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Literature response journals and students entitled to special education services

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The responses made by the students fell into eight categories and genre did not affect the response pattern when students were responding to books read aloud by the teacher. The students still made more responses in the categories of personal reaction and question/wonder statements regardless of genre. However, the students did make fewer total responses to certain genres. Students entitled to special education services demonstrated they are capable of varying their response types when responding to books read aloud by a special education teacher.

Literature Response Journals and Students Entitled to Special Education Services

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Abstract

This article examined the types of responses students entitled to level 1 and level 2 special education services made in their journals when responding to books read aloud by a special education teacher. The books chosen to be read aloud were from different genres and about varying topics. The responses were also examined to see if the genre read had any impact on the students' responses. The responses made by the students fell into eight categories and genre did not affect the response pattern when students were responding to books read aloud by the teacher. The students still made more responses in the categories of personal reaction and question/wonder statements regardless of genre. However, the students did make fewer total responses to certain genres. Students entitled to special education services demonstrated they are capable of varying their response types when responding to books read aloud by a special education teacher.

I have been a special education teacher for four years and am always striving for ways to meet the needs of all my students entitled to special education services. This can be a constant struggle, but I am starting to find more ways to ensure their needs are met. Literature response journals provided me with one more opportunity to examine students' thoughts and informally assess their writing also. Their thoughts about the various books read aloud also provided me with one more tool to use when evaluating their comprehension of the story. I was interested in analyzing the students' written responses to books read aloud to them.

This article emanated from an action research project I did recently. Its purpose was to examine the types of responses students entitled to special education services made when responding to books from different genres read aloud by a special education teacher. To date, there has been little research on examining students with special needs and their responses in journals to literature. The research that has been conducted did not analyze the types of responses and code them for categorization (Rossow & Hess, 2001; Williams, 2001; Oberlin & Shugarman, 1989). Research conducted in the area of literature response journals has been limited to general education students (Wells, 1992/1993; Hancock, 1992, 1993, 2000; Golden & Handloff, 1993; Fuhler, 1994; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999). There are many questions that need to be researched in terms of what students with disabilities can do when responding to literature, what types of responses they are making and what role genre plays in the students' responses.

Theoretical and Research Foundation

The Benefits of Using Literature Response Journals

The purpose of reading is to make meaning from the words being decoded. Every reader constructs his/her own individual understanding and meaning of the texts they encounter. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) state, "No two individuals are exactly alike; we all create our own interpretations of texts, our own images and our own subtle meanings" (p.163). These interpretations of the texts are affected by each individual's schema. One way to encourage students to make personal connections and bring their prior knowledge to bear on the text is through the use of reading response journals (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

The benefits researches have found when using reading response journals with all ages of children are manifold and they deserve a place in the already crowded literacy curriculum (Oberlin & Shugarman, 1989; Wells, 1992/1993; Hancock, 1992, 1993, 2000; Golden & Handloff, 1993; Fuhler, 1994; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999). Response journals encourage thoughtful, personal engagement with text. The journals also provide the students with the opportunity to interact with books of their choice and give them a voice in their own work (Fuhler, 1994). Through the use of journals students are encouraged to find ways to connect events in their lives with events in the books, instead of focusing on minute facts and details. The connections they are making help to increase their understanding and make the reading and writing process more meaningful. This meaning making process can contribute to the reading development of students.

Wells (1992/1993) found many ways that reading response journals influenced her eighth grade students' reading development. The students practiced critical reflection, made connections between what they knew and what they learned and were more conscious of themselves as readers because they had to reflect on what they had read. Responding to text is more than making connections with the materials the students have read. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) describe responding as the thinking individuals do as they approach the text, while they are reading it, and after they have finished it. Responding to the literature helps to increase the students' understanding of the material being read and develop their high level thinking skills.

Golden and Handloff (1993) explored reader response through the use of journal writing during independent reading time with a group of average fifth grade students. The researchers used seven categories to code the students' responses. The most frequent response was narrational, followed by literary judgment, personal response, and interpretive. Journals were found to provide a valuable means of engaging students in literary response and providing them with the opportunity to share their opinions about books and explore their feelings. Response journals are also effective tools for providing insights into students' thinking while interacting with various literature selections.

Journals record thoughts throughout the reading act, not just at the end of the book (Hancock, 1992). If students waited until the end of the book to write down their thoughts many of their ideas would go unexamined. By writing down their thoughts as they read, students have bits of information to refer to when discussing the book with others. The use of written response provides students with the

opportunity to react to the literature in a way that is meaningful to them (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995). This reaction to the material being read helps to link the writing and reading process (Bauso, 1988).

Another benefit of response journals is that students express their thoughts with confidence that they will be valued and respected (Fuhler, 1994). A trusting relationship needs to be developed between the student and teacher to ensure that students are expressing their thoughts and sharing all connections they are making. The students need to know they will not be judged by what they write, so they can express themselves freely.

Response journals can reveal students' knowledge and understanding of material being read without penalizing the students for grammar and spelling errors. The students write without the worry of their writing being evaluated for spelling and mechanics (Fuhler, 1994; Hancock, 1992). The journal provides the teacher with an understanding of what the students have taken from the text and what connections the students made while reading. Teachers can also identify individual interests, needs and concerns through the use of journals. The students are not burdened with the idea that their entries are going to be graded against a rubric for written language. Instead, they know it is the connections they are making and the understandings they are forming that are being evaluated. The role of the teacher in helping the students make these connections and forming these understandings is very important.

Role of Teacher Modeling Reading and Responding to Literature

Teachers play an important role in helping students get started in the response process. It is important for the teachers to model the reading and response process for

their students. This modeling can be done through minilessons and prompting the students (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999; Newton, Stegemeier & Padak, 1999). Students need to be given many opportunities to see the teacher model responses to text and to respond to literature themselves.

A variety of books can be used when modeling the response process. Robb (1991) found that picture books were valuable when introducing students to the idea of responding to text. By using picture books the students can use the pictures to make predictions about what may appear in the text. Read alouds of more difficult texts are also a great opportunity to introduce students to responding to text. Read alouds give even the weakest readers the opportunity to respond to harder texts. The books chosen for read alouds and the teacher can influence the type of responses students write (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995).

The research shows teachers can affect the responses that students give. Students often did what was asked of them and did not stray from the teacher's prompt (Newton, Stegemeier, & Padak, 1999). Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1999) found through teacher modeling and scaffolding students could go beyond retelling and become more involved with the material they were reading and respond more personally.

Teacher comments have an impact on what the students write in their response journals. Researchers found the comments teachers make need to validate the students' thoughts and then react to the entry in a positive way (Fuhler, 1994). Comments made by the teachers also need to be supportive, nonjudgmental, stretch the students' ideas, and direct students to unexplored areas (Hancock, 1993).

Bowman (2000) suggests teachers use their responses to students to challenge the students to explore different forms of literature. Teachers also need to guide students to other types of responses (Hancock, 1993). Wercerich (2002) found guiding the students to other areas could be done by the type of response the teacher wrote back. It is the responsibility of the teachers to identify the type of responses students are making and help lead them to other areas of reflection.

Many researchers have found students write a variety of responses and the responses fall into different categories. Students' responses fall into two broad categories (a) text-centered and (b) reader-centered (Hancock, 1992, 1993; Wells, 1992/1993; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995, 1999). Text-centered responses include retelling of events, understanding characters' thoughts or feelings, asking questions, and making predictions. Read-centered responses include the following: personal reactions, relating to own experience, and expressing sense of self in the story. We should encourage students to make more reader-centered, or aesthetic, responses, so that they may get personally involved in the story. Educators are challenged to find alternative methods for reluctant writers and students with special needs to respond to text.

Students Entitled to Receive Special Education Services

Students entitled to receive special education services are served based on their level of need and discrepancy from their grade level peers. Special education services are divided into three levels. Students receiving level one services, in the school in this study, are provided their services within the general education setting and are one to one and a half years below grade level. The students being served in a

level two classroom are two or more years below grade level and need specially designed instruction in all academic areas or program modifications to meet their needs. The students served in a level three program need significant program modifications to meet their needs. Students being served at both levels one and two struggle with learning various content materials. These students also need strategies matched to their strengths and weaknesses (Martin & Martin, 2001).

Students entitled to special education services are not proficient in the skills needed to work independently at grade level, so they need support to help them learn the skills needed to increase their independence. The support needed is provided through small group instruction with repeated opportunities for the students to practice skills at their instructional level and receive frequent feedback from the teacher.

The students' disabilities can affect their reading and ability to make meaning in a variety of ways. Levine (1990) has found that students with disabilities may experience delayed decoding a variety of reading materials, which interferes with their ability to comprehend. These students may also have difficulties recalling facts, organizing their memory and may lack the ability to plan effectively. Students entitled to special education services also need repeated opportunities to practice what is expected from them.

There are many methods of teaching reading and writing that are important to students with special needs. Instruction in the area of comprehension must be well planned, based on ongoing assessment, and provide guidance and explicit explanation

of strategies (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997). This instruction includes skills presented at a slower pace, in smaller increments, and presented in different ways.

Students Entitled to Receive Special Education Services Responding to Literature

The students with special needs require modeling and minilessons to become successful at responding to text (Williams, 2001). The students need to be shown what is expected of them, talked through the steps of a quality response, and given many opportunities to practice responding. This can be accomplished by creating folders with prompts addressing different story elements (Rossow & Hess, 2001). The prompts can help to get the students started and slowly be taken away from the students.

Response journals can become an effective way to assess students' understanding of literature. Through the students' responses the teacher can assess the students' understanding of the text and see how involved they are with the text. This involvement is assessed by the type of responses (a) text-centered or (b)reader-centered, the students are making. The responses can reveal the level of understanding and connections the students with special needs are making while encountering various texts.

There are many benefits to using response journals with students with special needs. Response journals provide personalized learning and differentiated instruction at each student's instructional level (Wercerich, 2002). Journals start where the students are and build on their knowledge. Each student brings different experiences to share in his/her journal thus creating his/her own meaning. These differences help students realize not everyone interprets stories the same way.

The use of response journals can help ensure that students entitled to special education services are being challenged. The challenge occurs when the teacher responds to the students' entries and encourages them to move their responses to a different area. The reading response journals make reading meaningful and require the students to take an active role in their learning. The students are in charge of selecting the material they want to read and making connections when reading. If connections are not being made, students are not reading for meaning.

The research done in the area of reading response journals and students entitled to special education services is limited and needs to be expanded. Research that has been conducted has been limited to examining journals within a Readers Workshop and types of responses were not coded for categorization (Rossow & Hess, 2001; Williams, 2001; Oberlin & Shugarman, 1989). The Readers Workshop integrates reading minilessons, student sustained silent reading, and written responses to literature in dialogue journals. The students entitled to special education services in the studies demonstrated increased motivation, improved attitudes towards reading, and started to relate the literature they were reading to their personal lives. The next step for research in the area of literature response journals with students entitled to special education services would be to examine the types of responses students are making.

This article examines the journal responses of readers entitled to special education services in one fourth grade class to determine the types of responses they are making. The following two questions will be addressed: (a) When responding to teacher read alouds through writing what types of responses are students entitled to

special education services making and (b) how does genre affect the students' responses.

Methodology

The Classroom Context

The school in this study is as unique as the students themselves. This Midwest, urban school, classified as low socioeconomic, serves 341 students in grades kindergarten through fifth that speak twelve different languages. English as a second language services are provided to 46% of the students and 14% of students receive special education services. The students come from a wide range of families with 63% receiving free or reduced price lunch and the rest of the families are middle class families. The following additional services and programs are provided in the school: Title math and reading, special education, ELL (English language learner), Reading First, Reading Recovery and gifted and talented.

The 2003-2004 fourth grade class included students from a variety of backgrounds. The class of 25 students included eleven students entitled to receive special education services and five of the eleven also received English language services. Two of the students received level 2 services provided in an alternative setting and nine received level 1 services within their fourth grade classroom. The students that made up the class came from the following countries or areas: Africa, Bosnia, Cambodia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Southeast Asia and the United States.

When literature response journals were introduced to all fourth grade students they had already spent many months interacting with a variety of literature and participated in many literacy rich activities. The classroom teacher uses a variety of

read alouds to spark interest in different genres and various authors. The students had previously been introduced to using journals when responding to their independent reading books. The classroom teacher had taught numerous minilessons and modeled letter writing for the students. The students were supplied with a sample letter and list of starter phrases (I wonder, I cannot believe, I was surprised when, etc) to use as references when writing letters to the classroom teacher about their independent reading books. This was the first time the fourth grade students were asked to respond in a journal format to a teacher read aloud.

Artifacts and Procedures

The participants, all fourth grade students, were asked to respond to five picture books in a literature response journal. Only the journals of the eleven students identified as entitled to special education services were examined and coded for response types. The books used dealt with different racial, gender or class issues and each book was from a different genre. The books were read in the following order: *Pink and Say* (Polacco, 1994) a historical fiction text, *A Bad Case of Stripes* (Shannon, 1998) a fantasy selection, *More than Anything Else* (Bradby, 1995) from the genre realistic fiction, *Clever Katya: a Fairy Tale from Old Russia* (Hoffman, 1998) a traditional literature story and *Faithful Elephants* (Tsuchiya, 1951) is a nonfiction informational text.

This study was conducted from January 12, 2004 to March 10, 2004. The responses were spread out over three months so the students would not become bored with responding to the selections being read. Each of the five books was read to the students by the author over a two-day period with students responding each day in

journals. The students had about a week off from listening to a read aloud before the next selection was introduced. A brief introduction of the story and background information about the author was given prior to reading each book. As the book was being read, pictures were shared, but comments were not made by the teacher or students. Then the students wrote responses of their choice to the story in their literature response journals.

Analysis of Students' Written Responses

As the journal entries were being read and analyzed for types of response by the author, it became apparent that most responses would fit into the following eight categories:

- Retelling
- Thoughts about characters
- Predictions
- Questions/wonder statements
- Personal reactions
- Shared experiences
- Confusion/surprise
- Thoughts about the author.

An example of each category of response is provided in Appendix A. These categories are adapted from a study conducted by Hancock (1993). All journal entries were coded according to these categories. Some of the entries fell into multiple coding categories, for example this entry from Pink and Say (historical fiction):

> I would feel bad if I were Pink because they had to use sticks and hammers for weapons. That is so unfair! He is too young to fight and does not even have good things to fight with. I cannot believe they hung Pink and not Say. You should not hang him just because he is black.

This entry could be categorized as personal reaction and thoughts about character. A total of 165 responses were coded for the five picture books read aloud. The number of responses coded for each book were as follows:

- *Pink and Say* 40 responses
- *A Bad Case of Stripes* 36 responses
- *More than Anything Else* 31 responses
- *Clever Katya* 24 responses
- *Faithful Elephants* 34 responses.

The entries examined and coded from the students' journals suggest that students entitled to special education services vary their responses to cover a wide variety of response types (see table 1). They are inquisitive and react personally when listening to a teacher read to them. They also share experiences related to the characters in the books, but do not share a lot of thoughts about the characters' actions. The students do make predications as they read and share moments of confusion when processing the story. They do very little retelling of events in the story and reserve a few questions for the author.

Table 1
Number of Responses by Category

Retelling	13
Thoughts about Characters	8
Prediction	11
Question/Wonder	51
Personal Reaction	51
Shared Experience	17
Confusion/Surprise	10
Author	4

Personal reaction and asking questions were typical of most of the students entitled to special education services. The students frequently asked questions and then reacted personally to the events being described in the book. Students reacted

very strongly to *Faithful Elephants* (nonfiction informational) and asked many questions about the events of the story. For example one student asked questions and then made a very personal connection:

> I wonder why they made to have a war and why can't they let the elephants go to where they use to live? Can't they go back to their families or did their families die? The book made me think of my mom's brother in Africa because he also died because he was sick of something. We buried him and had a funeral. I wondered if when the war stopped they had elephants in the zoo and every animal back at the zoo.

This same type of personal reaction and question response is in another student's journal for *Pink and Say* (historical fiction):

> Why do they need to win the war? So they can stay separated. This book reminds me of the war we are in with Iraq! If I were injured, I would be out there in the war. Even if I were shot I would still try.

While a personal response for *Clever Katya* (traditional literature) included:

> That is weird when she gets married. I would get married when I'm 23 years old or older than that.

These are only a few examples from the personal reaction and question/ wonder categories. The examples are typical of the responses made by other students, too. While the students were able to make a variety of responses across the categories, personal reaction and question/wonder responses were the predominant types. For responses coded overall, Table 1 shows the students had 51 responses coded questions/wonder statements and also had 51 responses coded personal reaction. These two categories, personal reactions and question/wonder statements, were predominant in their responses to each book as indicated in table 2.

Genre did not affect the response pattern when students were responding to books read aloud by the teacher (see table 2). The students still made more responses in the categories of personal reaction and question/wonder statements regardless of genre. However, the students did make fewer total responses to traditional literature

and no responses in the category of shared experiences. Students responded more frequently to books they could relate with or had prior knowledge of the events being shared. A shared experience for More than Anything Else (realistic fiction) included:

> It made me think when I was four years old. I tell my mother and dad to read to me and tell them to make actions to their reading. I know the feeling of Booker and his family, first not able to read and then surprised and happy when he learns to read. I had the same feeling before.

The traditional literature story, *Clever Katya: a Fairy Tale from Old Russia,* was very difficult for them to respond to. The students also had difficulties sharing experiences with the fantasy story, *A Bad Case of Stripes*. The students made fewer responses in the category of shared experiences for these two books because they couldn't relate with the characters or events

Table 2
Number of Responses for Individual Books by Category

Title of Book	Pink and Say	A Bad Case of Stripes	More than Anything Else	Clever Katya	Faithful Elephants
Genre	historical fiction	fantasy	realistic fiction	traditional literature	nonfiction informational
Retelling	3	5	1	2	2
Thoughts about Characters	2	2	2	1	1
Prediction	1	7	3	0	0
Question/Wonder	15	6	5	13	12
Personal Reaction	13	11	10	4	13
Shared Experience	4	1	7	0	5
Confusion/Surprise	0	3	2	4	1
Author	2	1	1	0	0

Students entitled to special education services can go beyond retelling the story, but their responses remain simple. They asked simple questions and made simple "I wonder" statements. The students also shared personal reactions to events, but sometimes missed the overall message of the story when constructing their

personal responses. Their responses are a good first step to helping them become active, independent readers who question what is being written and the events that are occurring as indicated in tables 1 and 2.

Concluding Thoughts

Extensive research has been done in the areas of literature response journals, focused on general education classrooms, grades three and above. However, little research has been conducted to date on an important group of readers, students entitled to special education services. This research is a start; there still needs to be more research done in the area of students entitled to special education services and literature response journals.

The findings indicate the students entitled to special education services need to go beyond surface level personal reactions, asking questions or I wonder statements. Too often the students write question/wonder statements that are not necessarily relevant to the story. They can be prompted to make responses in other categories. They need to be provided with redirection and refocusing; to expand their current responses. The teacher must direct the students to an area of response they do not use a lot when writing in their journals. Hancock (1993) suggested providing the students with guidelines for their literature response journals.

The key to thoughtful responses lies not only within teacher comments, but also with the literature selected to share with the students. It will be difficult for students to respond to literature they cannot relate with. On the other hand, we need books that can challenge the students to grow into mature responders to literature, who are capable of making a variety of responses.

To help students move their responses beyond simple responses and questions is not a change that will happen overnight or without a lot of modeling and reteaching. All students can respond to literature in a thought provoking manner only if provided with the necessary prompts and modeling (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1995; Fuhler, 1994; Golden and Handloff, 1993; Wells 1992/1993; Hancock, 1992).

While the findings of this study are important, there were also limitations to the study. The number of participants was limited and some of the students had multiple labels (special education and English language learners). Also, all participants were from the same classroom and received the majority of their instruction from the same general education teacher. The study could be improved by increasing the number of participants, including students from different classrooms and increasing the time period data was collected.

I would recommend continuing a study that could help students entitled to special education services move beyond simple responses. It is great that they are making responses to literature, but now they need to move on to more thought provoking responses. This could be done through extensive teacher modeling and minilessons, but most importantly increased timed for practice. The simple responses will not be able to become more complex unless students are given the opportunity to continue to respond to a variety of texts. This has been a good starting point, but it is nowhere near the end of students entitled to special education services responding to a variety of literature.

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Appendix A

Examples from each Response Category

Retelling

- The story is very sad because Pink was only 14 years old, went to war and got shot. He did find a friend that helped him, but he was a different color. (Response to *Pink and Say*)

Thoughts about Character

- I think he (Booker) is poor and has no shoes or clothes. He is a great boy and he helps his family. He works hard and cares a lot about others and learning to read. (Response to *More than Anything Else*)

Prediction

- I predict that Camilla will still have stripes (Response to *A Bad Case of Stripes*)

Question/Wonder Statements

- I wonder why the war started in the first place. Why did they not stop the war when it first started? (Response to *Faithful Elephants*)

Personal Reactions

- I would feel bad if I were Pink because they had to use sticks and hammers for weapons. That is so unfair! He is too young to fight and does not even have good things to fight with. I cannot believe they hung Pink and not Say. You should not hang him just because he is black. (Response to *Pink and Say*)

Shared Experiences

- It made me think when I was four years old. I tell my mother and dad to read to me and tell them to make actions to their reading. I know the feeling of Booker and his family, first not able to read and then surprised and happy when he learns to read. I had the same feeling before. (Response to *More than Anything Else*)

Confusion/Surprise

- I do not get the riddle. The riddle is weird and no one will be able to answer it. (Response to *Clever Katya: A Fairy Tale from Old Russia*)

Thoughts about the Author

- I wonder why the author wrote this book about war, the color of people's skin and called it *Pink and Say*. (Response to *Pink and Say*)

Appendix B

Author/Publication Guidelines

The Reading Teacher **instructions for authors**
Please read the instructions for authors carefully. Submissions that do not comply with all of the requirements as set forth in the Instructions **will not be considered.**

To request a print copy of our Instructions for Authors, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to The Reading Teacher, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. E-mail: bzell@reading.org

The Reading Teacher **welcomes submissions in three categories:**
Articles
Teaching Tips
Filler submissions

Articles should be:
about practical, theoretical, or research topics
1,000 to 5,000 words
no more than 18-20 double-spaced pages
original, not published elsewhere

Ideal articles:
have a clear purpose
discuss the topic in some depth
are written in a straightforward style

Teaching Tips submissions:
are brief (up to 1,500 words)
no more than 5-6 pages
have a single focus
have content that is explicitly applied in a classroom
are original, not published elsewhere

Filler submissions should be no more than 500 words and may take the following forms:
annotated bibliographies of articles or websites on a topic

Preparation for review
All submissions must be prepared using a computer word processing program. Submissions must follow the style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association,* 5th edition, 2001.

The manuscript should be double-spaced throughout, including quotations and references. Authors should not cite or reference their own name but instead use the word "author" followed by the publication date. Alphabetize references to "author" under "A" and not under the letter of the author's last name. Do not include titles or the names of coauthors in the "author" citations or references. RT articles do not use footnotes. Incorporate all information into the text.

Permission must be obtained to use quotes over 100 words or any copyrighted material such as figures and tables. See Permission and copyright considerations.

Submission requirements
All submissions and correspondence should be directed to The Reading Teacher, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. E-mail: rt@reading.org

Include the following:
Identification

- At the top of each page, type an identifying word or phrase and the page number. Do not put an author's name here.

Title page

- Authors' full names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.
- 100-word summary
- Journal name (*The Reading Teacher*)
- Date

North American authors should submit

1. 2 electronic copies, either on a disk or in an e-mail attachment – 1 with author information, cover letter, and title page; and 1 for review with author information removed; and

2. 2 printed copies – 1 copy with author information and title page; and 1 copy for review with author information removed, no title page included.

Authors outside North America should submit

1. 2 electronic copies, either on a disk or in an e-mail attachment – 1 with author information, cover letter, and title page; and 1 with author information removed; and

2. 1 printed copy with author information removed, title page included.

Keep an original copy of your submission, as we do not return manuscripts. Do not send originals of figures, tables, or other graphic materials.

Permission and copyright considerations

Authors should include a summary of permission information with their submission. Written permission to include figures, tables, complete poems, or longer quotations from any published work (including websites) must be obtained from the copyright holder and sent to IRA prior to publication of any article; permission must also be obtained to include text or images from unpublished work (e.g., student writing samples, teacher lesson plans). In addition, permission must be sought to include likenesses, voices, or real names of individuals described.

Detailed information about copyright and permissions issues is available here.

Illustrations

Include only one or two tables or figures if they simplify or clarify the presentation. Type each table (with its title) on a separate sheet and place it at the end of the manuscript. (Indicate in the text where to place figures and tables.) Photographs are welcome; include written permission from all photo subjects and the name of the photographer.

Avoiding bias

Avoid stereotyping on the basis of sex, race, disability, or age. Use gender-neutral and nondiscriminatory terms (such as *mail carrier* rather than *mailman*). Choose an alternative for the so-called generic third person singular pronouns *he, his, him.* Rewrite the sentence and use only nouns; pluralize the antecedent and use *they, their;* or use *s/he, her/his, her/him.*

Decisions

Authors are generally notified of a decision within 3 months of receipt. Articles are judged primarily for their contribution to the field, usefulness to teachers or researchers, timeliness, freshness of approach, and clarity and cohesiveness of presentation. Selection also depends on editorial determination of overall balance of content in the journal.

Appendix C

Title Page for Submitting Article

Andrea Jane Safina
413 Thackeray Ave
Ames, Iowa 50014
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515-292-7841

This article examined the types of responses students entitled to level 1 and level 2 special education services made in their journals when responding to books read aloud by a special education teacher. The books chosen to be read aloud were from different genres and about varying topics. The responses were also examined to see if the genre read had any impact on the students' responses. The responses made by the students fell into eight categories and varied with the genre of the book being read. Students entitled to special education services demonstrated they are capable of varying their response types when responding to books read aloud by a special education teacher.

The Reading Teacher
July 16, 2004

Appendix D

Letter of Submission to Editor

413 Thackeray Ave
Ames, Iowa 50014
July 16, 2004

The Reading Teacher
International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road
PO Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139

Dear Editors of *The Reading Teacher*:

The reasons for me wanting to write this article are manifold. I have been a special education teacher for four year and am always striving for ways to meet the needs of all my students. This can be a constant struggle, but I am starting to find more ways to ensure their needs are met. Literature response journals provided me with one more opportunity to examine students' thoughts and informally analyze their writing also. Their thoughts about the various books read aloud provided me with one more tool to use to evaluate their comprehension of the story.

I also found that little research had been done that examined students entitled to special education services and their responses to literature. Most of the research in the area of response journals has focused on general education classrooms, grades three and above. Very little research exists to show what students who have been identified with a disability can do when responding to literature. There are many questions that need to be researched in terms of what students with disabilities can do when responding to literature and what types of responses they are making.

Information regarding students' responses to literature and how genre affects their responses will be valuable to those who teach students with special needs. Too often special education students are not challenged or expected to respond to books above their instructional level. Students entitled to special education services can respond to a variety of texts, even if they cannot read it independently. This responding can be accomplished through teacher read alouds and journaling.

Thank you for your time and consideration for the publication of my article, Literature Response Journals and Students Entitled to Special Education Services.

Sincerely,

Andrea J. Safina

Andrea J. Safina