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ABSTRACT

Two exploratory studies were conducted to determine differences in the literary response patterns of children in kindergarten through fourth grade, as determined by their drawings. A study was then conducted to determine whether or not children of different ages talk differently about literature. A total of 30 children in grades one through four met individually with an investigator and discussed Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are" for five-minute periods after hearing the book read aloud. The children's responses were assessed in terms of the following variables: number of interactions, fluency of response, number of volunteered responses, initial reactions to the book, clarification of the initial reactions, categories of responses, and the effect of gender on responses. Analysis of the findings indicated that a great variety of response patterns existed among the children and that only a few tentative response patterns relating to grade level and sex could be discerned. (Tables indicating the children's response patterns are included.) (GW)

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MONSTERS ARE DUMB:
Comparative Response Patterns of First, Second, Third, and Fourth Grade Children to Where the Wild Things Are

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Background

The belief that teachers should listen to what children voluntarily say about a work of literature rather than tell children what they should say has a substantial body of supportive research. Purves and Beach (1972) indicate that studies of response to literature, dating from 1929, tend to establish categories for classifying responses. More recently, Cooper and Purves (1973) and Lid and Handler (1974) have attempted to popularize the notion that voluntary cognitive and affective responses to literature can be described and evaluated in the everyday classroom setting.

Researchers have effectively described the verbal responses of older children and adolescents (Loban, 1954; Squire, 1956; Purves and Rippere, 1968). But what about young children in the elementary school grades who lack the fluency of their older brothers and sisters? Might their responses provide significant information concerning their knowledge and feelings about literature?

In working with adolescents, Petrosky (1977) more than suggested that response to literature is a reflection of cognitive and affective development, that children's responses to literature could evolve longitudinally. In effect, one might be able to measure or describe an individual's changes in response patterns toward the same piece of literature.

One way to investigate developmental response is to perform longitudinal studies. Selecting a group of students, one might, over a period of years, have

them repeatedly read a given selection, then compare and contrast the responses to each reading. Or, one could, over a period of years, have certain designated students read and respond to a series of selections, then compare and contrast these responses. More expediently, one might sample students of varying ages from the same population, expose them to a given work of literature and compare, by age, responses. I chose this last method.

Preliminary Studies of Nonverbal Response to Literature

I conducted exploratory studies attempting to describe differences in response patterns of kindergarten, first, second, third, and fourth grade children. Both studies concentrated on what are, from children, more retrievable and analyzable responses than either speaking or composing: drawings.

The first study (Donlan, 1976) attempted to compare the types of drawings primary school children made after having The Giving Tree read to them. The Giving Tree, by Shel Silverstein, is a tale of a tree's lifelong devotion to a boy. When the boy is young, the tree provides pleasure and shade. As the boy grows older, he makes more materialistic demands on the tree--apples to sell, branches to build a house, a trunk to make a boat. At the end, when the tree has nothing left to give, the boy, now old and sad, uses the stump as a seat. Since The Giving Tree is a fable of growth and development, it seemed a most appropriate vehicle for getting children of various ages to respond. Specifically, I wanted to know whether kindergarteners would see the same elements in the story that the fourth-grades did. In other words, would kindergarteners' drawings be different from those of older children?

Two variables were measured: color selection and the degree of imbeddedness in the drawings. To measure patterns of color selection, the children were directed to "draw anything that came into their minds after hearing the story"; but they had to restrict the use of color in their drawings to three colors from a given packet of eight. It was felt that if children selected red, green, brown, or black, their

drawings would be more "tree oriented." If the children selected flesh tones (yellow, orange), blue, or purple, their drawings would be more "boy" oriented. To measure imbeddedness of drawings, a content analysis chart (See Appendix A) was able to determine which aspect of a given picture was drawn in greatest detail. For instance, a student would be perceived as more "tree oriented" if the tree were drawn with branches coming from the trunk, leaves on the branches, and apples on the leaves than the student who merely drew a trunk and a green mass. Likewise, a student would be perceived as more "boy oriented" if the human figure had fingers, toes, facial characteristics than the student who merely drew a stick figure.

A few tentative generalizations were made from this study. First, kindergarten and first grade children tended to select brown, green, and red crayons to draw trees; whereas second, third, and fourth grade children tended to select orange, yellow, and blue to draw human figures. As to complexity of drawings, general complexity increased from kindergarten through fourth grade, although the most complex kindergarten picture was more complex than half of those drawn by third graders. Younger children tended to focus on details in the tree; older children tended to focus on details in the human figure. It would have been nice to assume that the evidence in the drawings concluded that younger children view The Giving Tree as a story about a kind old tree and that older children view The Giving Tree as a sad commentary on human frailty. However, without extensive background in the psychology of children's drawings, such questions could not be readily answered.

A subsequent study (Donlan with Franks, 1977) attempted to determine whether the illustrations in the text of The Giving Tree influenced the drawings, both in terms of color and complexity. That is, did children merely copy from memory the pictures they had seen? The story was read to two groups of children, each group ranging from kindergarten through fourth grade. One group saw the illustrations, while the other group wasn't allowed to see either the cover (which was masked) or the pictures in the text. Results indicated that no significant differences existed in the use of color or in composition between the control (saw illustrations) and the experimental

(didn't see illustrations) groups, using a chi-square ($p < .05$) by grade level and total group.

The Problem

The two preliminary studies left investigators with the impression that responses of primary school children to a piece of literature varied according to age. In both studies, the drawings of younger children were definitely different from those of older children. But why the drawings were different was difficult to determine. It was decided, subsequently, to focus on the verbal responses of primary school children. The general question was this: Do younger elementary school children talk differently about literature than do older elementary school children?

The Procedure

Forty elementary school children in neighboring schools, drawn from the same population as was used in the two preliminary studies, were selected to participate in the experiment. Ten children (five boys and five girls) were randomly selected from each of four intact classrooms: kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and a combination third-fourth grade. In the combination grade 3-4 class, three boys and two girls from grade 3 were selected, as well as two boys and three girls from grade four. Checks on chronological age were made to assure that none of the students was repeating a grade. One investigator, specially trained in response theory, was assigned to the ten children within each intact classroom. The four investigators had participated in the first preliminary study.

Working one-to-one, the investigator met and chatted informally with each child, then explained that the child was about to hear a story, Where the Wild Things Are, read aloud. Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak, is a popular picture book that tells the story of Max, a young, high-spirited pre-schooler, who is sent to his room without supper for sassing his mother. While in his room, Max fantasizes a never-never land populated by wild beasts, whom he controls. Max decides to leave the place "where the wild things are" to return home. There he finds his hot supper waiting for him in his room.

The child was asked if she or he would mind talking about the story for about five minutes into a tape-recorder. If the child agreed (and each child did), the investigator read the book aloud while intermittently showing the pictures. At the conclusion of the reading, the investigator unobtrusively turned on the tape-recorder and began the discussion with an open-ended question: "How did the story make you feel?" After the initial question was answered, investigators were instructed to converse with the child in a natural and unscheduled way, for five minutes. "Natural and unscheduled" was defined as building subsequent questions on previous student responses. Investigators then transcribed the tapes accurately as play dialog and submitted them for analysis.

Variables of Response

In assessing the transcripts, investigators focused on the following research questions. In parentheses are the dependent variables being assessed.

1. Does number of interactions with the questioner vary according to grade level (number of interactions within five minutes)?
2. Does fluency of response, that is the number of words/response, vary according to grade level (fluency)?
3. Does the tendency to volunteer information vary according to grade level (volunteered responses)?
4. What effect does grade level have upon the initial responses to the question "How did the story make you feel?" (initial responses)?
5. What effect does grade level have upon the way that children justify their initial responses (clarification of initial responses)?
6. What effect does grade level have upon the types of responses children make (categories of response)?
7. What effect does gender have on variables 1-6?

Assessing the Variables

Number of Interactions. Since time was controlled at five minutes per child, investigators could readily assess, by student, the number of responses, or

interactions the student had with the investigator. A response was defined as that student talk which falls between two consecutive investigator responses. Consider the following examples:

(1)

I. How did you feel then?

S. Scared. I mean, Max was frightened and I was sort of frightened too.

I. I see.

(2)

I. Why do you think Max said that?

S. I don't know.

I. You don't?

(3)

I. Then...

S. Then he stared them right in the eye and said, "Be quiet, if you know what's good for you."

I. Then what happened?

Each of the above passages marked "S" would be considered one response. Since the response follows the words of the investigator, the response is also considered an interaction with the questioner.

Fluency. Fluency was defined as the length of a response, or the number of words in a response: e.g., a and difficulty would each be considered as one word. Expressions such as "uh uh" and "uh" and "ah" were each considered as one word. Kinesics (e.g., nodding, shaking head) though noted in the scripts, were not counted as words. Laughter, also noted, was not tabulated as a verbal response.

Volunteered Responses. Volunteered responses were defined as those responses containing additional information children would give in response to a yes-no question. As the scripts were evaluated, the number of volunteered responses to

yes-no questions was compared to the number of responses to yes-no questions that didn't contain voluntary information. Here are some prototype responses:

(4)

I: Did you like the book?
S: Yes, I did.
I: What did you like about it?

(5)

I: Did you like the book?
S: Yes, I did. I thought the pictures were fun to look at.
I: What else did you like about it?

Response (4) would be classified as an unexpanded answer to a yes-no question. Response (5) would be classified as an expanded, or voluntary answer to a yes-no question.

Initial Responses. At the beginning of the discussion, each student was asked the same question: "How did you feel about the book?" Students were expected to respond with a single word or a phrase. Each word or phrase could be classified into three categories: positive responses (e.g., good, funny, happy) negative responses (e.g., sad, unhappy, afraid), and unsure responses (e.g., I don't know).

Clarification of Initial Response. In pursuing the initial response, investigators would ask additional questions that would clarify the initial responses. Hopefully, investigators could gain further insight into what particular elements of the book the students were responding to most dominantly.

Categories of Response. In analyzing the types of responses the children made during the five-minute discussions, investigators used categories established by Purves and Rippere (1968) and reported the results in terms of percentages.

Results

Thirty of the forty transcripts were submitted for analysis. The investigator working with kindergarten youngsters was unfortunately unable to finish his part of the project; consequently, only first, second and third-fourth grade children's responses could be compared.

1. Number of Interactions

In tabulating the number of interactions the students from intact classrooms had with the investigators, I found that second-grade youngsters had the highest mean number of interactions. First graders had the lowest mean number of interactions. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Number of interactions between primary school children and investigators, by grade level.

Grade Level	N Students	N Responses	X Responses	Range
1	10	204	20.4	15-31 or 16
2	10	264	26.4	16-38 or 22
3-4	10	239	23.9	12-36 or 24
3	5	147	29.4	21-36 or 15
4	5	92	18.4	12-23 or 11

However, when the third-fourth grade sample is divided into two sub-samples, the picture is different. The third graders had the highest mean number of responses, while the fourth graders had the lowest mean number of responses. Also, the comparative ranges of third graders (21-36) and fourth graders (12-23) suggests that strong differences in these two sub-populations might exist.

2. Fluency

Fluency was interpreted as the length of response, that is, the number of words that a child uttered between two consecutive investigator responses. To arrive at a mean fluency score, the total number of words that each child uttered during the five minute interview were divided by the number of responses the child gave. For instance, if a child uttered 235 words during 10 responses, the mean fluencey score would be 23.5. Fluency scores were compiled and charted according to grade level. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Fluency scores (mean length of response) by grade level.

Grade Level	N Students	Total Length of Responses	N Responses	$\bar{X}$ Length of Response	Range
1	10	605	204	2.965	1.2-5.9
2	10	2076	264	7.863	3.4-20.9
3-4	10	1255	239	5.251	2.7-13.5
3	5	778	147	5.29	3.4-8.1
4	5	477	92	5.19	2.7-13.5

As Table 2 indicates, second graders were most fluent; first graders were least fluent. Also, second graders as a group had the widest range of mean fluency (17.5 words); first graders and third graders had the narrowest range of mean fluency (4.7 words). In examining the fluency of the third-fourth combined group, third graders and fourth graders, as sub-samples, do not differ appreciably as far as mean length of response. However, third graders tended to talk more and have many more interactions with the investigators than did fourth graders. Also, fourth graders tended to have a wider range of mean fluency (10.8) than did third graders (4.7).

3. Volunteered Responses

During their five-minute conversations with children, investigators tended to ask a number of yes-no questions, in order to facilitate the clarification of what the children were actually saying about Where the Wild Things Are. In dealing with these yes-no questions, children had two alternatives. First, they could answer merely with a yes-type answer or a no-type answer: e.g., "Yes," "Yes, I do," "No, I don't," "No, I didn't." Second, they could volunteer additional information. What

I wanted to determine was whether older children would be more inclined to volunteer information than younger children. Table 3 reports the ratio of expanded (volunteered) to unexpanded responses to yes-no questions, by grade level.

(Insert Table 3 here.)

As Table 3 indicates, all of the children tended not to volunteer responses. However, there was a greatest tendency to volunteer responses in the second grade; there was the least tendency to volunteer responses in the first grade. In comparing third to fourth graders in the combined class, one can see that although third graders tended to have more volunteer responses to yes-no questions, fourth graders tended to have a higher ratio of expanded to unexpanded answers to yes-no questions.

4. Initial Responses

At the beginning of the interview, investigators asked the children the open-ended question "How did the story make you feel?" Children tended to answer this question with single words or short phrases that suggested (1) positive feelings, (2) negative feelings, or (3) unsure feelings. When students expressed unsureness, for instance by saying "I don't know," investigators asked further questions to determine if students could clarify their feelings. With one exception, further questioning evoked either specific positive or negative responses from the students. Table 4 records the tabulation of initial responses according to grade level.

(Insert Table 4 here.)

Table 5 itemizes the actual theme words used in the initial responses of the children.

(Insert Table 5 here.)

Table 6 itemizes, by grade level, the ways in which those children making initially unsure responses clarified them.

(Insert Table 6 here.)

Table 3. The ratio of expanded to unexpanded responses to yes-no questions by grade level.

Grade	Responses Expanded		Responses Unexpanded		Ratio (%) Expanded/ Unexpanded
	Σ	$\bar{X}$	Σ	$\bar{X}$	
1 N = 10	19	1.9	108	10.8	15/85
2 N = 10	25	2.5	71	7.1	26/74
3-4 N = 10	17	1.7	67	6.7	20/80
3 N = 5	12	2.4	50	10.0	19/81
4 N = 5	5	1.0	17	3.4	23/77

Table 4. Tabulation of initial responses to the question "How did the story make you feel?" -- by grade level.

Grade Level	Positive Responses	Negative Responses	Unsure Responses	Clarified Unsure Responses		
						Still Unsure
1 (N - 9)	8	1	0			
2 (N - 10)	5	0	5	4	0	1
3-4 (N - 10)	2	5	3	1	2	0
3 (N-5)	1	3	1	0	1	0
4 (N-5)	1	2	2	1	1	0

Table 5. Itemization of initial responses to the question "How did the story make you feel?" by type, by grade level.

Grade Level	Positive Responses	Negative Responses	Unsure Responses
1 (N-9)	happy (4)* good (2) fine (1) like (1)	sad (1)	
2 (N-10)	happy (1) good (1) funny (1) fine (1) neat (1)		I don't know (4) I can't explain it (1)
3 (N-5)	funny (1)	scared (1) scary (1) weird (1)	I don't know (1)
4 (N-5)	funny (1)	scared (1) queer (1)	I don't know (2)

*Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of children making that response.

Table 6: Itemization of how children clarified their initial unsure responses to the question "How did the story make you feel?" -- by grade level.

Grade Level	Unsure Response	(became) → Positive	Clarified Unsure Response Negative	Still Unsure
1	0	0	0	0
2	I don't know.	→ liked story		
	I don't know.	→ liked monsters		
	I don't know.	→ liked pictures		
	I don't know.	→ liked story		
	I can't explain it.			→ (was never able to clarify)
3	I don't know.		→ sad	
4	I don't know.	→ happy		
	I don't know.		→ weird	

Tables 4. 5. and 6. form the basis for some tenuous generalizations about initial responses. Younger children, specifically first and second graders, tended to respond initially more positively than did the older children, the third and fourth graders. Eight out of nine first graders claimed that the story gave them positive feelings; whereas only two students from the third-fourth class claimed that the story gave them positive feelings and then because the story was "funny", Note the words that third-fourth graders use in their initial responses: scared, scary, weird, queer. Note also the tendency among second, third, and fourth graders to admit "I don't know," but to clarify feelings with further discussion.

5. Clarification of Initial Responses

Investigators pursued questioning students so that the initial response could be clarified. For instance if a story made a child "happy", the investigator wanted to find out why. Table 7 presents a profile of what aspects of the book children

referred to when they clarified their initial responses, grouped according to grade level.

(Insert Table 7 here)

As suggested earlier, the clarified responses of first and second grade children tended to be more positive than those of third graders. First graders tended to focus on personal security and good times (e.g., home, food, friendship, party), whereas second graders tended to focus on a primitive literary appreciation (e.g., humor, liking the pictures, the story, the fantasy). Third and fourth graders focused on the "darker" aspects of the book, particularly fright, uncertainty, and reluctance to accept the fantasy (e.g., "trees can't grow in your room"). Of the 28 clarified responses, 12 dealt with the monsters. Children in all grade levels tended to focus on these creatures, but only half of the children associated the monsters with a positive experience.

6. Categories of Response

The thirty scripts were analyzed using categories in Purves and Rippere (1968). Each response was coded by a number representing a sub-category, and a frequency distribution of each category was made for each transcript. Data were compiled by grade level totals, which were then translated into percentages of total response. For instance, in the first grade transcripts, there were 19 responses categorized as "engagement-involvement." However, since there was a total of 206 responses, the 19 engagement-involvement responses represented only 9 percent of the total response. These data are reported in Table 8. Table 8 indicates a few generalizations about the first, second, third, and fourth graders who were studied:

1. As a group, these thirty elementary school children used all four major categories as well as the miscellaneous category.
2. As grade level increases, there is a tendency to make more responses in "Engagement-Involvement" and "Interpretation."
3. As grade level increases, there is a tendency to make fewer responses classified as miscellaneous (for this study, most miscellaneous responses tended to be unexpanded answers to yes-no questions.)

Table 7. Profile: Aspects children referred to when they clarified their initial responses.

	Initial Response	GRADE LEVEL 1	2		4
Positive Responses	1. Happy (N=6) (including one "I don't know" → happy).	.mother waiting .wild party . party .wild things	.breakfast waiting		.good feeling → sailed and met monsters
	2. good (N=3)	.going home .party	.funny → monster		
	3. fine (N=2)	.(no expansion)	.funny → faces (monsters)		
	4. liked it (N=5) (including 4 "I don't know" → liked it)	.sea-serpent wanted to be friends	.when Max left (left the monsters) .the monsters .the pictures		
	5. funny (N=3)		.room grew into a forest	.room grew into a forest	.monsters
	6. neat (N=1)		.(retold story)		
Negative Responses	1. sad (N=2) (including one "I don't know" → sad	.no supper and met wild animals		.Max was going to kill the dog	
	2. scared (N=2)			.monsters → sorry because they were left alone	.monsters
	3. scary (N=1)			.Didn't know what would happen	
	4. queer (N=1)				.room became a jungle
	5. weird (N=2) (including one "I don't know → weird)			.animals	.trees growing in bedroom.

→ indicates further clarification

4. First grade children made no evaluation responses.

5. There existed little or no difference among grade levels as to the proportion of perception responses.

6. Second and fourth graders tended to have a higher proportion of evaluative responses than did first and third graders.

(Insert Table 8 here)

Noting the high proportion of responses under the miscellaneous category, I reanalyzed the frequency distribution of responses, excluding the miscellaneous responses. For instance, by excluding the 129 miscellaneous responses from the first-grade transcripts, one can see that first-graders made interpretive responses 40 percent of the time, rather than the original 15 percent. From the data presented in Table 9, one can rank order, according to frequency of use, the four categories of response by grade level (See Table 10.)

(Insert Table 9 here)

(Insert Table 10 here)

According to Table 10, second and third graders gave preference to engagement-involvement responses; whereas, first and fourth graders gave preference to interpretation responses. Evaluation appeared to be the least favored response type.

The data in Tables 8, 9, and 10 are reported only in terms of main categories. Table 11 presents a frequency distribution of responses according to the sub-categories (Purves and Rippere 1968). More interesting that those categories used are those categories not used. Of the 23 sub-categories, 13 categories were not used by the thirty children. Under engagement-involvement, responses tended to cluster under "general" and "reaction to content." Under perception, responses tended to cluster under "content." Likewise, under interpretation, responses tended to cluster around "content." Under evaluation, responses were distributed in all four sub-categories. In effect, there was a tendency on elementary school children's parts to make generalized responses and specific responses that focused on the book's content. What few evaluative comments that were made, tended to be distributed, unequally among the four sub-categories.

Table 8. Distribution of Responses According to Purves-Rippere Categories, in terms of percentages of Responses, by Grade Level

Grade Level	Engagement Involvement		Perception		Interpretation		Evaluation		Miscellaneous	
	N Resp.	%	N Resp	%	N Resp	%	N Resp	%	N Resp	%
1 (N = 10)	19	9	27	13	31	15	0	0	129	63
2 (N = 10	52	20	25	10	50	19	31	11	104	40
3-4 (N = 10)	58	24	26	11	53	22	16	7	85	36
3 (N=5)	39	27	15	10	26	18	5	4	60	41
4 (N=5)	19	20	11	12	27	29	11	12	25	29

Table 9. Distribution of Responses According to Purves-Rippere Categories, in terms of percentages of Responses, by Grade Level--excluding Miscellaneous Category

Grade Level	Engagement Involvement		Perception		Interpretation		Evaluation	
	N Resp	%	N Resp	%	N Resp	%	N Resp	%
1 (N = 10)	19	25	27	35	31	40	0	0
2 (N = 10)	52	33	25	16	50	32	31	19
3-4 (N=10)	58	38	26	17	53	35	16	10
3 (N=5)	39	46	15	18	26	30	5	6
4 (N=5)	19	28	11	16	27	40	11	16

Table 10. Rank Ordering of Categories, According to Frequency of Use, According to Grade Level.

Grade	Category			
	Engagement Involvement	Perception	Interpretation	Evaluation
1	3	2	1	4
2	1	4	2	3
3	1	3	2	4
4	2	3.5	1	3.5

Table 11. Distribution of Responses According to Purves-Rippere Sub-Categories by Grade Level

Sub-Category	N Grade 1 Responses	N Grade 2 Responses	N Grade 3-4 Responses	N Grade 3 (Only) Responses	N Grade 4 (only) Responses
ENGAGEMENT*INVOLVEMENT					
Engagement general	15	27	34	27	7
reaction to literature	0	0	0	0	
reaction to form	0	0	0	0	
reaction to content	4	25	24	12	12
PERCEPTION					
perception general	0	1	1	1	0
language	0	0	0	0	0
literary devices	0	0	0	0	0
content	24	24	25	14	11
technique/ content	3	0	0	0	0
structure	0	0	0	0	0
tone	0	0	0	0	0
literary classification	0	0	0	0	0
contextual classification	0	0	0	0	0
INTERPRETATION					
interpretation general	0	0	0	0	0
interp. of style	0	0	0	0	0
interp. of content	31	50	53	26	27
mimetic interpret.	0	0	0	0	0
typological interp.	0	0	0	0	0
EVALUATION					
evaluation general	0	5	2	1	1
affective evaluation	0	2	0	0	0
eval. of method	0	13	14	4	10
eval. of author vision	0	11	0	0	0

7. Sex Differences in Response Patterns

Fifteen boys and fifteen girls participated in the project. Since the leading character of "Where the Wild Things Are" is a boy, it might be interesting to see if girls responded differently to the book than did the boys. Tables 12 and 13 present data on the six variables of the study, according to sex:

(Insert Tables 12 and 13 here)

There appear, then, to be no dramatic differences between the ways girls responded to the book and the ways boys responded to the book, with a few minor exceptions; tenuously offered because of the small N:

1. Twice as many boys (4) as girls (2) responded to the book negatively in their initial responses.

2. Twice as many girls (6) as boys (3) were willing to respond initially with "I don't know," or some comparable response indicating unsureness.

3. Twice as many girls (4) as boys (2) used the word "happy" when responding initially to the book.

4. Two boys used the word "fine" initial responses, but no girls did.

5. Four boys used the word "liked it" or admitted to "liking" specific aspects of the story. Girls didn't use "liked it" nor did they expand on the question "What did you like about the book."

6. More girls (2) than boys (1) found the book "funny" or admitted that the book made them feel "good."

7. One boy used the word "neat" in his initial response.

8. More girls (2) than boys (1) found the book "scary" or admitted the book made them "scared."

Table 12. Sex Differences in Response Patterns

Variable	Girl		Boy	
1. $\bar{X}$ interactions/ five minutes	23.8		23	
2. fluency ($\bar{x}$ number of words/response)	5.5		4.8	
3. $\bar{X}$ expanded or volunteered responses to yes-no questions (ratio)	22/78		18/82	
4. initial responses				
a. positive	7		8	
b. negative	2		4	
c. neutral	6		3	
5. how clarified	See Table 13		See Table 13	
6. categories of response	N	%	N	%
a. engagement/ involvement	69	19	60	17
b. perception	35	10	43	12
c. interpretation	63	17	71	20
d. evaluation	35	10	27	7
e. miscellaneous	162	44	156	44

Table 13. Profile: Aspects children referred to when they clarified their initial responses. Coded by Sex: Girl (G) Boy (B).

Initial Response	GRADE LEVEL 1	2	3	4
1. happy (N=6) (including one "I don't know"→happy)	.mother waiting (B) .wild party (B) .party (G) .wild things (G)	.breakfast waiting (G)		.good feeling→sailed and met monsters (G)
2. good (N=3)	.going home (B) .party (G)	.funny→monster (G)		
3. fine (N=3)	.(no expansion) (B)	.funny→faces (monsters) (B)		
4. liked it (N=4) (including 3 don't know"→liked it)	.sea-serpent wanted to be friends (B)	.when Max left (left the monsters) (B) .the monsters (B) .the pictures (B)		
5. funny (N=3)		.room grew into a forest (G)	.room grew into a forest (G)	.monsters (B)
6. neat (N=1)		.(retold story) (B)		
1. sad (N=2) (including one "I don't know"→sad)	.no supper and met wild animals (G)		.Max was going to kill the dog (B)	
2. scared (N=2)			.monsters→sorry because they were left alone (G)	.monsters (B)
3. scary (N=1)			.Didn't know what would happen (G)	
4. queer (N=1)				.room became a jungle (B)
5. weird (N=2) (including one "I don't know"→			animals (B)	.trees growing in bedroom (G)

Conclusions

A study of this type is fraught with numerous methodological problems. First, it is difficult to get young children to sustain discourse about literature without facilitation. In this study, the facilitation came from sensitive adults who carefully tried to probe into the children's feelings. Doing so, they asked those questions which, at that time, seemed most likely to stimulate clear responses. However, those questions tended to elicit specific responses. For instance, a question asking for "perception," would, most likely, elicit a "perception" response. So this study could just as well be analyzing the types of questions adults ask children about literature. Nevertheless, children didn't always answer the questions as expected. Occasionally, when children were asked "How did the book make you feel?" one is left with the impression that answers, such as "weird" or "scary," suggested descriptions of the book itself rather than of the child's feelings. In many cases, children departed from the question to talk freely of their own experiences at home.

Further studies of interactions between children and adults about literature might indicate which questions stimulate response and which questions preclude response. For instance, in reviewing the transcripts submitted by the first grade investigator, I noted a tendency to ask what Douglas Barnes (1971) refers to as "social control" questions: "There are some wild things that are friendly, right?" or "Why did his mama put him to bed without any supper?" when the subject of the disciplinary act had not been brought up by the student.

One thing this study emphasized is the unbelievable variety of response patterns that can exist among children the same age, the same sex, in the same classroom. Although a few tentative patterns of response according to grade level and sex emerge, these are tentative, and, perhaps, a replicated study might produce totally different results. Thiry children participated in this study, but they were thirty individuals. I will always remember the second grader who claimed "Monsters are dumb" as well as the first grader who claimed she could tame the same monsters by "Kissing their paws."

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Appendix A

Table 14. Evaluation Sheet: Nonverbal Responses

Level 1 (1 point)	Level 2 (2 points)	Level 3 (3 points)	Level 4 (4 points)	Level 5 (5 points)
	*tree top	*branches	leaves	
		0	apples	leaves
				*stem
		apples	leaves	
			stem	
		0*leaves		
*tree	*trunk	bark		
0	0	hole-knot	heart	
		*carved heart		
		roots		
		feet		
		sucker		
		tears		
		branches	leaves	
			apples	
		face	eyes	tears
			mouth	
	*stump	flag-pole-banner	pole	
	0		banner	stripes
		bark		
		*carved heart		
		roots		
		tears		
		flag		
		hole		
		*ax	*blade	
			*handle	
	background	clouds		
	clouds			
*sky	sun	face	eyes	glasses
			nose	
			mouth	
		rays		
	birds			
	0*apples	*stems		
	*grass	blades		
*ground	flowers	leaves		
		stem		
		blossom		
	dirt	hill		
	rock			
	*apples	stem		
	boat	outside		
		inside		
	*head	*face	*eyes	
			*nose	
			*mouth	
*figure			*ears	
0				