1016). Readers’ theatre has been selected for this study because it is a creative, collaborative and predominantly oral performance method. What would happen if we kept the performance dimension, but made the task a written one instead of an oral one?

Creative Writing (Pastiche)

Where reader’s theatre could be considered an oral and performance-based way to enhance the reading of a text, imaginative writing may also enhance the reading and response to a text. Wagner (2003) asserts that “claims for the centrality of imaginative expression in the school curriculum are

solid” (p. 1011). Creating alterative versions of texts – alternative endings, new or alternative episodes, epilogues, new settings, additional characters, new dialogue or internal monologue—are examples of such creative writing. Peter Adams refers to this kind of activity as the “imaginative reconstruction” of a text (qtd. in Beach & Marshall, 1991, p. 116).

One report suggested having students review a complex passage by writing a dream sequence which captured sights, sounds and smells (Anderson & Rubano, 1991, p. 47). Adams (1987) termed such writing “dependent authorship” (qtd. in Beach & Marshall, 1991, p. 116). Another possibility might be to delete a section of text. The teacher might delete words and have students fill in the gaps as a sort of cloze response. However, more productive activities may focus more specifically on “writing within” -- writing between the lines of text in more depth than they have been in the text, an imaginative expansion of the existing text rather than a change to it (Anderson & Rubano, 58-59). Moffat (1990) suggested that students write extended scenes for the original work, such as parodies, endings, or sections of a text in a different medium. Moffat claimed that “This process can naturally elicit perceptive discussion of texts as partners recall, interpret, and extrapolate the text together” (p. 309).

Another version of this kind of activity is a pastiche assignment included in the International Baccalaureate programme. This creative option for the study of world literature has students write additional text in the same style as the author, and then justify their choices. This learning activity will be tested as a performance-based activity that operates in written mode.

Evaluating a Literary Text – After Reading and Discussion

Finally, readers can take a stance in which they step back and analytically consider the form and theme of the text itself, making judgements of its value and connections to other texts. Readers

also objectify, reflect upon, and evaluate their own interpretations and reading experiences. Langer calls this stance *Stepping out and objectifying the experience* (Langer, 1995, 15-20). While this stance seems purely rationale, does the imagination play a role in this kind of response too? Langer asserts that “In literary experiences, as students move among the stances, *imagining* is an essential part of meaning creation; it is a critical way in which students reach toward meaning and come to understand” (1995, 22, italics are mine). Langer highlights the point that the imagination is central to whatever strategies students adopt in creating meaning from literary texts.

By this point in the process, students should have the opportunity to begin formalizing an expression of their envisionment. When Langer (1995) writes about “stepping out and objectifying the experience”, she is describing a stance to the text, not a step or stage. This scored ‘extended response’ is a necessary procedure to collect the student’s independent ‘response up to now’ (Fish qtd. in Beach, 1993). Once students have enhanced their response through focused rereading, they are ready to formalize and extend their responses. At this stage they can also step back from the text with a critical eye to objectively analyze how meaning and impression were created.

Note that many researchers encourage a metacognitive view of own response processes and strategies at this stage. Thomsen (1987) suggested that “...once readers become reflexively interested in their own reading processes they can be helped to progress to higher levels of reading” (180). In other words, once students respond at some length, they need guidance to examine their responses to find the strategies that they are using, and then gain awareness of strategies at higher levels. This reflexiveness will be encouraged in the classroom through informal (formative) assessment and feedback, although this kind of data will not be collected in writing, and is not the focus of this study.

What Should a Reader Response Task Look Like?

If students will formalize their envisionment of the text in writing as part of the evaluating phase, what should the written response task look like? Rather than a strictly skill-based approach to assessing literacy using such tools as forced choice response, Johnston and Costello (2005) argue “We have to consider what kind of literacy might benefit individuals, what kind of literate society we aspire to, and what might best serve those ends” (p. 256-257). Since an essential goal for English language arts students beyond school is to articulate and respond to the ideas of a text, certainly, the task should be open-ended in a way that allows them to fully explore meaning. Simmons and Deluzain (1992) state that objective tests “are inadequate for testing in a response-centered curriculum”; a more congruent approach to testing reader responses would be to assign and grade “a free written response that is shorter and less structured than an essay” (p. 154). However, how free is this written response (does anything go?), and how should it be assessed? In order to design of a task and scoring guide for reader response, this study must first review research related to the design of quality performance assessment.

Is holistic rating of open-ended reader responses a common in practice in schools? One recent case study of classroom assessment in a Midwestern American high school English program might, unfortunately, be typical of schools elsewhere in North America. This study revealed that “65% of the total number of points for the semester involved questions that were multiple-choice, matching, true/false, and so forth” (Kahn, 2001, 279). For the remaining assessment, open-ended response opportunities that were given to students tended to be “...somewhat narrow and formulaic in defining the characteristics of strong versus weak responses” (Kahn, 2001, 281). In other words, teachers tended to rigidly prescribe a five-paragraph theme paper in response to literature, with content laid out for each paragraph. Interestingly, teachers included a very small number of assessment items that

reflected a more constructivist approach. These items only appeared "...to fulfill district-level objectives that required students to independently read and analyze works not studied in class and to prepare students for a district assessment that involved the same format" (Kahn, 285). The effect of the district assessment is worth noting – the only real constructivist assessment was influenced by large-scale test items that were constructivist in nature.

Given the nature of the assessment revealed by the case study, it is no wonder that American studies show that while students can comprehend at a surface level, a disturbing lack of ability among students to interpret, evaluate, and interrelate what they read exists (NAEP, 1994, qtd. in Newkirk, 2003, 396). Canada does not fare as poorly as does the United States in international tests of reading, including the reading skill of reflecting on what was read; in fact, Canada ranks near the top (Bussière et al, 2001).

Building a reader response task and scoring criteria is fraught with complexity. On one hand, the task and criteria should not limit the ways in which students respond; on the other hand, they should be designed in a way that promotes high achievement in responding to literature. Beach and Hynds' (1991) review of research on response to literature states the problem aptly:

Literary reading should not be taught, tested, or studied according to a purely normative orientation, based on a model of bureaucratic efficiency. The problem is in recognizing and preserving the integrity of each student's response within a highly technological and bureaucratic culture that demands standardization and accountability (Beach and Hynds, 1991, 480).

Constructing criteria that preserve a reader's right to construct a unique response suited to the learning of an individual must somehow be reconciled with assessment and evaluation of standards.

As a method of organizing an analysis of this challenge, the attributes of sound criteria for performance assessments provided by Quellmalz (1991) will be used to frame discussion about the nature of the response task and its criteria:

1. *Significance*: criteria specify important performance components
2. *Fidelity*: criteria apply in contexts and under conditions in which performance naturally occurs
3. *Generalizability*: criteria apply to a class or type of parallel tasks, contexts, and conditions; evaluators can apply criteria consistently to a set of similar exercises
4. *Developmental appropriateness*: criteria set a developmentally appropriate range of quality levels for the examinee population, anchored in a larger continuum
5. *Accessibility*: criteria are understandable and useable by all participants in the performance assessment process, including teachers, students, parents, and the community
6. *Utility*: Criteria communicate information about performance quality with clear implications for decision making and improvement.

(Quellmalz, 1991, p. 320)

The reader response task will be analyzed in relation to each of these components of performance assessment.

Significance

Significance, the first attribute of sound criteria, poses distinct problems for reader response, because consensus may not be easy to reach on “the important components of performance”. As Marshall (2000) points out in his review of research on reader response, three essential problems exist with the term Reader Response (no matter what definition):

1. It does not imply agency in the reader, but assumes agency with the text
2. Response is always mediated through some agency (writing, speaking, representing)
3. No limits to response (comprehension, interpretation, emotional reaction, personal connection, critique...); reader response may imply a whole range of skills: comprehension, interpretation, emotional reaction, personal connection, or critique (p. 382)

Problem 1: How thoroughly must a response deal with the text?

Marshall's first observation suggests that the text has agency, that the text must play a role in the response. In developing criteria, then, a response must deal with the text. While this point may seem straightforward, how much of the text do students have to deal with in order to formulate a competent response? Would it be acceptable to offer a sophisticated response based on a minor detail in the text? How about a misreading? If students have *only* given a summary in their own words, should that be considered a form of response?

For the purpose of this study, students will be asked to interpret a main idea, but no key will be provided to the scorer to say definitively what the central idea(s) might be. Only after interpreting meaning will students be asked to respond to the idea. For example, when the specific outcome related to reader response was targeted by a question on the Manitoba January 2003 Standards test, students were asked to "Examine and respond to an idea about time [the theme of the exam] in one of the visual or print texts in this booklet" (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003, *Process Booklet*, p. 27). The criteria for an "At Level" rating of response to this prompt reads: "Idea is clearly identified and response is personal or critical in making a clear connection to an idea in a visual or print text" (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003, *Scoring Rubrics*, p. 15). While the task was constructivist in nature, it needs improvement. This task and its criteria suggest that the text has a minor role to play,

merely providing an “idea”. Langer (2000) pointed out that “The text’s contribution to the meanings a person forms cannot be ignored. People from fields as diverse as linguistics (Pratt, 1976), literary theory (Booth, 1988; Iser, 1974), and Philosophy (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1969) concur” (p. 36).

According to Purves (1992) the meaning of a text is “that which can be verified by other readers and by recourse to the historical grounding of the text”, whereas “The significance [of a text] is personal or perhaps communal” (p. 24). This distinction that Purves makes between meaning and significance would be similar to my understanding of that between comprehension and interpretation. To conclude, student must be required base their interpretation on a clear comprehension of verifiable meaning in the text.

Vine & Faust (1993) suggested that “Whenever readers try to make sense of something ...[such as] what a text might signify—such meaning making falters when readers ignore or fail to attend to a sense of the situation....of both themselves and others” (106). This premise suggests students should fully experience a text before being expected to respond. Perhaps many students respond to minor details, misreading, or provide simple summaries as responses because they have not been given the full experience of the text before more sophisticated response is demanded. Vine & Faust (1993) recommended that, to empower students’ reading and response, “[First] ...read the text as rapidly and naturally as possible for the purpose of sensing the general situation and articulating some first impressions of it” (121). The reader response task should be constructed so that students have the chance to sense the situation of the text before being asked to construct elaborate responses.

Existing scoring guides for reader response do twin response criteria with comprehension criteria. For example, for a *proficient* rating on Grade 10 criteria produced by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, not only should the response be “personal and thoughtful”, but it should be based on “close familiarity with and understanding of” the text. Compare B.C.’s criteria to criteria for a

reader response outcome targeted on Manitoba's Senior 4 (Grade 12) ELA. Standards Test and one will find much less demanding criteria asking for an understanding of what it is students are responding to. In other words, to raise the quality of response, we need to demand that sound reading of the text in the first place become an important precursor of quality response.

Problem 2: How much should writing quality affect the score?

Marshall's second issue that complicates how we determine the important components of a reader response is the extent to which we rate the agency rather than the response. In other words, should the writing quality of the response in part determine the level of the response? Can a disorganized response be as sophisticated as an organized one? For the most part, readers are expected to respond to literature in writing. If the evaluator could see more advanced response visually or orally, should these media be allowed? In Moffat's (1985) spectrum of transactional communication, he defined responding as intimate and personal, and called the more formal, abstract, argumentative writing "reflecting". Should they write a more personal response (such as a personal journal entry), or construct a more critical and formal response (such as a formal expository commentary / analysis)? If the answer to these questions is unclear, the implication is not. The task must clearly specify whether the level of formality for the task will be graded. One set of scoring criteria from Alberta Learning's web site (see Appendix C) demands good organization and attention to conventions as part of both personal and critical reading response. In my opinion, these scoring criteria target the agency too much: most of the mark (60%) comes from organization, language use, and correctness.

Problem 3: What dimensions of response should be expected?

The third issue Marshall raised was the bewildering array of kinds of response. What kind(s) of thinking / skills are expected in reader response? Responses could provide an interpretation of what the text says, could communicate an emotional reaction or personal connection to the text, could critique either the issues raised by the text, or evaluate the way the text was constructed. Each of these alternatives could be rudimentary / competent / or complex in their own way. It would be difficult for one set of criteria to account for all types of response. Plus, one wonders whether it would not be advisable to have students vary the kinds of responses they construct to text in order to become more proficient in all of these cognitive processes.

If comprehension and response are essential components of the task, it is a more open question whether an appreciation of how the text was constructed is a necessary part of response. Certainly, a close (re)reading of the text examining the way it is constructed often leads to increased comprehension and more precise response. As students formulate a clear sense of the text, and then make connections, they can then step beyond these connections to evaluate their implications. However, because literature is a construction, a representation, and not experience itself, the task would seem insufficient if readers were not asked to take a critical view of the relationship between elements of the art and what the text represents.

To summarize thus far, then, the task and criteria must be constructed to encourage responses that are based on a full experience of the text, so the task must be enlarged to require an exploration of the text's meaning. Second, the task should allow for student choice in kinds of texts available for response. Third, the criteria should recognize that the agency is not the response, and so not penalize students unduly for matters of mechanics or style. Finally, after making sense of the text, the task

should not only ask students to make connections with the text and the world, but also move beyond to analyze and evaluate these connections, and the text itself.

Fidelity

Where the discussion of criteria has so far considered the important components of performance, Quellmalz's (1991) second characteristic is that the criteria can be applied in contexts and under conditions in which performance typically occurs. In other words, the criteria should be useful for classroom-based applications for multiple genres of texts. By comparison, criteria for scoring writing in classrooms recent years has employed trait scoring (such as content, organization, style and mechanics), and teachers have used such criteria for classroom writing. According to survey research in a Master's thesis on the influence of the Senior 4 (grade 12) Manitoba exam, "A large number of Senior 4 teachers, 61%, report that they have adopted the writing component provincial exam rubric for their own essay marking purposes frequently, and 25% state they use it occasionally" (Busby, 91). If the criteria for the response test are sound, teachers should be able to take the criteria from this test and easily use it to score reading response in the classroom.

Another important consideration for meeting the goal of fidelity is to recognize that reading should carry on beyond the walls of the classroom. Hynds (1990) argues that reading instruction and assessment that is based on a metaphor of personal competence ultimately restricts the possibility that students will want to read in later life. Quellmalz (1991) may not have had reading in later life in mind when saying "where performance typically occurs," but surely we want reading and response to extend beyond classroom activity. In order to develop criteria to account for Hynds' concern, one must be aware of the social nature of language. Hynds calls for reading and response as a way to "understand

people in the social world” (252), and, ultimately, to have students see themselves as readers in the real world and value their own responses to text (253). Of central importance for Hynds is assessment:

...we might ask ourselves how we define and measure reading competence. Do we stress intellectual processes to the exclusion of social or personal understandings? Which messages do our preferred modes of teaching and evaluation give to our students about the way they ought to read? ... What are our responsibilities, not only to develop literacy skills, but to develop literate behaviours, which lead to a lifetime of reading? (255).

Criteria for reading response should clearly take note of Hynd’s premise that the aspects of reading valued by the assessment criteria should reflect our ultimate goals for reading.

To summarize the aspect of fidelity, the criteria for response should be ‘portable’ for reader response in the classroom. The criteria should suggest ways that growth is possible over time, and promote the kinds of literate behaviours that are valuable in later life, such as allowing for a social component of understanding.

Generalizability

In addition to significance and fidelity, Quellmalz’s (1991) recommended that performance criteria represent dimensions of performance that trained evaluators can apply consistently to a set of similar exercises.

Again, perhaps generalizable, reliable scoring criteria for reader response could attain the same universality as that for trait scoring writing. This consistent conceptualization of reading response would become more reliably interpreted by classroom teachers, especially as the tasks that ask students to respond become more immediately recognizable to students and teachers. One key to the goal of generalizability is the term “trained evaluators”. Certainly, training would need to include a set of

papers that exemplify each of the scores on the criteria set. Each exemplar should be accompanied by a rationale connecting qualifiers in the criteria with snippets of the model response. Discussion of such exemplars is essential for achieving generalizability.

Although not an immediate concern of the present study, the criteria for an extended response would be considered excellent only if they could apply to similar texts, i.e. beyond short stories. The criteria should work for other kinds of literature (extended prose fiction, non-fiction, poetry). While this benchmark will not be tested, the criteria will be designed with the premise of generalizability in mind.

Developmentally Appropriate Expectations

The examination so far has considered important components of criteria that could be used in real contexts across a range of similar exercises. However, how well will the criteria serve grade 12 students, from a developmental point of view? Several researchers have made conclusions about how response develops. Marshall (2000) generalizes that younger readers engage in perception while older readers can interpret and go beyond. Sargent, Huus, and Anderson's (1987) Narrative Profundity Scale lists a development of young readers' understanding and response to narrative text, from recognizing physical and mental actions of characters, to realizing their moral and psychological dimensions, then being able to analogize and generalize beyond the narrative.

Designing a reading response task with developmental appropriateness in mind is complex because "individual development may follow a different timeline than a preconceived, Piagetian cognitive model" (Newkirk, 2003, 397). Researchers who have attempted to describe how well a typical adolescent can respond to a text may, as Newkirk (2003) notes, may only "...reflect the instruction [the students] receive (e.g., a focus on summarizing books and literal questions) rather than

on any inherent developmental limitations” (399). For example, Beach and Wendler (1987) found that college students responded more to psychological aspects of character while younger readers focus more on plot. However, this finding is a generalization: some college students focus more on plot while some younger students may consider psychological aspects.

Vine & Faust (1993) believe that the process that readers follow in distinguishing between the experiences of others and their own experiences follows a developmental pattern:

- First phase: unreflective *accepting* or *rejecting* of experience of others in relation to own (I was just like him ... I'm not like her... surface features only)
- Second phase: reflectively accept or reject others experience in relation to their own (try to understand not only surface features, but probe the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of those involved)
- Third phase: reflexively thinking about their thinking and meaning making (being metacognitive)

Ultimately, expectations for reader response must be flexible enough to recognize and encourage higher levels of response from those students who are able to respond in a more complex manner earlier, and also leave room for late cognitive maturers. As Newkirk (2003) puts it, “The central question [of the development of analytical ability to respond] should not be when students begin analyzing but how their ability to analyze changes as they mature” (399).

Thomsen's (1987) work *Understanding Teenager's Reading* posits a five-stage model of development. In each stage, Thomsen gauges the requirements for satisfaction and the typical reading strategies employed. One implication of this model is that the criteria should form a continuum of development that might engender an awareness of engagement, elaboration, and reading strategy.

Another important aspect of Thomsen's (1987) model is the clarification that it is not only the length of a response that should be assessed, but the way the response reflects the complexity with which texts are enjoyed and processed. Thomas Newkirk (2003) notes that research on reader responses is sometimes less useful because "...simply classifying responses as 'evaluative' or 'interpretive' misses the more central question of the *nature* of the evaluation or interpretation going on" (398).

Incorporating aspects of Thomsen's model into criteria would clarify the nature of the response.

The design of the task and criteria to meet an appropriate developmental stage, then, is not a matter of age appropriateness, but rather a continuum that considers both the complexity of the response strategy and the degree of elaboration or support that is offered to develop such a response.

Accessibility

The task and criteria should clearly make sense to a range of stakeholders involved, not just to the teacher. Quellmalz's (1991) fifth feature of sound criteria is that they are understandable and useable by all participants in the performance assessment process, including teachers, students, parents, and the community.

Does teaching students how to use the criteria improve their responses to literature? It is not clear. Goodrich, Andrade, and Boulay (2003) conducted a study, part of which tested the influence of teaching criteria to students writing an essay in response to literature. The 98 students in grades seven and eight attended a suburban California middle school. Both treatment and control groups in this quasi-experimental study were given criteria stated in the first person to rate their performance on a response to literature essay. After writing a draft, the treatment groups were given two 40-minute instruction sessions on how to self-assess their writing in response to literature. The first session taught students to use "more global criteria – ideas and content, organization, and paragraphs," while the

second dealt with “the four finer grained criteria – voice and tone, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions” (23). The control group also received the scoring rubric after writing a first draft, but no instruction. Trained scorers with high inter-rater reliability scored the second drafts. Results showed that “...the self-assessment lessons had no relationship to either girls’ or boys’ scores” (28). The study’s authors suggest that instructing students in using the criteria to assess their own work will take considerably more time and a better approach.

Anecdotally, some evidence could also be taken from the assessment program of the International Baccalaureate Language A1 (English) program. Teachers acquaint their students with the criteria for responding in a formalized ‘commentary’ well in advance of the final tests. Students are asked to respond orally to a work they have fully experienced, and respond in writing to an extract of a work they have not previously seen. Rothman (2002) notes, “By making explicit the criteria on which their work will be judged, the I.B. Programme make expectations for performance very clear. Students say such clarity provides a focus for their work” (p. 31).

The I.B. program has the benefit of repeated use of criteria over time, and another study on criteria and writing shows that more time is exactly what is needed to enable the criteria to help students (Thome, 2001). The study set out to determine the effect of a classroom-based analytic writing rubric and accompanying feedback on high school students' growing proficiency in writing over a two-year period. Student writing was scored six times during a two-year period. A statistically significant improvement in total writing performance resulted from the shared use of clear criteria (Thome, 2001). The implication here is that teachers must use the criteria regularly over a longer period in order to take hold. This premise speaks to the need for a more standardized reader response task for classroom-based and provincial assessment and regular use of such a task over longer periods in the classroom.

Students and their parents also should be able to read and interpret a rating on the reader response criteria, and find it meaningful. If schools called the task a “reading test,” and described criteria in a more accurate and straightforward way, parents and students would be more aware of what was expected in a response.

Utility

Quellmalz’s (1991) final characteristic of quality criteria is that they communicate information about performance quality with clear implications for decision making and improvement. It should be clear from the test results what a student could do to improve his or her own scores, and it should be clear to the teacher what to do to help a student if they their achievement could improve.

Conclusion

What might a reader response task look like, given all these considerations? Overall, instead of six or eight reading response questions, one integrated, staged task would take its place. After choosing a text, students would read it independently, sorting out the meaning of the text. Based on this understanding of the situation, students would express the significance of the text (i.e. an interpretation). Criteria for this task would holistically rate their interpretation. These learning outcomes are congruent with the strategies and cues section (2.1) of the *Common Curriculum Framework* for western and northern Canadian provinces and territories. A second set of criteria would be used to gauge students’ ‘second look’ response to the text, based on section 2.2 of the *Common Curriculum Framework*. Here, students would be required to make connections between the meaning of the text and the world as they know it. Finally, a third set of criteria would determine how well students could critically look at the techniques employed by the text (section 2.3). These responses could be separated

into three sections, one for interpretation, one for response, and one for appreciation. However, a better response would integrate interpretation, personal response, and appreciation, perhaps organizing itself by distinct parts of the text.

This close analysis resembles in some ways the assessment strategy of designing the lessons backwards from a description of what meaningful performance looks like. Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe articulate this strategy at length in their 1998 book, *Understanding by Design*. Ultimately, the enduring understanding that could come of a reading response task is a reader able to independently express an extended response to a fictional texts through strategies for making meaning.

Summary

- Overall, the task will be written, open-ended, somewhat formal, but shorter than and less polished than an essay. The criteria should focus more on evidence of reader response, and not on the features of writing, such as grammar, style, or organization.
- The task and criteria will target comprehension. The response should outline an idea that is congruent with a precise accounting of the situation presented in the text. However, scoring will not be based on a key.
- The task and criteria will target response. Students will make and evaluate text-world connections, and provide support from both personal experience and the text.
- The task and criteria will target appreciation. While this analysis may be more sophisticated, it may also reinforce comprehension and response to the text, especially if conducted during rereading of the text.
- For each trait (comprehension, response, and appreciation), the criteria will form a continuum of achievement, describing the relative sophistication of the response and

accounting for a degree of elaboration. These criteria will be useful for other texts besides short stories, and will be useful for classroom-based instruction, not just this test activity.

- Students will be acquainted with the nature of the task and the criteria.

The task designed for the study will be comprised of one three part prompt: “With reference to the text you have read, write an extended response in which you

- Interpret the main idea of the text.
- Explore connections with this main idea.
- Examine how this main idea was presented in the text.

See Appendix C on page 130 for a copy of the task given to students in the study. The criteria for scoring this task (see Appendix D) describe six levels of performance in three dimensions. For each dimension, a focus question has been provided to assist the student and the scorer to know what to look for when rating the response. The criteria for interpretation require a holistic rating. First, the scorer must gauge how specifically a response grasps the situation presented in the text, and then how well the response interprets the meaning of this situation. In addition, scorers consider how well this interpretation is supported with reference to the text. The task calls for connections to be made between the meaning of the text and experiences in real worlds or text worlds. A quality response explores the nature of the connection, such as how it is comparable, contrasting, causally-related, or associated. Finally, the task and criteria describe levels of performance related to an appreciation of how choices made in the text create meaning or effect.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Research Questions and Method

Three phases of responding to reading described by Vine & Faust (1993) guided this study: engaging, enhancing, and evaluating. This study will investigate how the nature of the classroom activities designed to *enhance* students' envisionments will affect their performance on a written response to text. An integrated task with three dimensions has been designed to reflect current thinking about response to reading and quality performance criteria.

This study seeks data guided by the following questions:

1. Could an open-ended extended written response task for short fiction be reliably scored on the criteria of **interpretation**, **response**, and **appreciation**?
2. How do three instructional modes compare for promoting high quality written response to literature: **performance-based** collaborative mode, **reflective** collaborative mode, and **teacher-led** instructional mode?
3. Does it matter whether the learning activities are predominantly *oral* or *written*?

Based on the review of literature, the collaborative conditions should be superior to those that are teacher-led (Reimer, 2001). Most theorists would support the prediction that the oral conditions will outperform the written ones (Langer, 2002; Galda & Beach, 2004; Gee, 2004). Further, the performance-based conditions will be found equal to the reflective conditions, as long as the process is collaborative.

Research Model

Wagner (2003) decried the use of quasi-experimental study methodology in her review of research, contending that what was needed were descriptive studies which showed “which heuristics are most likely to produce divergent thinking, deep understanding, and creative response” (p. 1015). However, much recent descriptive research (such as Langer’s, 1995) has provided such a heuristics for producing better response; therefore, a quasi-experimental design testing the nature of this description of the reading process seems a legitimate use of quantitative research. This study will test whether a three-phased model of developing a response to literature is effective, whether involving collaboration is superior, and whether the nature of the collaboration or the medium of the activities designed to enhance the student’s envisionment (oral or written) will affect a final written response.

The study employed a 3 X 3 X 3 X 3 repeated measures design (i.e. [teacher-led / performance-based / reflective condition] X [oral condition / written condition] X [interpretation / response / appreciation] X [class X, Y, and Z]). Data, in the form of holistic scores from the six point scale, will be analyzed using ANOVA. First, total test scores were considered, and then individual scores for interpretation, response, and appreciation were separated out for analysis. Students’ results on the three dimensions were compared with their own matched tests (six tests in all - one after each treatment). The significance level was set at $\alpha=.05$.

The means and standard deviations were calculated, first for total test score, and then for component scores. The data was checked for sphericity, and if none was found, *F*-tests were carried out on the repeated measures. Effect sizes were then calculated, and conclusions were drawn on the research questions.

The Research Participants

Seventy-three senior 4 (grade 12) students were invited to participate in the four week study (approximately fifteen periods of 68 minutes each). This invitation to participate was extended by a teacher who was not their classroom teacher through a brief oral information session. A consent form was completed for all students who wished to participate. Since the study relied on instructional practice that was congruent with the standards of the Manitoba English language arts curriculum for Senior 4, all students in all three classrooms took part in the classes. Essentially, a volunteer was a student who gave permission for their responses to be included in the data for the study. No coercion of any sort was used to gain students' consent. The total number of students who volunteered their responses amounted to sixty-one, eighteen in one class, eighteen in another, and twenty-five in the third.

The School and Community Context

The study was conducted in a publicly-funded suburban school in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. This city of approximately 700,000 is located in the geographic center of North America. The province has adopted an outcomes-based curriculum for English that shares its overall goals with other Western Canadian provinces and northern territories. The Stone River School Division (pseudonym) has about 9, 900 students in total.

The community around Living Prairie Collegiate (a pseudonym) is a suburban area on the outskirts of the city. The neighbourhood was built in the 1960s, and the school division has shrunk by two-thirds since the height of the baby boom generation. The area is known as middle class in terms of socio-economic status, and although the neighbourhood is slowly becoming more diverse,

the residents are predominantly of European ancestry. The area has traditionally been a political stronghold of more conservative voters, although recent elections have been closely contested. The area is economically stable, and crime tends to be low in this part of the city.

Living Prairie Collegiate bills itself as a school with a strong arts program, including band, choral, dance, drama, and visual arts. This medium sized school contains 735 students in grades nine to twelve, with approximately forty teachers and support staff. The school offers an International Baccalaureate (I.B.) program, so some capable students do not take this 40SC class; however, all the rest of the students (i.e. non-I.B. students) must take this course to earn a high school diploma. Five sections of this grade 12 English course were offered in the school at the time of this study.

The Classroom Context

The students were enrolled in an English 40S – Comprehensive Focus course. This grade 12 course is labeled comprehensive for the way it balances in approximately equal proportion the emphasis on texts from the transactional and literary ends of Britton's (1972) spectrum of forms. The course is mandatory for graduation, and culminates in a mandatory provincial English language arts standards test worth 30% of their final grade.

Two teachers participated in the study. A thirty-two year old female teacher, Mrs. Wellesley had taught English at this school for six years, and had taught English at middle school before that. She also spent time as a middle school education assistant before becoming a teacher. Mrs. Wellesley taught one of the three groups.

The thirty-six year old male teacher-researcher, Mr. Nickerson, had been teaching for about eleven years at the time of the study. In total, eight years were spent in this school division, one at middle school, four years at another high school in the division, and the remainder at this high school.

The other two years of teaching included time in an adult vocational school, and teaching English as a second language in China and Malaysia. Mr. Nickerson was assigned two of the three groups under study.

An essential question arises when two teachers are delivering instruction: how similar are their instructional practices? Of course, no two teachers would offer instruction in an identical way; each would have their own dynamic. The lesson plans were scripted in a way that attempted to control the variation in the delivery of instruction. Further, the cooperating teacher in this study was selected because she taught a similar program earlier in the course. For these three classrooms, the classroom activities should not seem a radical departure from those earlier in the course. Another teacher in the building had two more grade 12 classes, but since instruction in those classes was more markedly different, they were not invited to participate in the study.

Description of the Classrooms

All three groups received the same treatments and wrote the same tests, although the treatments were not given in the same order.

Group X

Thirty students made up the first group, thirteen males and seventeen females. One Japanese international student was included in the class whose reading and writing skills are proficient, but whose ability to speak and listen was less advanced. However, this student did not volunteer. Most other students were of northern European heritage, except one student who was of First Nations (aboriginal) background. Mrs. Wellesley taught this class. Before this study began, students had studied a full-length biography of their own choosing, participating in reading circles and writing a formal

review of the book. They also completed reading and response activities related to J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*.

Group Y

The twenty-two students in Mr. Nickerson's afternoon class were also predominantly of Northern European heritage, and, similarly, came from middle class homes. No students in this class were English as a Second Language learners. This class was dominated by the fifteen males; only seven females occupied the other seats. Up to this point in the year, both of Mr. Nickerson's classes experienced the biography unit that Mrs. Wellesley had offered to group X. However, rather than studying the novel, these students had studied *Hamlet*, focusing mainly on writing about character, but also participating in dramatic activities such as creating a series of tableaux.

Group Z

The twenty-four students in the morning class were predominantly of Northern European heritage (one is of mixed ethnicity), and came from middle class suburban homes. Three students in this classroom lived in rural areas and commuted. Except for one male International student from Brazil, no other students were English as a Second Language learners. The one International student's proficiency in English was exceptional in reading and writing; he would be considered advanced in speaking and listening in English, but he often needed clarification and written instructions to comprehend tasks. This class had a fairly even mix of gender: thirteen females and eleven males. Mr. Nickerson taught this class. Just like group Y, this class had completed the biography unit and the *Hamlet* unit before taking part in the study.

Description of the Instructional Activities

The literary selections were chosen from an anthology the school had recently adopted, entitled *Imprints 12: Volume 1 Short Stories and Poetry*, one that had been identified as an approved resource by the Province of Manitoba for our curriculum. Teachers using this anthology would not have had a long history teaching the selections in the text, and so might not be biased in teaching them one particular way or another. Additionally, the anthology was designed by its editors for a Canadian context of grade 12 students, and features contemporary fiction (the chosen selections were written between 1968 and 1999).

The six short story selections chosen for the study fit a running theme in the course, the portrayal or characterization of people in both non-fiction and fiction. The four stories each feature characters that live with the implications of choices they have made. At this point in the year, students had completed a unit in which they read a collection of short pragmatic forms that portray people, as well as a self-selected full-length biography. The instructional activities are summarized in Table 1, “Summary of Instructional Activity by Class”.

The order of presentation of the program, as illustrated in Table 1 below, varied so that the conditions (teacher-led, reflective, and performance-based) were not associated with the same short story, and so that the effect of maturation of subjects could be mediated. The following descriptions of the learning activities used to enhance responses will follow in the order that the first group (Group X) experienced them – the other two groups had identical lesson plans, but delivered in a different order, so they were associated with a different short story. The actual lesson plans themselves can be viewed in Appendix A on page 120.

Table 1 Summary of Instructional Activity by Class

GROUP X	GROUP Y	GROUP Z
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Kari Strutt's "Touching Bottom" (p. 124 – 133) • Teacher-led Oral discussion activity: Whole class discussion • Extended response test #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Kari Strutt's "Touching Bottom" (p. 124 – 133). • Reflective Oral response activity: small group discussion • Extended response test #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Kari Strutt's "Touching Bottom" (p. 124 – 133). • Performance-based Oral response activity: Readers' Theatre • Reader response test #1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Mark Ferguson's "A Drowning" (p. 160-163) • Teacher-led Written activity: Textbook responses. • Reader response test #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Mark Ferguson's "A Drowning" (p. 160-163) • Reflective Written response activity: Chain letter • Reader response test #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Mark Ferguson's "A Drowning" (p. 160-163) • Performance-based Written response activity: Creative writing • Reader response test #2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Alice Munro's "The Shining Houses", p. 26-35 • Reflective Oral response activity: small group discussion • Reading response test #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Alice Munro's "The Shining Houses", p. 26-35 • Performance-based Oral response activity: Readers' Theatre • Reading response test #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Alice Munro's "The Shining Houses", p. 26-35 • Teacher-led Oral discussion activity: Whole class discussion • Reading response test #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River" p. 70-84 • Reflective Written response activity: Chain letter • Reading response test #4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River" p. 70-84 • Performance-based Written response activity: Creative writing • Reading response test #4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River" p. 70-84 • Teacher-led Written activity: Textbook responses. • Reading response test #4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read "Dressing Up for the Carnival" by Carol Shields p. 92-99 • Performance-based Oral response activity: Readers' Theatre • Reading response test #5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read "Dressing Up for the Carnival" by Carol Shields p. 92-99 • Teacher-led Oral discussion activity: Whole class discussion • Reading response test #5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read "Dressing Up for the Carnival" by Carol Shields p. 92-99 • Reflective Oral response activity: small group discussion • Reading response test #5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read "Things That Fly" p. 143-149 • Performance-based Written response activity: Creative writing • Reading response test #6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read "Things That Fly" p. 143-149 • Teacher-led Written response activities • Reading response test #6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read "Things That Fly p. 143-149 • Reflective Written response activity: Chain letter • Reading response test #6

Teacher-led / Oral Condition: Whole Class Discussion

Kari Strutt's short story "Touching Bottom" was the first short story considered. This narrative features a powerful extended metaphor, swimming against a tidal current, to represent the

experience of trying to make a bad relationship work. The class read the short story with no prereading instruction except encouragement to form an independent interpretation and a cue about the time limit for reading. Students were instructed to record impressions and associations they made in brief written notes after the reading. The class remained quiet until all students had an opportunity to finish.

Afterwards, the teacher solicited and compared the impressions that the students made, and used these impressions to conduct a whole-class discussion of the story. The teacher focused discussion on the three dimensions of response (interpretation, response, and appreciation). First, teachers asked for an interpretation of the story's meaning, first asking students to clarify the situation of the story, and then to speculate on the meaning of the situation. Then, teachers prompted students for their responses to ideas. Finally, the class discussed the effect of particular literary features. While teachers included a focus on these three dimensions, discussion was not linear. Students were encouraged to provide support from the text for all assertions.

Teacher-led Written: Textbook Questions

The second short story considered was Mark Ferguson's "A Drowning", a first person account of a young witness to a fisherman's death that he was helpless to prevent. Students read the text silently, recorded first impressions and associations immediately afterward. In the teacher-led written condition, students recorded written responses to textbook questions. These questions were not the traditional ones many might remember, where answers can be right or wrong depending on an answer key the teacher might have. The anthology was new and congruent with a constructivist, reading response paradigm. For example, one question for "A Drowning" reads "What inferences about the narrator did you draw based on the information you were given?"

The specific questions that were assigned were selected so that students had an opportunity to consider the situation presented in the text (i.e. comprehension), the possible meaning (i.e. interpretation), as well as respond personally and critically. The questions were answered individually in complete sentences in notebooks. Although the follow-up session was abbreviated (so as not to turn it into whole class discussion), responses were briefly shared by the teacher calling on students to read out their answer, and providing brief feedback. These first two teacher-led conditions were designed to be typical or traditional fare in English instruction. Group Y answered the textbook questions for “Things that Fly”, while Group Z worked on “On the Rainy River” for this learning activity.

Reflective / Oral: Small Group Discussion

Along with the next two short stories, the study employed learning activities that involved reflective collaboration. Students first read and considered award-winning Canadian author Alice Munro’s “The Shining Houses” from her 1968 collection *Dance of the Happy Shades*. In the narrative, a young wife summons up the courage to take a stand against her husband and her neighbors who want to force an elderly lady off her dilapidated property to protect the property values in their new suburb. The short story considers a variety of salient themes – the generation gap, peer pressure, and so-called progress. Group X will took part in a reflective oral response activity.

After collecting their own impressions, students were asked to share and sort their impressions with others. During group discussion, each group expressed their consensus about the main idea and recorded it on chart paper. They added snippets of dialogue and description from the text, and drew representations (sketches, drawings) of the ideas. The groups shared the ideas on their charts with the class, and discussed possible literary elements at work in the text. Group Y conducted this small group

discussion based on the story “Touching Bottom”, while Group Z based theirs on “Dressing Up for the Carnival”.

Reflective / Written: Chain Letter

Following Munro’s short story, students read Tim O’Brien’s “On the Rainy River”. Similar to the “The Shining Houses”, the protagonist of “On the Rainy River” must make a choice, but this time the decision is intensely personal – answering the draft to go to the war in Viet Nam. Set in a Minnesota fishing lodge next to the Canadian border, the central character struggles with the decision to go with his conscience and dodge the draft or to answer the draft notice and serve his country.

Students recorded impressions in point form in their own notes, just as they had done before. Then, students silently wrote a chain letter, expressing their overall impression of the story, and signed their names on the bottom. The letters were collected by the teacher redistributed randomly. After considering the first response, students compared their own impression to their classmates. After a third exchange of these letters, students summarized their classmates’ impressions and compared them to their own, and turned to the text to find support for the overall impression that was emerging. One final switch of letters and students commented on literary devices that might have created these impressions. The letters were subsequently returned to their originator.

Group Y conducted this same chain letter procedure with the story “A Drowning”, while Group Z based their chain letters on “Things that Fly”.

Performance-based / Oral: Readers’ Theatre

The final two short stories were considered in conjunction with response activities that involve performances. The fourth selection students consider was “Dressing Up for the Carnival” by Carol

Shields. The text sketches a series of characters that interact with clothing or objects in a way that creates an illusion and changes perceptions. For example, one character, an elderly man, is invited to dinner by his daughter-in-law, an invitation borne out of obligation rather than love. En route to dinner, the man buys a couple dozen daffodils, and as he carries them around during the day, he perceives that others regard him differently, and he imagines himself as “a man who is expected somewhere, anticipated. A charming gent, elegant and dapper, propounding serious questions, bearing gifts, flowers” (*Imprints* 12, p. 96). Students were instructed, as before, to read the text independently and immediately afterwards to record impressions, thoughts, and feelings in brief responses in their notebooks.

During the enhancing phase, students shared their impressions, sorting them into categories. Then, they took one or more of these categories and traced its development through the narrative. They were then instructed to prepare a script using snippets of the text that traced the development of this main impression. They were encouraged to find opportunities for expressive reading, to use a narrator to tie scenes together, and to add any enhancement they wished to the performance of the script, such as tableau, props, sound effects, lighting changes, and vocal variations in pitch, volume or pace. The performances of these scripts were not meant to be lengthy, polished performances, but vignettes of the impressions that stood out.

Group Y conducted this same readers’ theatre activity with the story “Shining Houses”, while Group Z based their scripts on “Touching Bottom”.

Performance-based / Written: Creative Writing

The final selection is popular author Douglas Coupland’s “Things That Fly”. The narrator reflects on flight, especially that of Superman, during a time when the narrator is grieving a failed

relationship. Group X used creative writing as a method to enhance the reading. Following the pattern established earlier, students briefly recorded, free-form, associations they made with the work that they have just read. Then, students were instructed to use a main impression created by the story to creatively write about a parallel situation. This creative work, however, had to be consistent with the style used in the original short story. Students worked together to describe the style of Coupland's work, and to brainstorm ideas for their own creative writing. Afterwards, students shared their papers with students across the classroom. Finally, as a group, the class reflected on the similarities of the impressions focused upon and the techniques used.

Group Y conducted wrote creatively using "On the Rainy River", while Group Z used on "A Drowning".

Instruments Used in Data Collection

A more complete discussion of the rationale for the creation of the task and criteria was covered in Chapter 2. Six levels of performance with scores ranging from zero to five, were described for each dimension, under the category labels "out of range", "weak", "emergent", "novice", "proficient", and "outstanding". The teachers in the study would be familiar with the six level scale that is used on the provincial standards test, but these criteria are more descriptive for each of the six levels. The criteria have been included in Appendix D. The three dimensions of performance, interpretation, response and appreciation, are described in more detail below.

*The Design of the Reader Response Test and Criteria for this Study**1. Interpretation*

The first dimension of the extended response scored focused upon how well a student interpreted meaning from the text. This goal matched learning outcomes from section 2.1 of the Western and Northern Curriculum Protocol (p. 23). This category includes ascribing meaning to the text, explaining or generalizing about the text, perhaps recognizing and exploring the significance of the ideas or issues in the text in a broader context. Interpretations were not pre-conceived – an ‘answer key’ was not produced, but rather a set of descriptions with which to judge the relative sophistication of the interpretation, and also the degree of support given for that interpretation.

This first kind of response question demanded from students an abstracted idea from the text. This task would include Beach and Marshall’s (1991) describing (restate or reproduce information verbatim in the text), conceiving (moving to a statement of meaning; making inferences), explaining (using our inferences from the story to make statements about the social, political, and psychological dimensions of the story) and interpreting (defining the symbolic meaning, theme, or point of specific events in the story) response strategies.

2. Personal Response

The second category or trait focused on a student’s response to the meaning they have interpreted from the text, and could be found in section 2.2 of the WNCP curriculum framework (p. 27). This aspect of the response may or may not have formed a separate section of the response (in other words, the response may have integrated interpretation, response and analysis). Scorers focused on judging how well the response connects the meaning or impact of the text (or parts of text) with

relevant life experiences (topics, events, issues, or the individual's own life), similarities with or differences from other texts, or simply perspectives or feelings held by the reader. This kind of response would include Beach and Marshall's (1991) engaging (articulating their emotional response or level of involvement with the text) and connecting (connecting their own autobiographical or prior reading experiences).

3. Appreciation

The final category will judge how well a student analyzes and appreciates the form and technique used to communicate the meaning he or she has identified in the first part (section 2.3 of the Western and Northern Curriculum Framework, 31). Judgements about the aesthetic quality of the work as a whole, or appreciation of particular literary qualities, including language choices (such as diction and imagery) or story elements (such as characterization or plot choices) that make the text work are examples of the focus of these criteria. This kind of response entails what Beach and Marshall called judging (making evaluative statements about characters or literary quality). In the WNCP curriculum framework, related learning outcomes would ask students to appreciate the artistry of texts, including language and stylistic choices, and may also analyze the effect of form / genre, analyze how literary techniques have an effect, or analyze how language and vocabulary are used to convey meaning.

Reliability of the Scoring

Scorers were trained. First, they familiarized themselves with the short stories, the scoring criteria, and the task. Then, all scorers participated in an "anchoring" discussion to build a common

understanding of how to apply the scoring criteria. The scorers worked from coded photocopies of tests, with the identities of the students masked.

Three tests of inter-rater reliability were conducted to verify the degree of confidence in scoring results. The reliability took the form of four photocopied student responses that has been pre-scored by the researcher. The researcher provided a written rationale for assigning scores. Each marker rated the response, and after submitting these ratings, was provided with a copy of the scores and rationale. Markers collectively discussed their scores by comparing their interpretation of the criteria to the rationale. This discussion helped to build consensus around the interpretation of the criteria. The procedure was repeated twice, so that markers had scored twelve papers (three sets of four). The scores and rationales for these papers are included in Appendix F.

The scoring included a double blind procedure; that is, each paper would be marked by two different markers, the second one unaware of the scores given initially. Any scores that are adjacent (within one) will be averaged – scores that are more distant will be regraded by a third marker.

Table 2 Short Table Summarizing Instructional Conditions

	Story 1 and Test 1 <i>Touching Bottom</i>	Story 2 and Test 2 <i>A Drowning</i>	Story 3 and Test 3 <i>Shining Houses</i>	Story 4 and Test 4 <i>On the Rainy River</i>	Story 5 and Test 5 <i>Dressing Up for the Carnival</i>	Story 6 and Test 6 <i>Things That Fly</i>
Group X Mrs. Wellesley	Teacher-led and Oral	Teacher-led and written	Reflective / oral	Reflective / written	Performance -based / oral	Performance -based / written
Group Y Mr. N (PM)	Reflective / oral	Reflective / written	Performance -based / oral	Performance -based / written	Teacher-led and Oral	Teacher-led and written
Group Z Mr. N (AM)	Performance -based / oral	Performance -based / written	Teacher-led and Oral	Teacher-led and written	Reflective / oral	Reflective / written

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

Restatement of Purpose

This study has focused on learning activities designed for a progressive discovery of meaning, response, and appreciation of fictive text. Following a review of literature on reading response, the classroom activities were designed in three phases, engaging, enhancing, and evaluating (Vine & Faust, 1993).

In the engaging phase, students read the whole text independently, with no interruption. They were encouraged to think through the situation the text presented. Immediately afterwards, they jotted down first impressions and associations that occurred to them.

Students then took part in classroom activities that would enhance their brief, initial responses to the text: they reread, reconsidered and expanded their envisionments. The activities for enhancing reading in this phase were varied in order to compare the effect each might have. In order to investigate the effect of talking (versus writing) on developing an envisionment, activities either involved a significant degree of talk or a great deal of writing.

In addition, three instructional modes were fashioned for the enhancing phase, one that was teacher-led, and two that were more collaborative. One of the collaborative modes was more reflective; that is, students were more analytical in these activities. The other collaborative instructional mode was performance-based, in which students performed a part of the text. This collaborative mode was designed to be more creative in nature.

When the three modes were combined with both oral and written deliveries, a total of six conditions resulted. The teacher-led oral condition involved whole class discussion, while the teacher-led written condition had students answer questions from the anthology. In the reflective oral condition students talked about the text in small groups, while the reflective written condition shared their responses in a chain letter among classmates. The performance-based oral activity took the form of readers' theatre, while the performance-based written assignment was a form of creative writing in which students emulated the style of the author.

A final evaluating phase required students to express their envisionment in writing in a manner that revealed an interpretation of a main idea, a response to that idea, and an appreciation for the techniques that developed the idea.

Three specific questions guiding the study were as follows:

1. Could an open-ended extended written response task for short fiction be reliably scored on the criteria of **interpretation**, **response**, and **appreciation**?
2. How do three instructional modes compare for promoting high quality written response to literature: **performance-based** collaborative mode, **reflective** collaborative mode, and **teacher-led** instructional mode?
3. Does it matter whether the learning activities are predominantly *oral* or *written*?

Participation

Three senior 4 (Grade 12) classes comprising a total of seventy-two (72) students were approached to volunteer for the study. A relatively high number, sixty-one, completed a consent form so that their results could be used by the researcher. Those students who did not volunteer still participated in the classroom activities, as they were a regular part of the course, but their results were

not collected for this study. The procedures lasted three and a half weeks in the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year.

Although sixty-one (61) students volunteered for the study, statistical results were calculated only from students who attended all six conditions, because a repeated measures design requires the comparison of the results for the same student writing in all six conditions. Forty-four (44) volunteers attended all six conditions in the three classes, thirteen (13) from each of groups X and Y, and eighteen (18) from group Z. The papers from fifteen (15) volunteers who did not complete all six conditions were used to create exemplars and reliability papers (see Appendix E and Appendix F).

These students were average in their academic ability – fairly typical teens for a suburban Canadian school. Although the course is mandatory for graduation, some academically able students in the school gain credit through International Baccalaureate English, and so what may be the best students in English were not participants in the study. Although each classroom featured mixed genders, they were not proportionate in the same way. Group X had a male to female ratio of 4:9, while in group Y it was 9:4. Group Y had eight males and ten females, the more balanced of the three. Among the volunteers whose results were not used, several of them were characterized by the lowest achievement, and so the very weak ability students were not as well represented as they could have been.

Reliability of the Scoring

1. Could teachers reliably score a valid extended written response task for short fiction on the criteria of **interpretation**, **response**, and **appreciation**?

Scoring Procedures

This study used a double blind scoring procedure for the student papers in order to ensure reliability. Two marking sessions were conducted some time apart. All of the papers were scored once over several January evenings by four volunteer markers. Second marking of all of the responses was made possible with a research grant from the University of Manitoba detailed in Appendix H: Scholarship Rationale. Seven teachers worked for one day during a long weekend in April. None of the markers from the first session attended the second. All of the markers were high school teachers with experience in the scoring of divisional or provincial tests with a similar trait-scoring design.

To prepare for the scoring, the markers read the six short stories, and then reviewed the scoring criteria, the handout the students were given, and the task. On the first day the scorers participated in an anchoring discussion to build a common understanding of how to apply the criteria. Six exemplar papers were provided to the scorers, one for each short story (see Appendix E). These papers were chosen from students who volunteered but who were absent for one or more of the instructional activities. Unless student volunteers participated in all six conditions, their data were not used for the repeated measures comparisons; however, their papers were useful as examples for training and reliability procedures in the study.

In order to prevent marker bias, the names on the papers were blacked out and the papers were coded. The scorers knew the topic of the study but were not acquainted with the specific research questions or hypotheses. The tests were mixed such that the scorers did not know in which condition a particular class participated with that particular short story. The classes did not appear in any particular order. The scorers, most of whom taught at the school, were instructed that if they

could not score the paper blindly (e.g., if they recognized the handwriting or found some other clue to the student's identity), they were not to score the paper.

Once results came in, scores were compared. If the marker 1 and marker 2 scores were not at least adjacent (differed by more than one), the paper was read a third time, and a third scorer decided which of the two scores best matched the descriptions in the criteria. Because these scores were reviewed, any judgements about reliability have been taken only from the twelve papers in the reliability review rather than from the adjusted scores.

Once scoring began, three sets of four papers were used to determine inter-rater reliability (see Appendix F). Scorers considered set A of reliability review papers when scoring was approximately 20% complete, set B at 40% completion, and set C at 60% completion. After each set of four papers, the scorers discussed the scores they assigned as they compared to pre-determined scores, and considered a rationale for assigning each of the scores created by the researcher. The scoring of interpretation, response, and appreciation for twelve papers generated thirty-six scores for each marker.

Reliability Results for Total Test Score

The overall results of the three reliability reviews indicate a strong Pearson r correlation ($r=.832$, $p>0.01$) between the total score on the reading response (i.e. the sum of the scores for interpretation, response, and analysis) when compared with the total given by the researcher (see Table 3) This figure includes eleven scorers giving twelve extended responses three scores.

Table 3 Reliability Correlation Coefficients Based on Total Test Score

n=132		Total Set Score
Total Score	Pearson Correlation	.832 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

These data provide reasonable confidence that scorers could arrive at the same total score most of the time. It must be noted that since all markers in the study had worked together as colleagues in provincial and divisional standards scoring, it is unknown whether the same consistency could be achieved among a less experienced group. These data were scored with a relatively strong degree of consistency.

However, considering total scores yields limited data, because the score could have been derived from quite different scores on each dimension (interpretation, response, and appreciation). The next section will focus more specifically on the reliability of scoring for each dimension on the scoring guide.

Reliability Results for Interpretation

A moderate, positive correlation ($r=0.609$, $p>0.01$) occurred when scoring on the criteria for interpretation (see Table 4 on page 73). This coefficient was the lowest of the three dimensions on the scoring guide.

Table 4 Reliability Correlation Coefficients Based on Interpretation Scores

n=132		Set Score - Interpretation
Interpretation	Pearson Correlation	.609 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

During table discussion, markers made several comments that might explain the lower reliability for interpretation. First, they found it difficult to rate long responses that relied too heavily on a summary of the text. Another anomalous circumstance occurred when interpretations of an idea in a text were explained with evidence from outside of the text. This kind of response was difficult to separate clearly from the response category. One marker also suggested that comprehension (or understanding) is a related but separate construct from interpretation, and that some discrepancy in coding responses could have been avoided with separate criteria for each. One marker wanted the criteria to state “demonstrates close familiarity with text details.” This teacher felt that some students picked up a main idea through discussion, but found it difficult to explain the idea from the text.

Reliability Results for Response

On the response dimension the correlation between the set scores and the markers scores was strong ($r=.801$, $p>0.01$).

Table 5 Reliability Correlation Coefficients Based on Response Scores

n=132		Set Score – Response
Response	Pearson Correlation	.801 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Several markers noted challenges in scoring response. First, some answers would consider a single text-world connection in depth, while others would make multiple connections, but not develop them. While this kind of answer seemed legitimate, the criteria favoured the answer with depth rather than breadth.

The markers also commented that the task should be clarified. In the orientation material (see Appendix B) students were told that a personal connection could include any knowledge or experience

in the real world or in other texts. However, some students wrote “I have never had this happen to me”. Markers suggested that the word “personal” be dropped from the task.

Reliability Results for Appreciation

Appreciation netted the highest of the three correlation coefficients ($r=0.888$, $p>0.01$).

Table 6 Reliability Correlation Coefficients Based on Appreciation Scores

n=132		Set Score - Appreciation
Appreciation	Pearson Correlation	.888 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Markers commented that the appreciation criteria were easy to apply for two reasons. First, many students in the sample had very poor responses on this dimension, and the limited quality made for straightforward scoring. Second, older teachers pointed out that literary appreciation was emphasized in their own education and in previous provincial curricula, so they were comfortable scoring this kind of reading response.

Ultimately, these data lend credible support to the reliability of the scoring. Marker observations during reliability review discussions were useful for future improvements to the task and the instrument.

Main Finding #1

The open-ended extended written response task for short fiction could be reliably scored on the criteria of interpretation, response, and appreciation. That said, interpretation, more than the other two categories, needs to be more clearly differentiated by descriptions in the criteria.

Effectiveness of Instructional Activity

Because two versions, one involving more talk and the other involving more writing, of three instructional conditions were offered, the analysis of results must address the remainder of the study's questions together. These questions were:

2. How do three instructional modes compare for promoting high quality written response to literature: **performance-based** collaborative mode, **reflective** collaborative mode, and **teacher-led** instructional mode?
3. Does it matter whether the learning activities are predominantly *oral* or *written*?

Results will be analyzed by dimension (interpretation, response, and appreciation) for each variable, instructional mode and oral versus written. For each analysis of variance, the data will be checked for interaction with the group variable. A subset of questions organized this discussion:

- A. Were the group performances relatively even so that comparisons can reasonably be made among the three groups for interpretation?
- B. Did the mode of instruction (teacher-led, reflective, or performance-based) make a difference to students' interpretations of texts?
- C. Did it make a difference for interpreting the main ideas of a text whether the activity involved more talk or more writing?

The analysis looked first at the scores for interpretation.

Interpretation

Within the extended response, students were asked to interpret a main idea in the text. During orientation, students were guided to outline the situation that the text presented, and to explain an idea that the situation suggested (see Appendix B).

A. *Were the group performances relatively even so that comparisons can reasonably be made among the three groups for interpretation?*

An analysis of variance of the scores for interpretation shows that differences among the three groups were not significant ($F_{(2, 41)} = .229, p=0.797$). The group variable alone, therefore, is not likely responsible for differences in interpretation scores.

Table 7 Effects of Group on Interpretation

Measure: Interpretation				
Source	d/f	Mean Square	F^*	Sig.
Group	2	.072	.229	.797
Error(Oral)	41	.316		

* The F tests the effect of Group. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

B. *Did the mode of instruction (teacher-led, reflective, or performance-based) make a difference to students' interpretations of texts?*

The nature of the instructional condition (teacher led, reflective or performance-based) results in a nearly significant difference for student interpretation scores ($F_{(5, 43)} = 2.493, p=0.089$). However, this result is not sufficiently strong upon which to base any conclusions. Table 8 on page 78 summarizes this result.

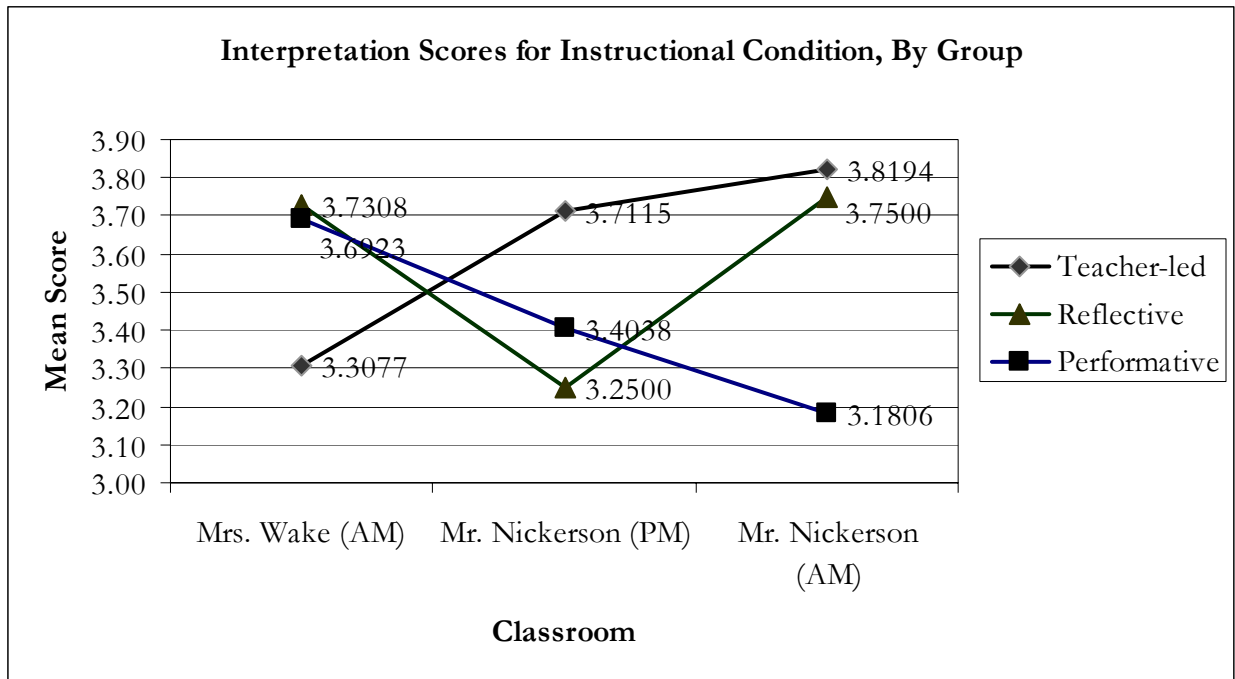
Table 8 ANOVA Table for Instructional Condition for Interpretation Scores

Measure: Interpretation

Source	d/f	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Condition	2	.849	2.493	.089
Condition * Group	4	2.922	8.577	.000
Error(condition)	82	.341		

While instructional condition by itself was not significant, when instructional condition and group coincide, a significant interaction effect is apparent ($F_{(4, 82)} = 2.922, p = 0.000$). In other words, for interpretation scores, the groups performed in a significantly different way depending on which instructional mode they were in, but that pattern was somewhat different for each group. The most reasonable explanation for this difference may lie in the sequence in which each group experienced the conditions. The three groups and their performances for each instructional mode are plotted in line graph in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Interpretation Scores by Instructional Condition, By Group



Mrs. Wellesley's (a pseudonym) morning class experienced the teacher-led instructional mode first, and turned in notably poorer scores ($\bar{X} = 3.3077$) than on the reflective and performance-based modes ($\bar{X} = 3.6923$ and 3.7308 respectively). In other words, after two poor performances, group X figured out how to express an interpretation, and once they got it, their scores reached a plateau. Mr. Nickerson's (PM) class experienced the three modes in a different order, but the sequence of scores is similar. They turned in poorer scores for the reflective mode (their first attempt, $\bar{X} = 3.2500$), better scores for the performance-based mode ($\bar{X} = 3.4038$), and the best scores for the mode they experienced last, the teacher-led mode ($\bar{X} = 3.7115$). These scores follow the same order, but don't quickly reach the plateau as the first group did. The third group looks much like the first group's

pattern of scores, doing poorly with their first attempts on the performance-based mode ($\bar{X}=3.1806$), and reaching a plateau with the teacher-led and reflective modes ($\bar{X}=3.8194$ and 3.7500).

Main Finding #2

The sequence made a difference to the achievement – the first attempts groups made to respond were worse than successive attempts, no matter the instructional condition.

C. Did it make a difference for interpreting the main ideas of a text whether the activity involved more talk or more writing?

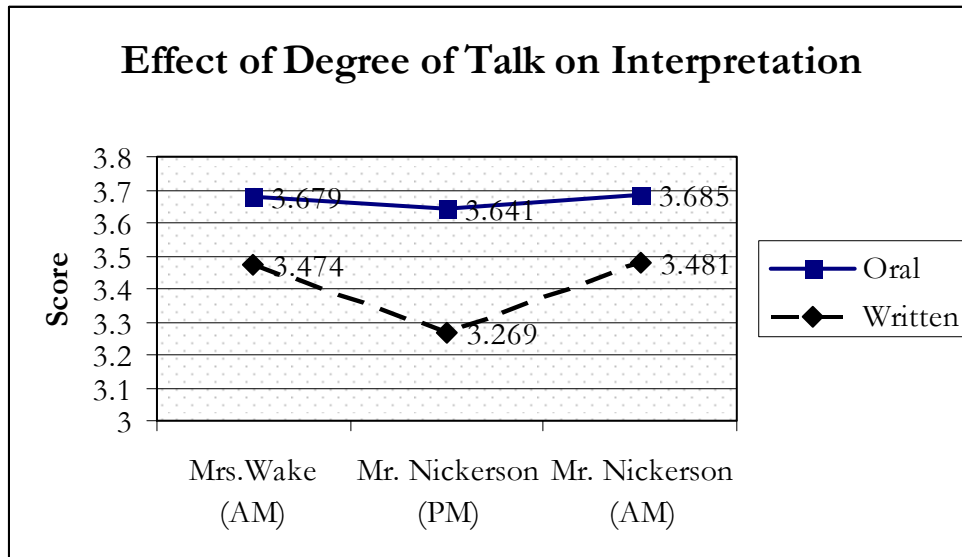
In the analysis of variance between groups summarized in Table 9 below, a significant difference appears in favour of the oral conditions over the written conditions for interpretation ($F_{(1, 41)}=23.379, p=0.000$), with no significant interaction with the group variable.

Table 9 ANOVA for Oral versus Written Modes, For Interpretation Scores

Measure: Interpretation				
Source	d/f	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Oral	1	4.365	23.379	.000
Oral * Group	2	.193	1.032	.365
Error(Oral)	41	.187		

The results seem clear when considering the scores. All of the scores for oral condition for all of the groups outperformed the written conditions in all three groups. This result was graphed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Effect of Degree of Talk on Interpretation

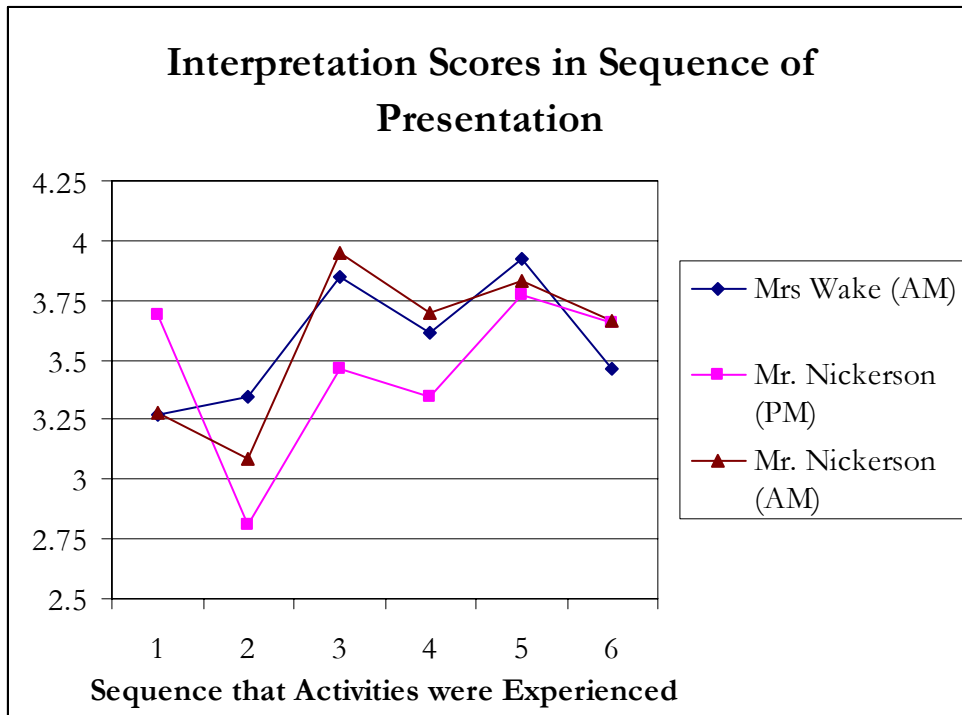


The finding that activities involving talk were productive for interpreting a main idea in a text confirmed the research cited earlier by Langer (2002) and that reviewed by Galda and Beach (2004). What was most intriguing from these results was some evidence that the learning activities should not only be collaborative (as the Reflective Written condition was), but also should involve a significant degree of talking out loud. In other words, it is not collaboration alone that works, but collaboration by talking. Even whole class discussion netted better results than a collaborative activity that was mostly completed in writing.

These results should also enhance the earlier discussion of sequence. Generally, the results followed an 'improve then slide' pattern, following the alternation of oral and written modes. In other words, after establishing a score on the first activity (an oral one), the scores would then slide for the second (a written one), improve the third time over the second attempt, and slide again for the fourth, and so on. The following graph shows the pattern of scores interpretation with the activities being

organized in the sequence the students received them (i.e. 1= first activity experienced, 2=second and so on). In all cases, the odd numbers featured more talk, while the even numbers involved more writing.

Figure 3 Interpretation Scores in Sequence of Presentation



Main Finding #3

Learning activities involving talk, whether whole class or small group, led to higher achievement for interpretation on an extended written response than activities that were predominantly written.

Response

For the dimension of response, students were instructed to “make connections between the idea you identified and your own knowledge and experience of literature and the real world” (see Appendix B on page 126). The analysis of the scores for response followed the same pattern as that established for response.

A. *Were the group performances relatively even so that comparisons can reasonably be made among the three groups for response scores?*

Table 10 Effects of Group on Response

Measure: Response

Source	d/f	Mean Square	F^*	Sig.
Group	2	.036	.072	.930
Error(Oral)	41	.504		

*The F tests the effect of Group. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Once again, it seems reasonable to make comparisons among the three groups. Group performances were relatively even, and this blocking variable was not enough by itself to make a difference.

B. *Did the mode of instruction (teacher-led, reflective, or performance-based) make a difference to students' responses to texts?*

None of the conditions (teacher-led, reflective, or performance-based) stood out as significantly better for response. Using the more conservative Huynh-Feldt statistic to compensate for a lack of sphericity, the F test was not significant ($F_{(1.895, 71.178)} = .696, p = .494$).

Table 11 Effect of Instructional Condition on Interpretation

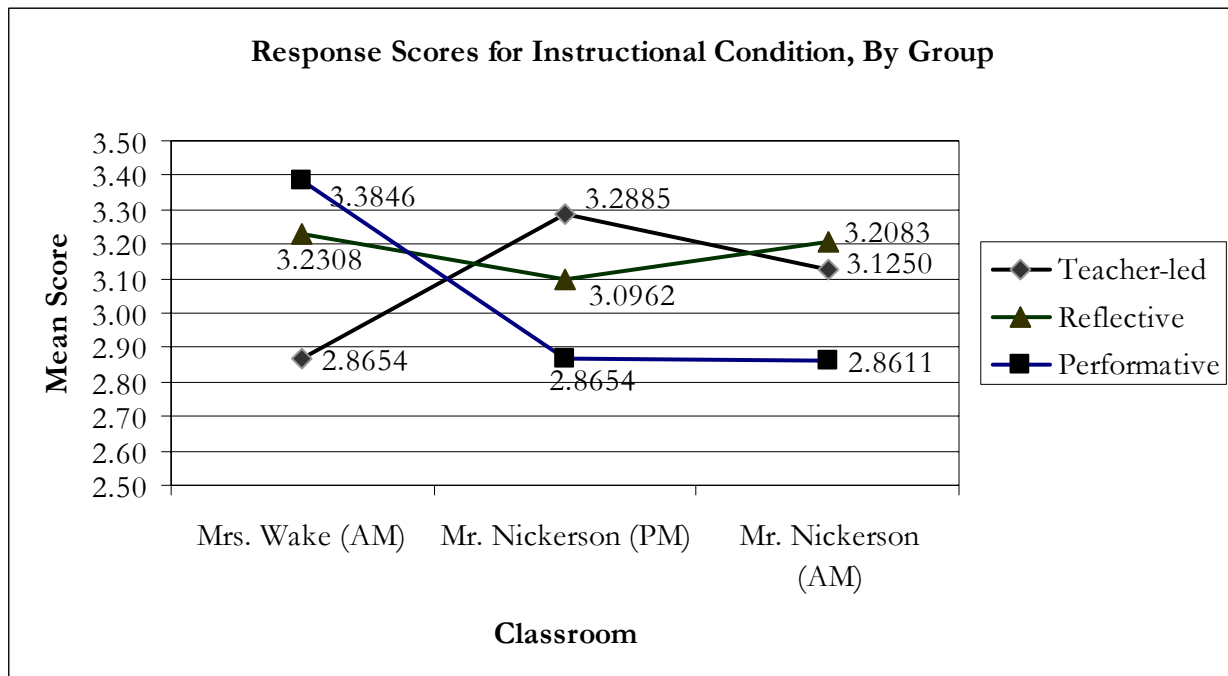
Measure: Interpretation

Source (Sphericity not assumed [*])	d/f	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Condition	1.895	.460	.696	.494
Condition * Group	3.789	1.901	2.875	.031
Error(condition)	71.178	.721		

^{*} Note: Data in this table were based on the more conservative Huynh-Feldt as Condition failed Mauchly's Test of Sphericity ($p=.037$).

However, a significant interaction effect occurs between condition and group ($F_{(3.789, 77.675)}=2.875, p=.031$). In other words, the groups had uneven performances in the instructional conditions when considering the dimension of response. These data are summarized in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 Response Scores by Instructional Condition, By Group



The sequence of instructional modes (teacher-led, reflective, and performance-based) was only partly responsible for the interaction between group and instruction. Mrs. Wellesley's (AM) class had poor showing for response ($\bar{X}=2.8654$) on their first attempts in the teacher-led mode, but improved and reached a plateau for the scores in the reflective and performative modes which they did in succession. This result followed the same pattern as the interpretation scores. Mr. Nickerson's (PM) group did not follow the sequence, however. They began with a strong showing on the reflective oral condition ($\bar{X}=3.0962$), and then the scores dropped for the performance-based instructional mode ($\bar{X}=2.8654$). However, the teacher-led mode that group y completed last did net the highest scores ($\bar{X}=3.2885$). This second group was the one that was out of sync with the pattern of other two groups. The third group, Mr. Nickerson's AM class once again steadily improved in the sequence that the instructional modes were presented. The performance-based mode (first) produced the lowest response scores ($\bar{X}=2.8654$), the teacher-led instruction that came second netted the second highest scores ($\bar{X}=3.1250$), and the final mode, reflective, netted the highest scores ($\bar{X}=3.2083$). The pattern of scores is familiar for both group x and z – after a slow start, scores improved to a plateau and stayed there.

C. *Did it make a difference for responding to the main ideas of a text whether the activity involved more talk or more writing?*

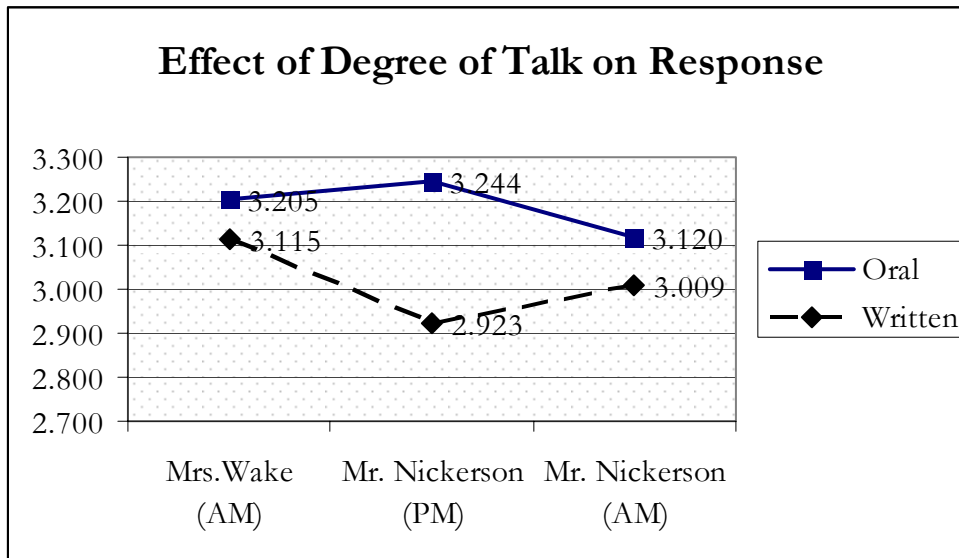
An analysis of the variance showed a significant difference between oral and written conditions for response ($F_{(1,41)}=4.237, p=0.046$) for oral over written conditions with no significant interaction with the group variable. These data are summarized below in Table 12.

Table 12 ANOVA for Oral versus Written Modes, For Response Scores

Measure: Response

Source	d/f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Oral (Sphericity assumed)	1	1.947	4.237	.046
Oral * Group	2	.330	.718	.494
Error(Oral)	41	.460		

Figure 5 Effect of Degree of Talk on Response



These data showed that talk was a significant factor for another reading response dimension – responding to an idea in the text. The act of reaching beyond the text to connect ideas was best served by authentic discussion in the classroom.

Main Finding #4

For making connections between an idea in a narrative text and knowledge of the world, activities for the engaging phase of reading that involve talk, whether whole class or small group, led to higher achievement on an extended written response than activities that were predominantly written.

Appreciation

Students were directed to show an appreciation for the way language choices or story elements were used to develop the text. The guide they were given asked them to “demonstrate appreciation for the methods the text uses to develop an idea”

A. *Were the group performances relatively even so that comparisons can reasonably be made among the three groups for appreciation?*

Group performances were relatively even ($F_{(2, 41)}=.908, p=.411$). Comparisons between the groups could be made. These data are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13 Effect of Group on Appreciation

Measure: Appreciation

Source	d/f	Mean Square	F^*	Sig.
Group	2	.889	.908	.411
Error(Oral)	41	.979		

*The F tests the effect of Group. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

B. *Did the mode of instruction (teacher-led, reflective, or performance-based) make a difference to students' appreciation of literary features in texts?*

No mode of instruction appears to have been significantly different from another for developing appreciation ($F_{(2, 82)}=1.155, p=.320$).

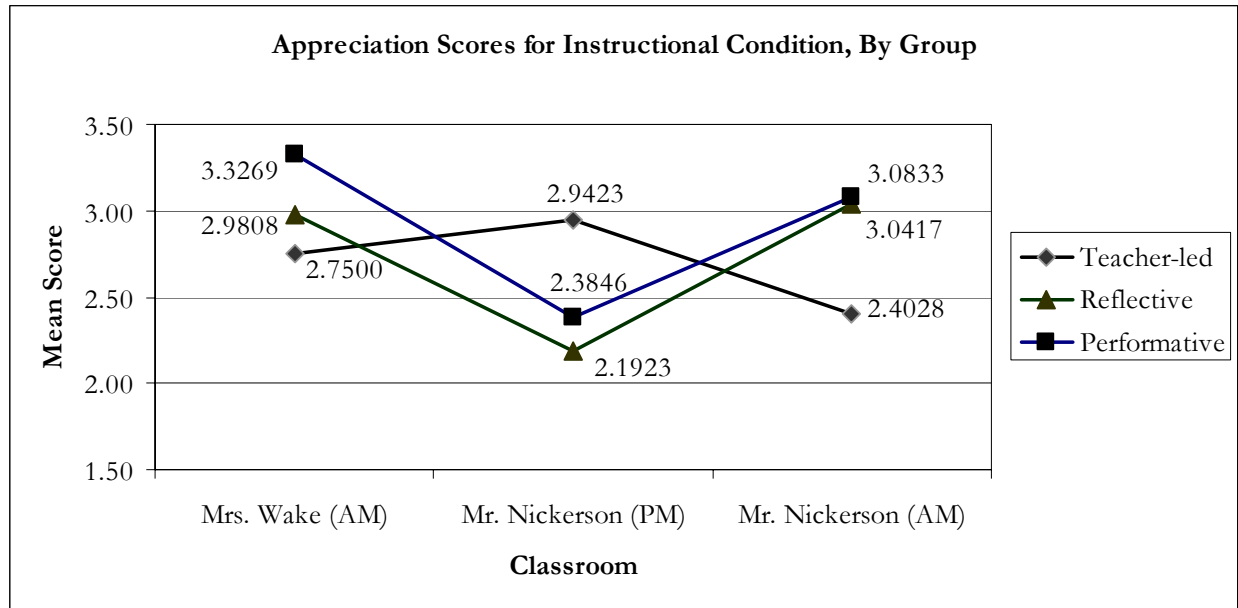
Table 14 Effect of Instructional Condition on Appreciation

Measure: Appreciation

Source (Sphericity Assumed)	d/f	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Condition	2	1.338	1.155	.320
Condition * Group	4	4.783	4.129	.004
Error(condition)	82	1.159		

However, a significant interaction does appear between the group and condition variables ($F_{(4, 82)}=4.129, p=.004$). In the analyses for interpretation and response, the uneven performances seemed attributable to the sequence in which the instructional modes were experienced, with weaker performances on whichever instructional mode came first. Two groups showed improvement, and then reached a plateau. For appreciation, these patterns are not quite the same. Mrs. Wellesley's (AM) class showed sequential improvement, with a mean of 2.7500 on the teacher-led, 2.9808 on reflective, and 3.3269 on the performance-based. In other words, their scores steadily got better as they repeated the tests. Mr. Nickerson's (PM) class showed the same sequential pattern, albeit with lower average scores: 2.1923 in reflective mode, 2.3846 in performative mode, and 2.9423 in teacher-led mode. For two groups at least, sequence seemed to matter more than instructional condition. However, the third group did not fall into pattern. Mr. Nickerson's (AM) class began relatively strongly in the performative mode with a mean of 3.0833, and then dropped to 2.4028, before recovering to 3.0833. Their low score was particularly affected by their work on the teacher / written learning activity. Perhaps the textbook questions for this short story were particularly ineffective for developing an appreciation of the literary features of the text. Another possible explanation could be that the morning class found it difficult to write about literary features in the particular short stories that came along with the reflective mode.

Figure 6 Appreciation Scores for Instructional Condition, By Group



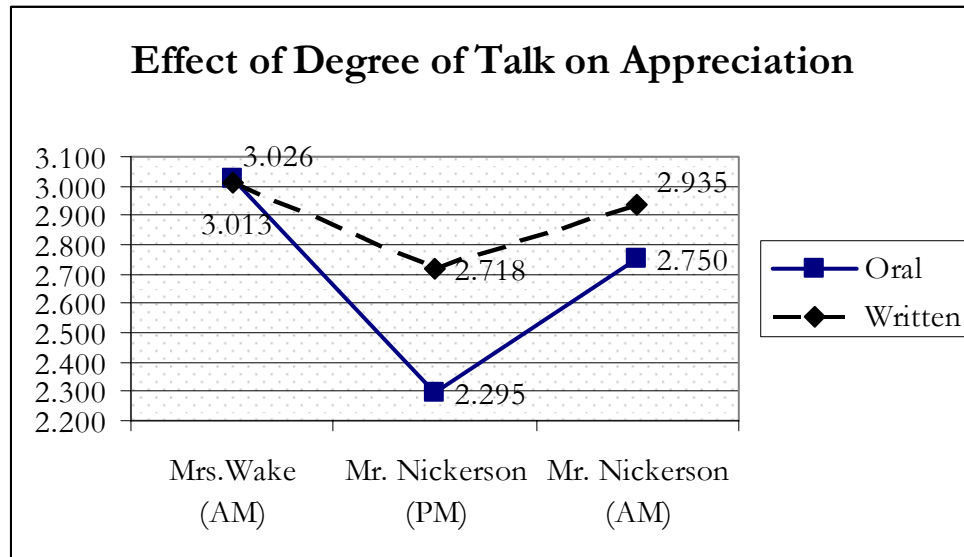
C. *Did it make a difference for appreciating the method(s) a text used to communicate an idea whether the activity involved more talk or more writing?*

The analysis of variance test, summarized in Table 15, showed near significance for the degree of talk variable, with no significant interaction with the group variable. The scores graphed in Figure 7 showed that, for the first time, the written scores outperformed the oral scores for both of Mr. Nickerson's groups, but Mrs. Wellesley's class had nearly identical appreciation averages for both oral and written modes.

Table 15 ANOVA for Oral versus Written Modes, For Appreciation Scores

Measure: Appreciation				
Source	d/f	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Oral (Sphericity assumed)	1	2.540	3.229	.080
Oral * Group	2	.929	1.182	.317
Error(Oral)	41	.787		

Figure 7 Effect of Degree of Talk on Appreciation

*Main Finding #5*

Activities for the enhancing phase of reading that involve writing led to somewhat higher achievement for appreciation than activities that were predominantly oral. Further investigation into the benefits of creative writing activities is warranted.

Summary

The data from this study led to several main findings. First, if the review of literature pointed to the validity of a short open-ended extended written response task for short fiction, it was heartening to learn that trained scorers could reliably score the papers on the criteria of interpretation, response, and appreciation. That said, criteria for interpretation did not work as well as the other two categories. Perhaps better training, better criteria, or fewer levels would have increased reliability.

Second, the sequence made a difference to the level of achievement in a particular instructional mode (teacher led, reflective, performance-based) – the earlier attempts to respond were worse than successive attempts, no matter the instructional condition.

Third, talking activities for engaging students in literature, whether whole class or small group, led to higher achievement for interpretation and response than activities that were predominantly written. These result seemed the strongest in the study.

Finally, writing showed some promise for helping students appreciate the methods used to develop ideas in a text. Further investigation of the creative writing featured in this study seems warranted.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Restatement of Purpose

This study has focused on learning activities designed for a progressive discovery of meaning, response, and appreciation of fictive text. Following a review of literature on reading response, the classroom activities were designed in three phases, engaging, enhancing, and evaluating (Vine & Faust, 1993).

In the engaging phase, students read the whole text independently, with no interruption, and immediately afterwards recorded impressions and associations briefly and in writing.

Students then took part in classroom activities that would enhance their brief, initial responses to the text: they reread, reconsidered, and expanded their envisionments. The nature of the learning activities in this phase varied so that comparisons could be made on their effect. Two kinds of activities were designed, an oral one that involved a significant degree of talk and a written one that asked student to record ideas on paper, in order to investigate the effect of talk on developing an envisionment.

In addition, three instructional modes were fashioned for the enhancing phase, one that was teacher-led, and two that were more collaborative: reflective and performance-based. The study should yield some results that show the effect of collaboration as compared to teacher-led activities, and also reveal some clues about the use of creative, performative activities to enhance response. When the three modes were combined with both oral and written deliveries, a total of six conditions resulted. The teacher-led / oral condition involved whole class discussion, while the teacher-led written

condition had students answer questions from the anthology. The reflective / oral condition saw students talk about the text in small groups, while the reflective written condition shared their responses in a chain letter to their classmates. The performance-based / oral activity took the form of readers' theatre, while the performance-based written assignment was a form of creative writing in which students emulated the style of the author.

A final evaluating phase required students to express their envisionment in writing in a manner that revealed an interpretation of a main idea, a response to that idea, and an appreciation for the techniques that developed the idea.

Three specific questions guiding the study were as follows:

1. Could an open-ended extended written response task for short fiction be reliably scored on the criteria of **interpretation**, **response**, and **appreciation**?
2. How do three instructional modes compare for promoting high quality written response to literature: **performance-based** collaborative mode, **reflective** collaborative mode, and **teacher-led** instructional mode?
3. Does it matter whether the learning activities are predominantly *oral* or *written*?

Limitations of Study

The study purposely limited the duration of the treatment – only about eighteen sixty-five minute classes – in order to guard against the maturation of subjects. However, seventeen and eighteen year olds in their senior year may also have acquired a well-practiced manner of responding to text that would be difficult to change in such a small time span. While the repeated measures design presented

the conditions in a different order to students, it is likely true student performances got better naturally as they became more acquainted with the short stories genre.

In this quasi-experimental design, subjects were not randomly assigned to groups – classrooms were kept intact, as is common in quantitative educational research. Because the subjects are not assigned randomly, a description of how the groups were composed is needed. Several factors shaped these particular classrooms. First, while all three groups had both male and female volunteers the ratio was different for each group. Group X with Mrs. Wellesley had nine female volunteers and four males, while Mr. Nickerson's Y class had the opposite – nine males and four females. Unlike these unbalanced ratios, the Z class was more even, with eight males and ten females. Since female achievement in reading response typically outpaces that of males, the uneven gender ratio among groups may make firm conclusions difficult to make.

The small sample of students also limits the generalizability of conclusions. Although more students volunteered, absenteeism with the onset of winter's cold and flu season reduced the number of participants in the three classes. Only forty-four students out of more than seventy in the three classes both volunteered and attended all the classes in those weeks. The attrition eliminated particular kinds of students. One group was typical students who simply caught a flu bug that circulated at the time of the study. Another group included several low ability readers and writers who characteristically have spotty attendance. Two males volunteers in group X, a male and a female in group Y, and two male and two females in group Z were among the lowest achievers in the course. Any interpretation of results, then, must recognize that those left in the study were average students – not academically driven enough to enroll in the International Baccalaureate program, but also not among the academically poorest achievers in the class.

Discussion of Results

The Validity of the Task

Overall, the task seemed academically engaging and appropriate for a curriculum that encourages students' own interpretations of text. The task and criteria need several adjustments.

One overall change is that the responses tended to consist of three separate paragraphs answering each question in turn, rather than a holistic response that addresses three qualities. Perhaps the bulleted list of directive statements should be taken off the task sheet and expressed as a single directive: "Write an extended response. In your response, interpret and respond to a main idea in the text, and show your appreciation for the techniques used to develop this idea."

Although the task was intended to be an extended response, many students wrote fragmented responses. Specifically, students interpreted a main idea, but responded to another idea, event, or situation unrelated to the first interpretation. The scoring criteria did not handle this anomaly well, and scorers by consensus agreed that, given the number of students who interpreted the extended response as three separate tasks, it was not fair to penalize fragmented responses. In future, instructions that are more specific, models, and preparatory material could address this fragmentation.

One marker wondered whether organization, style, and grammar should not have a place in the criteria. She suggested that for her purposes, she might continue to have students write extended responses to the short stories in the unit and she would give students feedback (but not grades) for some of their reflections, but at the end of the unit she would ask that students formalize one of their extended responses in an essay that would be scored for style and grammar as well. This possibility

has the advantage that students would reread a text again in the context of all of the reading, plus they would have some choice over which narrative they developed ideas about.

Ideally, the teachers encouraged students to move toward a more integrated pattern of response. We specifically pointed out patterns of structuring a response in separated and integrated ways (see Appendix B on page 126). Very few papers integrated interpretation, response and appreciation – most wrote three separate paragraphs, one for each. While in some ways the responses were easier to rate and give students feedback on, students miss the interrelated way that mature responses typically discuss text, alternating between meaning, emotion, and analysis of techniques. Further lesson design needs to explore how to model for students such an integrated response pattern. One problem may be that the task lists three questions separately. Perhaps a cue could be taken from one of the assessments for the International Baccalaureate English A1 course where the direction simple states “Write a commentary”, but the students have been well acquainted with the criteria of performance long before.

Overall, all four scorers agreed that the learning activities, the scoring criteria, and the extended response task were user-friendly and suitable for use in the classroom.

Task and Criteria for Interpretation

The criteria for interpretation need to be more specific about dealing with unusual papers. One paper that is difficult to deal with is one which bases an interpretation of a main idea on a limited part of the text. For example, in the short story by Alice Munro, some students condemned the old woman in the text, not taking into account that the central character takes pains to defend her later in the text. Markers didn’t know how to rate an answer that was specific and developed, but did not deal

with the whole text. Another difficult paper to score for interpretation is that one that makes a valid interpretive statement, but the support is over reliant on text details (essentially, retelling the story) without pointing out how these details develop the main idea. In other words, there is no analysis of the examples given.

Task and Criteria for Response

The scoring of response was smooth – it seemed the subjects were familiar with this task. However, some papers developed a personal response unrelated to the idea identified as the main idea in the text. These responses began with an interpretation of a main idea, but then developed a response to some other idea, event, or situation in the text. In other words, these papers were not extended responses, but separated into answers to three separate questions. For example, some papers interpreted the main idea of “Touching Bottom” as related to overcoming adversity in relationships, but then responded to the situation of learning to swim, without reference to relationships at all. The response criteria did not account for this anomaly. Responses might become more integrated if the criteria task rewarded it.

Task and Criteria for Appreciation

One issue that surfaced during scoring centred on the relatively low scores for appreciation of techniques. Scorers believed the problem stemmed in part from the question. “Examine how this main idea was presented in the text” was deemed too weak to indicate what was required by the criteria. Even though students were familiar with the criteria, the prompt may have been misleading. Scorers

suggested that a prompt such as “Analyze how techniques and elements in the text developed this main idea” might be more directive.

The appreciation scores were much lower than scores for interpretation and response, suggesting that the task of analysis was more difficult or unfamiliar to these students. Appreciation was one dimension where, at least for two classes, writing activities were better than oral ones. Perhaps the some activities were designed to consider of techniques and elements and others were less successful in building in that consideration. A possible implication is that perhaps appreciation needs to be split off of the task at times, depending on whether enhancing activities (and the texts themselves) lead or do not lead to a full consideration of techniques and elements.

Even if the question needs improvement, markers still felt that students in the study had a weak command of this task. Perhaps the school curriculum has not emphasized it as much in recent years with the arrival of new curriculum, but the facility many students had with literary analysis was weak. Perhaps it is also true that students have always had more difficulty with this task. They certainly need, as Gee (2004) might suggest, an apprenticeship in the discourse patterns of literary analysis. Many students simply didn’t have the words (especially the operative verbs, such as emphasize, contrasted, painted, etc.) to construct sentences that offered critical comment.

The Reliability of the Instrument

With strong coefficients for the reliability reviews, it seems clear that a task like this one could be used on a wider scale for classroom-based assessment or large-scale assessment, and could be scored with some reliability.

Two general suggestions emerge from reflecting on the scoring. First is that perhaps the scale has too many categories to reliably classify papers. Perhaps offering just five categories with scores 0,

1, 2, 3, 4 would lead to more agreement. It seemed that markers were especially reluctant to award a score of 5. Among the 1586 scores compiled in the study by marker 1 and 2, a score of 5 was only given by either marker 1 or marker 2 thirty times. That means that fives are awarded less than two percent of the time. It is possible that the criteria that students need to meet for a five are too lofty given the time constraints of the task and the abilities of the students. For example, the terms “fresh insight”, “insightful conclusions”, or “complex appreciation” seem very demanding.

More specific suggestions pertain to the criteria in each category. During table discussion, markers made several comments that might explain the lower reliability for interpretation. First, they found it difficult to rate long responses that relied too heavily on a summary of the text. Another anomalous circumstance occurred when interpretations of an idea in a text were explained with evidence from outside of the text. This kind of response was difficult to separate clearly from the response category. One marker also suggested that comprehension (or understanding) is related but separate construct from interpretation, and that some discrepancy in coding responses could have been avoided with separate criteria for each.

While a solid coefficient was turned in for the next category, several markers noted challenges in scoring the response category. First, some answers would consider a single text-world connection in depth, while others would make multiple connections, but not develop them. While this kind of answer seemed legitimate, the criteria favoured the answer with depth rather than breadth. The markers also commented that the task should be clarified. In the orientation material (see Appendix B) students were told that a personal connection could include any knowledge or experience in the real world or in other texts. However, some students wrote “I have never had this happen to me”. Markers suggested that the word “personal” be dropped from the task.

Markers commented that the appreciation criteria were easy to apply for two reasons. First, many students in the sample had very poor responses on this dimension, and the limited quality made for straightforward scoring. Second, older teachers pointed out that literary appreciation was emphasized in their own education and in previous provincial curricula, so they were comfortable scoring this kind of reading response.

Discussion of Instructional Activities

Why did instructional mode make little difference in the way student responded? After the study concluded, the definitions laid out for “performance-based” and “reflective” seemed weak. Both modes involved creativity in the sense of imaginative openness. Both modes involved analysis. Further study of the precise nature of creative activities employed for enhancing reading response is warranted. A discussion of each mode and each activity follows.

Discussion of Results from Teacher-led Conditions

Teacher-led / Oral – Whole Class Discussion

This study has shown statistical evidence that talking and feedback were significant factors in enhancing reading response, while so-called instructional mode (teacher-led, performance-based, and reflective) did not show significant differences. There is some evidence here that a whole-class discussion of a short story would at least be better than answering questions in the text book, creative writing, or collaborative written responses, but little indication of whether the better oral activity should be whole class discussion, small group discussion, or a drama activity.

Practice and feedback likely caused the significant interaction effects in this study, and blurred the comparisons of instructional modes. However, one additional factor may have been related to the method for designing the activities. The teacher-researcher involved in the study used a backwards design method (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998); that is, starting with the end assessment and designing activities that would hit those targets. The students started the unit with an overview of what the end goal looked like, and the process of getting there. During the unit, the teacher gained a sense of confidence not previously felt in teaching high school reading. The answer to the question “Teacher, why are we doing this?” was clearer to both the teacher and the students during this unit. When the purpose of reading instruction was brought to the fore, the nature of the learning environment seemed different – more focused – for *all* of the conditions, perhaps blurring the traditional definition of teacher-led activities. More precise distinctions between instructional modes should be made in future research, in a study with fewer levels.

Teacher-led / Written

The relatively poor result of the textbook questions may not surprise most people, but one must keep in mind that this up-to-date anthology reflected modern reader response curriculum, asking questions that were congruent with a response theory. What seems apparent is that it mattered little whether the question was focused and relevant: if students were unwilling to engage, the activity did not work. This is not a critique of the way the textbook questions were written, but rather a cue to teachers that they must do more than assign good questions if they want students to develop meaning.

In one way, the study showed that the success of an activity depended on how specifically it directed students to act in literate ways. Take the behaviour of rereading as an example. Other activities required students to go back into the text, reread, and copy out quotations. For example, in

the reflective oral (small group discussion) task students copied significant quotes onto their chart paper, and in the performance-based oral condition they used snippets of text for their scripts. When students answered the textbook questions, on the other hand, they were less likely to reread the text and to use quotation in their notebooks. Many, especially the weaker readers, felt comfortable answering the questions in a very limited manner after a single reading of the text. The behaviour of students in this condition seemed guided by the typical ways students were previously socialized to work from a textbook. Perhaps the variable that made the textbook questions less effective (and perhaps the reflective written condition, too) was the degree to which students engaged in a rereading of the text.

Discussion of Results from the Reflective Conditions

Reflective Oral

Clearly, talking helped the students in the reflective oral condition achieve higher scores. Upon reflecting on the design of the task, it is certainly possible that an extraneous variable was at least partly responsible for the high results. This condition included not only collaboration and talk, but also visual representation (see Figure 9), and that this factor may have enhanced the results. In the task groups were asked to talk about the text and record ideas by drawing pictures and snippets of text on a piece of poster paper. When Langer refers to the process of “making an envisionment”, it is certainly possible that representing ideas graphically played a part in the results rather than talking alone.

Based on observations of two groups, these poster visualizations generated more discussion, more rereading of the text, and generally a better sense of the specific situation of the text. More

investigation of the role of representation to the development of a response is necessary to confirm its effect.

However, while it is possible that representation enhanced the results, the result is certainly confirmed by other studies. Locally, for example, Reimer (2001) at the University of Manitoba found that “The level of achievement in reading comprehension and response for grade twelve students in a social constructionist approach was far superior to either the transactional or the transmission approaches” (86).

A social constructionist approach to instruction, a methodology in which students use dialogue to build meaning, might suggest a limited role for the teacher. However, it would be worth investigating reader response more fully to find out whether results for reading response methodology are similar to those for writing. George Hillocks’ (1986) meta-analysis of research on writing methodology might provide some direction. Hillocks showed that the ‘telling’ approach (similar to the teacher-led conditions in the present study), which he labels ‘current traditional,’ was likely most common and least effective. In this mode, teacher gives information about what writing should look like, and expects students to produce it. Hillocks also reviewed the approach of those who minimize teacher talking and let kids write freely. In this, ‘natural process’ model, students wrote freely while the teacher coached on the side. While better than the model that predominated (it at least recognized writing as a process), this approach was not the most effective. Hillocks’ concluded that a hybrid of the



Figure 8 Detail from a Reflective Oral Poster

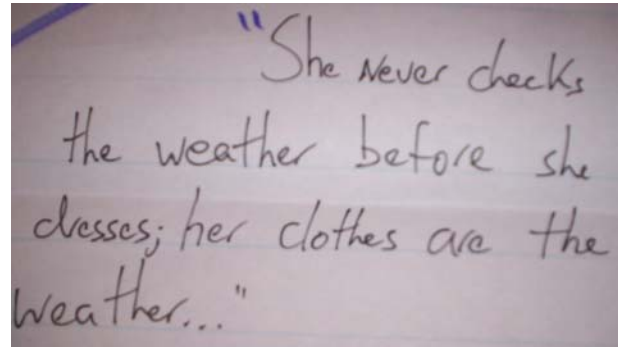


Figure 9 Snippet of Text Included on Reflective Oral Poster

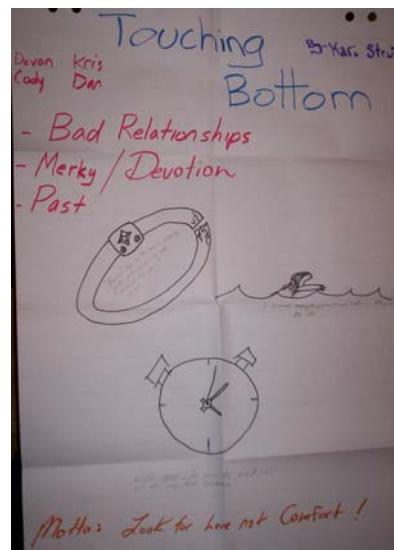


Figure 10 A Poster from the Reflective Oral Condition

two pedagogies was most effective, “I have labeled the most effective mode of instruction environmental, because it brings teacher, student, and materials more nearly into balance” (Hillocks, 1986, 247). Hillocks’ environmental mode balanced the “high student involvement” of the natural process mode, with “clear objectives” and “structured problem-solving activities” (247). Rather than teaching the product, the teacher led students in strategies to apply to solving the problems of writing,

strategies that integrate both social and cognitive aspects of writing. In essence, structure and freedom, direction and choice, came into balance. His analysis of the research showed that the environmental mode of instruction is "...four times more effective than the traditional presentational mode and three times more effective than the natural process mode" (p. 247). As Applebee (1986) interprets the Hillocks' (1986) meta-analyses, the ideal writing pedagogy is a "structured process" (p. 105).

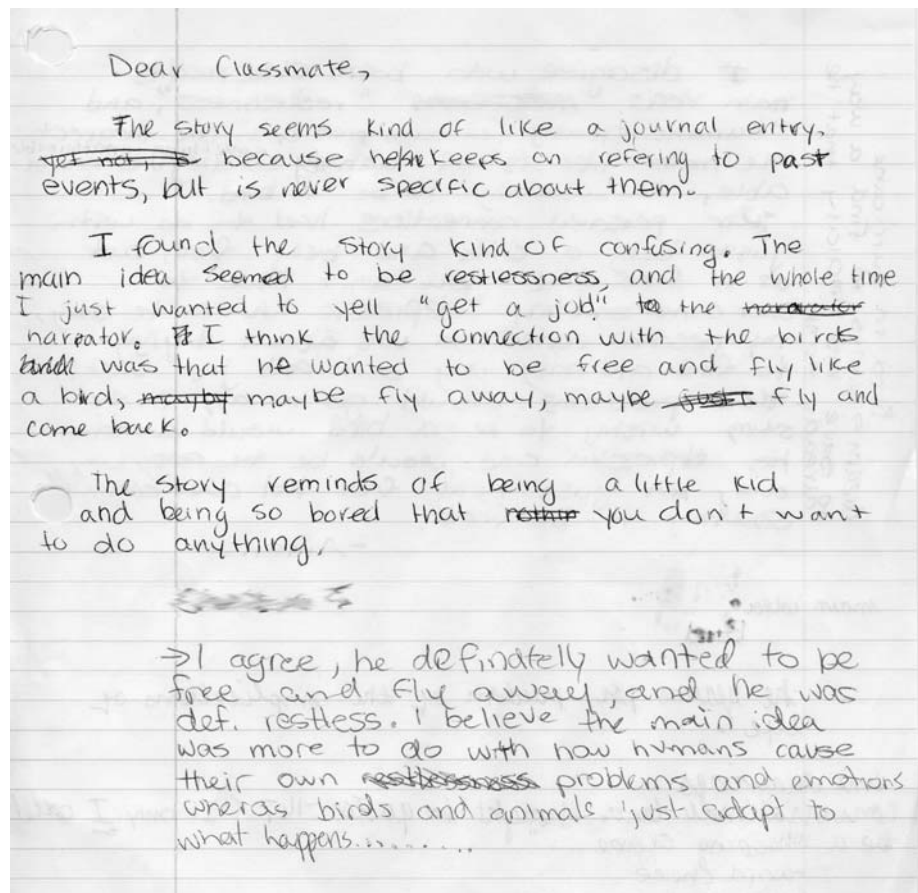
Effective methodology for reading response should be no different than for writing instruction. The reflective / oral condition in this study followed a clearly delineated process with clear objectives and a structured task. Students will excel in such conditions when given the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and the teacher using talk. In essence, one main recommendation from this study is that Hillocks' (1986) environmental mode of writing instruction be extended to reading response methods.

Reflective Written

The letter in Figure 11 and Figure 12 represents a typical "Dear Classmate" letter from the reflective written condition, this one in response to Douglas Coupland's "Things That Fly". In this letter, students conversed on paper rather than orally. In general terms, the activity seemed to garner a high participation rate. However, through anecdotal observations, the activity was somewhat flawed in its design. In a chain letter, students produced responses that were addressed to a random classmate. This situation is unlike genuine, face to face conversation, supporting Britton (1972)'s argument that uttered response is an important part of teen identity formation. Some students felt less responsibility for their utterances about the text. For example, some of the students in boy-dominated Group Y created silly responses and signed their papers with made up names.

In addition, once students became committed in writing to an interpretation at the beginning of their first letter, they hung on to that interpretation and tended not to agree with others, even when their interpretations were somewhat similar. However, students were more willing to come to a consensus, to allow meaning to be tentative and ambiguous, when they participated in small group discussion.

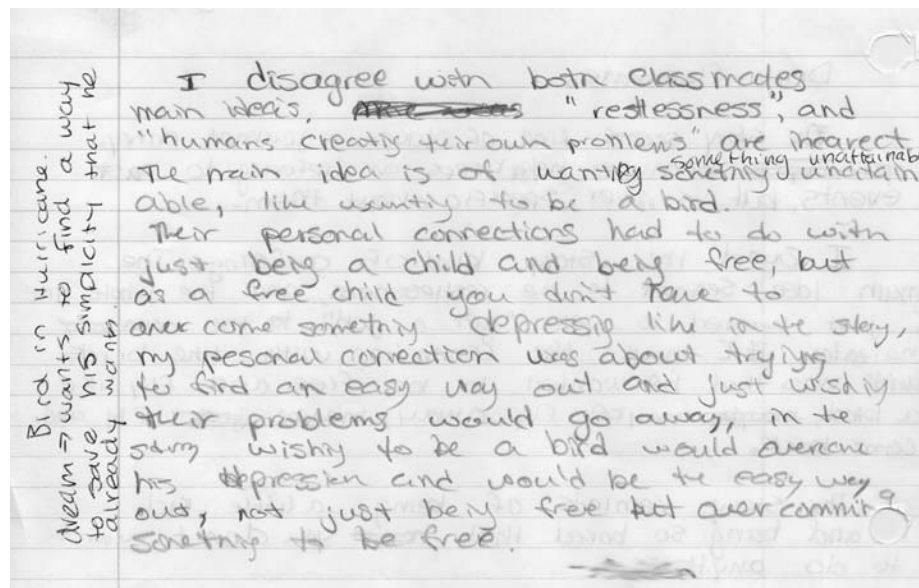
Figure 11 Student Sample from the Reflective Written Condition (part 1)



When compared to the results for the reflective / oral condition, these results underscore the importance of talk (i.e. oral exchange). If it were *only* collaborative activity that was needed to boost achievement, then this condition should have produced similar scores, but clearly, talking is important

for both interpretation and response. Students had the opportunity to express their ideas about the text and to exchange them with other students.

Figure 12 Student Sample from the Reflective Written Condition (part 2)



Discussion of Results from the Performance-based Condition

In the performance-based oral condition, students were asked to write and perform a short piece of reader's theatre. While, like the other conditions that involved talk, this condition showed promise, it was not clearly a superior task. Frankly, some students were not engaged by the performance activity. This disconnect seemed strange from a group who had been so willing to perform during the *Hamlet* unit earlier in the course. However, their expectations of a short story unit did not seem to include script creation or performance, and some students (especially the boys)

seemed to buck the activity. Also, although a relatively even amount of time was given to each activity for the purpose of the study, to be conducted realistically some of these activities simply needed more time. The performative oral condition in particular seemed rushed for the time provided. Some groups had barely finished three-quarters of a page of script when other groups were ready to perform.

Figure 13 Typical Student Response in Performance-based Oral Condition

Script

30

In a suburban strong hold of success and young families a tribunal of legal descent is gathered under the disguise of a birthday party with a true meaning of a politically correct mutiny.

Ms Fullerton's neighbors gather for a birthday party. After cake and fun for the children the adults get on the subject of Ms Fullerton's shanti and the mark it make on their perfect little community. A heated discussion is started and it seems the vote is unanimous. There is Mary however, possibly Ms Fullerton's only ~~att~~ friend. She objects to all the other suburban's surprise but there is no stopping progress as they say. The young mothers and fathers figure out a legal way to just ~~poof~~ Fullerton, ~~yet~~ she would get lots of money out the deal but Mary still objected.

The decision was made and nothing Mary could say would stop the bulldozer rolling over ~~the~~ Ms Fullerton's house.

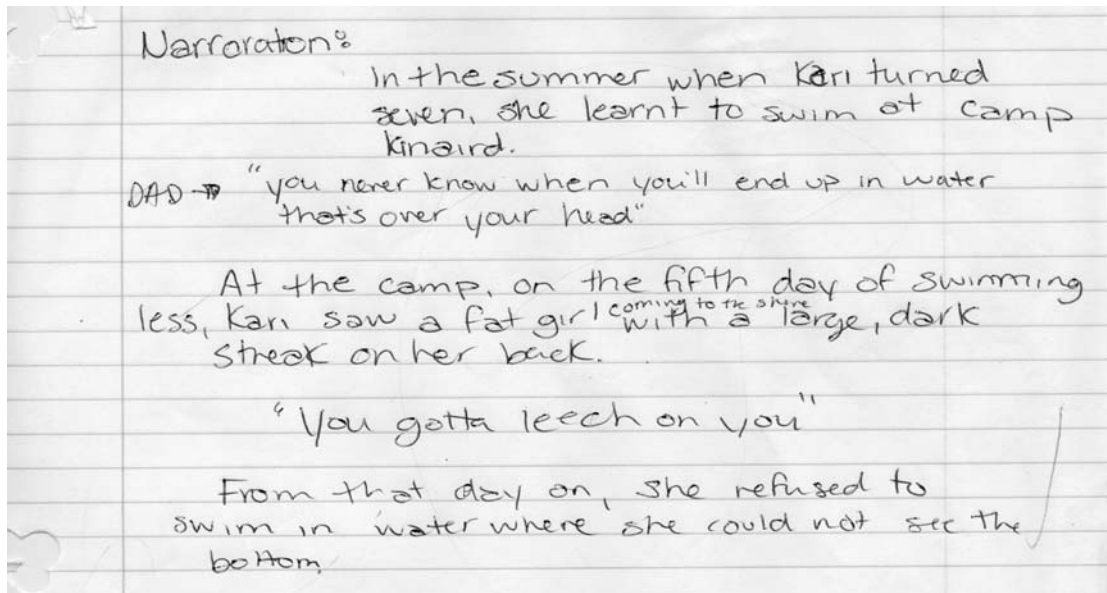
The excerpt from a script shown in Figure 13 shows a bit of what one student produced for the performance-based oral condition. Based on Alice Munro's short story, "The Shining Houses," the paragraphs represent only the narration for this group. In between each paragraph above, other students in the group read bits of dialogue with expression. Because of the somewhat illegible handwriting, the text appears below retyped and edited:

In a suburban stronghold of success and youth, families a tribunal of legal descent is gathered under the disguise of a birthday party, with a true meaning of a politically correct mutiny. Mrs. Fullerton's neighbours gather for a birthday party. After cake and fun for the children, the adults get on the subject of Mrs. Fullerton's shanty and the mark it makes on their perfect little community. A heated discussion I started and it seems the vote is unanimous. There is Mary, however, possibly Mrs. Fullerton's only friend. She objects to all the other suburbians surprise but there is no stopping progress, as they say. The mothers and fathers figure out a legal way to bust poor Fullerton. She would get lots of money out of the deal, but Mary still objected.

The decision was made and nothing Mary could say would stop the bulldozer rolling over Mrs. Fullerton's house.

The narrator's voice in this particular excerpt seems dramatic and filled with independent interpretation of the text. If all students in the room were engaged in the creation and performance of this scene, I am confident that results would have been better.

Figure 14 Snippet of Script from Performance-based Oral



One major observation needs to be added to contextualize the results for this condition. Engagement with this activity varied greatly within all three classes. Some members of each class, particularly males who typically underachieve, simply did not participate willingly in this activity. They found the instructions complicated and the point of the activity unclear. I noted in my journal for both classes that both the participation level and the relative success of each reader's theatre performance varied greatly. In a post-study interview, the cooperating teacher in the study found the same result. Also, she wondered whether she unintentionally communicated her own hesitation and unfamiliarity with the task to students. It's possible that this type of learning activity is unfamiliar and threatening for some students, or perhaps does not match their preferred learning styles. Given higher engagement rate, it is likely that results could have been better.

It is also possible that the performative / oral condition wasn't as oral as it should have been. The readers' theatre task that was given to them involved script writing to a greater degree than was

imagined in the design of the activity. Perhaps process drama, improvisation, or other more purely oral forms of drama would produce better results. The same might be said of drama activities that use a more kinesthetic approach. If the reflective / oral condition benefited from representation in the form of drawing, perhaps the dramatic activity would have been enhanced with the use of movement, tableaux or other forms of visual representation. While students were told that they could use visual means during their performance of scripts, none did.

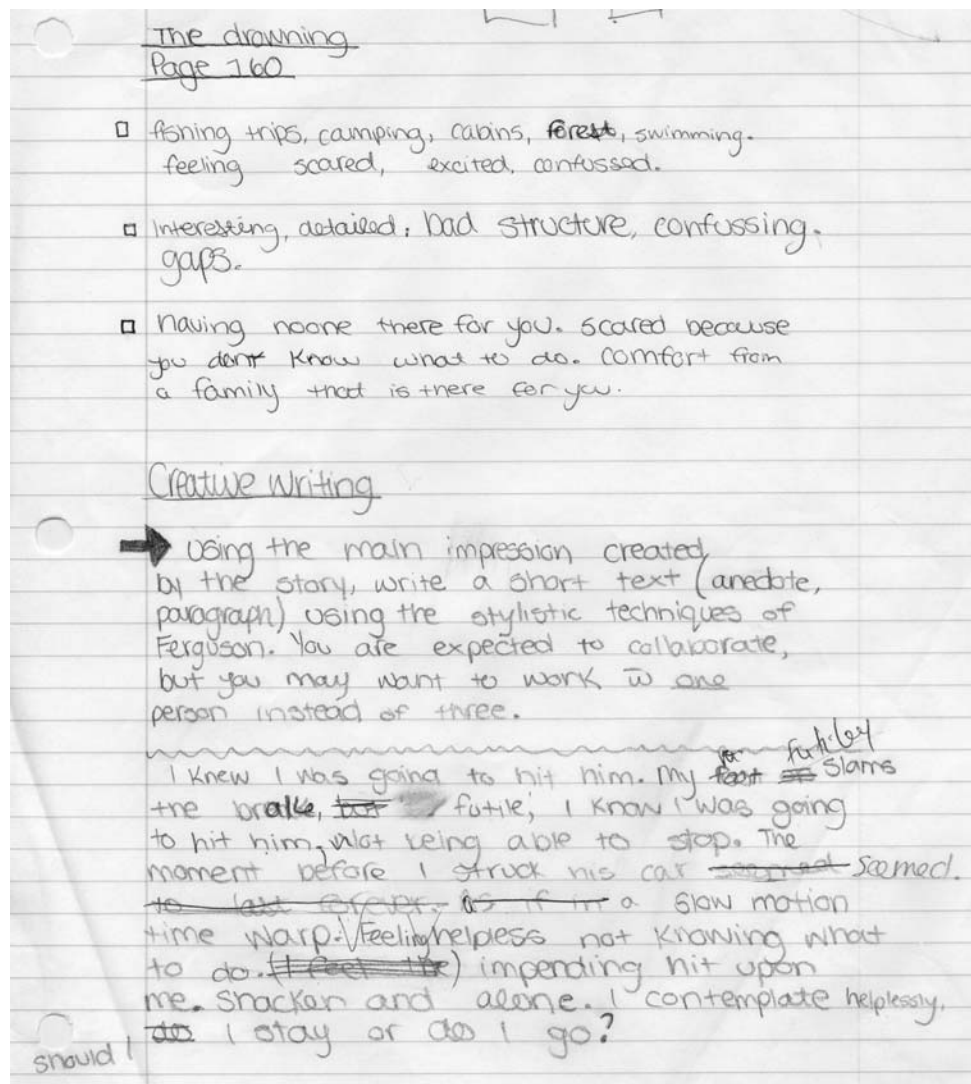
Performance-based / Written

Students found this activity engaging, but the instructions seemed complicated to students. One reason for the confusion resulted from an inability to analyze style. Since students were required to emulate the author's style, most were scrambling to identify the features of style in a way that they had not done for any other activity. It is little wonder that scores for appreciation rose for this component. Although students collaborated on this analysis with peers, students in all three classes frequently called on the help of the teacher to discuss elements of the author's style.

Another reason the activity caused confusion was the instruction that they write about a idea that was connected with the idea in the text. This task seemed too complicated to some students, in some cases because they interpreted this instruction too literally. For example, some claimed that since they had never witnessed anyone drown, they could not complete the task based on Mark Ferguson's "A Drowning". Instead, I had wanted them to write about facing mortality for the first time, or understanding the power of nature, or whatever their impression of the story had been. This exchange reveals the importance of establishing the specific situation of the text first, before attempting to elaborate an interpretation.

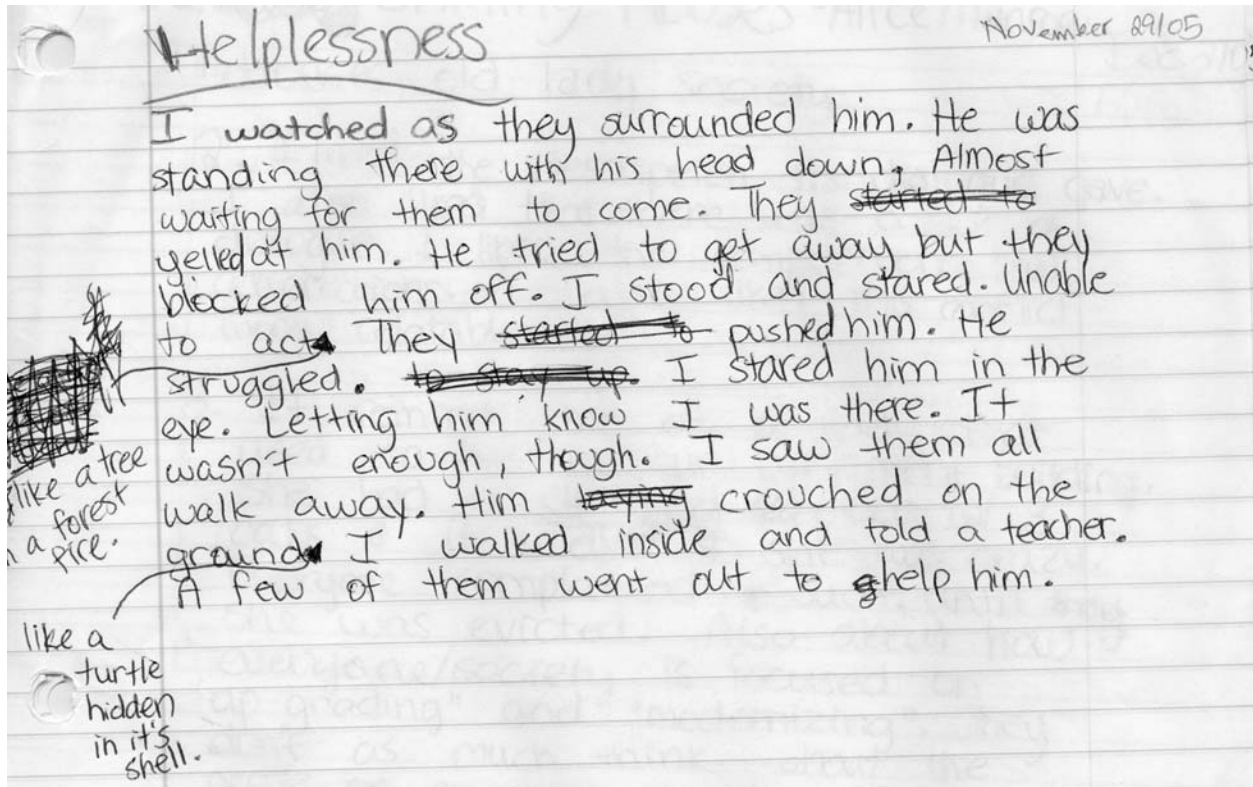
Despite some confusion with the instructions, most students enjoyed the task. Some examples of student writing appear in Figure 15 and Figure 16.

Figure 15 Typical Student Response in Performance-based Written Condition



"I knew I was going to hit him. My foot futilely slams the brake; I know I was going to hit him, not being able to stop. The moment before I struck his car seemed a slow motion time warp, feeling helpless not knowing what to do. I feel the impending hit upon me, shaken and alone. I contemplate helplessly, should I stay or do I go?"

Figure 16 Typical Student Response in Performance-based Written Condition 2



I watched as they surrounded him. He was standing there with his head down, almost waiting for them to come. They yelled at him. He tried to get away but they blocked him off. I stood and stared, unable to act, like a tree in a forest fire. They pushed him. He struggled. I stared him in the eye, letting him know I was there. It wasn't enough, though. I saw them all walk away, him crouched on the ground like a turtle hidden in its shell. I walked inside and told a teacher. A few of them went out to help him.

The creative writing in Figure 16 is somewhat successful in identifying a significant idea in the text, although the content is reduced only to “helplessness.” This overall impression is not wrong, but the activity demanded no further rereading than going with this one overall impression. It should not have been a surprise that the activity did not stand out for helping students interpret and respond to

text. However, what Figure 16 does show is a degree of success in emulating the conversational style in the writing of Douglas Coupland, with short choppy sentences and accessible similes. The similes were added as two peers compared which of Coupland's devices they had used, so the collaboration was as important to the development of the writing. This focus on style resulted in near significant scores for appreciation.

Discussion of Oral vs. Written Modes

The central finding of this study is that talking is important for students to interpret and respond to texts, and that writing seems to have an effect on engendering a student's appreciation of the literary techniques and elements evident in the text.

First, the study confirms the research that responses are deepened through authentic discussion (Langer, 2002). The positive results for interpretation and response for the collaborative, oral activities (i.e. reflective and performance-based) show that students can actively construct the meaning of a text when the teacher does not dominate the conversation (Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995). Perhaps the linguist, Gee (2004), offers the most insight in why conversation is central to building meaning from and making connections with story

...language is tied to people's experiences of situated action in the material and social world.

Furthermore, these experiences are stored in the mind/brain, not in terms of language, but in something like dynamic images tied to perception both of the world and of our own bodies' internal states, and feelings..." (p. 49).

The activities that produced the highest results in this study were social, tied to action, and therefore infused with images, moods, and feelings. Engagement more than any other factor seemed to matter most for quality reading response. Activities that engender engagement through structured

collaboration, whether they are more reflective, performance-based, or even teacher-led, will lead to better responses to literature.

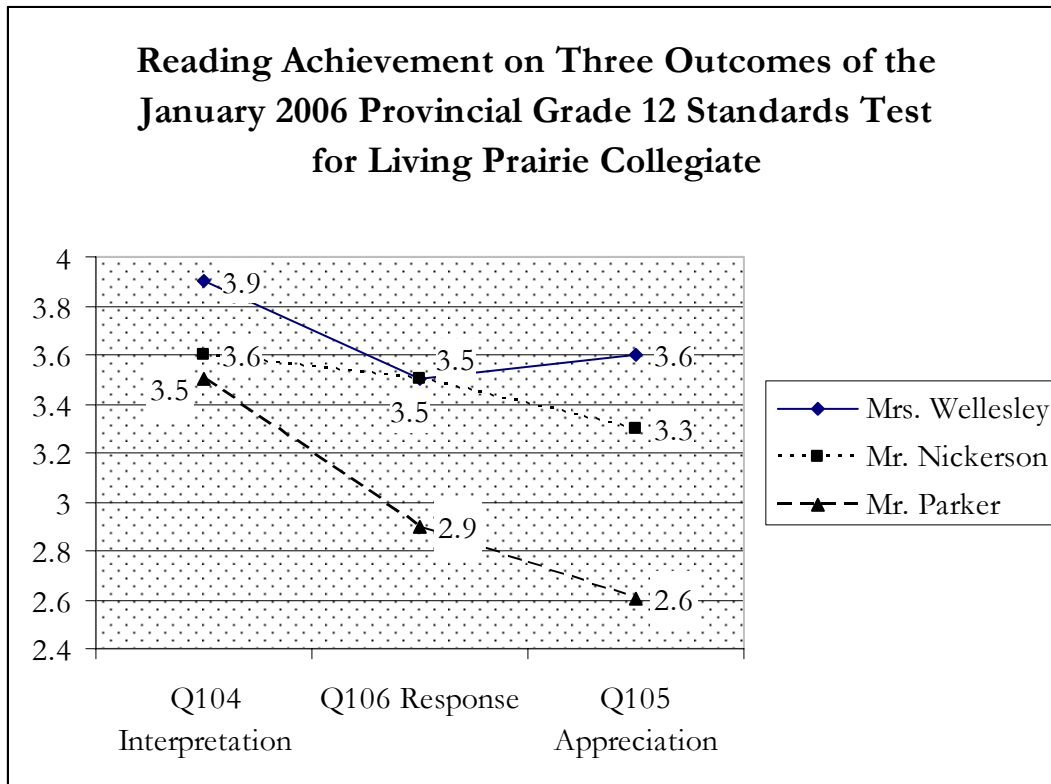
Descriptive Feedback

The study shows the importance of talk for building meaning, a result that held even more than the sequence of instruction. However, a result that is at least equally important has to be the role that feedback on specific criteria had on performance. Students wrote better responses when they had several opportunities to practice and received feedback on a descriptive rubric. This finding may seem self-evident to most, surely, but it underscores how futile it is for teachers who believe they can give one big test at the end of the unit or who want to prepare students for an open-ended exam in language arts by reviewing this kind of a task in a review session the week before the test happens. Gains in reading response simply do not happen in that manner.

An indication of the power of this practice and feedback was evident at the end of the school year when these students took a provincial ELA test. Although this is essentially an unscientific observation, the three classes of students at Living Prairie Collegiate who took part in the study outperformed students in the other two classes in the school who were not part of the study on the provincial standards test questions that targeted the outcomes for interpretation, response and appreciation (see Figure 17 on page 116). Mr. Parker (a pseudonym) taught the other two classes, and his course was designed with similar books (*Catcher in the Rye*, *Hamlet*) and assignments as the other classes, except for the unit in the present study. It may be more than a coincidence that the highest scores on these outcomes were turned in by students in the study, and that the improvements were

particularly noticeable in the categories of response and appreciation. Likely, the frequency of writing extended responses and the feedback students got on these papers made the difference.

Figure 17 Reading achievement on the Provincial Standards Test



Summary of Implications for Teaching

One might conclude from this study that:

- 1) The task and criteria created for this study are appropriate for a classroom that values the social construction of meaning.

- 2) The task and criteria created for this study can be used with a moderately high degree of reliability and might be appropriate as a shared classroom-based assessment tool
- 3) Talk is important for building an interpretation of text.
- 4) Talk is important for responding to text.
- 5) Given structured opportunities for collaboration, texts can be investigated by senior students with a great deal of independence
- 6) Visual representation might hold the key for building “envisionments” of texts.
- 7) Creative writing can help students appreciate the author’s craft.
- 8) Repeated practice and feedback enhances reading response.
- 9) Rereading is a necessary activity for enhancing reading response.

Recommendations for Further Research

Because this study was limited in its scope, further testing of the tasks, criteria, and modes of instruction are clearly necessary.

A larger sample size would produce results that are more reliable. While three full classrooms were chosen to take part in the study, the participation rate declined because of dropouts and absenteeism. A broader spectrum of students would have made the results more generalizable. The students in the study were mid-western suburban students from the “regular academic” program. The study’s results would be more conclusive if students from inner city or rural schools, or students from advanced academic tracks such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate students were also included in the study.

The study was specifically designed to be somewhat compressed in terms of time to guard against maturation of subjects becoming a significant factor in the study's results. Particular activities needed additional time, especially the performative conditions. It might have been illuminating to see what effect homework might have had too, since all work was completed in the classroom for the duration of the study.

One definite avenue of reading and response that was a limitation of this study was the single form of text chosen to investigate. While the lessons, task, and criteria were appropriate for narrative, fictive text, they could easily be adapted to visual art, poetry, non-fiction, and film. It would be worth knowing whether this single set of criteria would hold up for extended responses written about other genre. I do not see a reason why they would not, but it would take regular use in the classroom to find out the subtleties.

Finally, what was missing from the earlier theoretical framing of the task and criteria was a focus on formative assessment rather than on summative evaluation. Students needed more descriptive feedback on the whole range of reading behaviours that lead up to that final written response. For example, many weaker responses in the study showed these characteristics:

1. distractibility during reading and a slow reading rate,
2. a rush to judgement at the end of reading; and unwillingness to express impressions and associations,
3. a lack of engagement in rereading the text,
4. little sharing of own meaning with others – passivity or off-task behaviour,
5. frequent absences from class and other signs of the fear of failure, such as contributing silly answers or refusing to complete the task.

As Johnston and Costello (2005) point out:

Formative assessment requires not only noticing and making productive sense of the literate behaviours that occur, but also arranging classroom literacy practices that encourage children to act in literate ways and that make literate learning visible and audible (262).

The reading practice and assessment in this study needs to be bolstered by checklists, self-reflections, observations, and conversations that help students understand how to act in a way that develops response. Further research should investigate the effect of formative assessment in this context.

Appendix A – Lesson Plans

Lesson Plans for Group X (Mrs. Wellesley)

Teacher-led conditions – oral and written

First, students will read Kari Strutt’s short story “Touching Bottom”. This narrative features a powerful extended metaphor, swimming against a tidal current, to represent the experience of trying to make a bad relationship work. Students will be asked to respond to the short story with teacher-led activities to help them enhance their understanding of the story.

Day 1-2

1. Acquaint students with the nature of the extended response task
 - A. Use conventional lecture accompanied by overhead and a handout (see appendix).
Note that the task appears on the Senior 4 ELA Standards test, and that we will have six chances to practice.
 - i. Comprehension / Interpretation
 - ii. Response
 - iii. Appreciation
2. Examine patterns for the extended response, and show models.
3. Read the Kari Strutt’s short story “Touching Bottom” (p. 124-131)
4. Record, in your notes, brief responses to the following three questions:
 - Without hesitating, what three things pop into your mind as you think back on the reading you have just done?
 - What thoughts and feelings do you have about the work?
 - What does the work remind you of?

Day 3-4

1. Oral teacher-led discussion of Strutt’s “Touching Bottom”.
 - a. Encourage students to share the impression of the text they recorded yesterday. Ask for several points of view, and encourage textual support for assertions about the main idea of a text.
 - b. Cue students to respond to ideas that have been inferred. Encourage specific connections between the ideas and other texts and experiences.
 - c. Discuss feature of the text. Encourage students to suggest ways that the ideas was developed in the text.
2. Distribute Reading response test #1 with the following oral instructions:
 - a. Write an extended response to the short story “Touching Bottom”. You will have a forty (40) minute time limit in which to complete this response. You may use your books and your notes. Please observe these additional guidelines:
 - i. Write in blue or black ink only.
 - ii. Do not talk during the test session
 - iii. Approximately 40 minutes has been allotted for you to work on your response. If you have time remaining, please sit quietly until the 40 minutes is done.

- iv. You may use the available dictionaries, thesaurus, and style handbooks at any time.
- v. Extra paper is available should you run out of room.
- vi. Except for your name in the top left corner, please disguise your identity on the response as much as possible (use pseudonyms or fake names when relating real experiences).
- vii. You may refer to the scoring criteria and the handout given at any time.

Day 5-6

1. Read “A Drowning” by Mark Ferguson. (p. 160-163) (15 min)
2. The learning activity for this anthology selection will be teacher-led and written. After reading the short story, provide answers individually in notebooks to anthology activities 1 (a –e) on page 163 of the anthology. Write responses in complete sentences. (20-25 min).
3. Follow up with whole class review of student responses, with teacher controlling (and perhaps dominating) the discussion. Typically, teachers stand at the front, call on students to provide responses, and weave together student answers into the logical flow of discussion.

Day 7-8

1. Write reading response test #2. (40 minutes maximum). Repeat the guidelines for response given on Day 1.
2. With time remaining, read Alice Munro’s “Shining Houses”.

With the next two short stories, we will use collaborative learning activities will be used to engage students in the text. Students will first consider award-winning Canadian author Alice Munro’s “The Shining Houses” from her 1968 collection *Dance of the Happy Shades*. In the narrative, a young wife summons up the courage to take a stand against her husband and her neighbors who want to force an elderly lady off her dilapidated property to protect the property values in their new suburb. The short story considers a variety of salient themes – the generation gap, peer pressure, and so-called progress. Group X will take part in a reflective oral response activity that has them reflect on the tensions felt by the protagonist before writing response test number 3.

1. Complete the reading of Munro’s “The Shining Houses”.
2. Record, in your notes, brief responses to the following three questions:
 - Without hesitating, what three things pop into your mind as you think back on the reading you have just done?
 - What thoughts and feelings do you have about the work?
 - What does the work remind you of?

Day 9

1. In a group of four, share your first impressions of the text. Sort these first impressions into categories.
2. In the same group of four, on chart paper, collaboratively trace the development of these main impressions. You have 40 minutes to complete this task (25 minutes to record ideas on the chart, 15 minutes for sharing).
 - a. Find the episodes in the text that are relevant to the main idea or impression that stood out for your group. State a main idea or impression on the chart paper.

- b. Reread these episodes. On your chart paper, note snippets of dialogue, description or other bits of text that contribute to development of this dominant feeling in the episode. Record these bits of text on the chart paper.
- c. Represent these impressions with sketches / diagrams / symbols or other representations on your chart paper.
- d. As time permits, groups will leave their charts on the tables. Groups will then switch tables and read what others have recorded, adding their own responses to the chart.

Day 10

1. Back in your groups from yesterday (viewing the charts on the wall that are now posted), in small groups, discuss the literary element in the text that made each impression in the episodes in the text effective. (5 minutes of instruction and movement, 10 minutes of discussion)
2. Write extended response #3. Repeat the guidelines given for earlier tests. (5 minutes of instruction and paper shuffling, approximately 40 minutes for the test)

Day 11-12

Following Munro's short story, students will read Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River". Similar to the "The Shining Houses", the protagonist of "On the Rainy River" must make a choice, but this time the decision is intensely personal – answering the draft to go to the war in Viet Nam. Set in a Minnesota fishing lodge next to the Canadian border, the central character struggles with the decision to go with his conscience and dodge the draft or to answer the draft notice and serve his country.

1. Read Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River" (p. 70). At over 14 pages, this may take some students 45 minutes to complete.
2. Record, in your notes, brief responses to the following three questions:
 - Without hesitating, what three things pop into your mind as you think back on the reading you have just done?
 - What thoughts and feelings do you have about the work?
 - What does the work remind you of?

Day 13

Have students write a letter to a classmate about a third to a half a page long. The letter should express the overall impression or association that a student has after reading the short story. For example, a student might write:

"Dear classmate,
What stood out for me in Tim O'Brien's short story was his stress and angst over the decision he had to make. I'm not sure I would have swum to Canada, either."

It's O.K. if the impressions are not well-developed – just three to five sentences will do – more if students want to write more. Have students sign their name at the bottom of the letter

1. Collect and exchange the letters randomly. Have each student read the previous student's reading response, and respond to the first. Tell students to compare their own impressions and associations with those chronicled in the letter. In what ways are the responses similar and different? It might start something like this:

"Dear classmate,

I also see the narrator is stressed out – our overall impressions are similar that way. However, what I focused on is the way he handled his stress - he seemed lost and indecisive, and felt the need to run away. I guess people handle stress in different ways...

Have students sign their name at the bottom of their response.

2. Exchange letters once again to a third student who has not read either response. Have them identify the impressions in the first two cases, and find out if a pattern is emerging. Quote phrases to identify the pattern. Perhaps it might go like this:

"So far my classmates have talked about 'stress and angst' and how 'people handle stress in different ways' like 'the need to run away'. My response was similar, except I focused in on how the old man's silence helped the guy come to a decision on his own."

Then, ask students whether they can relate to this situation. Can they think of similar situation in their own lives, in the lives of people they know, or in texts they have read (including films)? Have them record this situation, noting how the situation was similar or different.

3. Ask students take the letters they have in hand read the previous three responses. Then, have students identify how the emerging impressions evident on the letter could be illustrated by key quotes or passages. Afterwards, they need to analyze what key literary devices worked to leave this dominant impression on the reader's mind. Depending on the class, you may need more or less teacher intervention at this point to guide the choices.

After a brief discussion, students should summarize the discussion on their letter. It might sound something like this:

"Dear classmate,

One part we noticed early on seemed really effective for communicating the fears that the narrator experienced. He says, 'I feared the war, yes, but I also feared exile. I was afraid of walking away from my whole life.... I feared losing the respect of my parents. I feared the law. I feared ridicule and censure.' I think it's probably the repetition in this passage that makes it so effective; that, and the short sentences. It makes it sounds like he's indecisive and anxious – people often have choppy and repetitive thoughts when they're anxious..."

Have each student sign the letter and return it to the first person who responded.

4. At the end, have each student simply read the letter he or she started.

Day 14

1. All students will write the extended response test #4. Repeat guidelines.
2. Read “Dressing up for the Carnival” by Carol Shields on page 92 of the anthology. At only five pages, this short story should take about fifteen (15) minutes to read.
3. Record, in your notes, brief responses to the following three questions (5 minutes):
 - ☐ Without hesitating, what three things pop into your mind as you think back on the reading you have just done.
 - ☐ What thoughts and feelings do you have about the work?
 - ☐ What does the work remind you of?

 Performance-Based / Oral Condition

The next two short stories will be considered in conjunction with response activities that are performance-based. The fourth selection students will consider is “Dressing Up for the Carnival” by Carol Shields. The text sketches a series of characters that interact with clothing or objects in a way that creates an illusion and changes perceptions. For example, one character, an elderly man, is invited to dinner by his daughter-in-law, an invitation borne out of obligation rather than love. En route to dinner, the man buys a couple dozen daffodils, and as he carries them around during the day, he perceives that others regard him differently, and he imagines himself as “a man who is expected somewhere, anticipated. A charming gent, elegant and dapper, propounding serious questions, bearing gifts, flowers” (*Imprints* 12, p. 96). Primarily contemplative fiction, Group A will use a performance-based oral method (reader’s theatre) to enhance the reading. Afterwards, they will write test number 4.

 Day 15

1. In a (new) group of four, collaboratively create a reader’s theatre script in which you develop the main impressions and ideas the group highlighted using quotes from the text. You have 40 minutes to complete this task.
 - a. Talk about the main impressions that were created. For example, students might work on the sense of “hidden delight” found in the text.
 - b. Reread the text and find the episodes in which these impressions and ideas were developed. Clarify the details of each situation.
 - c. Choose snippets of dialogue, description, and other bits of text that stand out from key scenes in the short story. Find opportunities for expressive reading of narration, interior monologue, or dialogue within each episode. Try to capture the dominant feeling in each episode.
 - d. Assign the part of a **narrator** (may be as a **chorus** of choral or competing voices), the character’s voice, and the part of other characters to retell the story in an effective way.
 - e. Develop a script. It should not be one that requires you to move around, but you may add sound effects, lighting changes, choral reading, or changes in volume, pitch, or pace.
 - f. These scripts do not have to be polished, finished products. They can be about a page and a half or two pages long – just enough to capture the main idea or impression that your group found was developed in the text.

- g. One or two groups will be asked to share their performances.
2. With time remaining, have as many groups perform their scripts for the whole class.
3. In groups of four, discuss which literary elements were present in the bits of text that groups found were 'expressive'. Why were these chosen? What literary devices are present in such a text? Prepare to explain how this short story is different from others that we have read.

Day 16

1. Write extended response #4. Repeat the instructions that you gave for the pretest. (5 minutes of instruction and paper shuffling, 40 minutes for the test)
-

The final selection is popular author Douglas Coupland's "Things That Fly". The narrator reflects on flight, especially that of superman, during a time when he is grieving a failed relationship. Group A this time will use creative writing as a method to enhance the reading. They will collaboratively insert more "Things that fly" into the narrative (performance-based written).

2. When the test is complete, have students read Douglas Coupland's Things That Fly

Day 17-18

1. Record, in your notes, brief responses to the following three questions (5 minutes):
 - ☐ Without hesitating, what three things pop into your mind as you think back on the reading you have just done.
 - ☐ What thoughts and feelings do you have about the work?
 - ☐ What does the work remind you of?
2. Use creative writing as a method to enhance the reading.
 - a. With a partner, compare impressions and associations of the narrative "Things That Fly". Sort these thematic concerns into categories.
 - b. Choose one of these themes. Think of a parallel situation, either from your experience with other texts or your experiences in the real world.
 - c. Discuss Coupland's style in the short story.
 - d. Writing task: Using the main impression created by the short story, write a short text (anecdote, paragraph) using the stylistic techniques of Coupland. You may write a collaborative text, or each write your own and collaborate along the way (i.e. switch papers, read one another's work, and make suggestions for improvement).
 - e. Exchange papers with another partnership. On the bottom of their paper, write a response to what their creative writing. Be positive and recognize ways that the writer was creative and ways that the paper fits in with the story.
 - f. Have other students written similar episodes? Conduct a brief gallery walk to find out.

Day 19

1. Write extended response #5. Repeat the instructions that you gave for the pretest. (5 minutes of instruction and paper shuffling, 40 minutes for the test)

Appendix B: Student Handout

The Extended Response

This handout will explore the elements of an extended response for short stories. An extended response is a written expression of your interpretation of, response to, and appreciation of a text.

A. COMPREHENSION and INTERPRETATION

- i. To begin your response, clearly outline the specific situation of the text. For a short story, consider the conflict faced by the main character, the obstacles that character faces in resolving that conflict, and how that conflict is resolved (not all short stories follow this classic pattern). This outline of the situation should be succinct, no more than a few sentences.
- ii. After expressing the situation of the text, determine, by reading between the lines, what idea the situation suggests. An idea here means a generalization about life. Essentially, you're asking "What point is this text making?"

TIP: in some short stories, you can interpret a main idea by paying attention to how the conflict the main character faces gets resolved.

For example, let's say the main character struggles with her conscience after having stolen a ring from a friend. If this inner conflict was settled by the character returning the ring, clearing her conscience, but losing her friend, the main idea might be that "the things that you need to do to forgive yourself don't always lead to forgiveness from others."

However, if the same character kept the ring, and then the friendship fell apart because the main character couldn't deal with her guilty conscience, the main idea might be that "wrongdoing will destroy relationships, even if it is never outwardly revealed".

- iii. Once you state your interpretation of the text you must then prove that this interpretation (theme, central idea, controlling idea, main idea...) is valid by referring to the text. Reference might include paraphrases, details or quotations from the story. Likely the biggest mistake students make in interpreting ideas is *only* summarizing the text. Show how that idea is developed by the text.

Ask yourself, "What's the point this text is making?" Then ask, "How do I know?"

B. RESPONSE

- i. In your response, you are asked to make connections between the idea you identified and your own knowledge and experience of literature and the real world.

TIP: You might make connections between characters, events, and ideas in this text and

- a. ...other texts or films you're reminded of
- b. ...historical events, social issues, or political situations
- c. ...your own life experiences with people, situations, or the world around you

- ii. Once you have made text-world connections, explore the nature of the connection. The two characters, situations, or ideas may be similar or different, or both. They may form a sequence. They may complement one another. Explain the nature of the connection, and any insights these connections offer.

C. APPRECIATION

- i. Your extended response must also demonstrate your appreciation for the methods the text uses to develop an idea. In other words, you will be asked to appreciate the craft of the text, to identify techniques the text uses and explain how these techniques to achieve its purpose.

TIP :Techniques and Elements you might talk about in short stories include:

1. Language choices
 - i. **Diction (Word choice)**
 - the way that particular word choices create an impression or tone (the term for this impression is ‘connotation’)
 - ii. **Literal images**
 - the use of words and phrases to describes sensory detail: sounds, smells, sights, tastes, and tactile experiences.
 - iii. **Figurative Images**
 - includes devices used to make comparisons, such as metaphor, simile, personification, and symbolism.
 - iv. **Sound Devices**
 - the way language sounds in the text, including alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance / consonance,
 - v. **Syntax**
 - the variety of sentences patterns and types in a work
2. Story Elements
 - i. **Characterization**
 - the way that characters are developed; in other words, how the reader finds out what a character is like
 - Often, character traits are inferred from what a character says, what a character does, and what other characters say.
 - Some other methods include description from the narrator or contrasts to a contrasting character (a foil).
 - ii. **Setting**
 - the time in which a story is set may reinforce ideas. Temporal setting may include seasons, era, duration, night/day, and pace
 - the place in which a story is set may reinforce ideas. Physical setting may include urban/rural, private/public, country or cultural spaces, interior/exterior
 - the atmosphere or psychological setting may also be important. For example, there may be an ever-present tension or terror in the story
 - iii. **Plot**
 - plot refers to what happens in a short story and the sequence in which it unfolds
 - the main character often faces a conflict which may be internal (such as a guilty conscience) or external (such as an enemy or a natural phenomenon, like an avalanche)
 - the classic parts of the plot include exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution
 - often the story can be divided into episodes
 - sometimes the sequence of episodes is not strictly chronological, but may use flashbacks flash forwards. Starting in the middle of the action is known as in media res

Sample Organizational Patterns for Your Extended Response

PATTERN 1 (SEPARATED): Three separate sections: interpretation, response, and appreciation

- A. A section explaining an idea in the text
 - 1. give the context of title and author of the work, and state the idea that was developed by the text
 - 2. explain the idea by outlining the situation presented in the text.
- B. A section explaining your response to an idea in the text
 - 1. make a connection between your own knowledge and experience and an idea or situation in the text
 - 2. explain the connection – show how it is the same or different. Be specific
- C. A section explaining your appreciation of the feature in the storytelling
 - 1. choose a literary element and show how it was important in creating meaning or overall impression

PATTERN 2 (INTEGRATED): A before-during-after examination of the short story, combining interpretation, response, and appreciation in each section

- A. A section explaining an episode in the text (for example, the beginning)
 - 1. explain the situation of the text at the beginning, and what idea that the situation might represent
 - 2. make a connection between this initial circumstance and your own knowledge or experience with the world
 - 3. highlight an important literary element that stood out in this section for creating meaning or overall impression
- B. A section explaining another episode in the text (for example, rising action)
 - 1. explain how the situation has progressed, and what the changing circumstances might represent
 - 2. make a connection between change and your own knowledge or experience with the world
 - 3. highlight an important literary element that stood out in this section for creating meaning or overall impression
- C. A section explaining another episode in the text (for example, the climax and resolution)
 - 1. explain how the situation has reached a peak and concluded, and what the resolution of the conflict might represent
 - 2. make a connection between the outcome and your own knowledge or experience with the world
 - 3. highlight an important literary element that stood out in this section for creating meaning or overall impression

Appendix C: Extended Response Task

Short Fiction Reading Response

Title of short story: _____

Instructions:

With reference to the text you have read, write an extended response in which you:

- Interpret the main idea of the text.
- Explore personal connections with this main idea.
- Examine how this main idea was presented in the text.

Each aspect of your response will be rated on a scale of 0 – 5 according to the scoring guide presented in class. TOTAL VALUE: 15.

Expectations:

- Write or print legibly in blue or black ink pen.
- Double space your response, and use both sides of the page.
- Write in sentences and paragraphs.
- Dictionaries, thesauruses, and grammar or style handbooks may be used at any time.

[illegible]

Figure 18 Scoring Guide for Interpretation, Response, and Analysis of a Literary Text

	Out of Range 0	Weak 1	Emergent 2	Novice 3	Proficient 4	Outstanding 5
Comprehending and interpreting texts. “Interpret a main idea of the text.”						
<i>How well does the response interpret the meaning of a situation presented in the text?</i> <i>How developed and specific is the support?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not interpret the meaning of a situation presented in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very limited interpretation of a main idea in the text (sometimes a literal repetition of text details) little or no supporting detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some interpretation of the general situation presented in the text; not entirely defensible few details, vaguely or superficially related ; too much summary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defensible, straightforward interpretation of the situation presented in the text some relevant and functional details offered in support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, logical and specific interpretation of the specific situation presented in the text developed, relevant and appropriate support from the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> well-considered interpretation of the specific situation presented in the text that offers fresh insight well-developed, persuasive, precise support
Responding personally to texts. “Explain personal connections with this main idea.”						
<i>How well does the response connect an interpretation of the text with other experiences?</i> <i>How well developed is the connection?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not connect this main idea to other experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes weak, superficial, connection(s) undeveloped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes a vague or general connection (sometimes very literal) underdeveloped (vague details, superficial conclusions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes a connection(s) with some clarity some relevant, functional details offered in support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly and logically details the nature of connection(s) adequately developed (specific and relevant details) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explores the nature of perceptive (nuanced/ complex) connection(s) thoroughly developed (precise details, insightful conclusions)
Analyzing and appreciating form and techniques. “Examine how this main idea was presented in the text.”						
<i>How well does the response identify and explain how language or stylistic choices create an effect?</i> <i>How much support is provided?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not identify or explain a language or stylistic choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very limited, simplistic explanation of how choices create an effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generalized, underdeveloped explanation of how choices create an effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some recognition of how choices in the text create an effect with some relevant and functional details from the text offered in support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sensible, clear evaluation of how choices create an effect supported by specific and relevant support from the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insightful, complex appreciation of how choices in the text create an effect developed with contextualized, well-chosen text support

Appendix E: Exemplar Papers

Exemplars (unedited)

Figure 19 summarizes scores for the papers that were selected to illustrate the criteria set out in the scoring guide. These papers were chosen from volunteers for the study who did not complete all six conditions because of absenteeism during the study.

Figure 19 Summary of Scores for Exemplar Papers

Short Story	Case	Interpretation	Response	Appreciation
<i>Touching Bottom</i>	Y17	3	4	3
<i>A Drowning</i>	X17	5	5	5
<i>Shining Houses</i>	Z7	5	4	2
<i>On the Rainy River</i>	X1	4	4	4
<i>Dressing for the Carnival</i>	X12	2	2	2
<i>Things that Fly</i>	Y2	2	2	3

These exemplars have been retyped on the pages that follow in unedited fashion (i.e. spelling and grammar errors were left uncorrected). Following each exemplar, a rationale is given for the score it received.

Exemplar #1 “Touching Bottom” TB-Y17

The main idea of the text was struggles in life. The writer used the current the main character battles as a metaphor to life. In the story, she says that “you battle the current until you die.” Life could be looked at in the same way. It’s better to just go with the flow.

I’ve had many personal experiences where I fought, struggled and hoped things were going to work out. The more I did, the more I realized you the harder you “swim” the hard it gets to keep going. After a while you’ll start to wonder why it’s even worth the effort anymore. It’d just be easier to sink to the bottom. I felt like this just recently. Over the summer, I saw *Phantom of the Opera*. It’s now my favorite movie. Being a singer I was ecstatic to find a score for one of my favorite songs in the musical lying in the choral room, and available for performing at solo night. I practiced the song up to five or six hours a week. I was proud to feel the progress I was making in the song, and my singing ability in general. But then I got a cold. Sometimes those last a few days, sometimes a few months. Eventually singing the song became harder and harder with achy muscles, a stuffy nose, and a scratchy throat. My song went unpracticed for a month. When I finally felt well enough to sing again, I was back to where I’d started. I started practicing extra hard, it seemed hopeless. You can’t force singing skills to develop in one day but I kept working. The more I sang, the harder it became to do right. Finally I decided with so much practice time lost, maybe this is a song best kept until the next solo night. At first I felt like a quitter. But then I learned it’s not quitting if you’re taking more time to get it right. Just go with the flow, keep practicing, don’t force it.

The main character swims against the current as hard as she can. It gets harder to do as she gets tired. She learns that you’re still going to need to work, but it’s easier to just float with the current along shore. Trying so hard to fight it only makes it worse. As she gets closer to shore, she gets out of the current learning a lesson. This happens to all of us. Just let life take you where it will. Unexpected things happen, but sometimes that’s half the fun.

• Interpretation**Score: 3**

- The response provides a defensible, straightforward interpretation of a main idea in the text, suggesting that the story shows how sometimes “*struggles in life*” are best dealt with by not swimming against the current.
- Paraphrases in the last paragraph provide some relevant and functional support for this idea, such as “*As she gets closer to shore, she gets out of the current learning a lesson.*”

• Response**Score:4**

- The response develops a clear, logical connection to the idea of not trying to fight against an ocean current. The conclusion is logical: “*At first I felt like a quitter. But then I learned it’s not quitting if you’re taking more time to get it right. Just go with the flow, keep practicing, don’t force it.*”
- The response is adequately developed (relevant details). “*When I finally felt well enough to sing again, I was back to where I’d started. I started practicing extra hard, it seemed hopeless.*”

• Appreciation**Score: 3**

- The response reveals some recognition of how metaphor in the text creates meaning. “*The writer used the current the main character battles as a metaphor to life.*”
- Some relevant and functional details offered in support. “*In the story, she says that ‘you battle the current until you die.’*”

Exemplar #2 “A Drowning” AD-Z17

In “A Drowning” by Mark Ferguson, the main character watches as another man drowns. Confronted by high, rocky cliffs and stormy seas, all the narrator can do is make his presence known to the other man. In the end, the swimmer’s efforts are all in vain as the pounding waves defeat him. Essentially, the main idea conveyed in this story is that one’s life is not always in one’s own hands, no matter how hard one tries to cheat death, at times it is inevitable. One moment the swimmer thrashes in the water, the next he sinks beneath the waves. He had “no terror then, but something. Resignation maybe...”, knowing that the transition from life to death is subtle; it can happen in a split second.

This idea regarding the fragility of mortality is a common theme in many movies, most notably The Perfect Storm. The fishermen in this movie are also from a small, close-knit fishing town, much like the town the author portrays in this story. Deaths at sea are not especially uncommon in these towns, but the loss of life is felt all the same, such as when people were “talking [to the narrator] but their voices were all really flat-sounding and seemed a long way off.” Evidently the drowning has affected the narrator emotionally. Both the movie and this story show characters dealing with the harsh realities of such a life, and in both death is a concept that, while hard to accept, is a way of life.

A technique in this story that adds realism and interest is the author’s diction or word choice. The narrator sees “the punt was already smashed, caught high up in the teeth of the land with tons and tons of water pouring back into the sea, off of the rocks and cliffs.” Rather than merely mentioning that the “punt” was smashed, the author describes the nature and cruelty of the seas. The land has “teeth”, giving it human characteristics, and supporting the ideas that the land and the sea contain some hidden malice. The narrator admits that “the sea seemed almost insane”, and the ocean, rather than being merely an aspect of nature, is seen to be the threatening force in the story. The tone is at times very dark as the reader realizes the drowning man’s helplessness and the power of the sea. The vivid language used emphasizes this struggle.

• Interpretation**Score: 5**

- After a clarification of the situation presented in the text, the response offers a logical inference that offers original insight: “...no matter how hard one tries to cheat death, at times it is inevitable”.
- In addition to the accurate paraphrase of the story details, the response includes well-chosen quotations that provide excellent support for the idea.

• Response**Score: 5**

- The response makes perceptive connections between the situations in the short story and in the film, The Perfect Storm – tragic deaths at sea from tightly-knit communities become part of the harsh life.
- The response weaves details from both the film and the story into the comparison for support.

• Appreciation**Score: 5**

- The response shows an insightful, complex appreciation of how vivid word choices create a realistic, dark tone in this helpless struggle against the sea.
- The response is supported by three well-chosen quotes that illustrate description, personification, and figurative language.

Exemplar #3 “The Shining Houses” SH-Z7

Standing up for what you believe in often takes amends courage and great self esteem. Unfortunately sometimes you can be greatly disappointed with the final verdict. In Alice Munro’s “The Shining Houses” Mary shows great self esteem when she stands up for Mrs. Fullerton to her angry neighbours. Mary felt that Mrs. Fullerton’s house was an eyesore and should be condemned. “I’d send my kids over there to play with matches.” (31) The neighbours didn’t know Mrs. Fullerton, all they knew is that her house is an eyesore and was bringing their property value down. Mary didn’t say anything at that time she was searching for words that would stand up against theirs.

Mary showed courage when she spoke she was not emotional or even scared. “She was here before most of us were born.” (32). No one else was standing up for Mrs. Fullerton, they were all against the value of her living there longest.

Realizing that everyone is against you, everyone has an opposing opinion a number of people would give up. They wouldn’t agree with what would be done but they would keep their mouth shut about such matters. Mary’s persistence to stand up for her neighbour in a sense gave her the opportunity to fight for what she believed in. This was shown when everyone else was signing a petition to put a lane in but in order to get a lane Mrs. Fullerton would either have to move or fix her property. “I don’t think we have the right. We haven’t the right.” (33) Mary seems hesitant to stand up for her opinion but realizes if she doesn’t she’ll feel awful about not doing what she could.

A person in her position may hold more power than they may think. Mary may have felt that there was nothing left to do and nothing more to be said. She was between a rock and a hard place to with her friends or stand up for what she believes in.

Mary shows just how strong her opinion is and how much it means to her at the end of the story “There’s nothing you can do at present but put your hands in your pockets and keep a disaffected heart.” (35). She didn’t sign the petition because she didn’t feel it was right. Mary stood up to her neighbours, her friends.

This story reminds me much of a group of friends and myself. Most of my friends didn’t like a certain friend I had, and I couldn’t understand why, she wasn’t mean and didn’t insult them, she wasn’t winey, I considered her a really good friend. One day my friends came to me and said that they weren’t going to hang around with her. I stood up for her with nine words “Then I guess you can’t hang around me either.” Then I walked away. I was willing to give up a group of friends for a single friend much like in this story. It took courage and self esteem to stand up to my peers and when I did most of them were crushed. I lost a few but most realized our friendship was more important than not getting along with one of my other friends.

Munro tries to tell us that it’s good to stand up for what you believe in even if it means losing a few friends along the way.

• Interpretation**Score: 5**

- The response offers an interpretation in the opening short paragraph that is maintained straight through to the end of the text. The response begins with “*Standing up for what you believe in often takes amends courage and great self esteem. Unfortunately sometimes you can be greatly disappointed with the final verdict*” and ends on the note “*...it’s good to stand up for what you believe in even if it means losing a few friends along the way.*”
- The response provides well-developed, precise support, paraphrasing and quoting relevant sections of the text to develop ideas.

• Response**Score: 4**

- The response makes a clear and logical connection to a similar situation involving friendship. After providing some specific details of the circumstances, the response draws logical conclusions, such as “*It took courage and self esteem to stand up to my peers... but most realized our friendship was more important...*”

• Appreciation**Score: 2**

- The response does not specifically identify (i.e., with literary terms) particular devices in the text. However, the response identifies key scenes where plot develops, such as Mary’s tentative protest at the end of the text. The explanation focuses mostly on meaning – the explanation of the effect otherwise is underdeveloped.

Exemplar #4 “On the Rainy River” RR-X1

The main idea of the text was courage, not only the fact of loyalty and standing up for you country but the concept of being courageous and standing up for what you believe in . ‘...then to Vietnam where I was a soldier and then home again I survived, but it’s not a happy ending. I was a coward. I went to war.” This shows that even though he went to war and was a “hero” in the eyes of the american public, he was still a coward because he didn’t stand up for what he believes in. The main idea is to have courage for what you believe in and do not be a coward about standing up for yourself.

Personally I connect with this story because I too run away from things I am afraid of. When I was ten or so I was out side playing with my brother and his friends. We were wrestling and having fun until I fell backwards and broke my playhouse window. All the boys told me it was my fault, and they were telling on me. I was so afraid to get in trouble so I ran away. Secretly I just hid in my playhouse for a couple of hours, but everyone was still very worried about me. Finally I came out, and in the end I confessed to breaking the window even though it was a lie. This connects to the story because I feared getting in trouble, and he feared the war. We both ran away from our issues, and in the end we both came crying back, but instead of sticking up for ourselves we both took the cowardly way out and did not stick up for the reason we ran away in the first place.

The main idea was presented in the text through first person retrospective. This gave the readers Tims thoughts and feelings towards the war. You get his opinions, his thoughts and his feelings. “I was too good for this war. Too smart, too compassionate, too everything.” It shows you he fears the war and the fear and cowardlyness would not have been portrayed as well through a point of view other than his own.

• Interpretation**Score: 4**

- The response provides a clear and specific interpretation: “...to have courage for what you believe in and do not be a coward about standing up for yourself.”
- The response quotes and interprets O’Brien’s conclusion to provide relevant and convincing support for this idea.

• Response**Score: 4**

- The response makes a clear connection to a personal experience about cowardice and standing up for oneself.
- The response is adequately developed, and similarities between the two circumstances are noted.

• Appreciation**Score: 4**

- The response gives a clear evaluation of how “*first person retrospective*” point of view was effective for giving “*his opinions, his thoughts and his feelings*”.
- One quotation and a statement explaining it are offered to provide evidence of the point made.

Exemplar #5 “Dressing Up for the Carnival” DC-X12

“We cannot live without our illusions” is the main idea of the text. In the story a bunch of different story’s where told about different people and their fanatasy’s.

Everyone can probably make a connection with this book one way or another. In the story when the man brought the mango and how it was so out of character for him to do something like that well I can make reference to that. My lake I once new a man out there he was in his mid 40’s Blue collar, likes to drink, hunt, and swear kind of guy well he also has a hobby that sorta took me off guard of pots for plant know it may not seem that big of a deal but this guys supposed to be a true man when you look up man in the dictionary he should be there, then I find out collects flower pots it was pretty weird.

The author Carol Shields used alot of characterization In the stories. Each story with in the hole story had great depth of characterization “He is a man of medium height, burly divorced, wearing an open-necked shirt, hurrying back to work after his coffee break” (94) “Ralph Eliot, seventeen years old, six feet tall, killingly handsome and the best half back the school team has seen in years” (96).

• Interpretation**Score: 2**

- The response uses a quotation from the end of the story to serve as the main idea of the text.
- The response provides vague support for this idea in the second sentence in the first paragraph: “*In the story a bunch of different story’s where told about different people and their fanatasy’s.*”

• Response**Score: 2**

- The response details a situation similar to one presented in the short story about behaving “*... so out of character*”.
- The response is provides some details, such as “*he was in his mid 40’s Blue collar, likes to drink, hunt, and swear kind of guy*”, but offers limited analysis of the situation in the statement “*it was pretty weird*”.

• Appreciation**Score: 2**

- The response identifies “*great depth of characterization*” as an element important in the telling of the short story.
- Two quotes are provided, but no analysis of these quotes is offered.

Exemplar #6 “Things that Fly” TF-Y2

The main idea of the text is that sometimes bad things happen and you may feel like crap for a while but nothing lasts forever so you can always get back up from it.

I don't really have a personal connection with this story but I can give an example. People get frustrated and usually when that happens they don't stop to think, it's almost if they can't just stop, take a breather and think of what could happen if you don't think something out. Emotions constantly get the better of people but life must go on.

The main idea was presented mainly through the characters. It really got us into his life and how he is 'down in the dumps.' It seems as if before this story he was married but something happened and he was left to pick up the pieces of his life. "I'm sitting hunched over the living room coffee table on a Sunday night, in a daze having just woken up from a deep deep sleep on a couch shared with pizza boxes and crusted plastic cherry yogurt containers" (pg. 143).

It also gives us great detail through the setting of his house and other places he's been to. It explains his house like this "I drifted listlessly about the house, from silent room to silent room, spinning the wheels of the two mountain bikes on their racks in the hallway and straightening a pile of CDs glued together with spilled orange crush in the living room." (pg 143).

The last thing that it explains very well is mood. It often goes into great detail trying to make us understand the atmosphere of the area like this "on another channel there were pictures of a zoo in miami, florida, which had been whacked by a hurricane and there were pictures in the wreckage except they didn't know it was wreckage. It was just the world." (pg. 146)

• Interpretation**Score: 2**

- The main idea of the text is somewhat generalized at the beginning of the response, "*sometimes bad things happen and you may feel like crap for a while but nothing lasts forever*". Later, there some recognition of the basic idea of the text "...he is 'down in the dumps.' *It seems as if before this story he was married but something happened and he was left to pick up the pieces of his life.*"
- Few details are offered in support of the main idea.

• Response**Score: 2**

- A connection is made with the text: "*People get frustrated and usually when that happens they don't stop to think...*".
- This connection is only vaguely developed. It seems rather than an example, the student seems to offer his or her own understanding on this topic.

• Appreciation**Score: 3**

- The response asserts that the story communicates "*through the characters*", "*through the setting*" and through "*mood*". There is some recognition here of how these choices create an effect. For example, "*It often goes into great detail trying to make us understand the atmosphere...*"
- Quotations are offered as examples for each of the literary devices, although little analysis of the examples is provided.

Appendix F: Reliability Review Scores and Rationales

Figure 20 Reliability Review Set A

Short Story	Case (999)	Interpretation	Response	Appreciation
<i>Touching Bottom</i>	X1	3	2	3
<i>A Drowning</i>	X6	3	3	1
<i>On the Rainy River</i>	Y16	2	3	3
<i>Things that Fly</i>	Y17	4	4	5

TB-X1**• Interpretation****Score: 3**

- The response provides a defensible, straightforward interpretation of the main idea of the text: “ignoring your problems will only dig you deeper and deeper into a hole”.
- The response also provides some relevant details to support this idea, such as the main character’s “fear of murky water” in paragraph one, or the frustration ending in divorce at the end of paragraph 2

• Response**Score: 2**

- The response makes a connection (“I know what it is like to ignore my fears and issues hoping they will just go away”).
- The details about this connection are somewhat vague, suggesting that, generally, these issues will eventually explode.

• Appreciation**Score: 3**

- The response identifies a language choice (first person point of view) and recognizes how this choice creates a more personal feel to the story.
- Some relevant and functional details are offered in support

AD-X6**• Interpretation****Score: 3**

- The response provides a specific and logical expression of the main idea of the text: “...in some areas of the world people watch people die everyday and they don’t deal with it they just continue on living there life”.
- The response offers some support for this idea. The response mentions an exchange with a passer-by and the report to parents, and draws an inference (“...which goes to show that...”) from the details provided.

• Response**Score: 3**

- The response offers a somewhat relevant connection between the desperation felt by the drowning man and a personal scare near water: “...for that brief instance knowing that I could of died was the scariest thing ever”.
- The response provides some functional details to make the situation clear.

• Appreciation**Score: 1**

- The response identifies “great detail” and “to the point” as qualities of how the story was told. The response says that the effect of these choices is that one can “visualize” and it makes it “much more real”.
- No story details illustrate this claim.

RR-Y16**• Interpretation****Score: 2**

- The response offers some interpretation. Initially, the response indicates “The main insight... is about Tim O’Brien going to war...”. The fourth paragraph offers more interpretation: “There wasn’t a point to fight altogether. ... That’s why he didn’t want to go.”
- A few details are provided to support this idea. In addition to some paraphrases (“...very smart in school studies”), one direct quote supports the idea that the main character didn’t want to fight.

• Response**Score: 3**

- The response establishes a connection between footage of the war in Afghanistan and the war in the story, Vietnam. While some connection is made, a clear comparative statement is not offered.
- The response shows how the home video made by soldiers in Afghanistan compares to O’Brien’s description of Vietnam.

• Appreciation**Score: 3**

- The response identifies “first person” as an important language choice, making it somewhat clear what effect it has: “sounds like he’s talking to an old buddy” and “takes you into his mind”.
- These claims are illustrated with one quotation (“He says ‘I remember’ a lot...”).

TF-Y17**• Interpretation****Score: 4**

- The response provides a clear interpretation. The first paragraph states “at times depression may worsen because of your way of coping with your despair – dwelling on it.”
- In the remainder of the first paragraph, this key idea is supported by statements that capture the overall situation of the text. This interpretation is further supported in the remainder of the response.

• Response**Score: 4**

- The response provides a clear connection to the discussion of shame and regret.
- The response is supported with relevant reflections on the way past regrets were handled.

• Appreciation**Score: 5**

- The final paragraph points out how the setting (weather, messy house) creates “depressing” tone in the narrative. Effective support.

Figure 21 Reliability Review Set B

Short Story	Case (999)	Interpretation	Response	Appreciation
<i>Touching Bottom</i>	Z5	2	1	0
<i>Shining Houses</i>	X12	2	3	0
<i>On the Rainy River</i>	Z24	4	5	2
<i>Dressing for the Carnival</i>	Y2	3	2	2

TB-Z5**• Interpretation****Score: 2**

- The response provides some interpretation of the main idea: “you should always know what you are doing or you may be in over your head.”
- Few details are given for support (“the swimming”).

• Response**Score: 1**

- The response presents a very weak connection (“when I play games... I do get in to far”). This concept is undeveloped.

• Appreciation**Score: 0**

- The response mentions a metaphor, but the explanation of this device is contradictory and illogical.

SH-X12**• Interpretation****Score: 2**

- The response provides a broad interpretation of the meaning of story events: “Be true to yourself... good things always work out in the end.”
- The response points out that Mary said no to the petition to evict Mrs. Fullerton; weak support for “things always work out in the end.”

• Response**Score: 3**

- A connection is made between the pressure felt by Mary and that felt by a teenager choosing a direction in life with parents pushing. The conclusion makes the point to “do something that will make yourself happy...”.
 - The response is gives some details from personal experience to develop this idea.

• Appreciation**Score: 0**

- The response does not identify a language or stylistic choice.

RR-Z24**• Interpretation****Score: 4**

- Despite weaknesses in conventions (not part of the score), the response makes it reasonably clear that the character faces a dilemma between entering a war that is “totaly veage on reasons” and “disapointing his country”.
- The second paragraph continues to discuss aspects of the dilemma.

• Response**Score: 5**

- The response compares the dilemma the narrator faces with a personal decision of whether to leave family to immigrate to the safety of Canada or to return to a dangerous Brazil.
- The response is thoroughly developed with details given for either side of the dilemma.

• Appreciation**Score: 2**

- The second paragraph mentions “detailed description” and “conflict” and “hero”; however, these terms are used in the service of interpretation and do not reveal an appreciation for the effect of these choices. The final paragraphs points out that one scene stood out, but it is not made clear what techniques made the scene powerful.

DC-Y2
• Interpretation **Score: 3**

- A clear interpretive statement is offered: “...people shouldn’t be judged by their appearance.”
- The cases of Tara and Roger from the story are paraphrased and quoted to provide support for this idea.

• Response **Score: 2**

- A general connection is between the character’s experiences with clothing worn at school.
- The response is weakly supported.

• Appreciation **Score: 2**

- The response discusses ways that characters help the reader “understand it very quickly” and how place helps us “see what they do is normal”.
- The explanation of the effect is underdeveloped.

Figure 22 Reliability Review Set C

Short Story	Case (999)	Interpretation	Response	Appreciation
<i>A Drowning</i>	Z20	3	2	0
<i>Shining Houses</i>	X2	3	3	2
<i>Dressing for the Carnival</i>	Y14	4	4	4
<i>Things that Fly</i>	Z21	1	1	0

AD-Z20**• Interpretation****Score: 3**

- An interpretative statement is reached after some inductive deliberation: “no matter what the problem is even if you fear it you should help”.
- The response accurately details the situation – one boy drowning while the other stood and watched. The meaning constructed by this reader recognizes the feelings of “shock, fear, terror, and surprise”, even while missing the detail about the cliff and the impossibility of the narrator helping.

• Response**Score: 2**

- The response makes general connections in the form of emotional reactions to the text. For example, “I felt the guilt he must have felt...” or “I would probably feel as though I must live with the death on my conscience.”
- The response chooses generalized, paraphrased details from the text to support these reactions. For example, “Feeling overwhelmed with shock, fear, terror & surprise yet somehow finding a way to let them know you’re their”. Later in the response, another general paraphrase reads “...he did nothing but watch...”.

• Appreciation**Score: 0**

- The response does not identify a language or stylistic device. One sentence reads, “To me the main ideas was presented as being a negative aspect...”. This analysis contributes to interpretation, but does not reveal an understanding of or appreciation for language or stylistic choices.

SH-X2**• Interpretation****Score: 3**

- The response identifies a main idea as being “Don’t judge people before you get to know them.”
- Some paraphrased, general story details offer support this for idea. Earlier in the first paragraph it points out that “everyone judges Mrs. Fullerton”, and later shows that “Mary actually got to know Mrs. Fullerton and didn’t want to knock her house down and get rid of her.”

• Response**Score: 3**

- The response makes a logical and specific connection between the shunning of Mrs. Fullerton and situations among teens at school where, for example, “kids won’t let someone in their ‘group’ because they thing they are weird”.

• Appreciation**Score: 2**

- While “word choice” is identified, the explanation is generalized. The effect of word choices is stated in terms of comprehension: “I really understood how” and “made it easy to see”.
- This explanation of the effect is underdeveloped. Generalized support includes such phrases as “the way the neighbors talked about and described Mrs. Fullerton” and “The way Mary talked about and described Mrs. Fullerton.”

DC-Y14**• Interpretation****Score: 4**

- The response offers this specific interpretive statement: "...people make decisions on there appearance in order to be percieved a certain way by people."
- After pointing out generally how the text is developed, a specific, relevant example (the man who carried the mango) is offered for support of this idea

• Response**Score: 4**

- The response clearly and logically compares the experiences of characters in the text to feeling cool while carrying a wakeboard.
- Adequate details are given to support this connection: "...lugging a heavy board that I would much rather put in the back seat of a car in any other situation....Much like the man who could have taken the flowers home and put them in water...".

• Appreciation**Score: 4**

- While it's uncertain that "episodic structure" is the right term for "telling many different small stories that have the same general idea", the discussion nonetheless clearly evaluates the effect: "works very well for getting the idea across".
- Two relevant quotations from the story support this statement.

TF-Z21**• Interpretation****Score: 1**

- The response states generally that the text is about contemplating life.
- A specific quote is offered in support, but no analysis of the quote is offered to explain how the quote supports the idea.

• Response**Score: 1**

- The response does make a connection to the idea of contemplating life: "what is the purpose of us being hear" and "how small we all are..."
- The response is undeveloped.

• Appreciation**Score: 0**

- The response does not identify a language or stylistic choice.

Appendix G: Ethics Approval Forms

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LIVING PRAIRIE COLLEGIATE

(note: pseudonyms are used throughout this form for the school and collaborating teacher)

CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: The Effect of Talk and Instructional Mode on
Enhancing Secondary English Students'
Interpretation of, Response to, and Appreciation for
Short Fiction

Principal Researcher: Mr. W. Nickerson, Teacher at Living Prairie Collegiate

Collaborating Teacher Mrs. D. Wellesley, Teacher at Living Prairie Collegiate

Faculty Advisor Dr. S. Straw, University of Manitoba

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

As part of a Masters of Education thesis at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education, Mr. Nickerson intends to compare various approaches to reading short stories in Living Prairie Collegiate. Senior 4 students will engage in a regular, three week unit of the coursework - they will read and respond to six short stories. Students will participate in whole-class and small group speaking and writing activities to enhance their understanding of the text, and the students' responses will be compared to see whether one is more effective than another.

One will use a more reflective approach, featuring small group discussion activity or a collaborative analysis. Another task will use a more performance-based approach, employing reader's theatre or creative writing. The third condition will involve whole-class discussion or textbook-based questions. After experiencing each of these learning methods, each group will write out an extended response to each of the short stories. The study will determine which classroom activities most help high school students write higher quality (more authentic, increasingly sophisticated) responses.

Three 40SC classes at Living Prairie Collegiate are invited to take part in the study: Mr. Nickerson's and Mrs. Wellesley's morning classes and Mr. Nickerson's afternoon class. All learning activities and assignments are ones used as a regular part of the program at Living Prairie Collegiate, and instruction in all these classes will meet with requirements for the Manitoba English language arts curriculum. Since the point of the study is to observe differences among regular coursework, no risk is involved for students participating in the study. Your consent simply means that your son or daughter's test scores will become part of the data that is used to draw conclusions for the study. The test papers will be shredded one year after the publication of the study.

The study will collect results using a task and criteria that are commonly used in Manitoba high school classrooms. Scorers will be English teachers from within the Stone River school division. Measures will be taken to protect students' identities: on their tests they

will identify themselves only by a number. In addition, students' identities will remain confidential when the study results are published. Only their classroom teacher will know their individual results. Students will receive all of their test scores as a regular part of the course. Mr. Nickerson will use the group's test results to write and publish a Master's thesis.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation:

Principal Researcher: Warren Nickerson, Living Prairie Collegiate (XXX-XXXX)

Dr. Stanley Straw, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba (474-9074)

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I consent to have my son / daughter's test results used as a part of this research:

<hr/>	
Student's Signature	Date
<hr/>	
Parent's Signature (if student is under 18)	Date
<hr/>	
Researcher	Date

If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study, please provide a mailing address where the summary can be sent.

m e m o r a n d u m

Date: 11/01/2005
To: Samuel Loney (a pseudonym), Principal, Living Prairie Collegiate
From: Warren Nickerson
RE: Consent to study student results with outside organization (U of M)

I am writing to obtain the school division's consent to study student results from my classroom for use in a Master's degree thesis. If you are satisfied with the description of the study, please sign at the bottom and return the form to me. I will sign it, and return to you a copy for your records. The study is outlined below:

FORM FOR SCHOOL'S CONSENT

Research Project Title: The Effect of Performance-based and Reflective Learning Activities on Secondary English Students' Written Comprehension, Response and Appreciation for Short Fiction

Researcher: Mr. W. Nickerson, Teacher at Living Prairie Collegiate – principal researcher
 Dr. S. Straw, University of Manitoba – faculty advisor

As part of a Masters of Education thesis at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education, Mr. Nickerson intends to compare various approaches to reading short stories in Living Prairie Collegiate. Senior 4 students will engage in a regular, three week unit of the coursework - they will read and respond to six short stories. Students will participate in whole-class and small group speaking and writing activities to enhance their understanding of the text, and the students' responses will be compared to see whether one is more effective than another.

One will use a more reflective approach, featuring small group discussion activity or a collaborative analysis. Another task will use a more performance-based approach, employing reader's theatre or creative writing. The third condition will involve whole-class discussion or textbook-based questions. After experiencing each of these learning methods, each group will write out an extended response to each of the short stories. The study will determine which classroom activities most help high school students write higher quality (more authentic, increasingly sophisticated) responses.

Three 40SC classes at Living Prairie Collegiate are invited to take part in the study: Mr. Nickerson's and Mrs. Wellesley's morning classes and Mr. Nickerson's afternoon class. All learning activities and assignments are ones used as a regular part of the program at Living Prairie Collegiate, and instruction in all these classes will meet with requirements for the Manitoba English language arts curriculum. Since the point of the study is to observe differences among regular coursework, no risk is involved for students participating in the study. The students who volunteer their responses will simply provide data to draw conclusions for the study.

The study will collect results using a task and criteria that are commonly used in Manitoba high school classrooms. Scorers will be English teachers from within the St. James-Assiniboia school division. Measures will be taken to protect students' identities: on their tests

they will identify themselves only by a number. In addition, students' identities will remain confidential when the study results are published. Only their classroom teacher will know their individual results. Students will receive all of their test scores as a regular part of the course. Mr. Nickerson will use the group's test results to write and publish a Master's thesis.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree, on behalf of the school, to allow these procedures and data collection. In no way does this waive the principal's legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw consent for the study at any time. Feel free to ask for clarification or new information at any time:

Principal Researcher: Warren Nickerson, Living Prairie Collegiate (888-7650)
Dr. Stanley Straw,
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba (474-9074)

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

On behalf of Living Prairie Collegiate, I,

Name: XXXXX XXXXX

Title: Principal

consent to allow the procedures and data collection described in this memorandum:

Signature:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the principal.

Appendix H: Scholarship Rationale

**Faculty of Education Graduate Student Support Scholarship 2006
Application Form**

Name: Warren Nickerson

Student # XXXXXXXX

Address XXXXXXXX, Winnipeg, Manitoba, XXX XXX

Telephone (204) XXX-XXXX

e-mail address wnickerson@sjsd.net

Provide a brief statement of funding request which describes:

- 1) amount requested;
- 2) rationale for request; and
- 3) proposed budget or how the monies will be used.

Use the space below and add additional page(s) if necessary.

1) Amount Requested: \$ 1756.50

2) Rationale for request:

Working with advisor Dr. Stan Straw I have received ENREB approval for a repeated measures study of reading response in the classroom. Three senior 4 English classrooms have voluntarily participated in the study, and results have been collected. Unfortunately, the labour-intensive double scoring of these open-ended extended responses has suffered set-backs. It has been difficult to recruit trained teachers for scoring, in part because high school English teachers are busy people, and in part because they are accustomed to being paid for provincial marking. While a colleagues and I have scored the results once, we are biased in that we teach at the school and sometimes recognize the students' handwriting. A second marking could involve teachers in the division who are not familiar with the students.

In addition to the need for double-blind scoring to ensure the reliability of the results, the instrument and scoring guides were created by the researcher for this study, and need to be used among a wider spectrum of teachers to get a sense of their utility. In other words, the scoring session itself is a major part of the study. I anticipate the results of this marking session will not only validate results, but give effective evidence as to whether the task and the scoring guide could be effective for teaching and assessing reading response in Manitoba classrooms.

3) Proposed Budget on How the Monies Will Be Used

Approximately three hundred papers need to be scored twice for reliable data to come out of the study. A proficient scorer experienced in the provincial senior 4 ELA standards test should be able to score each paper (much like a short essay) in approximately five minutes. Since three hundred must be scored twice, approximately fifty man/woman hours of labour is involved. With an additional one and a half hour's time set aside to train scorers and conduct three re-anchoring sessions, it would take approximately ten scorers to finish this marking task in one eight hour working day (including a half hour lunch). The provincial government offers teachers \$25.75 / hour for scoring. The funding breakdown would look like this:

1. 65 hours of trained labour @ \$25.75/hour	\$1596.50
2. Lunch, nutrition break, and office supplies	\$160.00
<hr/>	
TOTAL	\$ 1756.50

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