Secondary Literacy Instruction: Responding to Reading

What is responding to reading?

Responding to reading allows the reader to reflect on and extend understandings as they evolve, both through discourse and in writing. Central to the theory of reader response is Louise Rosenblatt’s work, which is primarily interested in describing readers’ processes of engagement and involvement for composing their own construction and interpretation of text (1964). Her theories allow for a variety of different response strategies, as first expressed in her 1938 edition of Literature as Exploration. Rosenblatt writes: “The special meaning, and more particularly, the submerged associations that these words and images have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him. The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a number of other elements in a never-to-be-duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text,” (pp. 30-31).

Why respond to reading?

- Responding to reading allows readers to make their own thinking visible as they create meaning.
- Responding to reading allows a reader to notice writer’s craft (in both fiction and non-fiction) and determine how the author’s use of craft has affected the reader.
- Responding to reading allows readers to observe the thinking of other readers across a variety of genres, in order to develop new perspectives and extend thinking.
- As readers share their responses, they develop into a community of readers.
- Responding to reading creates multiple opportunities for students and teachers to monitor reading growth.

What does responding to reading look like?

As readers think about what they are reading, they have opportunities to ask authentic questions, make comments and connections, and form opinions that allow meaning to go beyond the literal level. This process enables readers to construct deeper understandings of the text.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers are:</th>
<th>Students are:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrating their own responses to reading as well as discussing models from published reviews.</td>
<td>Reading a range of complex and compelling texts and making decisions about how to respond.</td>
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<td>Encouraging risk-taking and allowing students to explore a variety of options for responding to their reading as an extension of their understanding of the text.</td>
<td>Analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and forming judgments within and across texts.</td>
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<td>Creating and planning for social settings in which groups of students talk to others about their reading (e.g., guided reading groups, book clubs, online discussion forums).</td>
<td>Interacting with other readers and their responses to text in order to develop new perspectives and/or extend meaning.</td>
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<td>Supporting ELLs with multiple avenues for response, including one-on-one and small groups sharing their thinking either verbally or in writing.</td>
<td>Using Reader’s Notebooks (electronic or hard copy) to actively engage in and respond to text.</td>
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<td>Asking and monitoring student responses, behaviors and talk for increasing depth and complexity of understanding as they move along the APS Reading Continuum.</td>
<td>Reflecting on their growth as readers through examining and evaluating previous responses to reading.</td>
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<td>Providing specific feedback about process and content that supports students in making meaning and moving along the continuum.</td>
<td>Responding both verbally and in writing in a variety of ways that may include (but are not limited to): Informal and formal responses to text during small group reading instruction or 1:1 conferences.</td>
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<td>Making decisions about when to ask students to respond to reading and when to allow time for reading without a required response.</td>
<td>Personal response to text.</td>
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<td>Planning culturally relevant pedagogy to support all learners.</td>
<td>Response to open-ended questions.</td>
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Teaching/Learning Cycle

Assessment

Collect evidence that demonstrates the progress of learners along the APS Reading & Writing Continuum through formative and summative assessments.

Evaluation

Turn assessment data into learning information by identifying strengths, approximations, and next steps for student learning.

Planning

Based on the assessment and evaluation data, determine an instructional focus, choose appropriate resources, identifying proficient reading, writing, speaking and researching behaviors, and determine how students will transfer this learning to independence.

Teaching

Demonstrate reading and writing processes, strategies, and critical thinking needed to develop proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and researching. Set expectations for student learning and provide opportunities for practice and transfer to independence.

What professional resources support responding to reading?

- Comprehension through Conversation: The Power of Purposeful Talk in the Reading Workshop, Maria Nichols
- Literature as Exploration, Louise Rosenblatt
- Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well, Regie Routman
- Writing About Reading: From Book Talk to Literary Essays, Grades 3-8, Janet Angelillo

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