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Adriann Flint is a 2013 graduate of Bridgewater State University who double majored in Elementary Education and English. This project began in the spring of 2012 as an Adrian Tinsley Program summer research project mentored by Dr. Jenn Manak (Elementary Education). Adriann presented her work at the 2013 National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Her project was expanded and continued through the spring semester of 2013 as the focus of her Honors Thesis.

Read-alouds are a commonly used tool in elementary classrooms. Teachers read aloud for a variety of purposes, including helping students to better understand a topic, promoting students' enjoyment of reading, examining an author's craft, and developing students' literary understanding. There are two main types of read-alouds that are used in classrooms: traditional read-alouds and interactive read-alouds. Traditional read-alouds include a text being read by the teacher to the class with little student participation during the reading, but an in-depth, or grand conversation about the book at the end of the reading (Eeds & Wells, 1989). The second type of read-aloud, an interactive read-aloud, is different in that the students and teacher converse during the read-aloud, and the students are encouraged to make comments and discuss the text during the reading (Barrentine, 1996). An interactive read-aloud includes the teacher encouraging "the children to interact verbally with the text, peers, and the teacher during book reading" as well as the teacher asking "questions throughout the reading that enhance meaning construction" (Barrentine, 1996). Interactive read-alouds are useful because they help students vocalize and discuss their questions and thoughts while the book is being read-aloud, instead of having to wait and add their comments at the end of the reading (Barrentine, 1994; Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey, 2004). These interactions during read-alouds have been shown to help develop students' literary understanding and meaning making or comprehension (Sipe 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2008). Read-alouds can be conducted simply to increase a love of reading, but they are also used during writing instruction in order to provide students with an example of a mentor text. Students can then create their own work using methods and ideas from the mentor text that has been read aloud.

According to Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey, (2004) there are several characteristics of effective read-alouds. First, the chosen book must be developmentally, socially, and emotionally appropriate. Second, the teacher should practice reading the book so that the story can be read emphatically and fluently. A purpose for the read-aloud must be established, and the teacher may stop occasionally to ask the students questions regarding the storyline and their thoughts or feelings about it. Finally, during the reading, connections must be made between the text and other reading and writing activities (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey, 2004). Teachers conducting interactive read-alouds should carefully find a balance between the amount of reading and discussing, and should be careful to keep students' conversations related to the story or topic.

Literary scholars have been in favor of interactive conversation during read-alouds for many years. In her book *Literature as Exploration*, Rosenblatt (1938) discusses the way in which readers approach stories differently and introduces reader response theory. Previously, it had been assumed that every text had one correct interpretation, but Rosenblatt made it clear that books can often be interpreted differently because everyone approaches stories from their own lives and experiences. She explains that "the same text will have a very different meaning and value to use at different times or under different circumstances" and there is not one correct interpretation (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 34). This connects to the transactions that occur while someone is reading. Every person approaches a text differently, but as they read their interpretations vary as well. According to Rosenblatt, every person approaches a text "with certain expectations" about what is to come, but as the story unfolds their interpretations and hypotheses will vary (1938, p. 26). This explains "why meaning is not 'in' the text or 'in' the reader" but instead that both are "essential to the transactional process of meaning making" (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 27). Rosenblatt's transactional theory argues that the reading of a text involves a transaction between the reader, the author, and the text. Rather than using the term "interaction," Rosenblatt (1938/1995) used the term "transaction" to emphasize the influence of both the reader and the text in the making of meaning. Therefore, reading is a transaction during which the reader and the text are continuously affecting one another.

In addition to reader response theory and transactions, Rosenblatt also discusses two types of reading: efferent and aesthetic. Efferent reading refers to an individual reading for a practical purpose or to gain information "that will remain when the reading is over" (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 32). Conversely, aesthetic reading is done for pleasure so that the reader can "'live through' what is being created during the reading." Aesthetic reading is done for the experience and often elicits emotions in the reader (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 33).

Focusing on children's responses to literature, Sipe (2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2008) conducted naturalistic, qualitative studies on the oral responses of first and second-graders to picturebook read-alouds in order to develop a grounded theory of children's literary understanding. He conducted these studies by observing and recording read-alouds in a class of first and second-graders and analyzing the students' and teacher's oral responses. The interactive read-alouds were analyzed by the conversational turn, which Sinclair and Coulthard define as "everything said by one speaker before another began to speak" (Sipe, 2000, p. 263). Sipe used the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to develop categories from the data. He then examined the data further to see how frequently oral responses

fell into each category. In doing this, he showed that the students, although very young, were making thoughtful responses and constructing an advanced literary understanding during interactive read-alouds.

Sipe (2000a) laid the foundation for a grounded theory of literary understanding, which states that student's responses during interactive read-alouds fall into one of five conceptual categories. These categories for student responses are: analytical responses, intertextual responses, personal responses, transparent responses, and performative responses. Throughout the read-aloud, these responses interact with each other and at times, the lines can blur between the categories. Within Sipe's (2000a, 2008) study, over 70% of student responses fell into the analytical category. The analytical category consists of all oral responses in which the students treat the text as an item to be analyzed and interpreted. This category also includes responses in which the students made narrative meaning. The second category consists of intertextual responses and these made up 10% of his data. These are responses that connect the text that is being read to a text that the students have previously read or experienced, as well as connections that students made to television programs, videos, movies, or similar media. The third category, personal responses, also consisted of 10% of the data and includes conversational turns that connect the text to students' own lives or their life experiences to better understand the text. Sipe found that these responses occurred either from text-to-life or from life-to-text and show that the students are using the text to better understand their own lives. The fourth category consists of transparent responses, which show that the student has temporarily entered the world of the story and is reacting to it as though they are taking part in the story. According to Sipe, transparent responses are rare since they often only scratch the surface of what is going on inside of a student's head. Transparent responses only made up 2% of the conversational turns within Sipe's study. The final category, performative responses, which were also not very common, only made up 5% of the data. Performative responses show that the student has taken the text they are listening to and using it for their own purposes, such as to entertain their classmates (Sipe, 2000a, 2001, 2008).

Sipe conducted other studies that further attempted to understand interactive read-alouds and how the lines between the categories for students' conversational turns can be blurred. He also dealt more in depth with intertextual responses and analytical responses to see how they differed and compared (2001). Sipe further analyzed intertextual responses made in a first and second-grade classroom and examined the way that students build understandings based on similar stories, such as variations of the same fairytales (2000b). In both of these studies,

he calls for further research. Understanding the connection between students' reading and writing as well as studies in other grades are both areas in which Sipe hoped other studies would be conducted (Sipe, 2000b, 2008).

There have been many studies on interactive read-alouds, including how teachers can implement them, the characteristics of effective read-alouds (Barrentine, 1994; Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey, 2004), and how a teacher and students construct literary understanding during read-alouds (Sipe, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2008). My study focused on further researching the students' oral responses that occur during interactive read-alouds directly before writing workshop. Sipe's studies have inspired much of the project I conducted. While there has been a variety of research on interactive read-alouds, no previous studies have been conducted that focus specifically on oral responses that occur during interactive read-alouds that take place directly before writing workshop. In addition, Sipe's grounded theory focuses on students in first and second-grade classrooms; however, my study examined digital recordings and transcriptions of interactive read-alouds conducted with students in a third-grade classroom. By using Sipe's theory of literary understanding to analyze the transcripts of the read-alouds in my study, I was able to compare the frequency of the conceptual categories within his theory for student conversational turns. In addition, I was able to determine how Sipe's theory generalizes to different grades. The texts read aloud to the class in my study were shared as mentor texts. The students took part in the read-aloud knowing that they would soon be crafting a piece of writing during writing workshop that may be modeled in some way after the text currently being read aloud. My research focused on investigating the students' oral responses during interactive read-alouds specifically read aloud prior to writing workshop and examined how the frequencies of the oral response categories compared to Sipe's study.

Method
This six-month descriptive, naturalistic study examining third-grade students' social construction of literary understanding was conducted in a third-grade classroom. This classroom was in a public charter school (kindergarten-eighth grade) in an urban school district in a large northeastern city in the United States. The school's curriculum integrated reading and writing, and children's literature shaped their literacy curriculum. The classroom teacher in this study conducted interactive read-alouds at least three times a day. The school also had very high behavioral expectations, which limited behavioral disruptions in the classroom. This classroom was made up of 14 students. There were 10 African American students, 3 Hispanic students, and 1 Asian student. All of the interactive read-alouds examined in this study took place immediately before writing workshop.

The six read-aloud transcripts that I analyzed within my study were archival data that were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by my mentor during a previous study examining how interactive read alouds prior to writing workshop influenced students' writing. The texts read-aloud prior to writing workshop were considered mentor texts that the students and teacher read and examined in order to provide the students with successful models for their writing. I analyzed each of the conversation turns, which Sinclair and Coulthard define as "everything said by one speaker before another began to speak" (Sipe, 2000a, p. 263) using Strauss and Corbin's open coding, axial coding and selective coding, and Glaser and Strauss's constant comparative method (1990). Open coding consisted of breaking down, examining, labeling, comparing, and categorizing the conversational turns according to the five basic conceptual categories for student responses in Sipe's grounded theory of literary understanding. I coded for Sipe's five basic categories for students' oral responses including analytical, intertextual, personal, transparent, and performative responses. Axial coding helped me to reduce the number of codes, interconnect the codes into broader concepts, and develop subcategories within the initial five conceptual categories of student responses. Using selective coding, I related the subcategories back to the original conceptual categories and analyzed the frequency of the different categories that were found in my study as compared to the frequency in Sipe's study. In addition to my analyzing and coding of the students' oral responses, my mentor also coded the students' responses in order to ensure our inter-rater reliability.

FINDINGS

Within the context of interactive read-alouds prior to writing workshop, I found that some of the frequencies for the conceptual categories of student responses in my study were similar to Sipe's, while some were different (Figure 1). In this study, nearly 80% of the students' responses fell into the analytical category and 14% of the responses were in the transparent category. The remaining categories, intertextual, personal, and performative each made up less than 10% of the students' oral responses.

Analytical Responses
Sipe defines analytical responses as those which involve the students making narrative meaning from words and pictures and focusing on interpreting the text (Sipe, 2008). Sipe's analysis of his read-aloud transcripts demonstrated 73% analytical responses; while my data resulted in a slightly higher frequency of analytical responses. In my study, 76% of the student responses were analytical. Within the subcategories of the analytical responses, many responses dealt with the students attempting to

Figure 1. Student Responses

	Analytical	Intertextual	Personal	Transparent	Performative
Sipe's study	73%	10%	10%	2%	5%
My study	76%	6%	1%	14%	2%

Figure 1. Comparison of students' oral responses during interactive read-alouds in Sipe's study and my study.

make narrative meaning, understanding the language of the text, and viewing the picturebook as an object. In a read-aloud of the book *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant (2001), a student commented that he liked how the author was using the word borrowed:

> Teacher: Yes, Osahru. We are going to be focused on what Osahru is about to share with us. Osahru: I like how she kept using *borrowed* so that we remember that it doesn't really matter that the stuff is borrowed that he is happy the way he is. Teacher: Yeah, it's very interesting. We can certainly learn something from this book of scarecrows that the scarecrow does not mind that he's made up of all borrowed things and that he can't really close his eyes, and all these animals are making their home on him. He's alright with that. He's happy with who he is anyhow. Very interesting.

This student responded in a way that analyzed the text and attempted to better understand the story. Many other analytical responses also made reference to why the author wrote the book in a certain way. In the following example during a read-aloud of *Henry the Dog with No Tail* (Feiffer, 2007), a student commented on the author's decision to use certain punctuation points:

> Teacher: Yes, I love the word SCOFFED. What a great verb. It is kind of like…she must have said, (imitating the tone of the character in the book) "I told you that wasn't a REAL tail," she scoffed. See Mark, I just called on Jeremiah and now you're talking which isn't polite to Jeremiah. Go ahead. Jeremiah: I liked it when she put the exclamation point because it tells you like you saying something really loud. Teacher: Yeah. It's a FAKE! With lots of excitement, right? Yes.

In both of these examples, as with many analytical responses, the students were responding while analyzing the text and attempting to better understand the story. It is possible that the students' responses often fell into the analytical subcategories of understanding the language of the text and viewing the text as an object because these read-alouds took place before writ-

ing workshop. The students were viewing the text as an object to learn from or as a text to mentor their writing, not simply as a reading for enjoyment. This is also shown by the students having no responses that fell into Sipe's Analytical subcategory which focuses on analyzing the illustrations of the text.

Intertextual Responses
Intertextual responses are responses that show the students are making links to other texts, movies, plays, or other cultural products (Sipe, 2008). Sipe's second category of student responses, Intertextual, consisted of 10% of his total data. This was similar to my study which found that 6% of the students' responses were intertextual. Within my study, nearly all of the intertextual responses were connections to other stories or books:

> Keith: I have a text-to-text. I've got two things. In *Henry…the Dog with No Tail* and *Scarecrow* are both fiction and at the end they both said that they didn't care what they had.
> Jeremiah: I agree.
> Teacher: They didn't care what they had or didn't have, I agree with you there. I see eye to eye with you. Yes, Nakota.

In this response, the student connects *Henry the Dog with No Tail* (Feiffer, 2007) to another book that had previously been read in class. At other times, they connected the story they were reading to books they had read on their own or to stories that had been read in class during previous grades. For example, in the following excerpt, a student connects the book they were reading, *Spiders* (Gibbons, 2005), to a book they had read previously:

> Student: When you were talking about changing its colors, you made me think about adapting. Teacher: People are thinking about ADAPTING. It has adapted to catch its prey just like we read in *How Animals Adapt*. I'm glad you made that connection.

In this intertextual connection, the student refers back to a text that had a similar theme to the book they were currently read-

ing and made a connection through the word *adapting*. This is indicative of the intertextual connections in my study, as they most often connected the text currently being read to other works of literature.

Personal Responses

The third conceptual category includes personal responses. According to Sipe's definition, personal responses occur when students are making connections between the text and their own lives (Sipe, 2008). In Sipe's study, this category made up 10% of the students' responses, but in my study these only made up 1% of the data. One example of a personal response in my study came while the story *Animal Dads* (Collard, 1998) was being read. One student made sure to ask if his teacher and classmates knew about one of his special areas of knowledge:

> Teacher: What is the opposite of shallow, Samone?
> Samone: Deep.
> Teacher: Yeah, deep. So deep means to go really far down and shallow is not so deep.
> Yes, Jeremiah.
> Jeremiah: Do you know I am an expert on turtles?
> Teacher: Yes, you are an expert on turtles.
> Michael: I'm an expert on wolves.

In this example, the students were at the point in the text where readers learned that turtle babies never see their parents after they hatch. The student took this opportunity to share information about himself that was connected to the story. In another example, a student connects *Henry the Dog with No Tail* (Feiffer, 2007), the book that is about to be read, to their lives by informing their classmates that they have already read the story.

> Teacher: We are going to read Kate Feiffer's book,
> Student: Oooh, I've already read that.
> Teacher: Great, so you get to enjoy it again.

In this example, the student connects the book to their own life simply because they have already read this book. Personal responses in my study were rare and often included brief comments such as these. Only once in my study did a student tell a personal story about something she had done that connected to the text, although they did this frequently in Sipe's study. It is possible that personal responses were less frequent in this study because the interactive read-alouds took place immediately before writing workshop. Knowing that they would soon have a chance to share their personal stories during writing workshop, students' personal responses may have often occurred in written form instead, limiting the number of oral personal responses in my study.

Transparent Responses

The fourth conceptual category, transparent responses, occurred rarely in Sipe's study as well as in mine. Sipe suggests that transparent responses are rare because they often occur when the student's world and the world of the text are the same momentarily. He also adds that these responses are automatic and not intended for an audience (Sipe, 2008). The frequency of the fourth category in my study was also different than in Sipe's study. In Sipe's study, transparent responses only made up 2% of his data, but in my study they made up 14% of the data. Within my study, transparent responses were often quiet, and consisted of "oohs" or gasps. These responses often interrupted the teacher as she continued reading, such as in this example from the read-aloud of the book *Spiders* (Gibbons, 2005):

> Teacher: Remember the nursery rhyme, "Little Miss Muffet"?
> Students: Yeah.
> Teacher: Little Miss Muffett was a real little girl. Her father was a spider expert
> /Students: What! Blaugh!/
> Teacher: who used to make her eat mashed spiders when she was sick. About 200 years ago, this was a common cold remedy.

In this example, as with many, the students interrupted the teacher as if they could not contain their excitement and comments. This helped to categorize these comments as transparent, because it was clear that the students' worlds and the world of the text had been combined. In other examples, it was as though the students did not realize they were speaking out loud. During the read-aloud of *Henry the Dog with No Tail* (Feiffer, 2007), one student let out a few responses that were very quiet and seemed to have no intention of stopping the read aloud:

> Teacher: (Reading aloud.) "Look," he said, "I've got a new tail."
> Michael: Oh, my.
> Teacher: (Reading aloud.) "Wow! Neat! Cool!" said Grady. "Does it do any tricks?" asked Pip. Remember we're listening for cool, interesting sentences. Henry ran around in a circle and jumped over his tail. The first time he did a high jump, then he did a long jump, then he ran backward and jumped. He did a spin jump, a low jump, and a leap jump.

Transparent responses were more common in my study than in Sipe's, but they were still somewhat infrequent. It would be difficult to know if I was able to capture all of the students' trans-

parent responses, as many occur within their minds. However, the transparent responses that are audible usually show that the students are engrossed in the story and are not speaking to their class intentionally.

Performative Responses

Sipe describes the final category, the performative, as student comments that use the text as a platform for their own purposes, such as to express creativity or to entertain their classmates (2008). These responses were often accompanied by movements or dramatic motions. The frequency of this category was also slightly different in my study. In Sipe's study, these performative responses made up 5% of his data, but in my study it was only 2% of the data. During the reading of *Henry the Dog with No Tail* (Feiffer, 2007*)*, a student gave this series of performative responses during a dramatic scene in the story:

> Teacher: Something is about to happen and aren't you wondering what?
> Students: (chorally) YES!
> Teacher: I love how this author chose…She chose to end her page here. But she didn't just want you to flip and feel nothing. She wanted you to wonder what was going to happen. Are you ready?
> Students – (chorally) Yes!
> Jeremiah: Close your eyes. (Covers eyes with hands.)
> Teacher: Then…
> Jeremiah: (Whispers.) Close your eyes.
> Mark: No.
> Teacher: Shhh, Jeremiah. We're waiting.

This student was trying to entertain his classmates and make the reading more exciting for them by putting on a bit of a performance. The percentage of performative responses found in my study may have been slightly lower than in Sipe's study because of the age of the students and the culture of the classroom. The school that my study took place in had very high behavioral expectations, and because of that it may have resulted in fewer performative responses because the students understood that these would not be acceptable.

Conclusions

These results indicate that it is important for students to interact with their teacher, peers, and the text during interactive read-alouds prior to writing workshop. During interactive read-alouds, students' responses help readers develop an understanding of the text including how texts work, how they are purposefully crafted, and why they may be crafted in a particular way. In a traditional read-aloud, the students are able to express their thoughts about the story during a grand conversation (Eeds & Wells, 1989) after the story has been read; how-

ever, many of the students' responses found in this study would likely not have occurred during a traditional read-aloud. For example, if the students were not able to discuss the story during the reading, their transparent responses may have been less common. The students knew that the texts being read aloud were mentors for their writing, and they must truly understand how the author crafted the text for this reader's understanding and enjoyment. This may have led to a higher number of analytical responses. Additionally, it is possible that students did not feel the need to tell as many personal stories because they knew they would soon have an opportunity to share their personal experiences in their own writing during writing workshop. In a traditional read-aloud, the students would have had to wait until the end of the story and would have possibly forgotten some of these valuable comments that together led to the development of an understanding of how authors intentionally craft their texts for their readers. Also, many of the students' analytical comments that took place during the read-alouds involved the students asking for a definition of a word or commenting on something that they noticed in the texts. Given that the books read in my study were read immediately before writing workshop and with a clear purpose in mind, this may have increased the number of analytical responses given by the students. Read-alouds which required the students to be quiet would have meant losing out on many of the great comments and thoughts of the students. The conversations that the students had amongst themselves and with the teacher throughout the read-alouds in this study were rich and, in most cases, created by the students. Additionally, the students could let their emotions out through transparent responses or contribute performative responses meant solely for entertainment. The comments and questions that occurred during the read-alouds worked together to help the students form the basis of their literary understanding.

Allowing the students to converse with each other, their teacher, and the text during the read-aloud resulted in more responses that demonstrated a more advanced literary understanding and a better understanding of how the text was crafted for the reader. This corresponds with Rosenblatt's reader response theory because allowing the students to discuss the story while it is being read allowed them to comment based on their own experiences and understanding of the story, instead of requiring them to wait until the end of the story and listen to a grand conversation regarding the text. Encouraging the students to interact with the text as it was being read meant that they would be more prepared when their own opportunity came about to write a story modeled in a specific way after the mentor text.

There were some significant differences between Sipe's study and my study. Overall, his study featured small group and

whole-class read-alouds, and his study took place in the first and second grades. My study only featured whole-class read-alouds and took place in a third-grade classroom. The types of teachers featured in our studies also may have affected the frequency of the different categories of responses, based on what the teachers would accept or not accept as proper classroom actions. The types of books read in our studies differed, as well. Sipe's study featured all fictional stories, often based on fairytales. My study featured fiction as well as expository texts, which may have resulted in different types of responses. However, the most significant difference between the two studies is the difference that perhaps had the greatest impact on the results. The read-alouds in Sipe's study were read for enjoyment and for the overall experience. The texts read in my study were read immediately prior to writing workshop, and while they were read for the experience, they were also read with a specific purpose in mind to mentor the students' writing. Using the books as mentor texts, the teacher in my study would guide the conversation toward a certain aspect of the author's writing in order to teach this topic to the students. As the story was being read aloud, the students would work towards an understanding of not only the story being read, but the way it was written as well. By discussing the reasons why a text was written in a certain way, the students could better understand the way authors craft their writing. Then, immediately following the read-aloud, as they began writing in writing workshop, they would incorporate the author's craft that they had just learned about during their read-aloud.

The findings in this study lead to many more questions regarding students' oral responses and further analysis of teacher's oral responses during interactive read-alouds. Research that could better show the connection between students' responses during interactive read-alouds and their writing would help to demonstrate the effectiveness of conducting interactive read-alouds prior to writing workshop. Additionally, it would be helpful to see if interactive read-alouds prior to writing workshop often resulted in a higher number of analytical responses than in Sipe's study, or perhaps how the classroom environment leads to differences in students' and teachers' oral responses. The performative responses in my study were rare, but often added a great deal of energy and direction to the conversation. Research investigating the writing of students who often offered performative responses could possibly be a great demonstration of the link between interactive read-alouds and voice in students' writing.

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