INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO READING RESPONSE LOGS FOR EFL LITERATURE CIRCLES

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ABSTRACT

Reading response logs are journals which allow students to respond to and reflect on reading materials. Students are typically asked to record their reactions to what they have read, including making connections and evaluating the author's intentions. This article reports on the second stage of a two-part action research project. Having utilized assigned role sheets in the first part of the study, part two of the study reports on the same class of Japanese sophomore university students employing reading response logs to analyze, and then collaboratively discuss, a piece of graded fiction. Class procedures, analysis of students' log entries and discussions, student feedback, and salient issues that emerged are discussed. The study found that many of the participants valued the greater freedom and creativity associated with reading response logs. However, for response logs to be successful in EFL Literature Circle discussions, it is essential that students are trained in how to compose responses that not only facilitate peer comprehension, but also stimulate conversation.

INTRODUCTION

Reading response logs are strongly linked with reader response theory, which emphasizes the creative role of the reader. Developed by Louise Rosenblatt in the 1930s, reader response theory sees the reading process as a "reciprocal, mutually defining relationship" (1986, p. 122) between reader and text, in which meaningful ideas arise from the reader's own creative interpretations. Rosenblatt states that a reading text "is merely an object of paper and ink until some reader responds to the marks on the page" (1978, p. 23). Furthermore, not only will different readers reading the same text have different interpretations of it, but the same

reader may view a text differently at different stages of their own life (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Designed to explore students' individual responses to a piece of writing, a reading response log is completed during the act of reading. By using such a log, it is hoped that learners will go beyond simply trying to understand the words in the text and instead focus on the experience they have while reading. Benton and Fox (1985) identify four processes that a reader is engaged in while reading: picturing, anticipating/retrospecting, interacting, and evaluating. These four processes strongly influence Benton's guidelines for student reading logs (1992, p. 35), as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Benton's (1992) Reading Log Guidelines

While you are reading the book, write down all the things that go on in your head in a "stream of consciousness" style. As you read, you will be making a record of images, associations, feelings, thoughts, judgments, etc. You will probably find that this record will contain:

- Questions that you ask yourself about characters and events as you read. (Answer these yourself when you can.)
- Memories from your own experience provoked by the reading.
- Guesses about how you think the story will develop, and why.
- Reflections on striking moments and ideas in the book.
- Comparisons between how you behave and how the characters in the novel are behaving.
- Thoughts and feelings about characters and events.
- Comments on how the story is being told. For example, any words or phrases or even whole passages that make an impression on you, or motifs which you notice the author keeps using.
- Connections to other texts, ideas and courses.
- An outline of the chapter, no longer than a paragraph.

Please date each entry, and note down the time and place, as well as the mood you are in while reading.
Please note down the page number you are reading when you make an entry.
Please take pleasure and pride in your log.
Please do not try to rewrite the book.

Applying Reading Response Logs to EFL Literature Circles
As Benton's guidelines were originally intended for native speakers, and this study's participants are Japanese university EFL students, a number of adjustments were made to clarify the guidelines, as well as provide more scaffolding. Hancock (1993) outlines the benefits of this approach for students, saying, "Suggestions by their classroom teachers to expand their response horizons can move them even further along on their journeys through literature" (p. 471). Furthermore, in order to build on these particular students' previous experiences with Literature Circles (see Gill, 2020), some terms were altered to echo language from the assigned role sheets that the students were already familiar with.

Consideration was also given to the length and number of responses required of the students. While reading response logs are most commonly employed as an independent assignment, in this particular study, the logs were utilized as a tool for aiding Literature Circle discussions. Students were therefore only required to submit five responses in their logs, and the example entry provided was kept simple and concise.

Progressing From Assigned Role Sheets
Assigned role sheets are a common feature of many Literature Circle classes, providing clearly defined tasks to guide participants' preparation. Each lesson, students rotate in a series of set roles, such as Discussion Leader, Connector, and Word Master, which provide them with a different cognitive purpose for reading and a different interactive purpose in each class discussion.

However, role sheets have been criticized for their tendency to stifle conversation. Daniels (2006) describes "the mechanical discussions that can stem from over-dependence on these roles" (p. 11) and argues that an assigned role framework should be employed as a temporary support measure only. Having completed three iterations of Literature Circles utilizing such a framework, I deliberated whether this constituted sufficient support for my students and whether they could benefit from the greater freedom, and stronger connection to the text, potentially offered by reading response logs.

With this consideration in mind, this study was designed to explore the efficacy of utilizing reading response logs for EFL Literature Circles. The following research questions were generated:

Research Questions
- How can reading response logs be utilized effectively for EFL learners participating in Literature Circles?
- When is the appropriate time for students to progress from an assigned role framework to reading response logs?

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Materials
The participants in the study were the same sophomore students from part one of the project (see Gill, 2020): International Communication majors taking my academic reading class. The class met for 90 minutes, two times a week, during each 15-week semester. Literature Circles took place four times during the Fall semester, and this study was conducted during the fourth occurrence. The students had used an assigned role framework in the previous three classes: to discuss graded reader versions of *Billy Elliot*, divided into two parts, and the first half of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol.* In this study, students would be tasked with reading the second half of the *Christmas Carol* text. This particular book was chosen for its level appropriateness (CEFR B1), the timing (near to Christmas) and its major themes (emotional wealth, happiness, and greed) which linked with the Ethics unit being studied in class.

Before the action research project began, all participants had signed consent forms having read a detailed breakdown of the study in both English and Japanese.

Assigning Groups
The students were given two weeks to read the second half of the graded reader and complete their reading response logs. Each group consisted of four or five members who had remained together throughout the semester's Literature Circle classes. In the first three lessons (*Billy Elliot* Parts 1 and 2 and *A Christmas Carol* Part 1), the students were required to rotate between the six possible assigned roles provided: Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person and Culture Collector. The groups had been teacher-allocated at the start of the semester to avoid cliques, as well as to ensure mixed ability levels in all groups. As always, students were explicitly told that, in the case of absence, it was their responsibility to send their completed preparation to their group.

The Reading Response Log
Utilizing Benton's (1992) reading log guidelines (see Figure 1), and editing heavily to suit my own context, I created the response log in Figure 2 for students to complete.

Figure 2 Page One of the Reading Response Log

<u>Reading Response Log (A Christmas Carol, Part Two)</u>

1. Read Chapters 3-5. You do not have to read everything all at once.
2. While reading, put a sticky note next to any line, sentence or section that stands out to you. Write a short note to help you remember what you were thinking. (If nothing stands out to you by the time you finish reading, go back and find something to respond to.)
3. When you finish reading, use the information on your sticky notes to help you write your Reading Responses on the second page of this document. You should include <u>at least 5 responses</u>. A Reading Response can:

● **Evaluate**: give your opinion on a part of the story.
● **Connect**: make a connection with something from real life or another book, movie, song, etc... (e.g. In what ways are you similar to a character in the book? Would you have behaved in the same way as the character if you were in the same situation? Does the story remind you of something from your culture or something that happened to you?)
● Be about **language**: you see an unfamiliar word/expression in the text that you think could be useful.
● Be a **question**: Was there something you could not understand in the text? Do you have a bigger question (about relationships, morals, etc...) that the text made you consider?
● Highlight an **important passage**: you realize that a certain section of the text has a big impact on the story. Why is it important? What does it mean?
● Give **advice**: you notice a character experiencing a problem in the story. What advice would you give them?
● Be a **prediction**: What do you think will happen next? What information in the story helped you to make your prediction?
● Be a **life lesson**: Did you learn anything from an event in the book that you could apply to your daily life?

- Talk about **surprise**: Did part of the story surprise you? Why?
- Be about **relationships**: Did you find any interesting or unusual relationships between characters in the book?
- Describe **feelings**: Did you have any strong feelings as you were reading the book? Why did you feel that way?
- Be your **own idea**: If you think of something else, not covered above, you can write about that too!

Please note down the page number that each Reading Response refers to, as well as the type of response. You can see an example at the top of the next page.

Additional scaffolding was included to help the students understand their task, as well as provide some prompts. Where possible, language used from the assigned role sheets was also transferred across, in order to avoid overloading the students with new terminology.

Page two of the reading response log contained an example entry and spaces for five responses (plus the sentence "Please add more entries if you would like to" under the fifth entry space). The complete two-page document was shared with students as a Google Document through Google Classroom, making it easy to scroll between the log instructions and entries. My example entry, and the first entry space, can be seen in Figure 3 (entry spaces 2 to 5 have been omitted for brevity).

Figure 3 Excerpt from Page Two of the Reading Response Log

EXAMPLE

Entry: 1	Page: 32	Type of Response: Life lesson

"Nobody said that it was a very small pudding for a large family. Nobody even *thought* it. No Cratchit ever said or thought things like that."
This part made me think it is important to be grateful for things and to think positively. People often compare themselves to others, or want more than they already have, but the Cratchits seem very happy with something quite basic.

MY READING RESPONSES
(you must complete at least 5)

Entry: 1	Page:	Type of Response:

A major change from the traditional use of response logs was my decision to employ sticky notes. As stated previously, the response log was intended specifically to aid the Literature Circle discussions, and I did not want to overwhelm the students with a lengthy written assignment or distract them from their reading experience. As non-native speakers of English, I was concerned that the students would be impeded from fully immersing themselves in the text if they regularly paused to write detailed responses and check unfamiliar vocabulary. Using the sticky notes would allow the students to read more smoothly I hoped, noting down basic ideas, and then completing their response log entries fully after they finished reading. To ensure that all the students had access to the same materials, I provided each student with 20 medium sticky notes (75mm by 50mm): large enough to record a simple sentence or two, but small enough to discourage students from overly long responses.

Lesson Description
All 19 students arrived on time for the class. The lesson began with a brief warm-up discussion, in which the students discussed the ending of the book and challenges they faced in completing their response logs. The main discussion, focusing on their reading responses, lasted approximately 35 minutes. During this time, I moved between groups to monitor their conversations, quietly taking notes. After drawing the main discussion to a close, I provided feedback and some error correction, before moving on to a book review discussion. The students had five questions to discuss, such as "How might the story be different if it had happened in the present day?" and "If you were Scrooge, would you have acted differently?" Finally, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their experience using the assigned role framework versus the reading response log.

Student Submissions
The students were required to submit their completed response logs via Google Classroom before the lesson began. This reduced teacher interference in the lesson as I was able to refer to their logs on my own

device while monitoring the students' conversations, rather than looking over their shoulders.

Audio Data Collection

The same data collection methods were used as in the first part of the project (Gill, 2020): audio recording using pocket-sized digital recorders, allowing me to capture the necessary data without significant distraction to the students. The recording devices were placed in the center of each table to capture all group members' voices as clearly as possible. The conversations for each group were transcribed soon after the lesson with students' names redacted.

The Questionnaire

An in-class questionnaire (see Appendix A) was chosen to maximize the number of respondents. Furthermore, by providing class time to complete the survey, the students would hopefully consider their responses more carefully than if using their own time. In terms of ethical considerations, the purpose of the questionnaire was outlined clearly in an introductory paragraph, and confidentiality was assured. Finally, students were urged to provide honest answers to maximize the benefits of the study, in an attempt to address acquiescence and social desirability bias (Dörnyei, 2010).

A four-page, 15-minute limit was imposed to avoid the fatigue effect, whereby response quality falls due to tiredness (Dörnyei, 2010). To avoid non-committal responses, a four-point Likert scale was used for Section I, and the questionnaire employed a variety of question types to pique respondent interest. While the majority of sections required students to either circle or rank various items, the questionnaire concluded with two written response prompts, giving the students an opportunity to voice their opinions more freely, which respondents often appreciate (Fowler, 2002; Gillham, 2008).

Finally, to address potential second language issues that could impede understanding, the questionnaire was fully translated into Japanese. Both the English and Japanese versions were distributed to the students, and they were allowed to complete either one.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion section begins with an overview of the students' response log entries. A summary of each group's conversation is then followed by a discussion of salient issues that arose from the

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students' written submissions and recordings. Finally, analysis of the students' questionnaire responses is conducted.

Students' Response Log Entries
18 of the 19 students submitted their reading response logs through Google Classroom before the class began. There were a total of 103 responses in the students' logs: the average number of responses was 5.72, the highest was eight, and the lowest was five (the minimum requirement, explicitly stated within the response log instructions). It would be prudent to note that as the students were graded for their preparation and performance in Literature Circles classes, this likely impacted the number and quality of their responses.

Table 1 displays the breakdown of the response types used.

Table 1 Reading Response Types Used by Students

Response Type	Frequency	Response Type	Frequency
Connect	15	Language	7
Life Lesson	14	Prediction	6
Evaluate	12	Question	5
Feelings	12	Relationships	4
Important Passage	11	Own Idea	4
Surprise	11	Advice	2

As shown in Table 1, all 12 reading responses were utilized within the class. There were no rules banning multiple use of the same response type, although six of the students did use different response types for every entry. The students' categorization of their responses was generally accurate, with the exception of 'Own Idea': three of the four responses submitted could have been classified more accurately (two 'Evaluate' responses, and one 'Connect' response).

Individual response length varied greatly between the students with some 'Language' responses being as short as seven words (e.g., 'Moneylenders: a person who lends some money'), whereas other responses, such as predictions and life lessons, were over 100 words in length.

Summary of Group Conversations

Group One discussed a total of six responses. The first two students required some time to select which entry to discuss (40 and 30 seconds respectively), but subsequent students chose immediately. The group's interaction was smooth overall, and they were able to connect similar themes from their response logs, as well as negotiate meaning together. The balance of talk was spread evenly between the five students and, although they had not prepared questions in advance, they were able to formulate them quickly, both individually and collectively. Example discussion topics included being able to look back positively on bad experiences and ways in which families show each other affection.

Group Two also covered six reading responses in total. However, they sometimes struggled to understand each other's ideas, and the first two responses consisted of lengthy monologues and no discussion. After overhearing other groups' discussions, they began to ask questions from the third response onwards. However, reversion to L2 was a common feature of Group Two's interaction, particularly during the last ten minutes of their conversation. A combination of not having enough vocabulary nor historical knowledge to discuss the topic they had selected (politics and war), as well as possible tiredness, resulted in a number of long silences and several teacher interventions to help them back on track. Examples of topics discussed were having a dramatic change of heart and experiencing people talking behind your back.

Just as in the first stage of the study (see Gill, 2020), Group Three performed quite poorly. Although they occasionally formulated interesting discussion questions (e.g., "Would you rather marry a person with money who you don't love or a poor person who you like?"), the reading responses they chose generally caused confusion or resulted in minimal interaction. Furthermore, one student tended to dominate the conversation as other group members were very reticent. Finally, despite having submitted at least five entries each before the class, Group Three stopped discussing the book after presenting only one reading response each. With ten minutes of the allotted discussion time still remaining, they engaged in unrelated small talk, despite several teacher interventions.

Group Four were able to discuss eight of their responses (two responses each, as the fifth group member had not prepared). The balance of talk was fairly even within the group, although one student tended to assume a more dominant role in explaining difficult concepts and vocabulary due to their stronger L2 language skills. The majority of reading responses selected were discussed enthusiastically and in detail, but there was one

noticeable breakdown in communication regarding a 'Question' response (see 'Problematic Response Categories' section below). Examples of topics discussed by Group Four included the relationship between money and happiness and how to regain broken trust.

Overall, the students appeared to have understood the concept of the reading response logs, and many of them had prepared thoroughly for the lesson. However, through careful review of the students' submissions and analysis of the four audio recordings, a number of problematic issues emerged.

The Amount of Required Responses
As none of the groups were able to discuss more than two of their response log entries each, requiring the students to complete five entries appeared excessive. By reducing the number of reading responses to three, the student workload could be decreased and hopefully the quality of responses would improve. In addition, a common theme amongst all groups was long silences as they chose what to discuss. Ordering their responses could become part of the students' preparation, although leeway should be given to change the order if the students discover connecting ideas.

The Contents of Each Response: Preparing a Question and Example Answer
Long silences were also prevalent when formulating questions. Although I requested in my pre-discussion instructions that the students ask each other questions, my example log entry should have included a question too. This would have provided the students with a clearer model of what I expected from them.

If the students had prepared questions to accompany their reading responses, the conversations could have flowed more smoothly and more of their responses could have been covered. Furthermore, having students prepare their own answer to each question could potentially reap benefits. An example to illustrate this point was provided by Group Three, as they discussed the following reading response:

> Page 27, and the type of response is 'Surprise'. When he saw people pushing each other or getting angry, the spirit, he lifted his torch over their heads, and immediately they became kinder or stopped arguing *because it's Christmas*. This part surprised me that Christmas is enough reason to stop fighting. I found out Christmas

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is very important for people of this era. So what do you think, what event is most important in Japan to you?

The student who posed this question listened patiently as her group members discussed a variety of Japanese holidays and festivals but struggled to think of a fitting answer. When her group members had finished, she said:

> For me, the first day of school or company because I meet people who I meet for the first time and maybe I will spend time with them for a year or many years, so it's an important day for me.

The other students in the group proclaimed, "Oh! Good answer!" in unison; it seemed that if this thoughtful response had been provided first as a model, her group members could have used it as a springboard and been aware that the term 'event' was not just limited to holidays and festivals.

Incorporating this kind of model answer system could potentially foster more considered preparation by the students: if preparing an answer to their own question proves difficult, they may realize that it is not conducive to discussion and choose something more suitable.

Problematic Response Categories

The majority of response categories appeared to engender conversation, with the exception of 'Language' and 'Question'. On the two occasions that a 'Language' response was chosen, it failed to result in any kind of meaningful interaction. One such example is the case of Group Four:

> Page 32, line 14. Type of response is Language, and Bob's family name 'Cratchit'. This is the man with family name of Cratchit. So, I would say it's a little difficult to pronounce. So question is, are there anybody thought like me? Yes… bad question…

Another student responded, "Yes, a little difficult," and the group moved on. A similar occurrence took place in Group Three, with one of the students stating, "My first entry was about Language. Type of response, Language. I couldn't understand torch." This was met with muffled laughter before the next student took over.

The 'Question' category also proved troublesome. Given that the students had most likely read over their chosen passage several times before

formulating their question, it appeared unrealistic to expect their peers to be able to answer it immediately. An example comes from Group Four:

> Page 38, Line 2: The boy is crime. The girl is need. They will destroy man if nothing is done about them. My response is... Question, uh, I'm just wondering, what are the boy and girl, are they human beings or ghosts? Ah, *gomen* [sorry]. Where do they come from? What do humans need to do about them? That is what I can't understand in this book.

The students spent about two minutes re-reading the passage together, before the student who asked the question said, "I don't know. No idea? Okay, fine. Next, go!" Group Three had a somewhat similar experience with the question "Is Tiny Tim and the turkey buying boy the same person?", as they checked the relevant passage in silence, before giving up and moving to the next topic.

Rather than removing the 'Language' and 'Question' categories entirely, perhaps they could be placed in a separate 'For the teacher' section. These categories could be optional for the students, and the teacher would review the students' logs before the lesson, deciding whether to reply to each student individually or, if they feel it could benefit the whole class, spend some time discussing selected 'Language' and 'Question' responses in the lesson.

Students' Questionnaire Responses

A full breakdown of the results of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. In this section, the questionnaire's key findings are presented and analyzed.

Section I used a Likert scale to ascertain students' impressions of Literature Circles in general. The results showed that the students generally viewed the classes positively and felt they were beneficial. The majority of students were also satisfied with the teacher being responsible for book choice and group selection, a decision based on the EFL context, in opposition to common practice in Literature Circles (see Daniels, 2006).

Section II concerned the students' preferences regarding assigned roles, and is therefore not relevant to this paper, but Section III attempted to draw comparisons between the assigned roles framework used for the first part of 'A Christmas Carol' and the reading response logs used for part two. Although the results here showed a slight preference towards response logs, more students identified the response log as 'complicated'

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to complete. Interestingly, the majority of students were neutral in terms of the time taken to complete the reading response log (time consuming versus quick), suggesting they felt the demands on their time of the response log were more appropriate than those of the assigned roles.

Section IV requested that students provide written responses. This made grouping of the data slightly more problematic than in previous sections, but was possible nonetheless. The first question asked, "In the 'A Christmas Carol' Reading Circle, did you prefer having assigned roles (Lesson 1: Discussion Leader, Word Master, etc...) or using the reading response log (Lesson 2)? Why?" The majority of the students (12) preferred reading response logs, while six favored assigned roles. One student was neutral.

Comments in favor of the reading response log mainly described the freedom of choice involved, but the element of fairness, where every student has the exact same task, was also mentioned as a benefit of response logs, as opposed to the varying workload of assigned roles. Those who stated a preference for assigned roles praised the variety of areas covered in the discussion, the clarity provided by focusing on one area when preparing, and the teamwork aspect (students relying on each other to complete each of their respective roles).

The second question in Section IV asked, "If you participated in Reading Circles again in the future, would you rather have an assigned role (Discussion Leader, Word Master, etc…) or use a reading response log? Why?"

Two students stated a preference for utilizing both formats. One of them described the benefits of concentrating on specific skills, such as summarizing, while the other talked about progressing more slowly from assigned roles to the response log. Of the ten students who chose the reading response log, comments included being able to understand the story more deeply, as well as freedom of choice. The six students who favored assigned roles described the ease of completion, as well as the clarity provided by the roles. One response was invalid, as the student misunderstood the question.

While the majority of students expressed a preference for reading response logs over assigned roles, many of them seemed to appreciate the support offered by assigned roles and acknowledged their necessity in the early stages of Literature Circles.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

When designing this study, the first of my research questions was "How can reading response logs be utilized effectively for EFL learners participating in Literature Circles?" Despite my efforts to adapt Benton's (1992) reading response log guidelines to suit my teaching context, I believe that I failed to go far enough. Greater focus needed to be placed on responses that could stimulate engaging discussion, as the log was intended as a tool to aid the Literature Circles, not as a standalone assignment. As discussed in the Findings and Discussion section, both the number of reading responses required, as well as their content, need to be reviewed. I would strongly recommend setting students a target of three reading responses each time they use their response log. In addition, students should provide a question to accompany each response, as well as their own answer to potentially serve as a model if required.

Furthermore, the categories within the response log should be reduced. In this study, the 'Question' and 'Language' headings proved problematic. The simplest option would be to remove them from the log, leaving the students with ten options to choose from. However, as mentioned in the previous section, an alternative would be to create a sub-section at the bottom of the response log, effectively an 'Ask the Teacher' section. Any questions about the text contents or difficulties with language could be brought to the attention of the teacher, who could then choose whether to address each item on an individual basis or with the whole class. Admittedly, this would increase the burden placed upon the teacher but could be an effective way of clearing up common points of confusion, particularly in an L2 context.

The second of my research questions was "When is the appropriate time for students to progress from an assigned role framework to reading response logs?" Taking a holistic view of the class' performance, it appeared that the students were not yet ready to handle the response logs. However, looking at the performance of Group One, the students produced an impressive variety of responses and discussed them in great depth. This raises the question of whether using a response log itself was the major problem or was it the log contents and student groupings? Having made the decision at the beginning of the semester to keep students in the same Reading Circle groups for all four classes, group allocation could not be changed before this particular class. However, a review of the students' response logs showed that two of the most poorly prepared students were both in Group Three. Group Three had also

struggled in the previous Literature Circles lesson, finishing their conversation ten minutes before all other groups (see Gill, 2020). One of the major advantages of using reading response logs is that students' preparation tasks are the same, and therefore students can be placed in any group. Setting an earlier deadline for students to submit their logs (e.g., two days before the lesson) would give the teacher time to review them before the lesson, and decide groupings based on the log contents. This could cover not only the quality of the submissions (ensuring a mixture of well-prepared and less-prepared students in each group), but also the topics chosen. Once again, this would place extra demands upon the teacher, but could be an important step in fostering student success in Literature Circle discussions.

This study underlined the importance of clear scaffolding to the success of Literature Circles. Many of the students made excellent connections with the text and produced a series of thoughtful responses ready to share with their classmates. However, transferring these ideas from their written logs into discussion form proved problematic, and clearer example responses provided by the teacher (including questions and model answers) could have addressed this issue. In addition, post-discussion feedback from the teacher regarding which responses were successful, and providing specific examples from students' conversations in the class, would give students a clear idea of how to improve in the future.

Whenever implementing a new tool into the classroom, there will always be teething problems, and this study was certainly no different. However, the students' positive response to the logs, as witnessed in the questionnaire, as well as many of the students' performance in class, suggest that reading response logs are worth persevering with. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this study was very limited in nature: a single group of students, spending only one class using the response logs. Further avenues of research could include following a group of students utilizing reading response logs over a number of classes, or alternatively, involving several classes of students and comparing their performance against each other. In addition, more detailed opinions could be garnered from students through face-to-face interviews or focus groups, as opposed to the questionnaire employed in this study.

Carrying out this study provided me with valuable insight into the challenges faced by my students when participating in Literature Circles, and the importance of providing sufficient scaffolding for L2 students. With these points in mind, I would allow my students to complete at least

four lessons utilizing assigned roles before progressing to reading response logs: a format that they could potentially enjoy and greatly benefit from, provided that a basic level of Literature Circle familiarity had been established through experience with assigned roles.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

<u>'A Christmas Carol' Reading Circle: Participant Questionnaire</u>

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions regarding Reading Circles. This questionnaire is being conducted as part of a research project focusing on how Reading Circles lessons can be improved.

This questionnaire is not a test and I truly value your feedback. Please be aware that your answers will remain confidential, and you will not be identifiable in the results. Please give your answers honestly to maximize the benefits of this study. Thank you very much for your help.

SECTION I

In the following section, please record the extent of your agreement to a series of statements about Reading Circles lessons. After each statement, you will find four options. Please place an 'X' in the box which corresponds most closely to your opinion.

Please respond to every statement and be aware that there is no right or wrong answer: I am interested in your personal opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I enjoyed the Reading Circles lessons.				

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Gill, A. (2023). Introducing students to reading response logs for EFL literature circles. *Literacies and Language Education: Research and Practice, Spring 2023, 41-67.* English Language Institute, KUIS.

Reading Circles have helped me to improve my reading skills.				
I would prefer to choose my group members myself in future.				
I would prefer to choose Reading Circles books myself in future.				
I would like to participate in Reading Circles again in future.				

Please use the space below if you wish to explain any of your answers:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION II

In the following section, please rank the six assigned roles for Reading Circles we used this academic year in order of <u>importance</u>, where 1 indicates most important and 6 indicates least important. You can check our Google Classroom page to remind you of the details of each role if necessary. Please write a number (1-6) next to each of the roles:

Discussion Leader____   Summarizer____   Connector   ____

Passage Person   ____   Word Master____   Culture Collector ____

Please use the space below if you wish to explain any of your answers:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION III

The following section aims to gather your impressions of Reading Circles. Each item has a pair of opposites at each end. Please place an 'X' in one

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of the five positions on the scale to indicate how you feel about that particular concept.

For example, if the scales refer to 'Preparing for Reading Circle lessons' and you find it very worthwhile, but a little time-consuming, you should mark the 'X's' as follows:

Preparing for Reading Circle lessons was:

Pointless   __   __   __   __   _X_   Worthwhile

Time-consuming   __   _X_   __   __   __   Quick

For the following items, remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Please place the 'X's' to show your immediate impression, and mark an 'X' on every scale.

The Reading Circle discussions were:

Too long   __   __   __   __   __   Too short

Boring   __   __   __   __   __   Fun

A waste of time   __   __   __   __   __   Useful

The assigned roles (Discussion Leader, Word Master, Connector, etc…) we used for the first 'A Christmas Carol' lesson were:

Unnecessary   __   __   __   __   __   Helpful

Complicated   __   __   __   __   __   Simple

Time-consuming   __   __   __   __   __   Quick

The reading response logs we used for the second 'A Christmas Carol' lesson were:

Unnecessary   __   __   __   __   __   Helpful

Complicated   __   __   __   __   __   Simple

Time-consuming   __   __   __   __   __   Quick

Please use the space below if you wish to explain any of your answers:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION IV

In the following section, please write your answers in the spaces provided. Your opinions are valued and will be given serious consideration when revising Reading Circles classes for future students.

In the 'A Christmas Carol' Reading Circle, did you prefer having assigned roles (Lesson 1: Discussion Leader, Word Master, etc...) or using the reading response log (Lesson 2)? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you participated in Reading Circles again in the future, would you rather have an assigned role (Discussion Leader, Word Master, etc…) or use a reading response log? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Results

SECTION I

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I enjoyed the Reading Circles lessons.	6	12	1	0
Reading Circles have helped me to improve my reading skills.	11	7	1	0
I would prefer to choose my group members myself in future.	2	3	10	4
I would prefer to choose Reading Circles books myself in future.	3	2	11	3
I would like to participate in Reading Circles again in future.	4	13	2	0

SECTION II

Discussion Leader	1 1 4 1 1 1 2 5 3 2 2 1 1 1 2 2 2 1 1	34
Summarizer	2 5 1 2 2 2 1 1 1 1 1 2 5 2 1 1 3 6 3	42
Connector	5 2 2 4 5 4 5 2 5 4 4 4 3 3 4 3 1 3 5	68

Gill, A. (2023). Introducing students to reading response logs for EFL literature circles. *Literacies and Language Education: Research and Practice, Spring 2023, 41-67.* English Language Institute, KUIS.

Passage Person	3 3 6 5 3 5 3 4 2 5 3 5 2 5 3 4 4 4 2	71
Word Master	4 4 3 3 4 3 4 6 4 3 6 3 4 4 6 6 6 2 4	79
Culture Collector	6 6 5 6 6 6 6 3 6 6 5 6 6 6 5 5 5 5 6	105

SECTION III

The Reading Circle discussions were:						
Too long	1	2	14	1	1	Too short
Boring	0	1	1	8	9	Fun
A waste of time	1	0	2	8	8	Useful

The assigned roles (Discussion Leader, Word Master, Connector, etc…) we used for the first 'A Christmas Carol' lesson were:						
Unnecessary	0	3	2	5	9	Helpful
Complicated	0	1	4	9	5	Simple
Time-consuming	0	4	8	4	3	Quick

The reading response logs we used for the second 'A Christmas Carol' lesson were:						
Unnecessary	0	1	2	6	10	Helpful
Complicated	0	5	4	6	4	Simple
Time consuming	1	1	13	2	2	Quick

SECTION IV

In the 'A Christmas Carol' Reading Circle, did you prefer having assigned roles (Lesson 1: Discussion Leader, Word Master, etc...) or using the reading response log (Lesson 2)? Why?

I like both of them. The reading response was for the first time so it was a refreshing experience to me.

役割の方が好きです。単調な分、話を広げるためのポイントが見つけやすいからです。[I prefer assigned roles. It's simple and easy to find points to expand the conversation]

I prefer Reading Circle to the reading response log. Because Reading Circle has a lot of roles! We studied it many time. We can have many role. Each role has different work. It is good for education of English. It has possibility to improve reading comprehension.

I prefer reading response log better than roles. Because I could understand story deeply in order to think the connections or differences between story and real situation and question about the story. But, in conversation part, I prefer role's one. Role's conversation was more active because maybe discussion leader can concentrate making good and fun questions.

I prefer reading response log to assigned roles. When I did Lesson 1 way, I can't focus on the story because I care about my role. However, when I did Lesson 2 way, I was able to focus on the story and I enjoyed. So I like Lesson 2 way.

I prefer using response log because it is almost solo activity, so I enjoyed comparing with my opinion and book story. After that, we had share time. It was necessary for us to understand story and our opinion deeply.

I prefer to reading response log because everyone do the same things. If we have role, each assignment are very different. Burden is depends on role.

I prefer to having assigned roles. Because discussion will be smooth when group members have own roles.

I preferred reading response log because I can choose what I want to write. And it has many types of response. So, it is optional and kind system for me.

I like reading response. Because, we have a choice and also we can change our role for everytime (I think people don't choose same five things). So, we can get opportunity to think about the story many side.

I prefer assigned roles because we can focus on my role. It doesn't take too much time.

I'm poor at reading in English but I could have fun of roles because that was group work. If I don't do, my group mates will be in trouble, so it was nice activity to make everyone do homework.

I prefer to reading response because I can choose the response what I want to write. Also, in this time I can find the new information about me. It's fun!

I prefer using the reading response log. Because we can share about the thoughts of the book, and everyone certainly have something different opinion than you that makes me feel impacted.

I felt using the reading response log is more helpful than Lesson one. The reading response log doesn't need to fix my roles. That's why I can read books while thinking from various aspects.

I prefer the reading response log than having assigned roles. If I have a role I focus on my role too much. Because of it, I sometimes couldn't enjoy the story. Reading response log is able to think many things and connecting my life during read the book. I can read the book to focus the role too much. So I prefer the reading response log.

I like the reading response log because I could have opinion while I reading the book, but if I have a role, some roles doesn't have question section so I don't have any opinions while reading the book.

I liked a reading circle, because there is my role which I need to complete, so it's helpful for me to do designated roles. I liked a reading response log but it was difficult to connect some response.

I prefer to using the reading response log. It is very enjoyable and we can enjoy reading. Assigned roles of a very heavy task and I don't like it.

If you participated in Reading Circles again in the future, would you rather have an assigned role (Discussion Leader, Word Master, etc...) or use a reading response log? Why?

I want to use a reading response. It was good and fun. There were many type of response. So I can read and think about the story from various viewpoint.

Role because I can finish soon.

I think summarizer is best. It is hard job. But it is useful for improving reading comprehension.

I would like to use second one. Because I like to concern about the story deeply.

I would like to use a reading response log because as I said last question, I can enjoy helpful than an assigned role.

Actually, assigned role was easier than reading response log because we can work with responsibility.

I want to use a reading response log because I can understand story deeply.

I want to join assigned role. Because I love discussion and it is better than response log to know many idea from member.

I would use a reading response log because I can choose the parts I want to do. Also, I felt this way is better for me.

I want to use reading response but we don't get used to that, so I think firstly use assigned role then gradually change to reading response is good. And reading response is little bit heavy so I think it is good to do that mutual like this time (1 lesson assigned role, 2 lesson reading response).

I like assigned role!! It clears my role.

Roles. It was good time to share each part and complete the sheet. I felt teamwork.

Also I want to choose the reading response. Same reason I write above. It is fun to say my own response in front of group.

Reading response log. Because we can share and discuss our thoughts or feelings with classmates.

I would rather using a reading response log because I can choose my role.

I want to use both ways. Because I think I need summary skill. Also I want to enjoy the book without thinking my role. So, using two ways at reading different book is good for me.

I would like to participate in reading response log because it's easy and I could understand the story because I should have opinions.

I'd like to participate in Reading circles. The reason is because I like to do designated roles. Also, good point for reading circles is I can choose every time, so I can be a Word Master, also Discussion Leader. I couldn't find any bad point about it, so I'd like you to continue reading circles.

Reading response log! Actually, I hate the reading book, but in this time I could enjoy. The task is only pick up the part. And conversation is very fun and we can talk about book more deeply. 本を読むことが嫌いな生徒には、reading responseの方がいいと思います。[For students who hate reading, reading response is better].