

# Middle Grade Students' Responses to Canadian Realistic Fiction for Young Adults

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Students' response to realistic fiction is best understood through a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods. My research therefore included (a) qualitative analyses of open-ended interviews with students (types of response, response styles, and my influence on response), and (b) quantitative evaluation of the total probe-response relationship. The major finding concerns how the different roles I adopted influenced students' responses. As co-explorer and modeller of comprehension strategies, I got students to respond more broadly to fiction than I did in other roles.

Pour bien analyser les réactions des élèves à des textes de fiction à saveur réaliste, il est préférable d'utiliser à la fois des méthodes de recherche qualitatives et quantitatives. L'auteure a donc réalisé des analyses qualitatives d'entrevues à questions ouvertes (types de réponses des élèves, styles de réponses et influence de la chercheuse sur les réponses) et une évaluation quantitative de la relation globale exploration-réponse. L'un des principaux résultats de l'étude concerne la manière dont les divers rôles joués par la chercheuse a influencé les réponses des élèves. En tant que coexploratrice et personne capable de mettre sur pied des stratégies efficaces de compréhension, elle a amené les élèves à réagir de façon plus vaste à la fiction qu'en jouant d'autres rôles.

Schema-based perspectives on reading comprehension (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; McNeil, 1987; Weaver, 1988) are now thought compatible with Response Theory (Rosenblatt, 1983) perspectives. Thus researchers of students' responses to literature may draw on both perspectives in bridging theory and practice. In this study, I examined students' responses to Canadian realistic fiction for young adults in open-ended interviews (Stewart & Cash, 1978), using questions and inferences drawn from both research traditions. My aims were to discover response types, to detect students' "response styles" (Galda, 1983, p. 4), and to see if the data-collecting method influenced students' responses.

## RELATED RESEARCH

In the first wave of "response research," investigators relied on Rosenblatt's (1983) notions of reader-text transaction to support a wide variety of empirical studies. We now know about students' responses at different age levels

(Eeds & Wells, 1989; Galda, 1982; Hynds, 1989; Latshaw, 1985; Mauro, 1983; Yocum, 1987), developmental characteristics of their "sense of story" (Beach & Wendler, 1987; Cullinan, Harwood, & Galda, 1983; Hade, 1988; Mikkelsen, 1983; Pappas & Brown, 1987; Rubin & Gardner, 1985; Wells, 1986), and their "response styles" (Cooper & Michalak, 1981; Dillon, 1982; Galda, 1983, 1989; Odell & Cooper, 1977; Vipond & Hunt, 1984).

Since the late seventies, a second wave of reader response research has made naturalistic studies of students' responses. These studies discuss learning environments that support development of an increased sense of story (Hickman, 1979; Hepler, 1982) and examine the characteristic interactions of students in teacher-student book conferences (Hill, 1986).

In parallel with my research, two recent studies gathered information about schoolchildren's responses. Watson and Davis (1988) studied responses to a literature-centred reading program, and Knipping and Andres (1988) examined literature study groups. These investigations show that when literature is used as the text resource for teaching reading, teachers and students must adopt new roles in learning. Watson and Davis (1988) observed that "Literature study groups do not have much of a chance if the teacher fails to accept his or her primary role as a contributing member of the group, understanding that no member has the right to dominate" (p. 65).

These naturalistic studies are particularly promising in the move from theory to practice. Still, our understanding of students' responses in a wide variety of teaching situations and of ways teachers may assist students is incomplete. My findings add to this growing body of knowledge, providing information about seventh grade students' responses to Canadian realistic fiction in "the zone of proximal development," which Vygotsky (1978) defines as "the distance between the actual development as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

My work also shows how compatible qualitative and quantitative research methods may be used in studies of literary education.

#### THE STUDY

##### *The Readers and Texts*

I provided a classroom teacher with criteria for selecting students and texts.

Criteria for participants included that

1. they would score at or above grade level on reading comprehension tests administered by the school division;
2. both males and females would be included, preferably in equal numbers; and
3. students would agree to participate in the study, and their parents or guardians would grant their permission also.

Seven students (four girls and three boys) agreed to participate.

Criteria for selection of the texts were as follows:

1. the novels must vary in reading difficulty as determined by the Fry Readability Graph (1977);
2. participants have not read the novels;
3. the novels are thematically related; and
4. the group of novels contains both male and female protagonists.

(The teacher's selection of novels appears in Appendix A, along with brief summaries of two novels discussed in the interviews.)

Interviews took place in a school library conference room, arranged to create a comfortable, intimate setting.

Before turning to the novels, I talked informally with the students about forthcoming school events. Then I asked them to give their initial response to one of the books. I consciously employed more "wait time" (Cooper, 1982, pp. 177–178) than is usual in classroom interaction between teachers and students. The discussions ended when the student had nothing more to say or became restless.

Stewart and Cash (1978) claim open-ended interviews allow considerable latitude in deciding the amount of structure needed to encourage response. If subjects respond easily, researchers offer verbal and nonverbal encouragement, signalling interest in their speech. When subjects stop speaking, researchers may change the question or refer to something said earlier (Latshaw, 1985, p. 117). Open-ended interviews, backed up by informal probes (Gorden, 1969), provide students with consistent encouragement and assist them in elaborating and clarifying their responses.

### *Analysis of Data*

Transcripts of the interviews were prepared along Wells' (1986) guidelines. The transcriptions, sound recordings, and observation notes provided evidence of students' types of responses and response styles, and allowed me to consider how the data-collecting method influenced responses.

To categorize students' responses, I used analytic induction (Bodgen & Biklen, 1982; Patton, 1980; Williamson, 1977) to construct a taxonomy of response types (see below). To do this I read through the transcripts several times, noting in the margins distinctive features of each student's responses. From these notations I identified clusters of features showing how readers respond to events (Harding, 1968). Next, the clusters were combined whenever possible to form supra-categories. Through "triangulation" (Denzin, 1988, pp. 511–513), I refined the definition of the supra-categories until the description accounted for all responses placed in them. I continued this highly recursive procedure until the taxonomy contained descriptive categories for all responses, aiming finally to classify oral responses in various "styles" as Galda (1983) did, that is, by combining Purves' (1968) categories and Applebee's (1978) hierarchical model of evaluation (Appendix B).

After categorizing the responses, I considered the influence of my data-collecting method on students' responses, first, by quantitative analysis of probe-response relationships and, second, by additional qualitative analysis of selected portions of the interviews. Quantitative and qualitative methods' compatibility has two aspects. First, both are capable here of producing thorough descriptions. Although testable under quite different inferential rules, the categorized underpinnings of the descriptions are mutually understandable. Second, both point to theories of language, communication, and "interest," many of which may overlap or (even) coincide.

#### FINDINGS

My major finding concerns the importance of assisting students to explore their responses in discussions. I therefore combine findings on types of responses and how they were observed.

#### *Types of Responses*

At the start of the interview, students talked easily, with little if any encouragement. After a few minutes, pupils needed increasing amounts of encouragement and assistance to respond. Types of responses in the less-assisted context differed from those in the more-assisted context.

#### Less-Assisted Responses

Typically, students talked about themselves as readers before reporting parts of the novel they had difficulty comprehending. These responses were given without probes. Students who read *Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird* reported similar pre-reading expectations and explained why they did or did not modify them. The following illustrates both types of responses from four interviews:

Beth: I got kind of bored with it so I didn't read it anymore. Then I found after the first couple of chapters . . . then I thought it was better.

Fred: When I read the first chapter, it didn't seem like a book I'd like. Then I kind of got into it and then kind of enjoyed it more and understood what was happening and in the end I was glad I read it.

Joan: I didn't know if I'd like it at first . . . it wasn't very interesting at first.

John: I thought it was so big that, uh, I wouldn't get finished . . . like it took so long for . . . like, for some things to happen. . . . Like, ah, two chapters for him [Jeremy] to get moved into the apartment.

In contrast, students' less-assisted responses to *Hunter in the Dark* centred on the same comprehension problem. They did not understand Hughes' use of flashbacks and symbols:

Myra: I didn't like how it changed from one chapter to the other . . . it was kinda hard, but at the end I was used to it . . . I liked the present events that occurred in the present because it was more exciting.

Tony: I thought he was going to be . . . like I didn't think it was going to have anything to do with when he was in the hospital and that. I thought he was just going to be like the way he was outside the forest when he was hunting. I thought he was going to stay there and have some things like that.

Cara: I lost myself when I was reading about the deer . . . I thought there should have been more danger. I didn't quite understand what they [the author] meant . . . like when, uh, that he was trying to kill a deer and then get its head to hang on his wall as a trophy. Then at the end he realized a deer is just trying to be safe, just as he is. I didn't quite know . . . it was kind of . . . I didn't particularly like that.

Besides talking about themselves as readers and reporting the same comprehension problems, students talked about specific characters and events near the end of the story. Several types of responses intertwine. For example, in the following responses, Tony combines identification of the doctor and description of his actions, and Myra combines identification of three characters with a subjective evaluation of their relationship.

Tony: The doctor, he really enjoyed life and that. He really knew how he [Mike] felt. It was like he, the doctor, already went through it, and he knew all the things that was wrong, and he would always try to help Mike.

Myra: It was kinda funny how the parents acted. They wouldn't tell him what was wrong with him.

Less-assisted responses had two additional characteristics. First, the students identified characters by relational terms, such as "friend" and "brother," not by given names; reports of characters' actions included more information about the students' thoughts and feelings than information given by the author in the texts. Second, students identified events at the beginning and end of the novel more often than events in the middle; the identified events were either ones the students had difficulty comprehending or ones they thought unrealistic, such as Mike's parents not telling him he had cancer in *Hunter in the Dark*.

I selected the terms "Identification/Description" and "Identification/Evaluation" to describe the intertwined nature of the students' main types of responses to realistic fiction.

#### More-Assisted Responses

Increased direct questioning and clarification probes helped students interpret the meaning of some events they identified during the less-assisted discussions. Interpretations were given when I either requested students to hypothesize the possible meaning of an event, or encouraged students to clarify responses. The most distinctive feature of these responses is that they

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**Taxonomy of the Subjects' Types of Responses**

*Identification/Description*—readers identify characters by use of pronouns and relational terms such as “he,” “the friend” and “the sister” rather than by given names in the context of describing actions and thoughts of the character.

*Identification/Evaluation*—readers identify characters by use of pronouns and relational terms coupled with evaluative statements about the characters.

*Personal Connections*—readers identify and discuss past experience that is related to narrative content.

*Researcher's Statements*—the researcher shared past experiences related to narrative content.

*Interpretations*—readers formulate and “test” hypotheses about the meaning of characters' behaviour or an event after reflecting on personal past experiences.

*Questions*—readers request that a question or statement be repeated.

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were stated far more tentatively than other types. The important characteristic of students' interpretations is not the quality of insight but rather how they occurred: all are linked with students' recognition of pertinent prior knowledge related to narrative content. These types of responses are identified as “Personal Connections” in the taxonomy.

The last type, “Questions,” was observed least; most responses were limited to student requests that I repeat probes. A taxonomy of student response types appears above.

My examination of the more-assisted responses also showed that students independently read texts shorter and less complex structurally and conceptually than the two novels selected by the classroom teacher. As well, students' sense of story does not include an understanding of the characteristic of more complex forms of narrative. When choosing books for independent reading, students use selection strategies compatible with their existing reading interests; however, these strategies do not assist them select from among texts of children's literature recommended for middle-grade readers (Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, 1987; Norton, 1987).

In summary, students' unfamiliarity with Hughes' narrative techniques prevented them from identifying prior knowledge that would have assisted them to respond more independently. The students who read *Hunter in the Dark* required assistance in comprehending events before they could begin exploring their meaning from different perspectives.

### *Characteristics of Response Styles*

Students' response styles were examined from two perspectives: characteristics of the combined responses and characteristics of each group of readers. The first perspective provides general information about the students' response styles; the second, information about the influence of text features on style.

#### General Characteristics

Students adopted a text-centred stance for making all types of responses; however, the strength of this preference varied considerably among different types. When students made comprehension responses, for example, they preferred this stance only slightly. In contrast, they adopted a strong text-centred stance when making involvement and interpretation responses (See Appendix B).

All students made comprehension and involvement responses; a few made inferences and personal connections; none made generalizations. Individual differences in response style centred mostly on the ability to adopt both stances and to make slightly less subjective evaluative statements about narrative content.

#### Text-Related Characteristics

Response styles varied more among students who discussed *Hunter in the Dark* than they did among those who read *Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird*. Also, the first group's response style included less mature evaluation responses; for example, most students who discussed *Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird* made analytical evaluations, but only one student who read *Hunter in the Dark* made evaluative statements beyond categoric evaluations.

#### *Discussion*

By comparison with Galda's (1982) students, mine showed less literary awareness. In a study of fifth-grade students' responses to realistic fiction, Galda (1982) described individual differences in response as follows:

Emily was reality bound, uncertain of the rationale behind her responses. Charlotte was more objective but still limited by her dependence on real life as a measure. Ann analyzed both the text and her own responses as she sought explanations for both literary and real life experiences. (p. 17)

My study did not include an "Ann," but did include two "Charlottes"—Tony and Beth. The remaining students' response styles fell between "Emily" and "Charlotte." Further, Galda's observation that "Emily's evalu-

ations were almost always unelaborated, with no details from the text provided" (p. 8) was true as well for five students' evaluative statements in my study; therefore, the students were more like Emily than Charlotte, who could be specific in her criticism of an author's point of view (p. 12). My group's less mature sense of story is most likely linked to differences in reading background and general academic achievement. A further difference is that Galda's students were from a private school in New York, whereas the students in my study were from an urban public school in Saskatchewan, Canada.

### *Influences on Response*

Students' types of response and response styles indicated differences in response to the two texts and in the amount of instructional scaffolding needed by readers of each text. I adopted two approaches in determining how the data-collecting method influenced response: a quantitative evaluation of the total probe-response relationship and additional qualitative evaluation of portions of the interviews.

### Probe-Response Relationship

Quantitative evaluation of the total probe-response relationship indicates General Encouragement Probes (GE probes)—which include nonverbal and brief verbal cues that encourage natural interpersonal communication—elicited approximately one-third of the total responses. These form approximately half the comprehension responses and half the evaluative statements observed in the study. Questions that were predominantly open-ended elicited approximately one-third of the total response but, unlike GE probes, resulted in students making more types of responses. Clearly, only encouraging the students to talk about the novels provided an insufficient instructional framework to elicit their broad response. Clarification probes and my statements elicited approximately one-fifth of the total response. Clarification probes, like Questions, similarly elicited different types of answers. In contrast, my remarks influenced particular types; one-third of students' interpretation responses were elicited by this probe. This means my comments helped students make interpretations more than did the combined influence of Questions and GE probes. At the same time, my statements elicited very few evaluative replies.

These findings support Watson's and Davis' (1988) assertions about teachers' crucial role in discussions and indicate the possibility that teachers assist students more in making inferences than by questioning, sharing their own tentative thoughts and feelings, or providing GE probes. A quantitative view of these findings is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
*Total Probe-Response Relationship*

| <i>Types of probes**</i> | <i>Types of Responses*</i> |          |                    |          |                  |          |                   |          |              |          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|                          | <i>Comprehension</i>       |          | <i>Involvement</i> |          | <i>Inference</i> |          | <i>Evaluation</i> |          | <i>Total</i> |          |
|                          | <i>No.</i>                 | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i>         | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i>       | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i>        | <i>%</i> | <i>No.</i>   | <i>%</i> |
| Questions                | 19                         | (25.6)   | 14                 | (26.0)   | 22               | (27.1)   | 16                | (25.3)   | 71           | (26.3)   |
| General encouragement    | 30                         | (40.5)   | 16                 | (30.7)   | 4                | (4.9)    | 35                | (55.5)   | 85           | (31.5)   |
| Clarification            | 12                         | (16.2)   | 10                 | (19.2)   | 19               | (19.7)   | 8                 | (12.6)   | 49           | (18.1)   |
| Elaboration              | 5                          | (6.7)    | 3                  | (5.7)    | 7                | (8.6)    | 0                 | (0.0)    | 15           | (5.6)    |
| Researcher's statements  | 8                          | (0.8)    | 9                  | (17.3)   | 29               | (35.8)   | 4                 | (6.3)    | 50           | (18.5)   |
| <i>Total (%)</i>         | 74                         | (27.4)   | 52                 | (19.3)   | 81               | (30.0)   | 63                | (23.3)   | 270          | (100.0)  |

\*From Galda (1983).

\*\*From Gorden (1969).

### Researcher's Role

Because the examination of the probe-response relationship indicated my responses influenced students' ability to make inferences, I examined interactions beforehand. The findings indicate I influenced responses by encouraging students to reflect on past experience and to explore this meaning from more than one perspective, and by modelling metacognitive skills for monitoring comprehension processes. Excerpts from the discussions with John, Beth, and Tony provide operationalized views of these forms of instructional infrastructure. Here I encourage John to reflect further on his past experience:

Researcher: Tell me more about your feelings . . . about the characters.

John: Well . . . I thought . . . I could relate to it how Jeremy. . . . One of my friend's dad died.

Researcher: Umhum.

John: And—.

Researcher: Did this happen recently?

John: That was about a year ago almost. He never talked about it or anything, and I knew kind of how he felt, and. . . . Well, it was just like some books you read. That's how it is. . . . You don't hear about it happening usually . . . [but it] happens all the time . . . I didn't know what to say to him. I couldn't talk about it.

Researcher: But you felt—?

John: What could I say?

John is encouraged to talk more about his past experience, knowing the researcher accepted his observed association. As he talks, he reviews from a broader social perspective what he observed and felt originally. He then concludes by sharing candidly the sense of inadequacy most individuals feel in such circumstances. Most importantly, John retains ownership of the exploration of meaning for himself.

In the discussion with Beth, I modelled “drafting processes” as described by Tierney and Pearson (1983, pp. 571–572). In the following excerpt, Beth does not perceive personal connections with the events in *Mama’s Going to Buy You a Mockingbird* until I share John’s responses:

Beth: Um, sometimes the part I don’t like . . . I hate when people—in this book die, you know. And it talks about how, um, people have to like put their life back together again. I don’t like that because it’s, um, kind of not dull, but I like happy stories. This is kind of a sad story.

Researcher: O.K.

Beth: But at the end it you know it’s—

Researcher: Were you uncomfortable reading that part?

Beth: No, I probably would be if my dad died or something—.

Researcher: Another student said the father of one of his friend’s died, and he didn’t really know what to say. He realized from reading this story that someone else could be that uncomfortable too. He was surprised that parents could be that uncomfortable.

Beth: Before I moved here, like, there was a boy in my old school. His mother died, and he kind of cried, like the day after he came to school and everything. And he acted like it bothered him, and Jeremy, he never acted that way. Like, he thought about a lot in his mind, but he never showed any real feelings. But at the beginning he did kind of and. . . .

Researcher: Was he maybe numb?

Beth: Well, he probably didn’t know what to do, so he probably thought he didn’t cry because he didn’t really, um, I don’t know how to say it . . . took a little while to get like that his father—.

Researcher: Um—.

Beth: And same with the little sister Sara. She, like, she didn’t really understand the word “dead” because there is a part of the book where it said, um, that, like, she asked when is Daddy coming home? Like, she thought he’d gone away, like, on a trip or something.

The question, “Was he maybe numb?” models a basic drafting process, making and testing hypotheses. Because the researcher’s hypothesis was stated tentatively, Beth was invited to examine it as a co-explorer. Her response indicates that this assistance was enough to help her extend her understanding of the characters’ behaviour. From a process-oriented perspective, John explored the broader meaning of his personal connection response; Beth identified personal connections she used to extend her response.

Finally, when I asked Tony to hypothesize why Mike did not shoot the deer in *Hunter in the Dark*, he demonstrated a tacit knowledge of the thematic emphasis:

Researcher: What would be your best guess?

Tony: Well . . . I think he was just going around and thinking he could actually shoot one, but I don't think he had the guts enough to actually shoot a deer because inside he knew the deer was like him.

In response to GE probes that preceded this direct question, Tony had simply retold bits and pieces of the story. A process-oriented question helped him organize his perceptions and respond more broadly.

In summary, the findings indicate students' less-assisted responses did not go beyond literal reconstruction of the two Canadian novels for young adults. Reconstruction was done for the purposes of reporting comprehension problems and making evaluative statements about characters and events. However, in most instances, when I modelled metacognitive skills, students extended their less-assisted responses. Individual students differed mainly in their ability to adopt both reader-centred and text-centred stances in making different types of responses. I found that students who adopted both stances did so by utilizing prior knowledge for making the meaning of the story and communicated this meaning successfully.

### *Discussion*

Students' less-assisted responses provide much food for thought concerning students' role in selection of texts for group studies. We may be reasonably certain that students' responses would have been quite different if they had taken an active role in selecting the topic. It is likely that "coping with death" would not have been their first choice! The students' attitude towards the assignment might also have been more positive had they been given a selection from which to choose.

My findings do not provide much information about "revising processes" (Tierney & Pearson, 1983, pp. 576–577). All discussions except that with Beth centred on assisting students in formulating responses. However, the findings do indicate conscious self-monitoring of response, and that additional use of "wait" time (Sadker & Sadker, 1982) may be used effectively to help students with comprehension problems. Equally important, this assistance may occur without leading students to discover and adopt the teacher's broader perspective of events. According to Tierney and Pearson (1983), the functional importance of composing processes comes together when students are able to judge the quality of their developing ideas:

It seems that students rarely pause to reflect on their ideas or to judge the quality of their developing interpretations. Nor do they often reread a text either from the same or different perspective. In fact, to suggest that a reader should approach

text as a writer who crafts an understanding across several drafts—who pauses, rethinks, and revises—is almost contrary to some well established goals readers proclaim for themselves (e.g., that efficient reading is equivalent to maximum recall based upon a single fast reading). (p. 577)

Most students adopted, albeit for a short period of time, more than one alignment to events in the novels. Except for Myra, the coherence of their responses increased during the probe-response aspect of the discussions—although the combined findings indicate that for the entire group to have achieved greater coherence would have required several additional discussions.

Practically speaking, giving enough assistance in whole-group discussions would be difficult, if not impossible, because teachers must manage the group while briefly assisting individual students. The combined findings support teaching aligning processes in other contexts. The feasibility of fostering development of these processes through informal drama and art activities merits future research.

Several students demonstrated tacit knowledge of monitoring skills; however, they did not utilize these skills without modelling and encouragement. According to Rowe (1988), the importance of the monitoring process is as follows:

Metacognition assists not only in the organized recall of previously acquired knowledge and experience, in learning and problem solving, but also in maintaining and strengthening of concentration, motivation, interest and self-esteem. (p. 228)

My findings strongly support the view that students should have a role in selecting what they read, talk about reading informally in social contexts other than whole-group discussions, and construct representations less influenced by teacher responses. This supports arguments for the reconceptualization of reading as interaction and transaction (Hunt, 1990).

Finally, my research shows that teachers' potential roles in less-structured discussions of children's literature must be quite different from their existing roles in directed reading lessons. Evidence strongly supports viewing the teacher's role as a primary influence in students' development of a broad response to literature.

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## APPENDIX A

## I. Books used in the unit of study:

- Cleaver, V., & Cleaver, V. (1970). *Grover*. New York: Lippincott.  
 Hughes, M. (1984). *Hunter in the dark*. New York: Avon Books.  
 Little, J. (1984). *Mama's going to buy you a mockingbird*. Markham, ON: Penguin Books.  
 Lowry, L. (1977). *A summer to die*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.  
 Paterson, K. (1977). *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: Crowell, 1977.

## II. Brief summaries of the two novels discussed by the subjects:

*Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird*

Eleven-year-old Jeremy and his younger sister, Sarah, spend the summer at their aunt's cottage because their father is terminally ill with cancer. After his father dies, Jeremy handles the difficult task of supporting his mother and sister while dealing with his own grief. "His new but tentative friendship with a lanky classmate Tess and a move to a new apartment where he adopts a grandfather help cheer him" (Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, 1987, p. 500). Gradually, Jeremy learns "the 'more difficult' joy that remembering brings" (p. 500).

*Hunter in the Dark*

Mike's life changes abruptly when he collapses during a basketball game at school; the medical examination indicates he has leukaemia. Mike's parents decide not to tell him the seriousness of his illness until his hair begins to fall out from chemotherapy treatments. Consequently, Mike is confused by his growing weakness. After Mike knows what is wrong, he musters the needed strength and courage to take a solo hunting trip. During this trip he begins to accept the challenge before him.

## APPENDIX B

## Summary of Galda's (1983) System of Categorizing Oral Responses

1. *Comprehension*—Text-centred: restatements of the plot, description of the characters, or relating facts about the setting. Reader-centred: often includes complaints about a lack of comprehension (all comprehension statements reflect literal comprehension).
2. *Involvement*—Text-centred: statements indicate the reader's perception of the text in terms of real-world knowledge. Reader-centred: statements about using the text as a virtual experience.
3. *Inferences*—Text-centred: statements that evidence interpretation of the text and state that which is implicit in the text. Reader-centred: interpretation includes an inferred reason for the interpretation.

4. *Evaluation*—The perspective of evaluation is how the reader evaluates rather than what is evaluated (Applebee, 1978).
- (a) *Undifferentiated*—Response and object are not separated, as in “It’s good because I like it” (Applebee, 1978, p. 99).
  - (b) *Categoric*—This kind of evaluative behaviour includes systematic classification of responses into categories with well-defined attributes. The attributes may describe attributes of text or a personal response; however, frequently differentiation between self and text is not clear.
  - (c) *Analytical*—Statements about how the text works as a restructured whole and how personal responses are shaped by that whole.
  - (d) *Generalization*—Text-centred: statements about the work’s depth, uniqueness, meaningfulness, and relationship to the author or the world in general (Applebee, 1978, p. 131). Reader-centred: statements concerned with how the reader’s ideas about the world are affected by the work. (Galda, 1983, p. 5)