Assessment of Differences in Response to Literature

Diane Bonarigo

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ASSESSMENT OF DIFFERENCES IN RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

by
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in response to literature among second grade students who were given the opportunity to construct and convey meaning in a self-selected response mode as compared with a single assigned response mode.

A short narrative children's story, The Mitten, was read to four groups of children. Children were asked to respond to three questions about the story, in their respective assigned response modes; self-selected response mode, writing response mode, oral response mode and graphic response mode. Three questions were asked to all the children in this study;

1). Describe one character in a situation from the story that reminded you of a personal situation.

2). Explain how you felt at the end of this story.

3). Use your imagination and create a different ending to this story.

Prior to the study, the researcher and two second grade teachers convened to discuss and develop a scoring sheet to evaluate the responses to the story to determine degree of enthusiasm and number of creative responses.

The researcher video taped all children in their assigned response modes except the oral response group in which case observational notes were recorded and answers were tape recorded.

The results of this study were reported in a qualitative manner.
The findings of this study indicate that children in the self-selected response mode and graphic response mode demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm and creative responses. Observable behaviors and differences were noted and reported in the Oral response and written response groups.
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Question to be Answered

What are the differences in response to literature when students are given a self-selected response mode versus a single assigned response mode?

Need for Study

Over the past three decades, there has been a tremendous push for change in education. Many educators are presented with an array of innovative approaches and teaching methods to meet specific educational needs.

In the last part of this century researchers have extensively studied the teaching-learning process. Dunn and Dunn (1978) investigated educational and industrial research concerned with how children and adults learn. They were amazed to find an abundance of literature that had been accumulated over an eighty year period repeatedly verifying that each student learns in ways that are different from his or her peers.

The learning styles research, based upon extensive studies in basic brain functioning, contends that there is a need to recognize the variety of learning styles that children possess and the potential implications this may have for teaching and learning (Grady, 1984).
As brain based research continues to provide data on how children learn and remember, perhaps educators too, will continue to investigate the significance of a multi-modality approach to teaching and the effects this approach has on learning.

The concept of multiple intelligence and its impact on teaching in traditional classrooms has been investigated by several researchers. Garner (1983) describes several domains of intelligence not all of which are valued in school. These domains include language and logic intelligences, music intelligences, spatial intelligence, physical intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence.

If one benefit of classroom research is to provide teachers with alternatives that prompt them to reflect on and change their own practice, then sound alternatives need to be created and tested, and this will involve observational research in a variety of settings. (Fillion & Brause, 1987).

**Definition of Terms**

I. Response mode- a response displayed using one of the following language processes; listening, speaking, writing or role playing.

A. Self-selected Mode- one or more language responses determined by the participant.

B. Writing Response Mode- a response using written language.
C. Oral Response Mode- a spoken response by a participant.

D. Graphic Response Mode- a drawing or painting response by a participant.

Limitations of the Study

Limiting factors are the relatively small number of children studied and the lack of a diverse population pool. All the children are white, middle class and residing in small city or rural environments.
Chapter II
Review of the Literature

The purpose of this chapter will review research related to the topic of this study. A variety of teaching and learning modalities is discussed throughout this chapter. This study examines the differences in response to literature when children are given the opportunity to construct and convey meaning in a single assigned response mode as compared with a self-selected response mode.

Teaching and Learning Modalities

Years ago the research data on learning modalities tended to be confusing since studies frequently were undertaken to determine where students learned better by listening or seeing. Since a choice between the two senses was the only choice, findings tended to verify that either one or the other was superior.

Krawiec (1946) studied a comparison of learning and retention of materials presented visually and auditorially. He indicated that the visual mode appeared to be superior for the learning of simple materials, but for retention, neither the visual nor the auditory presentations appeared to verify better results. Prior to the 1960's researchers did not examine individual youngsters to identify whether each learned better or less well through methods and materials taught them either through their auditory or visual perceptions (Dunn & Dunn, 1978).
Dunn and Dunn (1978) investigated educational and industrial research concerned with how children and adults learn. They reported an abundance of literature that had been accumulated over an eighty year period repeatedly verifying that each student learns in ways that are different from his or her peers. Research data yield at least eighteen categories that, when classified, suggest that learners are affected by their: (1) immediate environment (sound, light, temperature and design); (2) own emotionality (motivation, persistence, responsibility, and need for structure or flexibility); (3) sociological needs (self, pairs, peers, team, adult or varied); and (4) physical needs (perceptual strengths, intake, time and mobility) (Dunn & Dunn, 1975).

Dunn and Dunn continued their research and further developed a learning styles instrument designed to elicit students preferences for classroom learning.

By 1974 the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) was developed and reliability and validity had been achieved. Today the (LSI) is used to diagnose an individual student's learning style.

"Education is currently under the scrutiny of many people and we, as professionals, are called upon to defend our teaching methodologies. A major benefit can be derived from understanding how individuals prefer to learn and by using instructional methods that meet an individual's learning style." (Dunn & Dunn, p. 400).

Farr (1971) examined individual differences in learning in an experiment with 72 college students. His study revealed individuals could accurately predict the modality in which they
would demonstrate superior learning performance. The data showed student's learning and positive test results were reduced when they were conducted in an individuals' nonpreferred learning modality. Desirable results existed when both learning and testing were in the student's preferred modality.

On-going research in brain functioning and advances in the neuroscience continue to provide educators with data on how children learn and remember. Grady (1990) states that brain research in the last part of this century helps to explain the differences in learning styles:

We know, for example, that students' learning styles differ according to their age and the nature of the subject matter they are studying. We also know that some children have a dominant learning style. Recognizing that there are a variety of learning styles teachers should help students to use the learning style that is appropriate to the learning task. This calls for a multimodality approach to teaching. (p. 9).

The concept of multiple intelligence and its impact on teaching in traditional classrooms has been investigated by several researchers. Howard Gardner, a research psychologist, argues that there are several domains of intelligence, not all of which are valued in school. In addition to language and logic intelligences (associated with traditional school learning), Gardner (1983) identifies musical intelligence, spatial intelligence (movement dance, and athletic skills), interpersonal intelligence (skills associated with self understanding), and interpersonal intelligence (skills associated with understanding of an empathy for others). Gardner believes that with "the adoption of a theory
like multiple intelligences may permit a more differentiated and precise analysis of how various educational goals might be viewed and pursued" (p. 373).

In the past the teaching and learning process from a psychological point of view, combined the psychology of human growth and development. Clayton (1965) concludes:

There is no adequate definition of teaching; however, it does encompass the following ideas: leading youngsters to develop a desire to learn; having a dedication to learning and passing this on; being aware of the needs of children; being able to know where to turn for concrete information and how to communicate this in as effective manner, and acting as a catalyst in developing ideas. (pp. 167-168)

Response to Literature

Case studies involving children's response to literature varies depending upon the instructional approach and purpose of the research.

Bartelo (1990) studied the linkages between the language processes of listening, speaking, reading, drawing, and writing to analyze the display of meaning represented in children's response to stories. She concluded that children use many language processes to construct meaning and differ in which language process they tend to use. "In guiding children's language learning, educators need to systematically observe, collect, and be cognizant of the many features of children's display of meaning," (p. 165).

When readers respond to literature, they do so in a way that reflects their personality, mental development, expectations,
Petrosky (1989) studied the effects of reality in perception and fantasy in two case studies in response to literature. Both case studies reflected divergence in how personal responses and perceptions were expressed. In his conclusions he maintained that a deep sense of identity was a powerful internal factor that influenced the responses generated in his two case studies. Petrosky emphasized that a response-centered curriculum can make good use of a sequence of study based on different kinds of human activities: free response, interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Petrosky concluded "the important element in this model is its structure-free response in the form of student-student and teacher-student discourse" (p. 257).

Pillar (1983) studied the aspect of moral judgement in response to fables. Her study explored oral reader responses to fable within the moral dimensions of intentionality, relativism, punishment, and independence of sanction. She reported finding significant relations between the age of maturity of response. The overall data reflected the versatility children bring to an experience with literature. "In order to cultivate, that is to enable children to experience literature in the richest possible way, teaching should take into account children's developmental needs and interests," Pillar concluded (p. 46).

Alternative Teaching Approaches

In a recent study of historical philosophies in education,
Levin (1991) described what he called two competing approaches to educating the masses since the turn of the century. One was led by E.L. Thorndike and the other by John Dewey. Levin (1991) found that the work of Thorndike supported the development of aptitude and achievement tests which were used to differentiate students in terms of ability and segregated students into groups and tracks which were deemed appropriate for them. In contrast, Levin described Dewey's work as focused on developing the individual, cognizant of any individual differences, but respecting those differences while involving students in a common learning community. Starting with Dewey in the early part of the century, progressive educators have long advocated that school-learning activities should be more play-like.

Block (1984) studied east and west coast elementary and junior high age students regarding their perceptions of common school learning activities. His interviews indicated that students saw their current task assignments, homework, and tests as being work-like and as undermining their emergent sense of self-social competence and self-social determination, "adding a play-like quality to current classroom activities connotes for students that they have some measure of control over their school learning destinies in terms of substance, form, motives, and standards" (p. 2).

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) describes a "flow" model which
emphasizes making school learning activities more play-like. These flow activities are perceived as being voluntary, fun, and personally rewarding (Block, 1984). Block contended that Mastery Learning strategies are systematic approaches to instruction. Mastery Learning is an optimistic theory about teaching and learning that asserts that any teacher can help virtually all students to learn excellently, swiftly, and self-confidently (Bloom 1976). "Mastery Learning activities should generate flowlike school learning experiences by establishing clear personal challenges, by coordinating students' personal skills to meet these challenges, and by providing periodic, concrete feedback about students progress" (Block, 1984, p. 9).

Levin (1991) concluded the current move for restructuring in education is, in fact a move toward Dewey's philosophy. A number of changes being called for by current reformers (such as process writing, literature based reading curriculum, interdisciplinary teaching, cooperative learning, flexible planning and scheduling are all consistent with Dewey's philosophy of education.
Chapter III

Research Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in response to literature among second grade students who were given the opportunity to construct and convey meaning in a self-selected response mode versus a single assigned mode.

Question

What are the differences in response to literature when students are given a self selected response mode as compared with a single assigned response mode?

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 21 second graders from an elementary school in western New York. This heterogeneous group consisted of 12 boys and 9 girls.

Materials

Materials used for this study included:

1. A video camcorder.
2. A tape recorder.
3. A writing folder.
4. A drawing folder.
6. A scoring sheet the researcher formulated to assist the researcher and two additional raters in evaluating the responses to story.

Procedure

Prior to the study, the researcher and two second grade teachers convened to discuss, assess and evaluate several pilot samples of written responses for the purpose of interrater reliability. A scoring sheet was devised to evaluate the differences in response to story.

The subjects in this study were randomly selected to participate in one of four groups consisting of five second graders per group. The classroom teacher told the student that the researcher would be coming into the class and designated who was in each group. The groups were referred to as:

Group 1/Self-selected Response Mode
Group 2/Writing Response Mode
Group 3/Oral Response Mode
Group 4/Graphic Response Mode

The classroom's second grade teacher read the short narrative, The Mitten, two separate times. Group 3/oral response mode was read to first while the other students in the classroom were working on a separate assignment. Prior to the reading, the
teacher wrote three questions on the board;

1) Describe one character in a situation from the story that reminded you of a personal experience.

2) Explain how you felt at the end of this story.

3) Use your imagination and create a different ending to this story.

She discussed these three questions with Group 3 to determine if they understood what these questions meant. Students in Group 3 were asked randomly to give an example of a question to explain their understanding further. The teacher then introduced the story and read it to the students in the front of the room on the carpeted floor while the rest of the class did seat work at their desks. After the teacher had finished reading the story orally to Group 3, she asked each of them to think about how they would answer the three questions on the board. She asked students to raise their hands when they felt they were ready to answer the three questions on the board. As the students hands were raised, the researcher took each student individually outside of the room in the hallway and asked each one the three questions. Answers were recorded on a tape recorder and the researcher recorded observations of facial expression, movement, etc. as each child gave his/her answers. The classroom teacher stayed with the other students and asked them to wait patiently and keep thinking about the answers they would give. After the researcher had finished recording and making observations with one child, that child would begin seat work. This process was repeated until all of Group 3's
responses had been recorded.

The entire class went to gym class and the teacher and researcher discussed observations. When the class returned from gym, they were asked to return to their seats. The teacher gave Group 3 specific seat work directions and asked Group 1, 2 and 4 to move to the carpeted floor in the front of the room. The teacher discussed the three questions on the board and repeated the same process. She described to the children specifically what they would be doing if they were Group 1, 2, or 4 after she read the story, "The Mitten." When, in the teacher's opinion, all of the students knew how they would be responding, the teacher read the story. When she had completed orally reading the story to the children, she asked Group 2/writing response group to please go back to their desks (and with the materials the researcher had left on Group 2's desks) they were asked to respond. During this time the researchers turned on the video camera which was placed on a tripod facing the students' desks. This video camera taped behavioral observations for groups 1, 2, and 4 which were used to rate descriptors to determine degree of enthusiasm, (see Appendix). Next the teacher gave Group 4/graphic response mode specific direction to return to their desk. This group was asked to respond to the three questions on the board through the drawing materials that were at each of their desks. Group 1/self selected response mode were told they could choose to respond to the three questions in any format they preferred. Those that wanted to orally respond
were asked to stay on the floor. All others returned to their seats. The researcher then recorded the responses and the teacher assisted with the children at their seats.

All materials were collected from Groups 1, 2, and 4 as soon as they were finished. The classroom teacher and the researcher assisted in this collection process.
Analysis of Data

Prior to this study, two teachers and the researcher convened to discuss, assess, and evaluate several written samples for the purpose of inter-rater reliability.

Each of the raters collaboratively and through consensus developed a scale to evaluate the students responses, (Appendix) to determine:

1) degree of enthusiasm
2) number of creative responses

The data were analyzed according to these two categories and findings were extracted and reported.
Chapter IV
Analysis of Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in response to story among second grade students who were asked to convey and construct meaning in a self-selected response mode versus a single assigned mode.

Findings and Interpretations

The questions asked in this study allowed students participating, to respond to story given three specific questions and through a specific response mode. The story, The Mitten, was read aloud to all of the students. The following questions were asked to all students:

1) Describe one character in a situation from the story that reminded you of a personal experience.

2) Explain how you felt at the end of the story.

3) Use your imagination and create a different ending to this story.

Group 3/Oral Response Mode  Five students were to respond orally to the story. These students were asked to raise their hands when they were ready to meet with the researcher and respond individually, out of ear-shot from the rest of the group. Ashley raised her hand first. She appeared excited and spoke with her
hands.

She began, "I think the boy would be the one cause he lost his mitten and I've lost my mitten before." Ashley clasped her hands together and standing, swayed back and forth. The researcher repeated the second question. Ashley replied, "surprised." She waited for the researcher to repeat the next question. She began, "I would do this a sad ending where the boy loses his mitten and the grandmother would yell at him." She then asked if she was finished and went back into the classroom. Three out of the four students now had their hands up and were ready to meet with the researcher. The researcher called upon them randomly.

After the researcher had asked the first question, Adam began, "The fox- once I was in a field and I saw a fox and it ran in a field, it was brown- made me dizzy." Adam put his hand on his face. The researcher repeated the second question. Adam stated, "kind of sad- cause I wanted to see how big the mitten could blow up." He was quiet. The researcher repeated the third question. Adam began, "If it kept getting bigger it might get so big his whole body could fit into it and he could sleep in it." Adam smiled and went back to the classroom.

David came into the hallway next. David appeared shy and was not smiling. The researcher stated the first question. David responded, "the wolf." He shrugged his shoulders. The researcher asked the second question. David replied, "very
sad- cause they all bursted out." David looked down at the floor. The researcher repeated the third question. David responded, "that they didn't burst out or that they could only come out at one time." David looked down at the floor again. He was told he was finished and he left the hallway quickly.

Patrick was asked the first question, he began to smile. He moved his hands around as he spoke. "Fox- because one time I went to this one place it was in the woods and I saw this fox. Patrick made good eye contact with the researcher. The second question was asked. Patrick replied, "good." The third question was stated. Patrick began, "I'd have un all in the mitten and they'd sleep all night." Patrick went back into the classroom.

Ricky was the last student in group 3. He came into the hallway and yawned. He asked what the question was again. The researcher started the first question. Ricky took a few seconds to respond. He began, "the bear- he had big teeth-when I was made at my brother." Ricky kept his hands folded and looked down the hallway. The second question was stated. Ricky replied, "Happy." He smiled. The third question was stated. Ricky began, "he had a dream and lost it." He then asked, "Are we going to gym now?" the researcher nodded and he went back into the classroom.
All five students in group 3 appeared to need some reassurance from the researcher that they had done a good job in their task. It appeared that some of the behaviors of the students reflected how many responses they were willing to give. David, who shrugged his shoulders and continually looked down at the floor, did not give as many responses whereas Adam who smiled throughout the task used more descriptors and more responses in his responding to story. The last student to raise his hand, Ricky, appeared less interested in the task. He had forgotten the questions (even though they were still on the chalkboard) and seemed more interested in where he was going next.

All of group 3 were able to verbalize their answers sufficiently. They appeared to understand the story, its meaning and the questions that were asked of them. Three out of the five students in group 3—Oral response mode, were assessed by the researcher developed scale as showing a high degree of enthusiasm and number of creative responses, as compared to a low degree of enthusiasm and creative responses scored by the remaining two students in the group. It was noted that David and Ricky's observable behaviors (see appendix A) reflected a lack of enthusiasm and responses in their response to story.

**Group 2/Writing Response Mode** Five students returned to their desks after the teacher had read the story, *The Mitten*, aloud to groups 1, 2, and 4.

3 out of 5 students raised their hands and asked several questions to their teacher. Even though the questions were on the
board and had been reviewed prior to the reading the story some students appeared to need more clarifications. Some of the questions were in reference to where they would write their name and how many papers could they use.

Jessica was biting her nails and kicking her feet. She began writing approximately four minutes after the rest of her group.

She wrote:

1. I lost a mittens and 1 mittens was big and 1 was little and my mom condined find ont wat hapind.

2. Cnfused and happy.

3. The mittens was the same size

John started writing as soon as he got to his desk.

He wrote:

1. I would be lik the boy becuas I have lost lost something. I lose stuff alot at my house. I have to look for it when I lose it.

2. I would feel good because I would get my thing that I lost and that I wouldn't get in trouble.

3. The boy would not find his mittin and the animals would live in the mitten.

Byrnn asked a question of the teacher related to the task and after the teacher nodded he began writing. Byrnn wrote:

1. My favrite character was the Bear because he sneezed and all the animals went flying. just like the boy did to me all over.

2. I felt sad because I lost my favorite thing and I could not find it at all and it was my doll.

3. like I found it and I would feel happy than sad and I would thank the person who found it alot.

Kristi had her head on her arm for approximately one minute before she began writing. She looked around the room and out the window
before she began to write. Kristi wrote:

1. The bunny rinds me of my pet bunny ohe dide
2. good
3. The boy fond his mitten and saw ol the anunlis and bububu made mittens for then too.

Kristi's papers had many erased words where it appeared she had rewritten another word or wanted to write more neatly.

Mark had raised his hand before he began writing. He had asked his teacher if he could go to the nurses office and complained of a stomach ache. His teacher allowed him to go to the office. He did not return back to the classroom for the remainder of the day. It was noted that none of the students in group 2 spoke to each other before, during, or after the written task was completed.

Two out of the five students in group 2—Writing response mode, reflected a high degree of enthusiasm and number of responses to story. In assessing Jessica's response to story she showed a lack of enthusiasm according to observable behavior. However, she demonstrated a fair degree of creative responses as compared to the pilot samples used for inter-rater reliability. Kristi's response to story was assessed as showing similar pattern as Jessica's.

Group 4/Graphic Response Mode  Five students demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm and creative responses in response to story. It was noted all five students used several colored markers to draw their responses to each question. All students used the entire space of the paper to draw their responses. A great deal of sharing and interaction with peers and teacher were observed in
this group. All students in this group interacted with another person at least once while engaging in their task. Three out of five students needed extra time to complete the task. In addition, all five students used multiple drawings in their response to each question.

Group 1/Self-Selected Response Mode Two out of five students elected to respond orally. One student selected to draw and respond orally. Two out of five students chose to draw and one of the two wrote on his drawings a phrase to depict his response to story.

Gabrielle and Stephen responded orally. Both students were smiling as they responded to each question. Good eye contact with the researcher was also observed. Gabrielle began, "The fox- cause like sometimes at the beach there was this bully-well he was about very mean, I know that." Gabrielle's response to the second question stated she was "happy". Gabrielle smiled as she answered the third question. She began, "the mitten rips!"

Stephen's responses to each question were as follows, "Well the rabbit-That's all. Happy and sad. Well, um having him not find his mitten and have to have his grandma make him a new one." Both Gabrielle and Stephen were assessed as having a high degree of enthusiasm and responses as seen in the oral response group. It was noted that both students appeared very comfortable in doing their task.
Samantha drew three single picture drawings in response to story. She used two colored markers and half of the total space on her drawing space was used. Samantha also chose to respond orally. Samantha began, "The boy, because I lost something once, I lost my money and I had eleven dollars in it—Scared because he saw the squirrel looking out the window—The boy found the animals and the mitten but didn't know what happened and he brought it home." Samantha smiled as she answered the questions and used her hands as she described her answers in response to story.

Andrew and Corey's drawings included multiple pictures in their response to story. Both sides (front and back) were drawn on which was not seen by the group of students who were in the graphic response mode. In addition, Andrew's drawing included the words "happy" under his number 2 drawing and the words, "that he lost his mitten", under his number 3 drawing.

Samantha, Andrews, and Corey each rated high on enthusiasm and number of creative responses to story. It was noted that all five students appeared very comfortable with their task. In addition two out of five students (Samantha and Andrew) responded to story using two response modes.
Summary

Twenty out of twenty-four students demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm and number of creative responses. The graphic response mode and the self-selected response mode groups reflected the same number of students showing high degree of enthusiasm and creative responses. Observable behaviors and differences were noted in the oral response group and the Writing response groups.
Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

This study was conducted to investigate the differences in response to literature among second grade students who were asked to convey and construct meaning in a single assigned response mode as compared to a self-selected response mode. A short narrative, The Mitten, was used in this study. Students responded to three questions in their teacher-assigned response modes and were evaluated based upon observation, teacher intuition, written samples, and a researcher designed assessment instrument to determine degree of enthusiasm and number of creative responses.

External Factors

The responses in this study may have been influenced by several factors. The use of video and tape recorder equipment was atypical of an average classroom day. Single word responses could reflect a lack of understanding rather than a lack of enthusiasm or creative response.
Conclusions

The results of this study suggest a number of conclusions that can be drawn about the differences in response to literature when students are restricted to one assigned response mode as compared to a variety or choice of response modes.

All students assigned to the graphic response mode demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm and number of creative responses. It appears when second grade students are given the opportunity to express meaning in graphic form (such as drawings) they are more likely to interact with each other, share their responses and spend greater time on detail in their task.

In comparison, the written and oral response groups demonstrated a mixture of low and high degrees of enthusiasm and number of creative responses. These differences in response appear to have a relationship between enthusiasm and number of creative responses given. Interaction or sharing of ideas with each other in these response groups was not observed by the teachers or the researcher. Therefore it might be concluded that graphic response mode generates a natural interaction between students, whereas writing and oral response modes do not generate this natural tendency for interaction, without specific teacher guidance.

It appears all children who were assigned to the self-select response mode demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm and number of creative responses.

The results of this study showed some students who were
constrained to written/oral response modes demonstrated a low degree of enthusiasm and number of creative responses as compared to students assigned to the self-select response mode.

In conclusion, the researcher observed a distinctive affective difference displayed by the students who were in the self-select response mode versus other modes. Perhaps educators need to engage student emotions in their learning. Students who had a choice in their response experience, appeared to consider the exercise more meaningful.
Implications for Further Research

The results of this study point to several areas that necessitate further research. More qualitative studies are needed to observe children and assess the differences in response to literature with regard to the instructional methods that are used in the classroom. If children use many language processes to construct and convey meaning, then educators need to be cognizant of instructional methods and strategies that allow children freedom and flexibility to construct and convey meaning in responding to literature.

Further research could explore such questions as:

1. What is the relationship between classroom instruction and motivation when responding to literature?

2. How do responses to literature change in the construction of meaning when children are assigned specific instructional modes versus a free choice of response(s) in the same story?

3. What is the relationship between how the child feels about his/her task and the response given to a particular story?

Perhaps longitudinal studies will be most valuable as researchers systematically observe, collect and evaluate students responses to stories using a variety of instructional techniques in the classroom.

Classroom Implications

Research, including the current study, has shown the importance of instructional decisions made for students when they are asked to respond to literature. Students who are constrained
to one instructional response mode may not respond successfully according to a teacher's assessment measurement. This lack of success may be directly related to a student's lack of skill constructing and conveying meaning in a particular response mode; rather than, an inability to make meaningful constructions in response to literature. Classroom teachers may need to look at how this might impact the desire and motivation that a student approaches the next response task given by their teacher. If teachers allowed for a more flexible climate for children to respond to literature through choices of response modes and assessment measure, constructing and conveying meaning from literature may be enhanced, making reading a pleasurable and fundamental part of a student's schooling experience.

A final classroom application is a reminder that responding to literature in the classroom should provide individual differences in learners (e.g. learning style, learning rates, interests, self concepts) with matching instructional techniques to be successful. Extensive data verify the existence of individual differences among youngsters - differences so extreme that identical methods, resources or group providers can prevent or block learning for the majority of students (Dunn & Dunn, 1989).
References


Purves, A.C., & Beach, R. (1972). *Literature and the reader: Research and response to literature, reading interests and
the teaching of literature. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.


APPENDIX
Appendix A

Checklist of observed behaviors in response to story:
(for noting observations in all groups)

LOW= <4                      HIGH= >3

NAME_________________________RESPONSE MODE_________________________

_____ interacts or shares work with other students
_____ smiles
_____ eager to share work and response with teacher or researcher
_____ appears comfortable in responding to story
_____ uses more than one response to describe feelings and experiences per question.
_____ uses creativity in the assigned response mode

Other Observations:

_____ SCORE