

**Media Elicited College ELLS Response to “The Giving Tree”****Peter S. Shieh<sup>1</sup>, Lucia Y. Lu<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Chihlee University of Technology, New Taipei City, Taiwan<sup>2</sup>Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA 31698, USA**\*Corresponding Author:**

Peter S. Shieh

Email: [petersshiehpeter@gmail.com](mailto:petersshiehpeter@gmail.com)

---

**Abstract:** In this case study research, the authors conceptualized hermeneutics, semiotics, and reader-response theories into the inquiry of poetry by inviting their college students including the foreign exchange students to read and interpret Shel Silverstein’s classic story-poem, “*The Giving Tree*”. Hermeneutics is the interpretation of poetry by the Greek philosophers; semiotics is the exploration of meanings by signs like languages, arts, music, dance, drama, and films; and reader-response, through which students from diverse sociocultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds read-aloud and think-aloud the poem, transact their life experiences with the world in the poem, and construct signs to interpret the poem. Coincidentally, “humanity” became an outstanding theme in most readers’ responses to this poem. The authors analyze the students’ responses from The Five Theoretical Perspectives on Response by Richard Beach: textual, experiential, social, cultural and psychological. This study shifted to the focus on breaking through the myth about gender role stereotypes, activating readers’ social consciousness for humanities toward a world of understanding and equity.

**Keywords:** Hermeneutics, semiotics, reader-response theories, humanity, social justice

---

**INTRODUCTION*****The limit of interpretation***

In a college English and literacy course, before the authors introduced the theories of literary criticism, most students used the traditional concepts of formalism, and new criticism to dissect the poem, *The Giving Tree*, in terms of trees, apples, leaves, life and death. They identified the “Giving Tree” as a beloved female based on the text where the pronouns like “she” and “her” appear throughout the pages.

Later, the authors challenged students to conceptualize various theories of literary criticism like hermeneutics [1], semiotics [2, 3], transaction [4], and reader-response theories [5] into their interpretation or transaction of the poem with their life experiences.

***Objective***

The purpose of this case study research is to help readers transcend the traditional formalism, and new criticism, that focus on the “right” or “wrong” interpretation of the literary works [6], and become critical thinkers who are able to think from different perspectives, see with different eyes, listen to different drums, speak with different voices [7], and most importantly, the readers’ eyes were enlightened to examine their roles in the family, at school, in work place and in the universe, and reflect on their impact on

humanity as part of the society, more than an individual concern.

**HERMENEUTICS, SEMIOTICS, READER RESPONSE CRITICISM, HUMANITY*****Hermeneutics***

Hermeneutics is the interpretation of poetry [1]. During the hermeneutical process, many factors like reader, author, text, time, society, culture, history, etc. are all involved and conditioned by one another to build an interpretation of poetry, and the ancient Greeks acquired knowledge and wisdom through hermeneutical processes. The contemporary philosophers define hermeneutics as the interpretation of the world of the text [1]. Hermeneutics makes the world of the text an open playground and invites all to play [6].

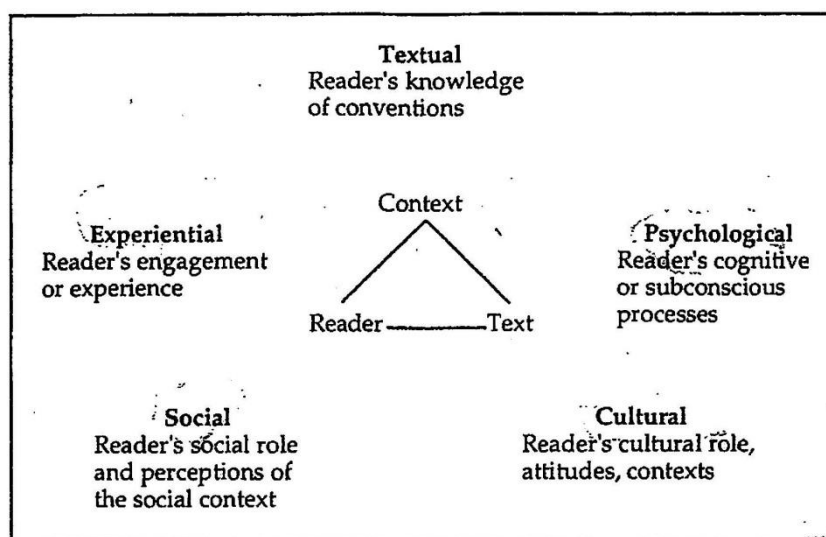
***Semiotics***

Semiotics is the study of signs like languages, arts, music, dance, drama, animation, cultural modes, paralinguistics [9] or nonverbal communication signals [10], etc. that humans created to mediate the world [2, 8, 3, 11]. Vygotsky asserted that semiotics highlights the use of signs and brings with it a focus on meaning as central to human activity [12]. The four components of semiotics are (a) signs – anything bears meaning; (b) semiosis – the construction of signs; (c) inference - reasoning of signs; and (d) reflexivity – the reflection on the process of signs.

According to semiotics, a good language arts curriculum must be able to expand a learner's potential for understanding and communicating through a variety of signs, not only language [11, 14, 15, 16, 17]. When readers are striving to communicate and construct different signs to interpret their understanding of the text, and since the connection between different signs does not exist a priori, it would be an "anomaly" to learners [13]. To Peirce, "anomalies" which learners encounter in their daily lives drive the process of inquiry into the cycle of inference [2]: abduction (generating hypotheses), deduction (testing hypotheses), and induction (accepting, rejecting or modifying the previous hypotheses). Learners should be provided with opportunities to become actively involved in the construction of knowledge through these reasoning processes. In education, the shift from a knowledge transmission model to an inquiry-oriented model of teaching and learning can be achieved through the process of inference, or reasoning, in a social context [13].

### **Reader-Response criticism**

Reader-response theories [5] is a school of literary theory that concentrates on the readers and their life experiences to a literary work, in contrast to other schools and theories such as formalism and the new criticism, that focus attention primarily on the author or the content and form of the work, in which the reader's role in re-creating literary works is ignored. Reader-response theory recognizes the readers as active agents who infuse "real existences" to the literary works and complete its meaning through interpretation. Reader-response criticism claims that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which readers create their own, possibly unique, text-related performance. [4] confirmed that, in order to achieve a direct transfer of experience, readers are encouraged to employ artistic means [18], words or other medium, to parallel their feelings, tensions, moods, in their interpretation of the literary works.



**Five Theoretical Perspectives on Response (Richard Beach, 1993)**

### **Humanity**

The Ohio Humanities Council [19] defined "humanities" as stories, ideas, and words that help us make sense of our lives and our world. By showing how others have lived and thought about life, the humanities help us decide what is important in our own lives and what we can do to make them better. By connecting us with other people, the humanities indicate the ways on what is right or wrong, or what is true to our heritage and history, and help us address the challenges we face together in our families, our communities, and as a nation. [20] lists eight characteristics of humanity as humility, equality, nobility, integrity, companionship, compliant, heroism, and faithfulness.

### **Design of research**

The authors designed this research as a case study, a naturalistic inquiry emphasizing on an individual reader's uniqueness to respond to the story-poem, *The Giving Tree*.

### **Participants**

Fifty students participated in this semiotic inquiry; and the nine readers whose artifacts were selected to discuss in this study, happened to be ELLs from various sociocultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. For sake of their privacy, family, cultural, political and religious concerns, they offered to use

---

names of the color, i.e. black, blue, green, orange, pink, purple, red, yellow, and white to identify themselves instead of their real names. All are from diverse backgrounds and enthusiastically participated in this poetic journey.

#### **MATERIALS**

1. *"The Giving Tree"*: text and illustration by Shel Silverstein [21],
2. The narration of this book by Shel Silverstein himself,
3. The Actual 73 Giving Tree Movie by Churchill Films,
4. [www.YouTube.com/storyamination](http://www.YouTube.com/storyamination) with an old male voice for the "Giving Tree", a young man's voice for the "boy" and a female voice as narrator (Nandia Barteridene), and
5. *"The Giving Tree"* by American Sign Language (ASL).

#### **Data collection**

In a college English course, the authors invited students to (1) "read-aloud" [22] and "think-aloud" [23] the poem individually, (2) "envision" [4] the poem, (3) transact their prior knowledge or life experience with the world in the poem, (4) construct signs like languages (storytelling), art (drawing), music (hymns), cultural modes, etc. to interpret the poem, and (5) share their drawings and their reflection by storytelling in the literacy circle.

#### **Findings from Reader-Response to "Humanity"**

Nine students out of fifty coincidentally talked about humanity, and humanity thus became an outstanding theme in readers' response to this story-poem, *The Giving Tree*. The readers from different sociocultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds became humanity activists using Chinese logoscript, drawings and storytelling to proclaim their fury against the social injustice on tree such as rape, oppression, discrimination, violence, sexual harassment, and patriarchal systems that degraded humanity. They concluded that humiliation affects society as a whole, rather than on an individual basis. They advocated gender equality, women's rights, woman's dignity, woman's self-identity, women's bodily integrity for abortion right, for legal protection of women and girls toward social justice in the modern society. At the same time, environmental science, religious philosophy, and pet's rescue are included in the response.

#### **Mr. Black (self-identified himself as a good boy)**

Mr. Black was from south Taiwan. After he finished reading *The Giving Tree*, he was deeply touched and shared the life story of his mother – May - who was a noble woman, but a victim in a patriarchal society:

When May, the innocent country girl, was 17 years old, her father arranged her to marry a city man who is the eldest child in a large family. On the second day after she stepped into the big house, she was assigned to serve her parents-in law, her five young sisters-in-law, and her six young brothers-in-law. She had to cook, do the laundry without laundry machines, baby-sit the younger sisters-in-laws and brothers-in-laws, clean the house, sew their clothes, etc. Mr. Blake saw her dear mother's suffering and humiliation in the big family, and was determined to take her away when he grew up. He did! But May volunteered to raise and take care of the children of Mr. Blake's brother and sister. She worked very hard as maid in a Japanese family to make more money. She has been sick in the hospital. Mr. Blake loves her with all his heart. He likes to see her recover soon and enjoy a happy life in her old age.

#### **Ms. Blue (self-identified herself as the grandparent's daughter)**

Ms. Blue was raised by her grandparents during her early childhood. She loves them, and they love her very much. According to Chinese culture, the girls have no right to inherit anything from the family like the property, land, house, car, money in the bank, etc. When her grandfather was getting old, he requested her to file his will and deeds in the court house. She noticed that her grandfather did not have any portion of his property left for her, and the grandfather did not mention this to her. But she knows that she has all the love from her grandfather. She did not complain, and she did not plan to claim her right to the court according to the civil law.

#### **Mr. Green (self-identified himself as environmental activist)**

Mr. Green was the only begotten son from his father, who is a successful businessman. To build houses in the cities, he has to cut trees. Mr. Green was very furious about the little boy when he finished reading the book. The little boy took it for granted to eat the apple, to break the branches, to scratch the skin on the truck, and eventually, he cut down the truck to make a boat and sailed away. Mr. Green blames the people who cut the tree in the book of *"The Lorax"* too! This is one of the many reasons for global warming, and the coming of many natural disasters. Mr. Green's response is like the ecological criticism which comment on the book as a parable of human's relationship to nature [25].

#### **Mr. Orange (self-identified himself as a "Big American Boy")**

Mr. Orange is interested in Chinese culture and came to Taiwan to take the Chinese lesson. He compared the two writing symbols of "LOVE" and "RECEIVE" in Chinese, and noticed the difference between these two words in Chinese logoscript is

“heart” which is the key that differentiates these two words or concepts. He said “love” is care, concern, fond, appreciate, and offer. When you love someone, you will use your heart to consider what he/she desires and you will prepare the best gift for him/her. When you affectionately love someone, you will sacrifice all you have, even your life for him/her. This is his response to this book – *The Giving Tree*.

愛 (love)

受 (receive)

心 (heart)

**Ms. Pink (an American-born Chinese student)**

Ms. Pink is an American-born Chinese, she came to Taiwan as a foreign exchange student. She said that the story is very sad, and the tree is very miserable. The tree should keep something to meet her own needs, not to give everything even her life to the ungrateful young man. The tree as a mom should not spoil him as her son; instead, she should train him to be independent to make money for his needs, his education, his family, his wife, his children, his house, and his car, etc. When he gets old and poor, he should go to the social security administration for shelter, not to return to the tree and exhaust her. Ms. Pink’s response to this story is based on her experience in American society.

**Ms. Purple (an exchanging student from Korean)**

Ms. Purple is a sweet young woman from Korea. She shed tears when she read this poem and thought of her dear mother in Korea. Her mother was adopted from an orphanage when she was born. Her

adopting parents adopted her and raised her to be their daughter-in-law. To their disappointment, she did not bear any male child for the family except two daughters: Ms. Purple and her sister. The adoptive parents and their son, Ms. Purple’s father, treated her like a servant or a slave. But her mother was tolerant. She became very brave to educate her two daughters. Ms. Purple and her sister are working very hard for the degrees, and plan to take their mother far away for a better life when they graduate.

**Mr. Red (was trained to be a Christian missionary in Taiwan)**

Mr. Red proclaimed that *The Giving Tree* was the embodiment of Jesus Christ, because the Cross of Jesus was made of wood, and because the shape of the tree is like the cross. His sharing of his response is like his preaching based on Philippians 8 – 11:

Mr. Red said that the Lord Jesus humiliated Himself to be a slave by emptying Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men, humbling Himself, being obedient even unto death, and the death of the Cross. The Lord humbled Himself to the uttermost, but God exalted Him to the highest peak, and bestowed on Him the name that is above names, that all knees should bow, and all tongues should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Mr. Red also shared one of his favorite hymns while he played guitar in the class.

**Oh, how dark the night that wrapt my spirit round**

**hymnal.net**

**994**

(Guitar: Capo 3)

1. Oh, how dark the night that wrapt my spir - it round! Oh, how deep the woe my Sav - ior found  
 5 When He walked across the wa - ters of my soul, Bade my night disperse and made me whole!  
 9 **Chorus**  
 (C) All the way to Cal - var - y He went for me, He went for me, He went for me;  
 13 All the way to Cal - var - y He went for me, He died to set me free.

2. Tremblingly a sinner bowed before His face,  
 Naught I knew of pardon, God's free grace;  
 Heard a voice so melting, "Cease thy wild regret,  
 Jesus bought thy pardon, paid thy debt."
3. O 'twas wondrous love the Savior showed for me!  
 When He left His throne for Calvary,  
 When He bore my trespass, bore it all alone;  
 Praise His Name forever, make it known.

---

**Ms. Yellow (a female student from the US)**

Ms. Yellow shared her experience in adopting a beautiful female dog after she heard the dog's story. She compared the tree to the homeless mother dog that was abandoned by her breeder and was sent to the county humane society when the dog was seen digging food from the street trash can, and breast feeding her nine puppies on the street in the cold winter.

**Mr. White (a struggling learner of English)**

Mr. White was a struggling learner of English. He had difficulty in listening, speaking, reading and writing. But, after he surveyed the text and the illustration by Shel, listened to Shel's expressive narration, watched the animation of the story, Mr. White said that he understood this book. The shy boy tried to use his own words to retell the story in simple English, and the students were very encouraged. Mr. White found that technology and social media have the potential to help struggling learner to learn the foreign languages if they are used appropriately.

**DISCUSSION**

The students' responses to *The Giving Tree* are discussed based on the Five Theoretical Perspectives on Response [5]: social, textual, cultural, experiential, psychological, textual, philosophical and religious [24].

**Social theories of response**

**Feminism.** Feminism is a collection of movements and ideologies aimed at defining, defending, and advocating equal political, economic, educational, cultural, and social rights for women [24]. Feminist theory, which emerged from feminist movements, directs to understand the nature of gender inequality by exploring women's social roles and life experience; it has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of sex and gender. Thirty years after women became 50 percent of the college graduates in the United States, men still hold the vast majority of leadership positions in government, education, and industry. This means that women's voices are still not heard equally in the decisions that most affect our life. In *Lean In*, Sandberg [26] examines why women's progress in achieving leadership roles has stalled, explains the root causes, and offers compelling common sense solutions that can empower women to achieve their full potential.

**Silent wives.** [30] used the metaphors of "silence" and "finding a voice" in the development of women's sense of selves, minds, and ways of learning, and found that many women from various ethnic, sociocultural, and religious backgrounds had gone through a period of "deaf and dumb". In this study, most female readers looked "deaf and dumb" when they read the poem, "*The Giving Tree*". Because of their

mutual trust, they became open to each other and willingly shared their transaction of the poem with their life experiences.

**Gender injustice.** Gender equity continues to be one of the challenges in current times. Across the world, the rights of girls and women are not equally regarded. In many developing countries, girls and women continue to be deprived of their right for education, while others are forced into early marriages or are the victims of humiliating abuse [28]. In the U.S. nearly a year after the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, another social movement is poised to challenge long-held cultural norms and beliefs. The transgender tipping point, America's next civil rights frontier [29]. They view sex and gender as two separate concepts: sex is biological, determined by a baby's birth anatomy; gender is cultural, a set of behaviors learned through human interactions in the culture.

**Cox's calling.** Cox is the TV star in the Netflix drama *Orange is the new black*, and a public face for the transgender movement. Bases on her life experiences, trans people are significantly more easily to be bullied, impoverished, unemployed and suicidal than other Americans. Trans activists are emerging from the margins to fight for an equal place in society, for improving the lives of a long misunderstood minority, and for changes in schools, hospitals, workplaces, prisons and the military. After her public speech about media stereotypes, a six-year old boy who was teased and bullied in school because of his appearing "feminine", came to ask Cox for advice. Cox was deeply sympathetic with him, and commented, "...whether the child identified as a boy or girl, it doesn't matter... We need to protect our children, and allow them to be themselves." [28]. Cox asserts that the transgender revolution still has a long way to go.

**Sandberg's voice.** Thirty years after women became 50 percent of the college graduates in the United States and in Taiwan, men still hold the vast majority of leadership positions in the family, government and industry. This means that women's voices are still not heard equally in the decisions that most affect our lives. In *Lean In*, [26] examines why women's progress in achieving leadership roles has stalled, explains the root causes, and offers compelling, common sense solutions that can empower women to achieve their full potential.

**Conflict and a fine balance.** After the release of the movie, "*The fault in our stars*" and the novel, "*The silent wife*" [30], Woodley [31] made a conclusion, saying, "I think that if men went down and women rose to power, that wouldn't work either. We have to have a fine balance."

---

**Reader's social role and perceptions of the social context.** Mr. Green claims for the environment when he read *The Giving Tree* as well as *The Lorax* in which the greedy businessman cut all the trees without any concern about the ecology, and the wild animals. Ms. Yellow was furious against the dog's breeder who abandoned the pets. Both readers assume the role as social constructivist [5].

#### **Textual theories of response**

**Semiotic theories of response.** In this research, Mr. White broke through the bottleneck of English learning by various sign systems like the text and illustration by Shel himself, Shel's narration with expressive voice, the animation from [www.YouTube.com/story](http://www.YouTube.com/story), and American Sign Language (ASL). Media in terms of text, images, sounds, and storytelling, plays a significant role in helping the struggling learner breakthrough the bottle neck to literacy, and get on the right track of learning/acquiring English as a second language.

**Semiotics-storytelling invited response.** In their responses, Mr. Black, Ms. Blue, Mr. Green, Ms. Purple, and Ms. Yellow created touching stories as one of the signs to interpret their understanding and reflection on "*The Giving Tree*".

**Semiotics-logoscript invited response.** In his response, Mr. Orange used three Chinese logoscripts to interpret his reflection on "love" and "give", and on the difference between these two concepts by "heart":

愛 (love), 受 (receive), 心 (heart)

**Semiotics-music invited response.** In his response, Mr. Red, the missionary, used three pieces of hymn (hymnal. net #914) to reflect his understanding of the tree, of the Cross of Jesus.

**Semiotics-retelling story invited response.** In his response, Mr. White overcomes his shyness and language barrier, and bravely uses English as his second language to retell the story of *The Giving Tree*.

#### **Experiential theories of response [5]**

**Judging the quality of one's experience with a text.** In her response, Ms. Pink judged the attitudes of the tree "who" spoiled the ungrateful boy, and did not train him to be independent. She gave the ungrateful man some advice, to go to Social Security Administration for some benefits like housing, and retirement money instead, not to exhaust the miserable old tree.

#### **Psychological theories of response [5]**

In their responses to the poem, Mr. Black, Ms. Blue, Ms. Pink, and Ms. Purple are emotionally involved, and are fully empathizing or transacting with

the text based on their autobiographical life experiences [4]. Both authors and the students feel the anger, fear, greediness, grief, love, pity, sadness, shame, sympathy, vulnerability, etc. of the students' responses by using the "language of emotions" [30].

#### **Cultural theories of response [5]**

**Reader's cultural role, attitude, contexts.** In her response, Ms. Blue assumed her role based on the perspective of Chinese culture. According to the modern civil law, it is legal for the female to claim her portion like property, land, house, money from her grandparent; but she kept silent and she did not argue with her grandfather when she was requested to file the documents like will and deed for her grandfather.

#### **Religious theories of response [25]**

**Reader's spiritual response.** Mr. Red, a Christian missionary trainee, gives a spiritual response to this book, *The Giving Tree*. Reading this book can be part of his Christian missionary training activity [25].

#### **In Education:**

Humanity is not the product by birth, it needs to be cultivated through education at home, church, and working place.

**Gender stereotypes.** [33] confirm that gender roles in our society are "normative", that means, the ideas about values, attitudes, and behaviors that are closely related with sex or gender, have been coded by the social or cultural groups as norms, or stereotypes. For example, boys and men are expected to be aggressive, independent, strong, logical, direct, adventurous, ambitious, and self-confident; girls and women are expected to be relatively passive, dependent, weak, illogical, gentle, and emotional. We have all been socialized from birth for women to be sweet and nurturing and men to be tough and aggressive, and for women to be valued for the care they give while men are valued for their external accomplishments. It's not fair to either men or women. The power of role stereotypes limit the cognitive and humane development gender role stereotypes is great, and the cost is high to everyone: boys and girls, women and men. Gender of the youth by creating fear, anxiety, misconception, competition, alienation and hatred. Two forces, "misogyny", the hatred of women; and "homophobia", the fear of homosexuals, enforce the development of male and female stereotypes among children and young people in our society. Both forces degrade and even contempt female quality and equity.

**Gender awareness in early childhood.** [34] find that gender awareness develops very early in childhood; and children can identify the gender of themselves and others by external clues such as dress, toys, and activities. Assignment of gender roles is one of the functions of culture, and children are able to

---

distinguish gender roles through the socializing agents at home, school, society and the mass media. Educators noticed that children display “gender stereotypes” in play, they maintain that once children have achieved the sense of gender identity, the “powerful stereotypes” will follow them throughout their lives. Educators and parents should address gender equality as early as the developmentally appropriate time, not wait until children become more mature.

**Gender activities in classroom.** Usually, misunderstanding, competition, stereotypes are the source of violence. A balanced curriculum with classroom management will help children develop their gender awareness, engage boys and girls in the activities for collaborative learning through social interaction, promote understanding and foster clarification of stereotypes about gender, culture, religion, and society.

**Children literature and social media.** Read and discuss multicultural literature from the International Children Digital Library [www.icdlbook.org](http://www.icdlbook.org), and watched multicultural movies from [www.bridgesweb.org](http://www.bridgesweb.org) by authors, directors, and illustrators of the target culture for authenticity and reliability, yet without bias or stereotype. Multicultural literature and movies help children become aware of people from diversity, and help to get rid of xenophobia, the distrust, fear, or hatred toward people from diversity.

**The coordination and collaboration of family, school and social media.** Long since 1994, educators noticed that children display gender consciousness and gender stereotypes [31, 32] very early when they are playing. That means, educators, parents, and social media should address gender equality as early as the developmentally appropriate time, not wait until children become more mature.

**Why and how to use media to enhance teaching and learning.** Media can be used in almost any discipline to enhance learning, both in class, and also for out-of-class assignments. Short film and TV clips, animations, etc. can be viewed to reinforce concepts and spark discussion. Songs and music videos can have the same effects. In this study, Mr. White, the young struggling learner of English benefited from the social media such as the expressive narration of Shel, the beautiful music and the animation of *The Giving Tree*.

## CONCLUSION

In this research on reader-response to “*The Giving Tree*”, through the poem, the readers, both male and female, find the courage and expressions to reorganize their own experiences of social and injustice. The poem also allowed readers to find a platform to

activate their humane consciousness, and to call for a just and equitable society from girls and women perspectives. We need more committed early childhood educators as well as parents to break through the myth about gender stereotypes, and correctly conceptualize gender consciousness [33, 34, 35, 36], gender identity into family and school settings. To the girls and women who have been suffering as victims of violence, and prejudice, the education system as well as the slow progress of social movement will heal their wounds. We need to openly acknowledge and discuss the pervasiveness and effects of these gender roles, cultural tradition, religious perspectives, social and environmental issues so we can move forward toward a more just and balanced society.

## REFERENCES

1. Gallagher S; Hermeneutics and education. Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1992.
2. Cunningham DJ; Beyond educational psychology: Steps toward an educational semiotic. *Educational Psychology Review*, 1992; 4: 165-194.
3. Sebeok TA; Sight, sound, and sense. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979.
4. Rosenblatt LM; The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work. Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978.
5. Beach R; Reader-response theories. Urban, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993.
6. Eco U; The limits of interpretation. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.
7. Lu YL; Inner city children’s graphics call for social justice. *English Language Teaching*, 2010; 3(3): 11-19.
8. Deely J; The human use of signs. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994.
9. Magraph D; Multibrief: Paralinguistic concern for ESL instructors. Retrieved from [http://eclusive\\_multibriefs.:Paralinguistic concerns for ELS instructors](http://eclusive_multibriefs.:Paralinguistic_concerns_for_ELS_instructors), 2015.
10. Cherry K; Top ten communication tips. Retrieved from [Psychology bout com](http://Psychology_bout_com), 2014.
11. Siegel M; Rereading the signs: Multimodal transformations in the field of literacy education. *Language Arts*, 2006; 84(1): 65-77.
12. Moll, LC ; Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
13. Siegel M, Carey RF; Critical thinking: A semiotic perspective. Bloomington, IN: Eric on Reading and Communication Skills, 1989.

14. Harste J, Short KG, & Burke, C; *Creating classroom for authors*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988.
15. Hubbard R; *Authors of pictures, draughtsmen of words*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1989.
16. Short KG, Kauffman G, Kahn, LH; "I just need to draw": Responding to literature across multiple sign systems. *The Reading Teacher*, 2000; 54(2): 160-171.
17. Suhor C; *Semiotics and the English language arts*. *Language Arts*, 1982; 69: 228-230.
18. Eisner EW (Ed.); *Reading, the arts, and the creation of meaning*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 1978.
19. Ohio Humanities Council; *What are the humanities?* 2015
20. Israelite007; *8 characteristics of humanity*. *Philosophy Forum*, 2015.
21. Silverstein S; *The giving tree*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992. (Originally published in 1964).
22. Hickman P, Pollard-Durodola SD; *Dynamic read-aloud strategies for English learners*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2009.
23. Oczkus L; *Interactive think-aloud lessons: 25 surefire ways to engage students and improve comprehension*. New York: Scholastic, 2009.
24. Radiva M; *The giving tree: Women, and the great society*. In P. R. Costello (Ed.) *Philosophy in children's literature*. 267-284. New York: Lexington Books, 2012.
25. Miller E; *The giving tree and environmental philosophy: Listening to deep ecology, feminism, and trees*. In P. R. Costello (Ed.) *Philosophy in children's literature*, 2012; 251-266. New York: Lexington Books.
26. Sandberg S; *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. New York: Random House LLC, 2013.
27. Belenky MF, Clinchy BM, Goldberger NR, Tarule JM; *Women's way of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
28. FAWE; *Who we are*, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.fawe.org/about/index.php>
29. Steinmetz K; *A nation in transition: Transgender people are emerging from the margins to claim an equal place in American society*. *Time*, 2014; 38-46. *Why use media to enhance teaching and learning*. Retrieved from <http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/media/why.html>
30. Harrison ASA; *The silent wife*. New York: Penguin Group, USA, 2013.
31. Woodley S; Retrieved from the upcoming movie, *The Fault in Our Stars*, 2014.
32. Solomon R; *Literacy and the education of the emotions*. In S. deCastell, A. Luke, & K. Egan (Eds.). *Literacy, Society, and Schooling*, 1986; 37-58. New York: Cambridge UP.
33. Cushner KH, McClelland A, Safford P; *Human diversity in education: An intercultural approach* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2015.
34. Robles de Melendez W, Beck V; *Teaching young children in multicultural classrooms: Issues, concepts, and strategies*. Wadsworth, CA: Cengage Learning, 2013.
35. Lu YL, Zhou L; *Calls for the sick rose. Hermeneutics and semiotics for feminism from diversity*. *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Studies*.
36. Linton G, *Higher education gender gap deserves attention*. Retrieved from <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2013/mar/23/gregory-linton-higher-education-gender-gap/>.