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Once Upon A Time...Integrating The Modes of Language
In A Novice ESL Classroom

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education
Moravian College
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
2007

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study documents the observed and reported experiences of fifth and sixth grade novice English as a Second Language (ESL) students within an integrated language arts setting where fairy tales were used as a curricular focus. This study integrated reading, writing, speaking and listening into holistic learning activities where students used authentic reading materials, in the form of traditional and modern day variant fairy tales as their curriculum. There were seven participants of this study, of which three were fifth graders and four were sixth graders. There were four female participants and three males participants. This study took place in an urban school setting over the course of a four-month period. The focus of this study is on the positive affects of using authentic literature with novice ESL students. The study documents interactions the students had with each other and the literature they were reading. The study suggests that when novice ESL students are given the opportunity to delve into authentic literature, authentic learning takes place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first whole-heartedly thank my students whom were involved in this research study. The enthusiasm that my students showed as they ventured down their individual paths to happily ever after...truly touched my heart. They all embraced this study and their joy of learning English has forever changed the way I see my classroom. To you boys and girls, I thank you for helping me write “my book” and aspire to be a positive and influential role model in your lives.

I would also like to thank my fellow teacher action researchers who listened to me when I was confused and pulled me up when I felt like I was drowning. For the laughs that you all made me have, to the moments of exhilaration you shared with me as we continued to complete this massive endeavor, you were all right: this was totally worth it!

I sincerely want to express my gratitude to Dr. Jack Dilendik and Dr. Charlotte Zales whose expertise and guidance allowed me to complete this study. Your supervision and support is one that I will cherish and have grown from in so many different ways, I hope I have made you both very proud.

Finally, to my husband and daughter, who have seen me through this program from the beginning. TJ, thank you for overlooking the mounds of laundry, messy rooms, prepackaged dinners and days when I was just incapable of being uplifted, you deserve this degree as much as I do. Gabriella, although you

are only a very small child right now, I hope that I have made you proud and that you enjoyed the many nights mommy would read you the fascinating tales of Dewey, Friere, and Vygotsky, oh my! I will never forget the time you took my stack of research articles and threw them all over the room and happily pulled apart every page as I unfalteringly tried to complete my literature review. May you have the joy of learning fill your heart, as it has mine.

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RESEARCHER STANCE

I find it interesting that I am where I am today. Who would have thought that I would have come so far? I have become a teacher of English when I was thought to have been the worst of them all. I can remember when it all began, my education that is, or lack there of.

I started first grade with no true dominant language. With parents that spoke both Portuguese and Spanish at home and no English-speaking friends, venturing into the world of English was a truly daunting task for this small child. The English I had learned at an early age came from a blue cookie-eating monster and his fine yellow-feathered friend. I brought with me the knowledge I gained from watching television with pride as I entered school. That pride quickly turned to shame as I was an outcast my first day of school because I could not write my name. Sister Ann did not know that I could in fact write my name; I just had no idea that that was what she was asking of me. With 20 sets of eyes on me, I quickly learned the value of sitting quietly and making no eye contact.

Three long years later, I eventually was taken out of special education. Those in charge at my school had felt that someone with such poor communication skills obviously had learning deficits. What may seem like the worst possible event in my early educational career by others is what I credit to be the most poignant. Within the walls of my special education classroom, I was taught how to read through reading; I was taught to write through writing; I was taught English in the most holistic manner possible, by experiencing it within the pages of books. As I look back, my early educational experiences have shaped

the teaching philosophy that I hold today. It is where I was taught the joy of learning.

I can honestly say, that I do not feel like I have allowed my own students the same educational joy that I felt as a child. Do my students love learning? Can they learn English through the immersion of English prose similarly to the manner in which I learned English for the first time?

My second language students have many obstacles to overcome. Many of their families struggle just to make ends meet. My students were brought here in hopes of a better life, a life filled with opportunity, wealth, and education. I am fortunate to teach students that understand the importance of an education, many of whom in the fifth grade have already completed more schooling than their parents. They carry with them the burden of being their family's translator and communicator. Their dream is not to get to the ball in time, it is to simply get to graduation and maybe more importantly, become American citizens. So you can see that within the past eight years, motivation has never been a problem, but what has is the ability to meet all the students' individual needs.

Within the typical teacher-centered classroom setting, I have seen my students flounder. My students' needs are so high that this type of classroom format has not proved to be successful. What has been successful with my students is an environment where their questions can be quickly and easily answered and where I can target their areas of concern, and all of this can be done within a workshop setting.

I have tried creating a workshop setting in my classroom in the past, where students work in cooperative groupings and or in rotating “center” like activities. Every time that I have tried it, I have had positive results, but for some reason, I resort to teacher directed lessons, then break up the students into cooperative task oriented groups. Why can I not simply provide a workshop setting to the students from the start, where student behaviors and expectations are clearly outlined so to provide the students and myself with more one-on-one teaching time? I believe that an integrated language arts setting, mixed within a workshop classroom setting, can be my answer.

Within a workshop setting, my students will be able to practice the two important modes of language that often get pushed aside, speaking and listening. Within a teacher-centered classroom, it is difficult to have more than one student sharing his or her ideas at the same time. A workshop setting will provide the students with ample time to communicate in the targeted language.

Allowing for no separation between the modes of language, within an integrated language arts program, will also provide the students with the most appropriate means to learn language. Why do we just read, without writing? Why do we speak, without listening? By providing my students with the ability to work independently or within small groups, the students will be able to delve into books and become engrossed in literature, instead of engrossed into a lesson on nouns.

For most of my teaching career, I have been inundated with movements that some may say have restrained a teacher’s ability to venture closer to my educational ideal. Thus, movements have perhaps changed some teachers’ way of

delivering information into a manner that lacks educational enjoyment. These movements have caused many teachers to feel the crunch to meet statistical norms and in doing so may have left our students' joy of learning behind. I feel that I am one of these teachers. I wish to rectify this in my own classroom. To change the manner in which I have been teaching English into a way that returns to the joys of my own language learning is what I seek.

In a recent preliminary research study, I looked closely at how English Language Learners in my class could use thematically grouped trade books to improve their English proficiency levels. Within this study, I examined closely the students' attitudinal affects that providing authentic reading materials as the basis of our language arts class had on them. The positive results were astonishing for me to witness. This study reaffirmed my thoughts that providing concepts through simpler, frankly more enjoyable avenues such as picture books, students were able to understand language concepts and then transfer their learning to more challenging literature at a later time. Researcher, Margaret Graham stated at the 2000 NCTE annual meeting,

One way to introduce literary elements and writing concepts to middle school students is through the use of picture books. Using picture books, whose stories simplify various language arts themes and concepts, students apply and extend themes, literary elements, and writing concepts to grade level tasks. Hardly too juvenile for use in secondary classrooms, picture books help the reader build greater awareness of language and

offer opportunities to explore and learn the conventions. (Graham, 2000, p.15)

In essence, this preliminary research study allowed me to see the positive effects of using authentic reading materials as a basis of our language arts curriculum. From that point on, I have been looking into other ways I can create an integrated language arts setting for my students.

Some may see similarities between my ideal and that of whole language. Whole language is an approach, not a teaching method, that sees language as a whole entity where reading, writing, speaking, and listening should be integrated when learned. Whole language techniques help children and even adults learn a second language in much of the same way they learned their first (Patzelt, 1995).

Researchers like Weaver, Daniels, and Atwell have all looked into the effects of a language arts program that incorporates the four modes of language into their program design, but not much has been said about such practices that these researchers suggest within the walls of an ESL classroom. I am venturing into new territory by allowing myself to study the effects of an integrated language arts curricular design in an ESL classroom, and I hope to be able to do so with a set of wide lenses.

Why would my inquiry be useful to others? I suspect that there are many ESL teachers and regular education teachers that feel that the way in which they are teaching English is lacking “something.” I have heard many of the following comments during the last eight years of teaching. Some teachers feel that their students’ writing is not connected to anything “concrete” in their classroom.

Others feel that grammar is a solitary class that stands alone and they wonder how they could make these language lessons more meaningful. Still others feel that their students simply “spit out answers” and are never really delving into the literature they are reading. The above feelings can be generalized even further by the simple idea that there just has to be a better way to teach language arts! The demands placed on teachers by the recent standards movement provide us with an overwhelming notion of “let’s just get our kids to pass the test!” Providing students with an environment where language is not integrated and seen as a whole entity of a curricular environment does not allow teachers time to provide students with the ability to truly jump into literature and see what happens. I believe that teachers **can** create learning environments that connect the four modes of language, teachers **can** meet the standards that the state outlines for our students to attain, and teachers **can** make language arts an integrated environment where students become better literacy masters.

Overall, through my prior teaching experiences with ESL students, I truly see an integrated program within a workshop setting as a very viable method of teaching a second language. Gone will be the days where I segment my students learning, and on will be the days where my students are able to escape within the pages of books, with me as their guide along the way.

Can I successfully engage my ESL students in integrated language arts lessons while fostering their language acquisition process? Can I break down the borders between grammar, reading, writing, speaking, and listening lessons to create more meaningful learning experiences for my students? To answer these

questions, I posed this research question: Within a reading and writing workshop setting, what will be the observed and reported learning experiences of my beginner ESL students when engaged in an integrated language arts setting?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To acquire something means *to get by one's own efforts*. We acquired our first language without being taught it. We did not need teachers, books or drills. People talk about *learning* or being *taught* a foreign language in school, but we *acquired* our native language, outside of school. How can an English as a Second Language teacher effectively teach English inside of school? In order to answer this question we must look briefly at the historical and philosophical views of second language acquisition and how the past has shaped leading present day philosophies, such as Whole Language Approach and Integrated Language Arts. A look at how to successfully teach grammar will also be presented along with research studies that looked specifically at the processes of reading and writing in the English as a Second Language classrooms.

Second Language Acquisition

Our views of how students learn generally and more specifically learn language, have been influenced by Piaget (1955), Vygotsky (1962), and Rosenblatt (1978). Piaget, for example, has shown how learners move through developmental stages as they mature. These stages are developed biologically and through learner's experiences. Piaget focused his work mostly on the individual psychological development that happens when students interact with their environments. Vygotsky, on the other hand, claimed that learning occurs when more competent individuals aid students. His educational theory is more social linguistic in nature than Piaget's theory. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal

Development theory helps us understand that activities presented to students should range between what they can do alone and what they can do with the assistance of a teacher. Teaching, in his mind, should then be targeted in between this Zone of Proximal Development. Rosenblatt further explains a students' learning to say that students learn from interacting from text, meaning cannot be found alone in text or the reader, but when the reader actually interacts with the text.

Chomsky's (1965) view of language learning specifically is similar to Piaget's theory. Chomsky believed that humans learn language with little conscious effort. Learning language is innate. Experiences are the only thing entirely needed in order to learn a language. These philosophers have shaped sound principles for teaching language that are still influential today.

Teaching practices based on sound principles are essential for English language learners (Cummins, 1996). Teachers and administrators want to do what is best of their students, but teachers are frequently unprepared for students who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and do not speak English. Freeman and Freeman (1998) worked closely with English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and found that effective ESL teachers followed a set of principles, instead of basing their teaching on commonsense assumptions. Freeman and Freeman's seven principles of second language teaching are: learning proceeds from whole to part, lessons should be learner-centered, lessons should have meaning and purpose for students now, lessons should engage students in social interaction, lessons should develop both oral and written language, lessons should

support students' first languages and cultures, and lessons should show faith in the learner to expand students' potential. Freeman and Freeman also support the imbedding of grammar into students' writing lessons; teaching grammatical structures when student writing shows evidence of specific areas of need.

Grammar Instruction

Leading educator Constance Weaver has said, "The question is *not* a simple dichotomy, 'To grammar or not to grammar?' Rather, the question is, 'what aspects of grammar can we teach to enhance and improve students' writing, and when and how can we best teach them?' 'In the context of writing' is my short answer" (Weaver, 2001, p.19). The kinds of grammar lessons that Weaver suggests in her text, *Teaching Grammar in Context of Writing* are incidental lessons, where grammatical terms are used casually, in the course of discussing literature and students' writing. Weaver suggests guiding students to notice grammatical patterns and derive generalizations themselves, teaching grammatical points when conferring with students in writing conferences (Weaver, 1996). Weaver also suggests presenting students grammatical information in the form of mini-lessons, which present new and useful information to the class or small group in a brief format and extended mini lessons where students try or apply a concept (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1986; Weaver, 1996).

Learning grammatical concepts is a complex process. Harris and Rowan (1989) point out that practice, practice, and more practice usually does not make perfect. Crafted grammar lessons in grammar books tend to be relatively easy and repetitive in nature. Doing such exercises does not make a student a master in a

particular grammatical area. If anything it simply teaches the student how to locate a noun in a sentence, not necessarily knowing how to use one correctly in a sentence. Harris and Rowan's case study found that college students were confused with the simple meaning definition of what a sentence was. After the completion of many grammar worksheets on sentences, students were asked to share the definition of a sentence that they had been taught. Many of the students could not differentiate between sentences, fragments, or run-ons even after their extensive practice in doing so prior to their interviews. This shows quite convincingly that a conscious grasp of grammatical concepts requires more than the completion of a set of grammar exercises. Kane (1997) goes on to say that embedding grammar lessons is highly recommended in both whole language and integrated language arts settings, where grammar is studied in the context of the students' actual oral and written communication. Kane also suggests that teachers can accomplish a lot in the name of language instruction just by reading well-crafted texts to their students.

Reading

Researcher Martin (2001) believes that during shared reading, when the teacher and his or her students read a common text together, the teacher can become the perfect model of a proficient reader for their students, encouraging and drawing students' attention to specific grammatical features while in the act of reading. He goes on further to mention how teachers can allow their students to play with language. He suggests this by teaching ESL students to expand sentences. By taking a relatively simple sentence with a subject and object, he

believes that teachers can provide students with the ability to expand the sentence to include the when, where and why of the sentence. In doing so, the children can discuss English grammar in an enjoyable, yet challenging way.

Researcher Strong studied the effects of using literature with ESL students (Strong, 1996). In his work, he found that the teaching of story grammar, or the essential elements of a story, such as character development, conflict resolution, and thematic analysis, proved to be a highly effective basis for small group literature discussion. He believes that the teaching of story grammar provides the ESL student with common terms of reference and offers a direction for their discussion of fiction. Research indicates that extensive reading programs improve student language abilities (Elly, 1991; Hatiz & Tudor, 1989). Elly noted that by immersion in meaningful and interesting texts, and subsequent group discussions of books read over a school year, school children made more significant gains in reading comprehension, word recognition, grammatical knowledge, and even oral fluency, as compared to children taught by approaches, such as the audio-lingual or grammar translation methods.

Free voluntary reading is a highly praised practice by famed linguist Krashen. “There is an enormous amount of research that confirms that free voluntary reading is the source of a great deal of our reading ability, our writing style, our ability to use complex grammatical constructions, our vocabulary and much of our spelling ability” (Krashen, 1995, p. 2). Providing students with sustained silent reading time, reading good stories to the students as read alouds,

and discussing such books in class are at the essence of Krashen's beliefs in an ESL classroom.

Bearse (1992), a reading specialist and action researcher, looked at the effects of a fairy tale reading unit on third graders over a six week period. Bearse's research question was simply, how would students' writing be influenced by the fairy tales that they read? Bearse used students' writing journals, interviews, and questionnaires for her data collection methods, but the most important pieces of data were the students' final stories themselves. The findings for this study suggest that students' writing was greatly influenced by the reading of fairy tales. Over half of the students said that they made conscious connections to the stories that they read, citing specific stories that they used as inspiration.

Kowel (2003) a teacher action researcher, investigated how young adolescent readers made meaning from the text they read. Kowel wanted to see what aided her students to become better readers. Kowel's students were given the opportunity to reflect daily upon their own learning through completion of reading journals. The students' meta-cognitive practices lead them to attain an increase in their academic gains with 53% of the students showing a higher language arts grade at the end of the semester. Schwartz and Bone's study (as cited in Kowel, 2003) developed the Retell, Relate and Reflect approach. This approach asks students to first retell what they feel they have read, then connect what they have read to their own lives in the second segment of the approach, and finally reflect on how the text was written and organized. This approach was

found to be very effective in structuring student lead small group discussions and for completing student reflective reading journals in Kowel's study.

A further study on determining whether the attitudes of poor readers could be improved through tutorial instruction was conducted by Thames (1994). Thames sought to see if authentic literature versus basal reading series would affect students' attitudes toward reading. Within the treatment group, students' interests recorded on pre-treatment surveys were used to select literature that would be of interest to the students. A variety of literature was used including trade books, fairy tales, magazine articles, and comic books. Reading materials for the control group included the text selections contained in the basal reading program taught by their classroom teacher. Lessons within the treatment group included four major segments: lesson vocabulary presented in context, presentation of a specific instructional strategy for the lesson, uninterrupted reading, and summation of the lesson through writing and speaking activities. Within the control group, each reading lesson was teacher-directed with an instructional focus on the development of decoding skills, such as word recognition, phonics, and context analysis. Findings of this study suggest that tutorial instruction, which includes trade books related to the student's interests in an integrated language arts approach, may positively impact the attitudes of poor readers. Student attitudes toward listening, reading, and self-perception as learners, all increased at the end of this study for students in the treatment group. No major changes in the students' attitudes were found in the control group at the end of the research study. It also appears that active involvement during the

instructional process and the use of trade books significantly influenced the positive attitudes of the students in the treatment group.

In her book *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading*, Janet Allen clearly states the aim for guided reading:

The aim for guided reading is to develop independent readers who question, consider alternatives, and make informed choices as they seek meaning. Guided reading is an enabling and empowering approach where the focus is on the child as a long-term learning being shown how and why and which strategies to select and employ to ensure that meaning is gained and maintained during reading and beyond (Allen, 2000, p. 81).

Guided reading, along with read-alouds, and shared reading, where the students are invited to read along silently when the teacher reads the text aloud, are all methods employed to steer away from round robin reading. Allen suggests these techniques can move students beyond simply reading words into making meaning of those words being read. She feels that students' questions and discussion can move an entire group of students into a better understanding of a particular text. "It is the outcome of these processes that allow students to participate in the experience of reading, not just the skill of reading, but the experience of words making us see the world in a different way" (Allen, 2000, p. 79).

Writing

Rosenblatt (1978) believes that students compose and become active creators of meaning in text, making conscious and unconscious decisions about

incorporating literature into their writing. Rosenblatt's transactional theory also states that the relationship between what is read and written is central to a child's understanding of a text.

In order to explore the possible effects of children's reading on their writing, Eckhoff (1983) analyzed reading texts and writing samples from two second-grade classes. The one class used a basal reading series that used the simplified style found in many basal reading texts. The other class used a basal reading series that more closely matched the style and complexity of literary prose found in authentic literature. Students who read stories most similar to literary prose found in authentic text, showed more elaborate sentence structures than that of the other group of students. Students who used the basal reading series, used more simple sentences similar to the readings in their basal series. The findings of this study clearly showed that the children's writing was greatly influenced by their reading texts.

In his book, *Craft Lessons: Teaching writing K-12*, Ralph Fletcher (1998) encourages students to "borrow" author's style. Like Fletcher, Lancia (1997) a second grade teacher action researcher, found that literature was the most effective model for writing in his classroom. Lancia noticed that many of his students composed stories based on ideas from books they had read. They appeared to spontaneously "borrow" ideas from literature in order to create their own pieces of writing. Lancia investigated how his students selected and manipulated ideas while writing on their own. Lancia designed and conducted a classroom study to identify patterns in and sources of such literary borrowing. His

results indicated that a saturation with literature directly influences writing by providing important models for successful work. Research methods included an analysis of student writing samples, anecdotal records taken during writing workshop, student interviews, and field notes. The author concluded that children borrowed ideas from literature in the following five ways: the writer borrowed an entire plot for retelling (3% of the time), the writer borrowed a book's characters and wrote new material for them in a new plot or continuation of the original story (32%), the writer borrowed the plot devices such as setting, conflict, or language patterns for a particular book (43%), the writer borrowed elements from a genre by using particular stylistic devices (9%), and the writer borrowed information from a nonfiction source and used it in his/her own writing (13%). The author concluded that in a classroom where students have the opportunity to interact with books and authors every day and to practice writing in an environment that supports and encourages students to write, authorship becomes real as they imitate role models and write their own stories. Literature inspires, influences, and instructs young writers by providing examples needed for effective learning.

Mello (2001) conducted a yearlong study with fourth graders on the effects listening to monthly fairy tales had on student writing. Mello wanted to see if students transferred literary techniques used in fairy tales, such as climatic struggles between good and evil, elements of magic, broken family dynamics, personification of animals, in their writing. Mello found that throughout the course of her study, students' writing abilities did in fact emulate the stories that

were being read to them, however she also found gender differences amongst the females and males who participated in her study. Mello's findings concluded that the boys felt that heroes were men who showed bravery, strength, and usually were involved in some type of battle, where as girls said that heroines were wise and used their head in order to resolve their conflicts. The researcher felt that her study exemplified traditional gender bias that children may possess at this early age.

Mikkelson (1983) used fairy tales for the core of her study. Mikkelson worked with 15 children from the ages of 7 to 10, who meet regularly over a three-month period to listen to folk and fairy tales. She wanted to see what kinds of stories children would write directly after hearing a particular fairytale or group of tales. Mikkelson collected data during and after each of the sessions with the students and used the students' stories (52 stories) as her primary data collection method. She concluded that children's stories written after each session could be categorized five different ways according to the extent that the children relied on the literary materials presented to them. The five categories were: retellings, borrowings, blendings, recreations, and transformations. The five categories are important to distinguish among for they show how the students interpreted, assimilated, synthesized, and later reproduced their own fairy tales. Retellings contained most details from the original story that the children heard and had little to no deviation from the original tale, Mikkelson categorized only 3 of the 52 stories as retellings, of which all were created by the youngest of the students. The second category, borrowing, is only a small step away from retelling. In this

category the students exhibited a firm comprehension of the original story elements in their pieces of writing. However, the stories included the same plot and theme, 9 of the stories were placed into this category. Blendings, combined characters from one tale with the plot of another tale. Ten of the children's stories were in this category. Mikkelson concluded that this was due to the complexity of integrating two tales together. Twenty-one recreations were written by the students, in which the children extracted only a single element from the tale, usually a character type and placed the character into their own milieu. Finally, 9 stories were categorized as transformations, where the children reproduced themes from the fairytales read to them, but created stories with entirely new story structure.

In her book, *More Than Guided Reading*, Cathy Mere states:

Looking at writing can tell me what students know about print, about words, and about putting a message down on paper. It can tell me whether they have the ability to develop a story, to sequence events or to notice detail. I can discover what students understand about story language and their accumulated vocabulary (Mere, 2005, p. 107).

Kendall and Khuon (2005) clearly state how reading and writing can be integrated together for English language learners. In their book, *Making Sense: Small Group Comprehension Lessons for English Language Learners*, they propose that teachers of English language learners create environments where small-group reading and writing workshops are established to promote: low anxiety environments, opportunities for teacher-to-student interactions, guided

student-to-student interactions, more on-task behaviors, easier check for understanding and allows the teacher to monitor and adjust instruction accordingly. Such environments can be established in a classroom that practices a Whole Language philosophy.

Whole Language

The major principles underlying the design of Whole Language instruction are as follows: the use of authentic literature rather than artificial, specially prepared texts and exercises designed to practice individual reading skills, the reading of real texts of high interests, particularly literature. An integration of reading, writing and other skills in student-centered learning activities is also valued. Some of these activities include: the use of dialogue journals, writing portfolios, writing conferences, student-made books, and story writing (Rigg, 1991). Freeman and Freeman (1998) believe that whole language is an appropriate approach to extend the learning potential of the second language learners. In whole language classrooms, learning takes place from whole to part; learning is child-centered, meaningful, and is a social activity; both oral and written language are acquired simultaneously. Teachers should provide students with plenty of communication opportunities. Opportunities should be provided in the context of meaningful classroom activities.

Some have argued that Whole Language promotes fluency at the expense of accuracy. Teachers who use Whole Language approaches in their classes are seen as anti-direct teaching and anti-skill teaching, assuming that language can be absorbed simply through reading (Aaron, 1991). On the other hand, supporters of

Whole Language have developed a rich array of materials that can offer an integrated approach to ESL instruction and that can be adapted for use in a wide variety of contexts.

Cummins also emphasizes the importance of context in developing language proficiency. According to Cummins (1996), language that is context-embedded is less cognitively demanding than language that is context-reduced. Cummins differentiates between context-embedded and context-reduced by saying that context-embedded is face-to-face communication supported by appropriate situations. Context-reduced communication involved situations where there are very few contextual aids in interpreting the communication. Second language teachers know that one way to embed language in context is to provide authentic learning experiences for their students. They believe that the more contextual support through the use of materials and actions in the classroom, the fewer students have to rely solely on their new language.

Integrated Language Arts

The educational approach termed integrated language arts is an approach that uses entire pieces of literature as the stimuli for a language arts program. The aim of integrated language arts is to integrate the four modes of language, reading, writing, listening, and speaking together through literature, much like the whole language approach. Argo (1995) defines integrated language arts as “providing natural learning situations in which reading, writing, speaking, and listening can be developed together for real purposes and real audiences” (Argo, 1995, p. 2). Teaching the four modes of language together allows students the

ability to see that each mode works together. One cannot read without being able to discuss what is read. One cannot discuss what is read without writing down one's thoughts. Does integrated language arts improve learning performance in reading and writing? In 1992, Barch (as cited in Argo, 1995) implemented a study in her classroom, that tried to "increase interest and achievement in spelling by integrating spelling with reading and writing" (Argo, 1995, p. 4) Her results showed that students were successfully using spelling strategies throughout their day, not only during spelling time.

Furthermore, Parmer, Thames and Kazelskis' (1997) study on the effects of an integrated language arts format for reading instruction indicated that the integrated language arts format for reading instruction increased comprehension performance in students who exhibited severe reading problems. Their study also suggested that teaching students how to use a variety of comprehension and vocabulary strategies, along with using a variety of meta-cognitive skills helped aid students in their comprehension.

This approach opposes many current philosophies in which skill acquisition dominates the students' learning process. Most times in an integrated language arts setting, writing, grammar and phonemic awareness skills are introduced to the students when student performance or questions indicate the need for instruction in those areas (Gavelek, Rapheal, biondo, Wang 1999).

Conclusion

Through the eyes and research studies of leading educators and qualitative researchers, we have seen how students can in fact acquire a second language within a school setting. The most appropriate school setting for such to occur is one that values the authenticity of literature as a means for which language can be learned holistically. To allow students to work in small group reading and writing workshops, where literature is used as a vehicle in which to learn from, is what is valued. Along with this, it is most viable to teach grammar within the context of writing and to make students internalize this component of language. In conclusion, making the connection between reading and writing through authentic literature is the essential factor in allowing English language learners the ability to acquire their second language.

METHODOLOGY

Setting

My research study was conducted in a self contained ESL classroom comprised of fifth and sixth grade novice ESL students. My school district is located in a large urban city with a very ethnically diverse student population. There are many different types of ESL programs available to linguistically diverse students throughout our country, push in, pull out, bilingual, immersion, and sheltered English classrooms to name a few. This research study was conducted in a pull out ESL classroom where students were scheduled for ESL everyday for a 90-minute block of time. Within these 90 minutes, English reading, writing and language arts are to be taught to the students through specialized second language instruction.

Participants

There were seven participants in this study. These seven students were all novice English speakers, readers and writers as determined by district and state standardized testing results. Of the seven participants, four were female and three were male. There were four sixth grade students and three fifth grade students. Five of the students' first language was Spanish and two of the students' first language was Vietnamese. These students were randomly chosen from the seventeen fifth and sixth grade novice ESL students to participate in this study. Students in the classroom who were non-participants of this study worked with the other ESL instructor in the room.

Planned Intervention

In order to best meet the language needs of my students, I believe that language arts instruction in an ESL classroom has to be delivered in a holistic way. That is to say, students best learn a language when it is presented to them in a meaningful concrete manner. My professional opinion is that this can be done in an integrated language arts setting, where no division between grammar, reading, writing, speaking, and listening is created. In turn, an environment is created where students read, then discuss through oral and written fashion what they are reading about. For this particular research question, I looked at how students could use fairy tales as the authentic curricular reading content.

Within our workshop setting, students worked on making meaning of authentic text while they further studied the English language. Grammatical lessons were introduced while students were trying to convey their meaning of the authentic reading materials they read. These lessons were created in small mini lesson format where students could immediately apply the lesson's objectives in their workshop setting. In order to ensure that state mandated curricular topics were addressed, correlation between student benchmarks and topics addressed in mini lessons was accomplished (see figure 21). This type of lesson planning allowed for the students' needs to be addressed quickly and efficiently with students only receiving small mini lessons on topics, which they have not yet mastered.

Allowing students' needs to be addressed in small mini lessons, in an environment where the teaching of language arts is holistic in manner, was only

one aspect of this research study. In order for students to be able to better communicate with me, their teacher, they were asked to write in a dialog journal weekly. These journals became the core of my data collection process. The journals also documented the skills taught and learned throughout the study. Within the pages of these journals students and I discussed their academic process, and areas of excellence and need. The students however, began sharing personal information that was relevant to the readings that were done in our class. Students began making text to self, text to text and text to world connections that Zimmerman refers to in his text, *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a reader's workshop*. In order to help the students make these much needed connections while they were reading, we use a series of large posters around our room for the students to refer to (see appendix A). The students also used a connections bookmark (see appendix B) that helped them remember to be active readers. During reading workshop the students would record the connections they made on their connection sheets (see appendix C), which they kept in the reading sections of their binders.

Data Collection

A large portion of my data collection process included the compilation of a field log. I used this field log to record the occurrences within my classroom on a daily basis. My field log allowed me to record my observations, as well as my reflections separately, in order to delineate between the two. My field log was the core of my data collection. It also housed my student work samples as well as student survey and interview responses. By examining my field log notes

carefully, I was able to see emerging themes and critical products of my proposed integrated language arts setting. My field log was locked in my desk at all times throughout the day as to protect the confidentiality of my students. At the conclusion of my research study, my field log was destroyed (Burnaford, Fischer, & Hobson, 2001).

Collection of Student Work

Student work was a large aspect of my data collection during this research study. Due to the nature of novice ESL students, numerical grading is not given to the students their first semester in our district ESL program. Through collected student work samples academic progress could be seen, instead of test grades. Collected student work samples included daily in-class assignments, homework assignments, prewriting activities, first and final writing drafts which were in the form of “published” original pieces of literature. Other forms of student work collected were the collection of student dialog journals. These dialog journals formed the basis of teacher-student communication and allow instruction to be derived from students’ needs.

Interviews and Surveys

Formal pre and post interviews and surveys were conducted with all participants of this research study (see appendix D and appendix E). These interviews and surveys helped to establish pre and post data research findings. Interviews were also conducted systematically throughout the research time frame. Unlike the pre and post formal interviews, numerous informal interviews were conducted with students when the need to explicate information shared

through the completion of the student dialog journals was needed. These informal interviews provided valuable insights into the students and their learning processes throughout this research study.

Researcher Trustworthiness

Within my research study, I tried to remain an objective observer of my classroom and of my students. As a second language learner myself, I may carry with me certain biases that I acknowledge. Working so closely with learners that are similar to myself can be seen as an advantage and as a disadvantage. Being familiar with the language acquisition process allowed me to better understand the hardships and daily struggles that my students may face, although my familiarity with them may have also caused me to over-generalize or pigeon hole my students' emotions into categories that may not necessarily truly represent them. I also cautioned myself in the areas that I may take for granted, as in thinking that my participants' experiences must hold similarity to my own. My sense of connection and allegiance with similar students as myself may as well cause me to overtly justify my students' actions or academic gains or lack thereof. I, as a reflective qualitative researcher, did do my best to see to these biases so that they did not affect my research findings. In stating my concerns and reflecting on some possible emotional connections to my students, I hope I have minimized the effect of any biases that I may hold.

Trustworthiness as a researcher is very important to me. Obtaining permissions from participants, their guardians, as well as my administrators, and building relationships of trust are important for qualitative researchers. As a

qualitative researcher, it was essential to my research gathering that I consulted with other researchers within my teacher support group. Within my teacher support group, ideas were shared and explored to benefit my research study and my students themselves. Allowing for the opportunity to discuss my study confidentially with other teacher researchers provided me with the opportunity to safeguard my research gathering procedures. I, as a qualitative researcher, did best to see to the above safeguards throughout my study (Arhar, Holly, & Krasten, 2001).

Ensuring that ethical guidelines were met was another manner in which I proved my trustworthiness as a teacher researcher. The student participants of my study all understood their role in my research gathering. Participants understood that I safeguarded their identity through the use of pseudonyms. My students understood that within my research study, I did not label the students as participants or non-participants so as not to discriminate between any of the students in our classroom. Students were asked to participate in the classroom activities within the research gathering time as part of their regular English as a Second Language curricular objectives (Arhar, Holly, & Krasten, 2001).

HSIRB Approval

Prior to beginning this research project a written proposal was sent to the Human Subjects Internal Review Board. The HSIRB board accepted the proposal for this research study(see appendix F), written permission was attained from my building principals to conduct this study (see appendix G). Written permission was also sent to all students' parents/guardians (see appendix H). Students and

their parents/guardians had the opportunity to choose to be participants or non-participants in this study. Students were not labeled as participants or non-participants in this study as to protect their identities. To minimize any risk to the students, any written communication home was provided to the subject's family in their primary home language. Close contact with all parents of my subjects was established in order to safeguard them from any problems that could have arisen. I believe that my research study helped meet the needs of my students, but if any of the strategies interfered with any of my students' special needs, the student was not expected to complete them. I also followed the individualized 504 or IEP documents for any of the students who may receive special education services and I upheld communication between their case managers during my research study to protect any individual student's educational needs.

Triangulation

I, throughout my research, exhibited triangulation in my data collection methods. The triangulations of my data allowed me to see that results were not just the result of consequences, but were emergent patterns of data. I also used the core element of self-reflection as an integral part of my study. Self-reflection, the heart of teacher research, allowed me to see the effects that an integrated language arts setting had on my students. Self-reflections provided me with clear distinctions between my observations and my inferences. I was told at the start of my MEDU process that research is me-search. This parallelism has stayed with me through the years. The process that I undertook was an in depth look at not only the experiences that my students were having in my class, but it was also a

look at my practice as a whole and the opportunities that I provided for my students' experiences to occur. I hope that these self-reflections will be the basis for which other possible teacher researchers can use and experiment themselves with using authentic reading materials in an integrated language arts setting.

THIS YEAR'S STORY

Once Upon a Time...

A fairy tale is a children's story about magical and imaginary beings and lands. The story I am about to tell you is not a fairy tale. Although my students and I did venture into many unfamiliar and somewhat scary lands, we did so through the pages of books. Our adventure with fairy tales and using them to integrate the modes of language began as a bumpy one of discovery. As novice English Language Learners (ELL), students, they played the roles of heroine/hero, damsel in distress, villain and trickster throughout our story as they dove into each of their own English learning experiences. These experiences were housed within the pages of fairy tales, traditional fairy tales and their modern day variants. Through these pages, my students and I were able to begin to connect ourselves to the lives and struggles of the characters in our stories. Through this research study, my students began to look beyond the plot of a classic tale to the moral the story presented. Some students were able to connect brilliantly with characters of our stories, others found connections between the stories themselves, but all the students and I were able to reflect upon our learning throughout this journey to see how we could take what we learned and continue down our paths of discovery.

Our Cast of Characters

Before walking bravely down the path to “Grandma’s House” I think it is necessary to introduce the cast of characters of this story. The following vignettes will introduce and allow you to become familiar with the students involved in this story. It may be helpful to refer back to this list as you are reading.

Laura Warren

I am a fifth grade ESL teacher who teaches all four levels of ESL, beginner or novice, intermediate, advanced and monitor/tutorial. I pride myself on developing the minds of my students and allow them to flourish by allowing them to ask, “why?” As a former ESL student myself, I feel I bring plenty of experiences of my own milieu as I connect with my students. My favorite pastimes include snow days, watching Food Network, figuring out where to correctly place commas, playing with my young daughter and amusing my husband (not necessarily in that order)!

Natalie

I am a sixth grader from Vietnam who works hard at staying awake in school after long nights of working at my family’s nail salon. This is my second year in America. I am always worried about being here in the United States while the rest of my family is hungry in Vietnam. I am lucky to be living here. My mother sent for me because my father was not able to take care of me. His drinking and drug abuse caused me to run away from home and travel over fifty miles to my grandmother’s home. Once there, my mother was contacted and arrangements were made for me to come to America. I like to try to be smarter

than the other Vietnamese girl in our group and I like to experiment with being funny. Most times it takes the other students and my teacher a little bit of time to figure out my humor, but when they do...I excitedly clap my hands and say, "Right? Funny, right?" So much so, that my fellow students like to use these lines when they are also trying to be funny!

Tiffany

I am another sixth grade Vietnamese student. I came to our country at the end of last year. I am a very conscientious student who prides herself on her work. I really think that American schools are very different than my school in Vietnam. I am so happy that my teachers in America do not hit me if I get a question wrong. I do not like it when my teachers make me think for myself. You can hear me saying, "Teacher how you say...in English" all the time.

Matthew

I am a sixth grade student from Guatemala. This is my second year in America. I did not have a strong educational background in Guatemala and I have some lapses in my past learning experiences. I worked on my family's potato farm most of my days prior to coming to America. I came here because my mother and father got a divorce and my mother met someone on the phone that she wanted to marry. I miss my dad a lot. I only talk to him once a month when my mom buys me one of those cards that I can use with the phone. I try to be the alpha male of the class and like to address the other males in our class as "hey, hermano!" I have begun to like girls and smile a lot at a few of the girls in my

class. I am physically very awkward and my voice likes to crack every two seconds.

Andrew

I am a fifth grader from El Salvador who thinks I belong in tenth grade already. I am very smooth and like to compete with Matthew to be the center of attention and the alpha male. I too am an “hermano” in the bunch; I like to puff out my chest and show my macho-ness in front of the other students. I am a bright student that likes to ask questions of the teacher while I am writing, like, “How you spell?” when I am stuck on a word in English. I am very sneaky and like to get others off task when I think the teacher isn’t watching me, but I know she is on to me. The teacher always is interrupting me when I am trying to speak in Spanish with my other “hermanos” in the class. I like to read and show everyone that I read well. I miss El Salvador a lot and wish I were back home. I do not think America is my home, I have told Mrs. Warren that America is like a bus stop and I hope to be here only a short time. My mother just had twin boys and I have two other younger brothers that I have to look after when she leaves for work at 5 o’clock each night. I like them, but I like to ignore them a lot at night and just play my video games. I don’t sleep well at night because my twin baby brothers sleep in the same room as I do and they cry all the time.

Amber

I am a fifth grader from the Dominican Republic. I have been here since second grade. My family speaks both English and Spanish at home, but I still struggle a lot with reading and writing in English. Even though I have been here

for three years, I have not shown much progress in my ESL classes. My teachers have discussed perhaps testing me to see if I can qualify for special services, but my school district wants me to be in the country for some more time. I am very immature and speak in “baby talk” often, which drives Mrs. Warren crazy. I think I speak in this “baby talk” because I have a younger sister at home that I help take care of. I like to talk about things that are not appropriate for my age, like Sesame Street and Jo Jo’s Circus cartoons. I love to go home and reread the stories we read in class with my younger sister and my cousins. I like to play teacher with them. I am trying to be a better student in school and ask my teachers for help when I need it. I am worried that I will not pass fifth grade and have talked to Mrs. Warren about it.

Drew

I am a fifth grader from Columbia. I came to America in the middle of fourth grade. I was diagnosed as ADHD in Columbia but I refuse to take my medicine because I have said to my mother and teachers that I think my brain will explode if I take my medicine! Seriously, I say this a lot and believe it! I like to be the class clown and make the other students laugh, although I am very bright, my hyperactivity interferes with my learning many times. I am very creative and say interesting things to Mrs. Warren that makes her laugh! I love making her and my other teachers laugh and I try to bring funny jokes to tell her everyday! I am sad because I don’t think I am as cool as Matthew and Andrew and I try to be their friend, although they just sort of push me aside which makes me sad, but I try to not let it bother me too much! I love playing video games and talk about

professional wrestling. I am always impressed when Mrs. Warren talks about these things, I always thought she wasn't cool, until she started talking about these things with me! I live with my mom. She works a lot. We live with our cousins. There are about fifteen of us living in our house.

Rebecca

I am a sixth grade girl from Peru. I came to America last year and am starting to really enjoy living here. I had a very difficult time adjusting to this new country. I miss my family and friends terribly in Peru, but talking about them helps me feel better. I love to learn and feel good about myself that I can finally understand my teachers without having to ask Mrs. Warren for help everyday. I also am making new friends that don't speak Spanish. I think some of these girls like me because I am different than them, I talked to Mrs. Warren about them, and she told me that these girls like me because I am a fun person. I liked when she told me that I was a fun person. I love doing my hair and playing with it, I get in trouble a lot though for trying to fix it while I am in class. I have to get better at this! I also enjoy fashion and I have a lot of fun putting together different interesting outfits. My family owns a little Spanish grocery store downtown and I help out there all the time. I don't like to be there because kids from school go there after school to get candy and I have to wait on them, I told Mrs. Warren that this makes me feel like I am not as good as them, but I have no choice and I have to help out my family. I hope to become someone famous one day or maybe be a famous designer like Jennifer Lopez. I want to go to college so badly and I think I will be able to make it there if I can just keep getting better and better at English.

How do we hope to reach...Happily Ever After?

Student-Created Dictionaries

In order to integrate reading, writing, and grammar together through the reading of authentic texts, a few elements had to be in place before we began. First, in order for the students to be able to fully understand the texts that we were about to read, they had to have a way to reference all of the words they learned throughout our research period. The students were each given a blank notebook that was sectioned off like a dictionary. These dictionaries were used to compile all of the unknown words the students encountered throughout the texts we read. Unlike most standard dictionaries however, the students were asked to use the word in a sentence instead of arbitrarily copying someone else's definition of the word. In Figure 1, taken from Tiffany's dictionary, you can see how the student used the definition that was discussed in class of the unknown word and placed it into a sentence that made meaning to her.

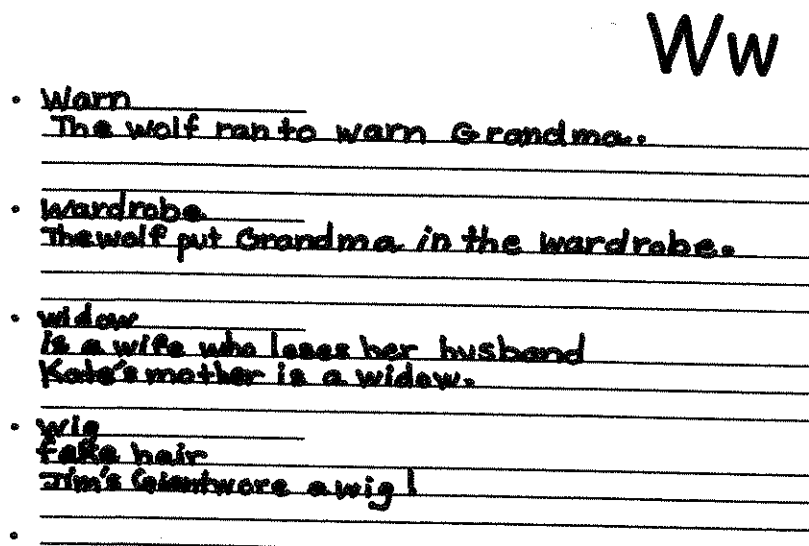
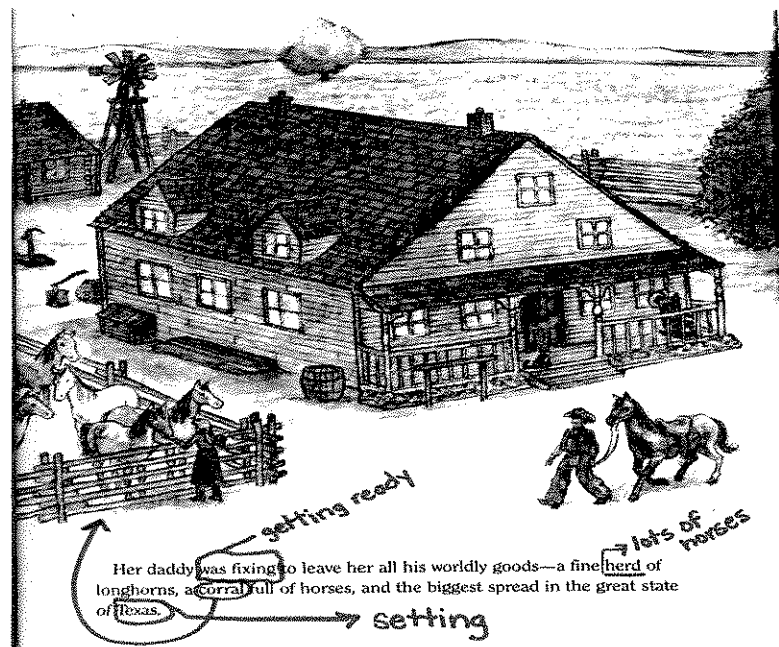


Figure 1: Example of student's dictionary page.

Student Binders

The students each were given a three ring binder at the start of our research period. These binders were divided into four sections, reading, writing, grammar, and notes. The reading section is where the students placed their own copies of the stories we were reading in class. We used photocopied versions of the fairy tales we read, which allowed the students to label particular story elements while they read, highlight unknown words, and circle examples of grammatical topics. Having the ability to “mark up” the reading texts gave the students the ability to easily reference their own thoughts during class discussions. Figure 2 below shows an example of Amber’s photocopied fairy tale that was placed in her reading section of her notebook.



*Figure 2: One of Amber’s pages in her reading section of her binder. (Taken from *The Cowboy and the Black-Eyed Pea* written by Tony Johnston.)*

The writing section of the students' binders was used to house all of the students' prewriting activities as well as rough drafts of their writing assignments and original stories. Figure 3 is one example of Andrew's prewriting activities that he kept in this writing section.

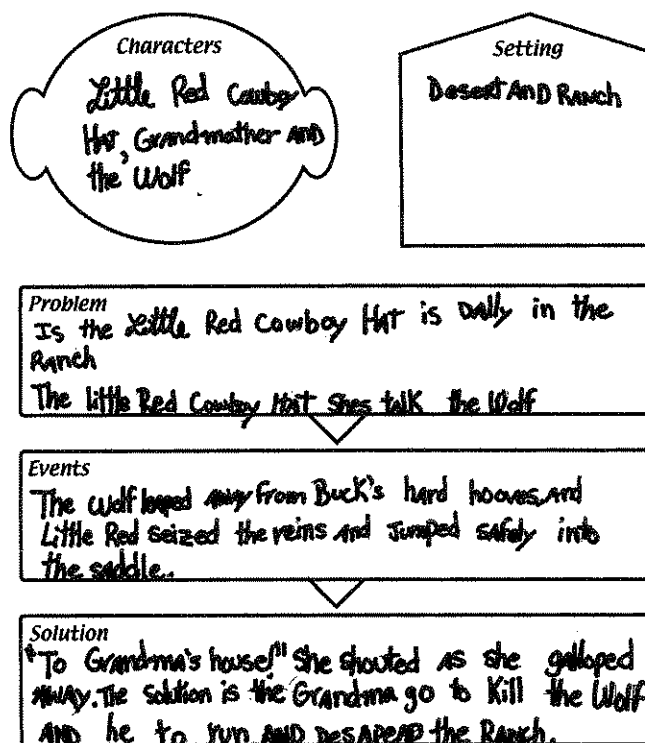


Figure 3: One of Andrew's prewriting activities after reading *Little Red Cowboy Hat* written by Susan Lowell.

The grammar section of the students' binders housed notes that were written during grammar mini-lessons. These notes were generated by the students' needs and questions and were mostly impromptu in nature. When a student would ask a question about a particular grammatical concept, I would lead a mini lesson on that topic and the students would record these lessons in this section of their binders.

11/12/06

Nouns

A noun is a person, place or thing.

person	place	thing
man	mall	leaf
baby	bedroom	animal
teacher	school	penicil
doctor	house	scissors
student		dog

11/14/06

Common and Proper Nouns

A common noun is NOT specific.
ex) dog, girl, movie.

A proper noun is specific.
ex) Emily, Mrs. Warren, Santa Claus.

Proper nouns always begin with a capital letter.

11/16/07

Irregular and Plural Nouns

Irregular nouns are not regular nouns. (person, place or thing)

Plural nouns are not regular nouns. (person, place, thing)

Rules

1. Most nouns at the end of a word add s or es.
2. If the noun ends in s, x, ch, sh, add (s).
3. If the word ends in y, change y to i and add s.
4. If the word ends in a vowel and o, add o.
5. If the word ends in o, change o to oes.

Examples:

- 1 fox = 100 foxes
- 1 bus = 2 buses
- 1 dish = 10 dishes
- 1 city = 2 cities
- 1 boy = 2 boys
- 1 day = 2 days
- 1 boy = 2 boys

Figure 4. Example of Grammar Notes

The writing section of the students' binders were subdivided into prewriting, rough draft, peer edit, and publish sections. These were simply subdivided by cutting two manila folders in half and labeling each section. This simple division allowed the students' writing to physically "move" through each stage of the writing process. Natalie's writing section of her binder is pictured below in figure 5. The final notes section of the students' binders was simply where the students placed extra paper and handouts.

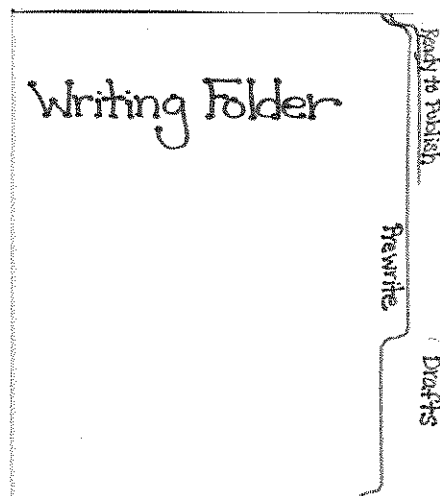


Figure 5. Students' Writing Folders

Dialog Journals

Along with the students' dictionaries and binders, each student had a journal. These journals were written in the form of letters to me. I would read and respond to each of the students' journals once or twice a week. This dialog between the students and myself allowed me to gather a wealth of information as well as understand the learning that my students were engaged in. Each dialog journal entry asked the students to comment on the fairy tales we were reading, the learning the students were engaged in, and the research project they were involved in. It took some time for the students to feel comfortable enough with me to discuss their emotions and opinions, but through the use of these dialog journals the students and I were able to create very profound connections to their learning.

Sept. 18, 2006

Dear Mrs. Warren

Mi favorito cuento es Kate and the Beansstalks.
y a usted cual fue el cuento favorito que le gusta Mrs Warren.
yo nunca pense que yo fuera buena para entrar en una historia
donde nosotros contamos nuestra vida y la de usted tambien esa es una experiencia
muy grande.
Escribir cuentos inventados, leer cuentos, hacer tareas juntos son mis favoritos.
Si ya tengo libro que usted va escribir.
Yo cuando este grande yo tambien puedo escribir un libro como ti.
sobre mi, sobre mis amigos, y sobre mi profesora Mrs. Warrens.

Your Student,
[Redacted]

Figure 6. An entry from Rebecca's dialogue journal.

Starting Down The Path To Grandma's House

We started our journey integrating the modes of language through fairy tales with the tale, Little Red Riding Hood. The students seemed excited to learn all about fairy tales although many of them couldn't name even two fairy tales after reviewing the definition with them. When I wrote the title, Little Red Riding Hood on the board, one of the students, Natalie, excitedly said, "Oh, oh, I write!" Natalie wrote, "Cô Bé quang Khan do". This small action set the tone of our class, a tone that appreciates and honors the students' first languages. From this day on, the students began to connect what we were learning and experiencing through our stories, to their first languages and their prior experiences. As soon as Natalie wrote the title of our book in Vietnamese, another student, Drew, said, "Oh, oh, I know" and wrote, "Caperucita Roja." The class was all smiles, they looked at each other, satisfied that we had accomplished something huge...we had... we had broken down language barriers by simply allowing ourselves to communicate, through any means possible, without hesitation, without fear of embarrassment...without being able to speak the same language.

The Wolf's Side of the Story

After reading about Little Red Riding Hood, I wanted to the students to begin to compare and contrast the stories we were going to read through the introduction of modern day variants of traditional fairy tales. *The Wolf's Story* written by Toby Forward, is just one of the variants of Little Red Riding Hood that the students read. After reading about all of reasons why The Wolf felt he

was blackmailed into being coined, “The Big Bad Wolf” the following interaction took place in our class discussion on characterization.

Mrs. Warren: So, boys and girls, how would you characterize the wolf in this story? How would you describe him?

Natalie: Um...he bad... he like real bad.

Mrs. Warren: What do you mean Natalie why would you say he is real bad? He told us his side of...

Drew: Oh no...Mrs. Warren, you know that he not tell the truth...he a lie!

Mrs. Warren: Natalie, Drew seems to think that the wolf is a liar, someone who doesn't tell the truth. What do you think?

Natalie: Um...I think he is, play a trick on us.

Drew: Who? He no play a trick on me, I too smart! (giggles all around the room)

Natalie: Well...if you too smart, you know that he trick us! He trick us to think he right, that he tell true, but he no true, he want we to believe him, his story (pointing to title of book) it not true, he lie...I mean liar! (smiling to me) See right here, he smile funny, not like hee heee, funny but he smile like, “I know you believe me, right?” kin of smile...see?

Drew: Yeah, I see...(Drew just sits back in his chair looking defeated by all the oh and yeahs coming from around the room toward Natalie's book.)

Mrs. Warren: Well, you see boys and girls, that Natalie is saying that the wolf's characteristic is an animal that is tricky or sneaky, trying to trick us. Let's look in the book again and search for places that we can say that the wolf is trying to trick us.

Drew: Ok...maybe he smart like me...but I still more smart, cuz I not a wolf like he!

Mrs. Warren: Yes, Drew, you are still smarter, not more smart, than the wolf...now let's circle all the parts of the story that we think the wolf is trying to trick us, ok, let's do that now.

Through our class discussion on the story *The Wolf's Story*, the students were able to discuss fully what they thought of the trickster wolf. By allowing the students to discuss the story the students were able to make meaning of it and make meaning of newfound English words like, trickster, sneaky and tricky that the students later placed into their dictionaries. Figure 5 shows Drew's dictionary definition of trickster.

Bring On The Whisper Phones!

Silent Sustained Reading Time or SSR is very important in building. Our administration would like to have our students be in SSR time for at least fifteen minutes a day. Well, have you ever tried to silently sustain the reading of ESL students? Well, it is difficult, novice ESL students try to formulate the segmented sounds of the words they encounter. It can sound something like this, d..ah... d..ah...g...rrrr.....ah...n...ah... p... d... ah...tr...ee (The dog run up the tree.) It is a very loud process to say the least. Now, imagine all the students seating in a small group doing the same thing for an entire short story! I just couldn't handle it any longer. The answer lie in my elementary education background and silly plumbing pieces from Home Depot!

I bravely ventured into the plumbing aisle of Home Depot, looking for something that could resemble a phone that the students could hold up to their ears allowing them to hear themselves read, while not allowing the others to hear them and not drive me so crazy! A man asked me for help while in the aisle, (I obviously didn't look like I belonged, but I sweetly said no as I started putting pieces of pvc elbow piping together. Figure 6 shows how proud I am of the result. The result being my sanity and the students' ability to have SSR time in our small room, I like to call them whisper phones.

While the students began reading *Little Red Cowboy Hat* written by Susan Lowell, during SSR time, Matthew and Andrew held the following conversation with me.

Matthew: Mrs. Warren, you make these thins?

Mrs. Warren: Yep, do you like them?

(Matthew and Andrew look at each other, sort of smiling awkwardly.)

Andrew: They a toy...a toy for babies?

Mrs. Warren: No, why would you say that? They aren't for babies, there aren't any babies in this room.

Matthew: Um...ok...but I baby if I use dis to act like I talk to someone?

Mrs. Warren: No, no boys, you didn't understand why we are using them. I think these will help you. Look here. When I read out loud like this, everyone can hear me, and I am afraid I am bothering people. So if I read like this (with the whisper phone to my ear) I can read the same way but I can hear myself only not all the

other kids. It isn't about being babies or not, it is about being a better reader and listening to yourself read. Do you understand?

Andrew: Yeah, ok, I know...you not try to be funny, you want me to listen to me read and no one can listen to me and make funny of me? Right?

Matthew: Yeah, upstairs...the kids laugh at me when I read, so dis thin will make me quiet and no one can laugh at me!

Mrs. Warren: Yes that is right, now go and start reading boys!

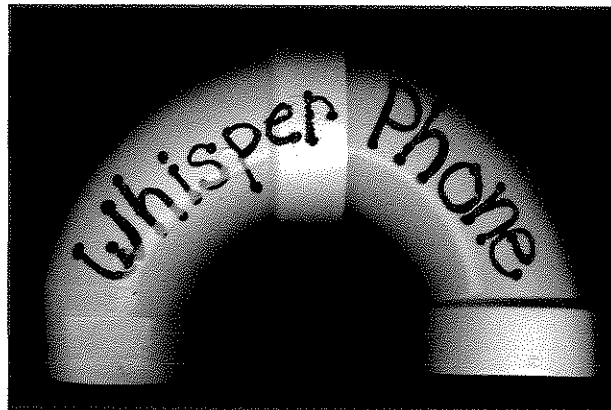


Figure 7. Sample classroom whisper phone

Who Is An ESL Student?

These conversations with the boys made me realize how sensitive my students are about their English learning and about how others see them. I later asked my students how they feel about being ESL students in our dialog journals. The following pastiche represents their answers to, Who is an ESL student?

A ESL student is a kid who know more than the other kid, you know, like I know Spanish and they no no any other language!

An ESL student is someone who gets to come to see you Mrs. Warren and read cool books!

I is ESL student, I come here, I new to USA, I learn English so I can be good kid!

It is a kid who not born here in America but like to learn lots of stuff and be better at English so I can teach my family English. This is what ESL student is.

I ESL student, I come here to learn English and then I go back to Vietnam and teach those kids, they not ESL to speak English. I am ESL student, I smart, they others do not know lots of ways to talk, they no smart.

No one know who I am, I am a kid who no no English, but I no lots, I just too scary to talk to kids and teacher.

An ESL student is someone like me, I work hard to learn English, I can learn English, I learn English so I can be like my dad he nose how to speak English, Spanish, and nose lots of ways to talk.

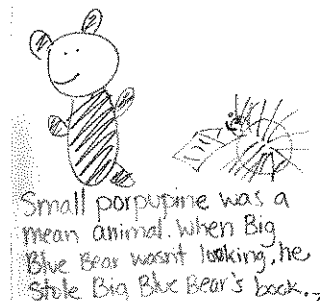
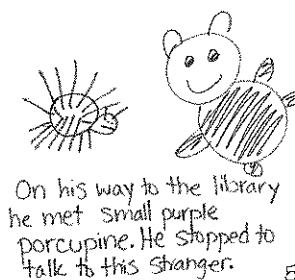
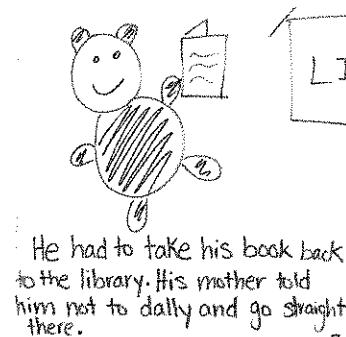
Figure 8. Who is an ESL student? Pastiche

Reading through my students' responses to Who is an ESL student, made me realize the depth of emotions my students go through. Even though, I am a former ESL student myself, I had forgotten the dilemma that plagues these kids; the fear of being different, the fear of not being as smart as others, and the fear of being misunderstood. By providing my students with the opportunity to talk about how they see themselves and how others may perceive them, we were able to further strengthen our bond between teacher and students. Rebecca hesitantly handed in her response this day and asked, "Dis go in your book?" I responded yes, it will and she nodded and said, "good."

Big Blue Bear

At the end of our unit on Little Red Riding Hood and its modern day variants, the students were asked to create their first original fairy tale. The students were asked to incorporate a person or animal with a color that represented them as their protagonist and their conflict had to represent the danger of talking to strangers.

Amber wrote her story titled Big Blue Bear, although somewhat simple in nature, her story clearly shows her understanding of the assignment and the idea of conflict. Figure 8 are pages taken from Amber's story. After completing her rough copy below we discussed her characters and her conflict.



Figures 9. Pages taken from Amber's original fairy tale

Mrs. Warren: Amber, I see that you made a story about a big blue bear and a bad purple porcupine. Why did you choose these animals for your story?

Amber: Well, I thin dat bear is soft...nice, so he is good and porcupine, well...he is bad..he has thins on his back that hurt people, so he is bad.

Mrs. Warren: I see, you think porcupine's quills, those are those things on his back, make him a bad character?

Amber: Ah...yeah, but you know it all fiction!

Mrs. Warren: (laughing) Yes, Amber, you are right, it is only a fiction story and porcupines can be bad! Very good.

Amber's writing conference with me further demonstrated that the students were beginning to become real writers, writers that could defend their stories and the characters in them. Amber's use of a porcupine as a villain, shows how she connected the porcupine's dangerous quills with his characterization of

being bad. She also wanted to make sure I knew that she was only making a fictitious story and that perhaps my question about why the porcupine was bad was too thought provoking for her at this stage of our study of fairy tales, because she put me clearly in my place by telling me that her story was simply fiction!

Climbing Up That Big Beanstalk

The students and I were really starting to take ownership of the characters and stories we were reading. The students started bounding into our classroom asking, “Teacher, what we read next!” Their excitement grew as we started our study of *Jack and the Beanstalk* and the modern tales of *Kate and the Beanstalk*, *Jim and the Beanstalk* and *Look Out Jack, the Giant is Back!*

At this point, I wanted the students to begin to be able to retell the stories we were reading in chronological order. I noticed that in the students’ original tales they wrote in our previous study of *Little Red Riding Hood*, the students lacked a sense of plot development and elements of story events. After reading *Kate and the Beanstalk*, I asked the students to break the story into four sections: first, next, then, and finally in an in-class assignment. Matthew’s retelling of the story in these four simple parts is pictured below.

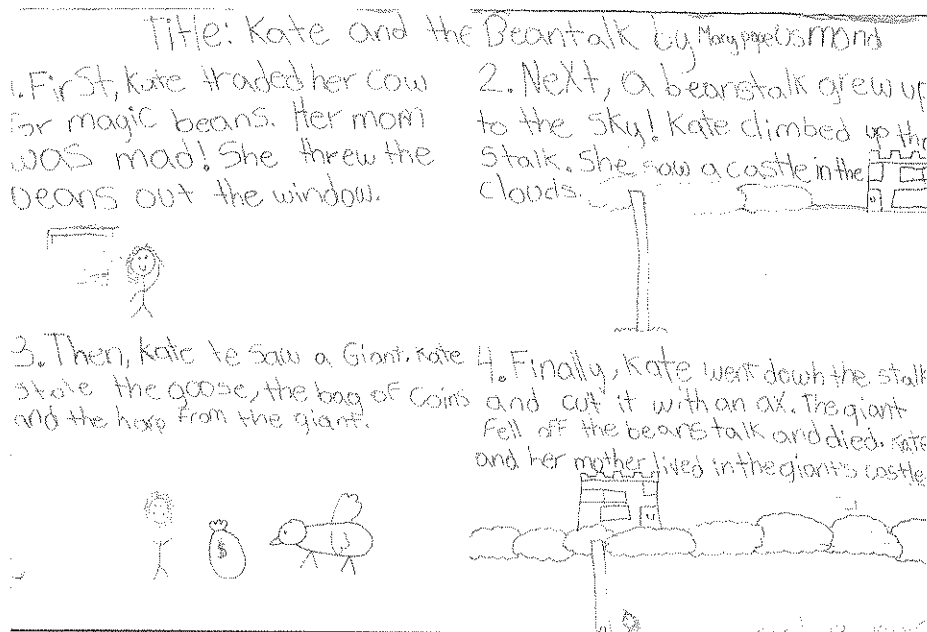


Figure 10. Matthew's Retelling of *Kate and the Beanstalk* written by Mary Pope Osmond.

You can see how Matthew clearly states the major events from our story in chronological order. By allowing the students to illustrate the major events of the story, they were able to more easily see how the story flowed. Later, as the students read the tale, *Jim and the Beanstalk*, Matthew transferred his knowledge of how to retell a tale in chronological order in his completion of a sequence map for this tale. It is important to note that he was able to clearly break apart the tale into the four parts as well as do so in chronological order. I believe this exemplifies the gains that he made through his previous in-class assignment.

Jim and the Beanstalk By Raymond Briggs
Sequence Map

NAME: [REDACTED]

<p>First, Early one morning Jim woke up and saw a great plant growing outside his window.</p>	<p>Next, Jim saw how high it goes and he began to climb up the plant. It certainly is by a mile as he disappeared into the clouds. Jim ran to the castle and knocked on the door. He waited and waited, until the door was slowly opened by a very old giant.</p>
<p>Then, He made him glasses, and also his teeth and his wig, for he can look better than he did before.</p>	<p>Finally, He told him to leave before he saw the boy did leave, and once he got down the bean stalk he cut it down. Also the giant gave him a giant golden coin.</p>

Figure 11. Matthew's Sequence Map

Look Out, That Grammar Giant Is Back!

An important element of second language acquisition is the development of good grammar. Grammar in traditional classrooms may be presented in somewhat dry, boring ways. I can picture other classrooms in my building where students still learn grammar through diagramming sentences! Unlike these classrooms, throughout this study, it was important for me to incorporate the teaching of English grammar to the students in attainable ways that were simple for the students to comprehend. I found it to be most beneficial to teach grammar through the use of the words in the stories we were reading. For example, it was important for the students to understand how to write a complete sentences with a subject and predicate. I had noticed that the students were writing incomplete thoughts like these sentences found in Tiffany's writing:

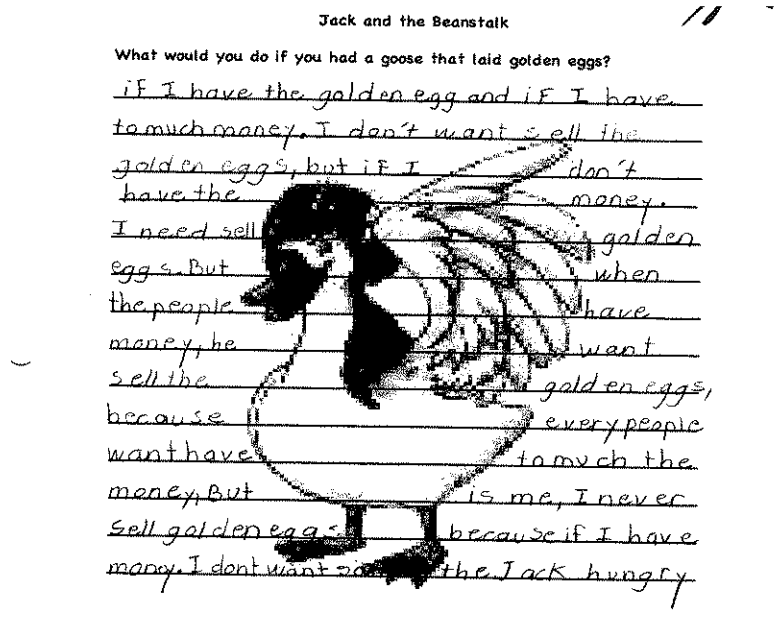


Figure 12. Tiffany's *Jack and the Beanstalk* writing sample.

In her highlighted sentence, it is clear that she needed more direction on how to clearly state her subject and predicate. In order to try to introduce the topic of subjects and predicates of sentences, I simplified the terminology by asking the students to find the who? and the doing what? part of sentences from our story, *Kate and the Beanstalk*. The students found nouns and verbs and placed them under the correct headings. They then used the words to create simple sentences such as: Kate traded. Then we later explicated them into: Kate traded the beans with the old woman for gold coins. Scaffolding the students from simple two-word sentences to more detailed sentences allowed this grammatical concept to be attained easily and within their zones of proximal development.

“The zone of proximal development furnishes psychologists and educators with a tool through which the internal course of development can be understood” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87). I consider Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development as

one that connects a student's first language to their second. The gap between the two is the area or content of information that the student needs to learn. The way in which ESL teachers bridge the gap between the two languages is through attaining to what the students' developmental capacities are at a given period of time. This "zone" or area can be best matched to what a student's prior knowledge is and what they need to know next. By providing the students with the bridge between what they have already learned, nouns and verbs to creating sentences with thoughtful subjects and predicates I was able to stay within their zones of proximal development. In Amber's writing sample that was completed after the above lesson, you can see that she still was having problems grasping the concept of who? doing what? The above lesson must not have been in her zone of proximal development and I was reaching too far away from her previous experiences and understanding to move forward, and so I had to move back and re-teach this topic to her so that she could continue along her way.

who? Subject	doing what? action
1. we	1. die
2. I'll	2. take
3. I	3. think
4. Kate	4. traded
5. Kate	5. bet
6. she	6. got up and crept into
7. Kate	7. climbing
8. woman	8. hobbled
9. He	9. Killed and took over
10. They	10. had
11. She and Kate	11. looked
12. are and you	12. afraid
13. Knight	13. night
14. Kate	14. took
5. giantess	15. lunged
16. My	16. cook
17. I'll and you	17. servant
18. Kate	18. whisper

Figure 13. Amber's Who? Doing what? chart

The Teacher and Her Magic Peas!

The students continued to their next fairy tale, *The Princess and the Pea* and its modern variants *The Cowboy and the Black-eyed Pea*, and *The Princess and the Pizza*. When the students began this group of stories it was important for us to begin talking more about what they should be doing while they are reading to aid in their comprehension. During our guided reading lessons, the students many times were able to tell me what was happening in the story, although when they were asked to silently read, I found that the students were not practicing meta-cognitive skills that aid in their comprehension. I began to think of ways to correct this. I decided that the students needed a way to mark in the different literary and story elements that we were discussing in class easily and quickly as to not interrupt their reading fluency. My answer to this problem came in the form of bright yellow post-it notes (magic peas as the students called them due to our reading of magic peas in our current stories).

I instructed the students to begin to label their stack of yellow post-it notes by simple pictures that represented the story elements we were studying. A simple mountain for setting, stick figure for character description, question mark for problem, numbers one to three for three major story events, and a star for solution. The students used these post-it notes while they read and when they felt they read a part of the story that represented one of their “magic peas” or story elements, they were asked to stick the post-it directly on that section of the story. When it was time for the students to later discuss their stories, they were able to easily see where the character descriptions were, where the setting was etc.

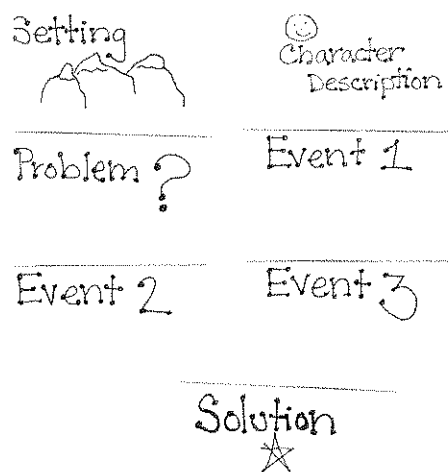


Figure 14. Example of Post-It Notes used during reading

While using the post-it notes for the first time, the following discussion was held between Rebecca and Tiffany after reading *The Princess and the Pizza*:

Rebecca: Tiffany, you no put the person in the right place!

Tiffany: Wat you mean? Here is what they say about the Princess, she miss her father and he at home.

Rebecca: No, no, tat is not about her, tat about how she feel...

Tiffany: yeah, tat why I put picture of person there...

Rebecca: Mrs. Warren, Tiffany no get it!

Mrs. Warren: What do you mean Rebecca? Tiffany do you understand what to do with your post-it notes?

Tiffany: Yes, I put post-it note where I see thins with Princess Paulina.

Rebecca: (interrupting) See, she put yellow note here, where it talk about Paulina sad about missing dad, but tat not to do with her, tat have to do with problem, she sad, tat is problem, not character...right?

Mrs. Warren: Well, Rebecca you are right, I think when the author tells us that Paulina is sad because she misses her dad that the author is telling us that is the problem of the story, that is why Paulina enters the contest at the castle.

Rebecca: See...I was right!

Mrs. Warren: Well, not so fast Rebecca, Tiffany can also put her post-it note that says character because even though the author is describing the problem here, the author is also telling us more about the main character Paulina, so you really are both right!

Tiffany: See...I was right! (smiling at Rebecca, as if she ultimately won the battle)

Mrs. Warren: Boys and girls, you have to remember that everyone will be putting their post-it notes in different places in your stories. This is ok. There is not always one answer.

Rebecca: (to the class) Yeah, I am always right, but this time Tiffany is right too...(the class responds to Rebecca's declaration with a bunch of laughs, even Tiffany)

Mrs. Warren: Ok, let's get back to work, when the timer goes off, we will get together and see where everyone placed their post-it notes and discuss why you put them where you did. Remember these "magic peas" are supposed to help you remember what you are thinking as you are reading...so don't worry if you put your post-it notes in the same place as your friends, everyone can not always think the same way.

Through this interaction, the students were able to begin to learn how to learn! They began to understand that while reading, it was important to remember what you are reading and the significance of our thoughts and opinions about what we read can be different from others. Through the act of simply sticking post-it notes on areas of text while reading, the students were able to start discussing and defending their opinions. The students were beginning to move away from simply decoding words to decoding meaning!

Howdy, Partner!

Mrs. Warren: The End. (finishing a read aloud of *The Cowboy and the Black-eyed Pea*)

Andrew: Mrs. Warren, how you know how to talk like that?

Mrs. Warren: What do you mean?

Andrew: You read the story like you a cowboy, how you know how to talk like that, you sound like a cartoon!

Mrs. Warren: Well, thank you Andrew, I am glad you think I sounded like a cowboy, the title of the book is *The Cowboy and the Black-eyed Pea* right? So I wanted to sound like a cowboy, plus the author makes us talk like a cowboy when she writes stuff like: howdy, partner! Shimmer me timbers!

Andrew: oh.

Mrs. Warren: Authors can make their readers say lots of funny things with dialog.

Drew: Dia...what?

Mrs. Warren: Dialog. Dialog is what authors use in their stories, it is what we read that the character actually says. We put dialog in quotation marks. Let me show you.

After six weeks of reading, writing and talking about fairy tales, the students finally questioned me about dialog! Andrew's comment was a sincere one. He had tried using quotation marks in his previous stories, but he and the other students resorted to sentences such as, "Then the boy say go away to the old man, and the old man goed away." The students were even arbitrarily putting in quotation marks in their writing, without knowing why they were doing so or what they meant. I had noticed that the students were also beginning to use inflection in their voices when they read, especially when using the whisper phones (sounding as if you were enjoying the book you were reading, isn't always too cool in fifth grade) so the students were definitely ready for this! (although I could not believe that they were after such a short time!)

The following class session I had prepared some papers for the students with pictures that I had photocopied from the story. I asked the students to tell me what they thought the character was saying in each picture. The students shared what they thought the character was saying and we wrote it on the board. Then I discussed with the students that this is what we call dialogue. The students seemed to understand. So I continued to explain to the students that we put what the character says in quotation marks so that we, the reader, understand that those are words coming from the character and not the author.

Drew: Yeah, but the author writed them.

Mrs. Warren; Yeah, they did, but the character is saying them not the storyteller or author...do you understand?

Drew: Yeah, like Howdy Cowboy, is what Farethewell says, and not the writer...oh I don't know!

Mrs. Warren: No, Drew, you are right! The main character Farethewell is saying "Howdy, Cowboy!" so we write it like this (writing it on the board)

Drew: Yeah, ok.

The students seemed to be able to grasp this concept although Drew's comment made me understand the complexity of it all! The students got to work writing dialog for their pictures. I noticed that one of Tiffany's pictures did not have any dialogue on it, so I asked her:

Mrs. Warren: Tiffany, you forgot to put dialog on this page, please tell me what the character is saying here.

Tiffany: Oh, I don't see his mouth open and I don't think he talk...he just hummmmm.

Mrs. Warren: Well, you can still tell me what the man is thinking in your picture, authors do this all the time!

Tiffany's comment lead us to a class discussion on how authors can also tell their readers what characters are thinking by changing the type of font they use. This clearly was something I would have thought that novice ESL students could not understand, simply because they are trying to understand English words! How could you begin to understand author intent etc? I was so wrong! These students were capable of understanding this somewhat complex writing

style and wanted to understand it further. I used Tiffany's example and asked the students to write what they thought the man was thinking. (see figure below)

Tiffany: How you spell how you laugh...haaaaaaa? (laughing in a different masculine voice)



The man ride on the little tree.
 When the man ride finish, he come back. The man
 say, "I need marry her, because she have to much
 money!" HA! HA! HA!

Figure 15. Tiffany experimenting with dialogue in response to The Cowboy and the Black-Eyed Pea written by Tony Johnston.

From learning to decode words, to this! The strides my students were having were huge. They were strides that I thought the students weren't ready to take. As an ESL teacher, I try to protect my students from teachers that don't understand them, from other students who may tease them, and here I was protecting them from the possibilities that they were able to gain in their writing because I had thought that I should not expect too much. I could not believe what was able to happen when I simply allowed my students' questions drive what we learned. The training wheels had totally come off! It was time these kids were

allowed to ride alone! Whatever and wherever our reading and writing would take us, I would let them go there!

“Mrs. Warren...How You Say...?”

As second language learners, the most limiting element to my students’ writing was simply searching for the correct word that they wanted to use. While my students are in their writing workshop setting, individually working on their original fairy tales, a consent interference to the class dynamics is the question, “Mrs. Warren, how do you say...?” The students were constantly asking me how to spell or say words in English that they wanted to use in their stories. The two Vietnamese students, which I couldn’t code switch for, would ask me the words they were looking for through drawing pictures, or acting out the words. The following interaction occurred during the students’ writing workshop where they had to recreate the story, Stone Soup.

Tiffany: Mrs. Warren, how you say...dis...here...(pointing to the picture of a kettle in the original story)

Mrs. Warren: That is a big cooking pot, we call it a kettle.

Tiffany: How you spell?

Mrs. Warren: K-e-t-t-l-e.

Tiffany: Say (moving her hands forward) please.

Mrs. Warren: K-e-t-t-l-e.

(2 minutes later)

Matthew: Missy (term used for teacher in Guatemala) how you say caldera in English?

Mrs. Warren: Una caldera is a kettle in English.

Matthew: Ok, how you spell? (1 minute later)

Rebecca: How you spell cebolla? (45 seconds later)

Natalie: Mrs. Warren, how you say this (moving her hand in a mixing motion)? (20 seconds later)

Andrew: Huh, Mrs. Warren, sorry to brother you, huh...how you say pone in el English?

(Here is when I lost it! I have toned down my following reaction, but as teachers, I am sure you can exactly understand my frustration at this point!)

Mrs. Warren: (Ugh!) Boys and girls...when you are in your writing workshop I am constantly being asked "Mrs. Warren how you say this or that in English? It is really bothering me because I have to say the same words over and over again.

You are all driving me crazy!

(The class giggles then realizes that I have had enough and am thinking of a way to fix this problem, the students fall silent, they cautiously look at me while I roam the room muttering to myself about how I am going to fix this so I don't become even more crazy than I feel I have already become. I can be heard muttering, this is crazy, I am crazy, what the heck am I going to do! My co-teacher walks over to me and starts to help Matthew who still has his hand raised with a question. The other students sit staring at me. I ask myself if I am crazy for

making them write their own stories at such an early language acquisition period....I have hit a low.)

Mrs. Warren: (after sitting back at my desk...I think of something) Ok,...(deep breathe) boys and girls, I know that when you are writing your stories, you get stuck all the time because you don't know a word in English. This I understand, but the problem I am having is that everyone is constantly bothering me with the same questions, a lot of you want the same words. So I think we can fix this problem if we do a few different things before we write. Remember everybody, that before we write we do are thinking charts, we put our ideas for our stories down on paper...well I think maybe if we think of some words that you think you will need to tell your story and write them down for everyone to see, then everyone will be able to have the words they may need to write their stories before everyone starts to write. We can start one big chart of words for every story we write. I can make a big chart of words for each story we write in front of our room and everyone can copy the words down on a piece of paper in your binders, that way you can start to make a special place for all these words you are learning to spell in one place. Boys and girls, I really like when you ask questions and I am not mad that you are asking questions, it is just not a good idea to keep asking the same questions over and over again. While you are all working if one of you has a word to add to the chart, then please come up to my desk and ask me the word you need and you can then write the word down on the chart yourself. Before coming up to my desk though, please look at the chart and see if you

Coloring Our Stories

Amber: Mrs. Warren, I want to color my story.

Mrs. Warren: OK, you can add color when you are done writing.

Amber: No, no wat I mean. I try to add palabras to describe, like here, I say the man put stone in kettle.

Mrs. Warren: Yes.

Amber: But, I want to say color, like the man put gray stone in kettle.

Mrs. Warren: Oh, I understand, you want to add adjectives to your story. Words that describe something's color or how it looks, smells, tastes, feels are called adjectives.

Amber inquiry into “coloring” her story began our class’s study of adjectives. Once again, allowing the students’ inquiry to drive what they were taught made for a more meaningful and impacting learning experiences. After Amber’s comment to me in private, I placed the words, “Adding color to our stories” on the front board while the students were in their writing workshop. Tiffany was the first to comment.

Tiffany: I know, we can use crayons, paint to color our stories. (sounding very matter of fact and aloof)

Amber: (rushing in excitedly commenting) No, no, we color with adjectives, like gray. (The class seemed confused.)

Mrs. Warren: What Amber is trying to say is that she and I talked about adjectives. Adjectives help us color our stories, not with crayons or colored

pencils, but with words. Adjectives that describe the things, people or places in our stories make our stories more interesting or colorful.

Drew: I want to add lots of colors. Like here, I wried The trickster putted the water in the kettle. I change to say...The trickster putted hot hot water in the kettle...that colored.

Mrs. Warren: Yes, Drew you would have colored your writing, with the adjective hot, good you understand. Now, let's go on a hunt for adjectives in the story Cactus Soup and see all the ways the author colored this story.

While working in small groups, the students always seemed to cross cultural barriers between them. Even though the students' first languages may not be the same, they still were able to communicate effectively. This was astonishing to watch. The following took place between Tiffany, a Vietnamese student and Drew and Matthew, two Hispanic students.

Tiffany: (getting up and pointing to board) Good... we forget this!

Matthew: (looking at Drew) yeah not like Jesus, like better, good is adjective.

Drew: (nodding) yeah

Tiffany: (asking boys) bad? adjective?

Tiffany: (answering her own question) Oh, yeah, bad and good...adjectives (with a smile and a giggle, boys copy bad onto their papers too.)

Tiffany: tamales? adjective?

Drew and Matthew: (laughing) No, no, tamales you eat...

Tiffany: oh...like dis? (pointing to picture in story)

Drew: yep, dat right, you know speak Spanish!

Tiffany: (laughing) No no, I don't.

Drew: (continuing on search for adjectives in story) Pink...oink, oink...oh no, wait a seconds...pig con g. (laughing at himself, others laugh too)

Matthew: Pink, adjective...yes...good job Drew! (sounding a little too much like his ESL teacher.)

Drew: (turning page) Night? No, no, night that is day! (pointing to words) Nope, nope, nope, nope

Tiffany: (interrupting) Long? (motioning with her hands to describe long to the boys)

Drew: Oh, yeah, long...good one!

Tiffany: Mrs. Warren, you write me? (noticing I was writing what they were saying)

Mrs. Warren: Yes, I am, it is for my book.

Tiffany: Oh, good, I in her book! (proudly saying to the two boys)

Drew: We too, right? (asking if they were in my notes as well)

Mrs. Warren: Remember all of you will be in my book.

Matthew: Yeah, see we too Tiffany.

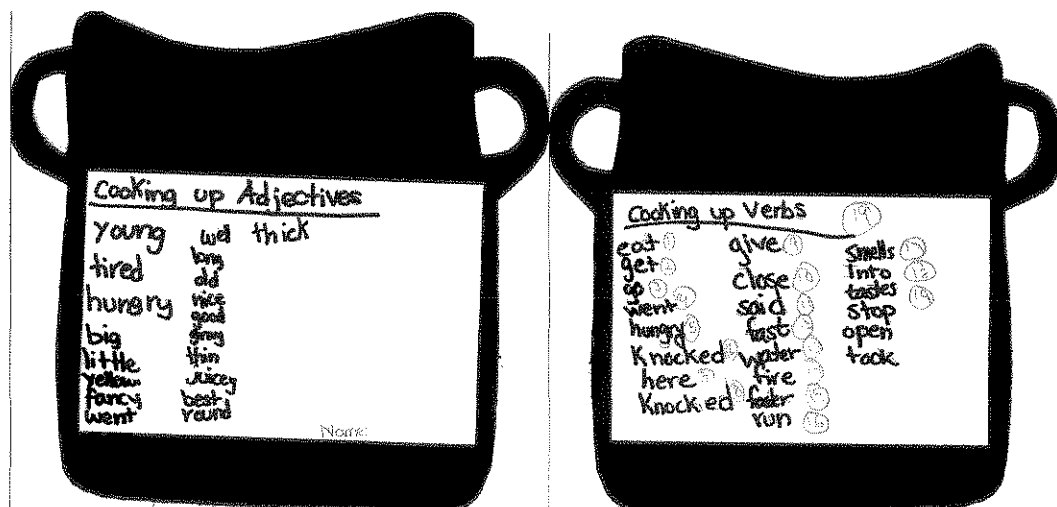


Figure 17. Embedded Grammar Activity

Although coming from different first languages, these students were able to communicate effectively. The students used a variety of methods to communicate with each other including hand movements, sound affects, use of the pictures in their books, and basic communicative cues such as pauses back and forth. All of these modes of communication allowed the students to complete the task at hand of finding the adjectives in their story without relying on their first languages. These types of jumps across cultural barriers allowed this entire thesis to be successful and it lay fully in the hands of the students. Surprisingly, their ability to nonverbally communicate so effectively, allowed them to gain huge strides in their English proficiency levels.

“Look ... More Din A Mit”

As we further read classic and modern day variant fairy tales, the students became very intrigued when authors would change the characters’ classic roles of bad guy vs. bad guy. In one particular case, after reading the original Three Little

Pigs story, the students read, *The Three Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* written by Eugene Travizas. In this retelling, the author changes the main characters' roles. This excited Drew tremendously.

Drew: (after Mrs. Warren showed the class the cover of *The Three Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*) Oh I know....I think the wolf are the good guys and the pig bad.

Andrew: Huh, tat not how it goes!

Drew: Yeah, but remember authors do whatever day want!

Tiffany: Tat not right, the wolf is bad, not dat pig!

Mrs. Warren: Ok, ok, settled down everyone, I didn't expect everyone to get so upset. Drew is right, authors can do whatever they want and in this story, Eugene Travizas wanted the pigs to be the bad guys.

Amber: You can do dat?

Mrs. Warren: You can do anything if you are an author! (This seemed to calm the raging mob, they settled back down to listen to the story.)

During this particular read aloud, not only did the start of the story, the simple title elicit such conversation between the students, but the pictures did as well. This began with Drew's first comment.

Drew: Oh, look, der is din a mit!

Mrs. Warren: That is called dynamite.

Drew: Yeah, I know, din a mit. (he couldn't hear the difference when he repeated the word dynamite, so I just left it go, it reminded me of my daughter when she says the letter W and says "double do")

Mrs. Warren: Ok, let's continue with the story.

Rebecca: (interrupting the read aloud) Mrs. Warren, wat dat called?

Mrs. Warren: What?

Rebecca: Dat, right there?

Mrs. Warren: Oh, that is a sledgehammer, it is used to break up concrete.

Rebecca: Oh, the pig get that?

Mrs. Warren: Yeah, I guess he got it from somewhere. Why?

Rebecca: You know think it too heavy for a pig to carry? (all the students laughed) (Rebecca is not the class clown, so she didn't understand why her question made the kids laugh, but she still hesitantly laughed with them.)

Mrs. Warren: (stopping the read aloud) Gosh, you guys are really questioning the author and the illustrator of this story. You guys never did that before.

Andrew: We authors too now, we can ask them right?

Mrs. Warren: (laughing) Yes, I guess you can, you are all doing it more then usual today though. I think it is interesting.

Natalie: In what?

Mrs. Warren: Interesting, it is making me think...well, ok, let's continue with the story.

(Towards the end of the read aloud)

Mrs. Warren: (The third wolf in this story used heavy materials to build their houses from the start, they used, concrete and iron, but the third wolf used flowers) Hey, do you think that a house built of flowers would keep the pig out?

(All the students say no, except fro Natalie.)

Natalie: It end of story, da other story end good, so it end good too.

Mrs. Warren: Oh, ok, let's find out what happens.

For some reason this simple variant of *The Three Little Pigs*, really allowed the students to begin to question the authors and illustrators of the stories we were reading. Prior to this read aloud, the students normally would sit back and listen to the story, taking it for what it was. This story marked a turning point for the class as a whole. For some reason, without me trying to make this happen, the students began to pose questions to the author and the illustrators. I feel this was due to the fact that by now the students had produced five original stories themselves, which were treated with as much respect as any other published authors' works, so perhaps they had begun to feel the weight of their identity as authors themselves. This connection to the identity of authorship, allowed them to begin to critique the authors and illustrators work we were viewing in class. An incredibly high level of learning was executed here without me EVER thinking such could be possible. From this point forward, the students had realized their true potential...they had all become authors.

“Dat is What Authors Do!”

After completing their prewriting activity for their original stories “*The Three Little ... and the Big Bad ...*” The following interaction occurred while the students were in their writing workshop.

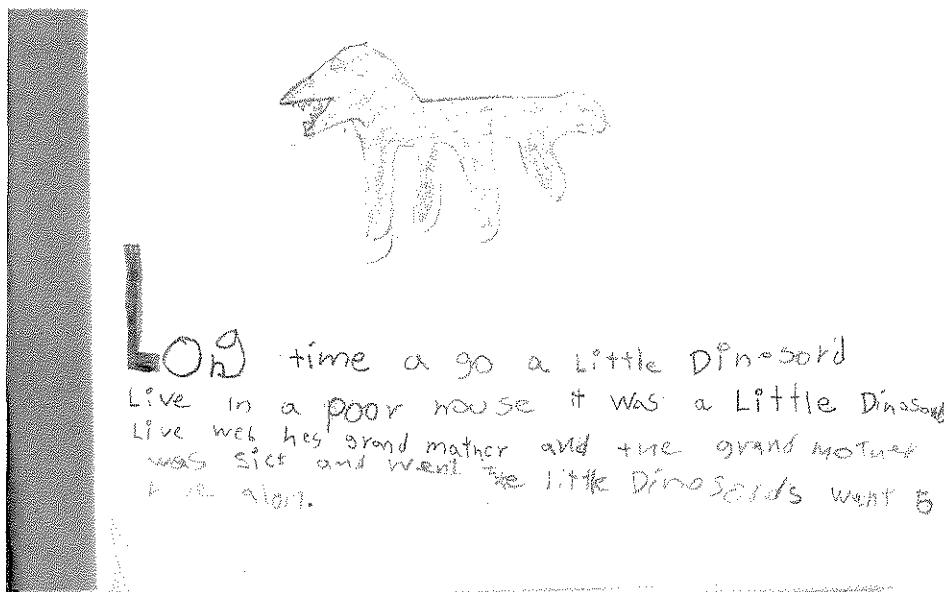


Figure 18. Drew becomes an Illustrator

Mrs. Warren: Drew, why did you write the first letter L like that?

Drew: I uh...it wrong, I erase...it ok...I erase.

Mrs. Warren: Absolutely not! I love it! I am very excited that you did that, but I want to know why you did it that way.

Drew: I doed it that way cuz dat way you know where I start my story. Big L, you can not say...where I start reading...

Mrs. Warren: Oh, I see.

Drew: I doed it too because dat what authors do!

Mrs. Warren: Really? Ok, I am going to write that on the board. (Drew seemed very happy that I was using him as an example) (Authors sometimes enlarge the first letter, of the first word of their stories, in a picture.)

Rebecca: Really, Mrs. Warren?

Mrs. Warren: Yep, see here (pointing to book)

Rebecca: Umm...Mrs. Warren, dat not author, dat job of illustrator. Remember you telled us that illustrator makes the pictures?

Mrs. Warren: Yes, I absolutely remember that. I wanted to see if anyone remembered. You are correct, the illustrator makes the pictures.

This short interaction between the students allowed me to see the actually transfer of knowledge that my students were having between what they were reading and what they were writing. Drew's use of an illustrated first letter in his story was something that we had not talked about in class, but was something that he unconsciously imitated in his own piece of writing. This transferring of knowledge was further explicated when Rebecca remembered that the illustrator makes the drawings of a story and not the author. This may be somewhat simple to some, but profound to me. This interaction proves that the students were consciously and unconsciously emulating the styles and conventions of the authors we were studying.

Good Teacher vs. Bad Teacher

Upon returning from a conference, my students were very upset. I asked them what happened during the two days I was out, the following conversation ensued.

Natalie: The teacher, she no happy, she look upset! (yeah's coming from around the room)

Mrs. Warren: What do you mean?

Tiffany: I know you good teacher, she not.

Mrs. Warren: What made her a bad teacher?

Natalie: She sit and not look at me, she read no pictures, she sound mad, she talk like this..mmmmmmmm (in a monotone)...you talk like this, heehaaahhaaaaaa.(in a high pitched laugh)

Mrs. Warren: Boys and girls, just because she may not read the stories the same way I do, does not make her a bad teacher.

Drew: Oh yeah, she took off her shoes too! (laughs from the class)

Mrs. Warren: What does that have to do with anything?

Drew: I can see she take off her shoes at your desk, she sit there at you desk, not by us, she scared of us.

Mrs. Warren: I don't think she was scared of you boys and girls.

Drew: Yup she is different! She different, I no like how she read like that, no fun, I could not understand anytin, she no care if we understand....you say...ok?...ok? you always say ok...she no...(giggles)

Mrs. Warren: You are right Drew, I do say ok a lot when I want to know if you understand me and the story.

Rebecca: Yeah, she no like us, she no care we understand or no, she only give us paper, she thin we no understand anything, I talk to she and she no know tat we know anytin, so we just sit and be good.

Amber: I sit and be good in math, my teacher hate me in math.

Mrs. Warren: Stop it, I am sure he doesn't hate you.

Amber: Oh yes he does, he never help me, he help the other kids too much, I think he think me stupid, like I don't know numbers, I know numbers!

Mrs. Warren: Do you volunteer in math so he knows you understand the numbers or problems you are working on.

Amber: Yep, all the time, he just look at me and he make a face...and he no call on me.

Mrs. Warren: That is too bad Amber, I am sorry you feel that way.

Tiffany: Yeah, me too, in science, my teacher, no call on Natalie and me, I think he afraid.

Mrs. Warren: Afraid of what?

Tiffany: He afraid to talk to us.

Mrs. Warren: I don't think he is afraid of talking to you.

Natalie: No, he afraid, cuz, he no understand my English. You understand my English, why he no?

Mrs. Warren: Well, I guess I understand your English, because I am used to listening to students working on learning English, and sometimes my students sound different then other students who know English, but Natalie, I don't think you should think he is afraid of you, he is a teacher, what would he be afraid of?

Natalie: I say, he afraid of me, because I and Tiffany are different, he no know Vietnamese....

Mrs. Warren: (interrupting Natalie) Now, Natalie, I don't know how to speak Vietnamese.

Natalie: (interrupting teacher) Yeah, yeah, you no know Vietnamese but you know us...you know we try to learn, you no know Vietnamese, but you know how to listen...you listen...science teacher...too afraid to listen...too afraid to not know something.

Mrs. Warren: I understand what you are saying Natalie. Ok, boys and girls, so you didn't understand the story at all while I was gone?

Matthew: I understand, the story about some girl with a fur jacket.

Mrs. Warren: A fur coat, that is right, so you understood something, how about the rest of you?

(The kids just sat there and shook their heads no.)

This conversation allowed me to see what the students thought were my positive attributes as a teacher. They felt that the way that I read stories out loud helped them understand stories. The way in which I questioned my students during our read alouds or while they were working seemed to be something they thought was helpful to their learning as well. They also seemed to comment on the fact that the substitute didn't care about them due to her proximity to them. The students seemed to internalize the way teachers treat them, taking how they perceived they treated them to whether or not they liked them as students. I thought it was especially thought provoking that Natalie felt that her science teacher was afraid of not knowing what to say to her. This is quite profound and interesting to ponder. I hate not knowing an answer that a student may pose to me in class. I feel, as the teacher, I should be able to answer all of the kid's questions. But, as a regular education teacher, with ESL students, I guess perhaps Natalie's

judgment of her science teacher can be a clear one. She feels that her science teacher is afraid to call on her, because he has a difficult time understanding her. This, in some part, must be true. I wonder, though, how do I possess the ability to understand my students through their broken English and other teachers cannot? Is it because they don't want to try? Is it because they just are too afraid as Natalie pointed out? Can teachers be too afraid to have ESL students in their classes that it is easier to simply not call on them in class, even though the ESL student can be bright enough to feel that the only reason they are not being called on, is due to the teacher's own self confidence levels? This conversation opened my eyes to the little subtle things that students pick up on and quite frankly judge their teachers on; how well students feel they are heard; the tone in which we speak to them; to our proximity to them during class; all affect the ways in which our students feel we care and how they perceive us to be a good teacher vs. a bad teacher.

Finding Our Own...Happily Ever Afters

During the guided reading lesson using the story, *The Gift of the Crocodile*, written by Judy Sierra, Natalie interrupted with:

Natalie: Teacher, I am Damura!

Mrs. Warren: What do you mean you are Damura? Do you feel like Damura the main character?

Natalie: Yep, like I say, I am Damura. I shut the door to the young man cuz my stepmother tell me. I have stepmother, she no like me. She make me do everythin.

Mrs. Warren: I am sorry you do not like your stepmother. Remember sometimes stepmothers can be good like the one in Kate and the Beanstalk, she was a nice stepmother.

Natalie: Yeah, but mine mean like Damura's...I cook, I clean, I do everythin like Damura...problem is, I no have special crocodile to save me, like she, she has luck.

Mrs. Warren: She is lucky to have a special crocodile to help her, you are right, real life does give us special crocodiles to help us does it?

Andrew: No, special stuff no happen like tat to us, we not in a book.

Mrs. Warren: Right, you aren't in a book but, you are lucky. Because of the fact that you aren't in a book, there is no author writing your story except yourselves, you are the authors of your own stories. So even though you may not have a special crocodile, you may have special things in your life that bring you luck.

Tiffany: Mrs. Warren, you funny, you sound like a book now.

Mrs. Warren: Yeah, you are right, I just want you all to have happily ever afters in your stories. I don't want you to have sad endings.

Drew: I don't have sad ending. I will save the princess in the tower! Don't worry, I have great ending!

Mrs. Warren: I am sure you will.

Amber: Yeah, don't worry, we have good endings...we not have special crocodiles that save us from mean stepmother, but we have our own luck, right?

Mrs. Warren: Right. (quickly changing the subject, not wanting the kids to realize I was becoming overwhelmed with emotions.)

Matthew: Mrs. Warren, you stopped reading....you finish reading right?

Mrs. Warren: Yes, I am sorry, I was just thinking...

Tiffany: Not time to thinking, time to reading!

Mrs. Warren: Yep, here we go, back to Damura and her gift from the special crocodile.

Sad, isn't it? To hear from the mouth of a student that she felt just like the main character, fighting for her independence, fighting for her freedom from a stepfamily that hates her, fighting to find her happily ever after. Like these students' families, my parents came to America, to give us the ability to have what they thought would be our own happily ever afters, and they did. My sisters and I are all successful adults with families of our own, living the American dream, but we were lucky. Although we may not have had a magic crocodile to help us like Damura, we had a strong family that may have been more powerful than any creature in the sea.

Sadly, though, the students that were involved in this study, may not have the same luck that my family did. They may continue to struggle, they may face even more horrible encounters than the most ferrous of beasts, without avail. They will probably not have a fairy godmother in their lives to save their day in the end. They may never find their escape route from their Giants. They may never all find their happily ever afters, but I hope that they at least try. I hope that they will at least be able to find out what true love is, find the strength and courage to stand up for what they believe is right, to find at least each of their happily for nows...and at least remember that there was a lady in their individual stories that

tried to make reading and writing come alive for them, and if that should be the closing line of our story today, it would read... The students of this research study did live happily ever after.

DATA ANALYSIS

According to Ahar, Holly & Krasten (2001), and Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997) data analysis is an ongoing process throughout qualitative research studies. Throughout my research study I continually examined the data I collected. The major forms of data collection that I employed for this research study were the creation of a researcher's field log, the collection of student work, and the implementation of interviews and surveys.

The student work I collected throughout my research study was carefully analyzed on a daily basis. It is this daily analysis of students' work, both written and oral, that allow ESL teachers to carefully examine what each student's needs are at any given time. Daily analysis of students' abilities is performed to better design future lesson themes and topics. Therefore, the analysis of each student's needs is vital to a productive ESL program.

Along with the analysis of student work, students were also surveyed and interviewed throughout my research study. Interviews, both formal and informal, were conducted to better analyze students' progress and to better understand the students themselves. Surveys, both pre and post, were conducted in order to further study the effects my research study had on my students' feelings about their second language acquisition.

At the mid-point of my research collection period, I also conducted a mid-study review. This mid-study review, allowed me to closely examine my data collection and chronologically view the data I had collected thus far. By

completing this task, I was able to view how I could better my study and better meet the needs of my students.

My researcher's field log was vital to the successful collection of data throughout my research study. The most important method I used to analyze my field log was a process, Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997) described as re-reading of a researcher's field log in order to find common threads of information. As I reread over my field log entries, I tried to identify the root of what I was writing about and wrote my interpretations of what I recorded. By separating what exactly I observed in my classroom and what I could interpret through these observations, I was able to justly view my classroom as an effective qualitative researcher.

After closely rereading my data collection notes, I was able to define codes or meaningful words to describe important occurrences in my classroom. I then carefully grouped these codes under similar headings, which allowed me to begin to see larger themes of information that emerged through my data collection.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER OF CODES AND BINS

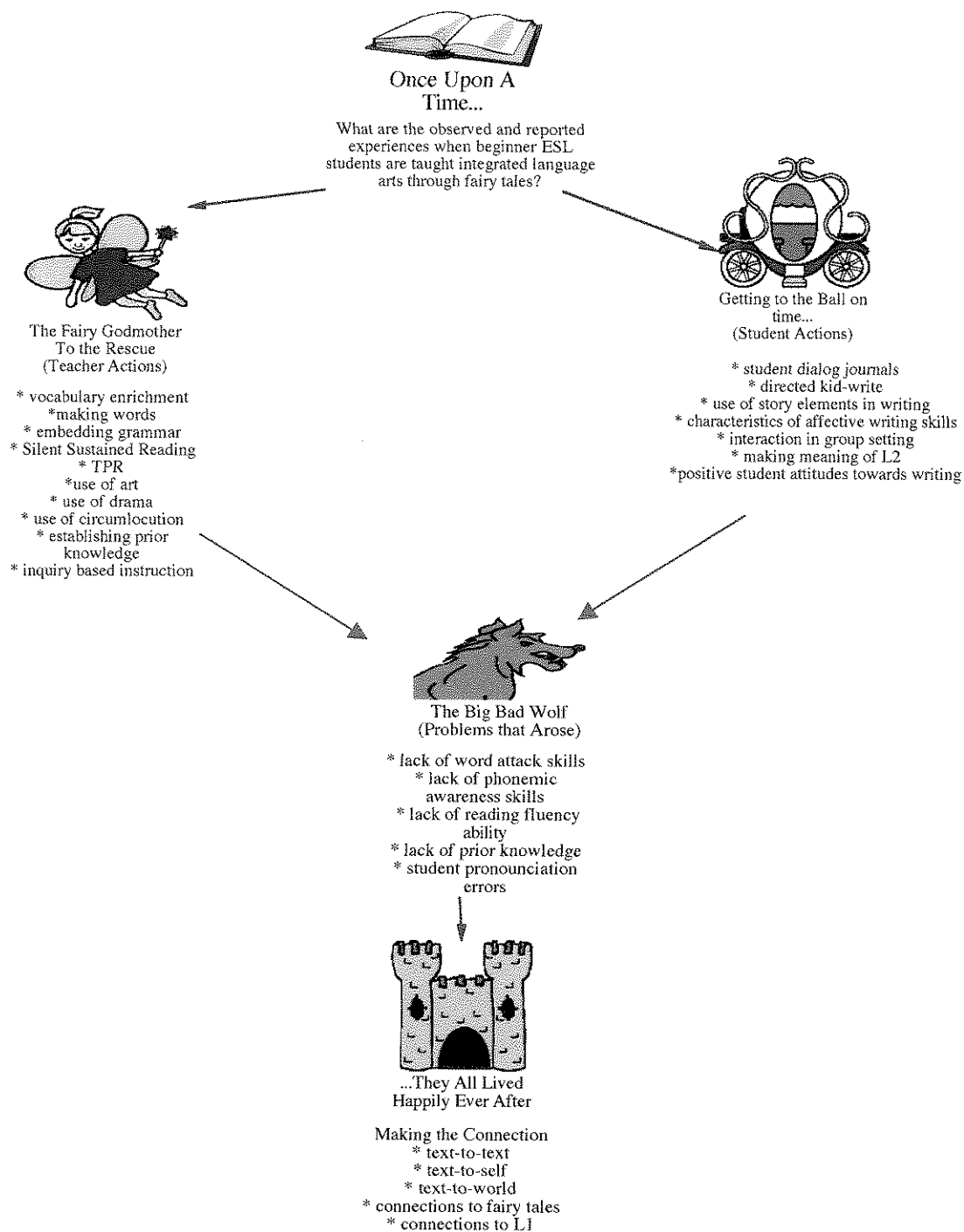
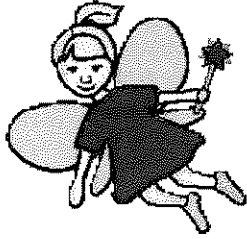
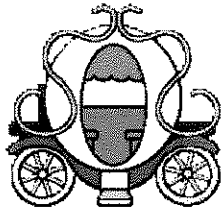


Figure 19.. Graphic Organizer of Codes and Bins

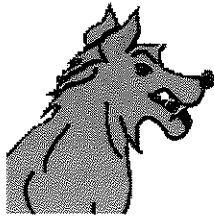
THEME STATEMENTS



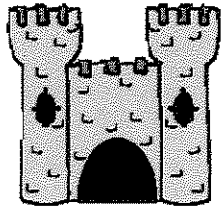
A variety of teaching strategies is necessary to novice ESL students success in an integrated language arts setting.



While learning English in an integrated language arts setting, novice ESL students' actions influenced their academic growth.



Novice ESL students' lack of basic reading skills affect the speed of their academic growth.



When novice ESL students make connections between their educative experiences and their lives, authentic and meaningful learning takes place.

Figure 20. Theme Statements

FINDINGS

This experience, as a qualitative teacher action researcher, has taught me so much. Most importantly, it has taught me how to critically examine my teaching practice and the learning experiences I provide for my students. As a qualitative researcher, the importance of examining the significance of my observations and their implications are the most critical to me. Dewey said, “Observation alone is not enough. We have to understand the *significance* of what we see, hear, and touch” (Dewey, 1997, p.68). The following are significant findings that I found throughout this research study.



A variety of teaching strategies is necessary to the success of novice ESL students in an integrated language arts setting.

Leading second language expert Noam Chomsky (1965) believed that humans learn a language with little conscious effort. Learning a language is innate. Experiences are the only thing entirely needed in order to learn a language. Throughout this research study, I tried to keep Chomsky’s beliefs close to my heart and lesson planning. While working with novice ESL students many times ESL teachers are bombarded with the notion of “Where do I even begin?” “What do these kids need to know?” I have felt this way many times. During this study, however, something was different. I believe it was due to the fact that I allowed the students’ needs to drive what we studied. For example, if I found the students had difficulty with writing complete sentences, then I would teach a mini lesson on this topic.

Connie Weaver (1996) believes that teaching students grammar, reading and writing in small concise mini-lessons is ideal, or as Ralph Fletcher (1998) coined them, craft lessons. In this form students are able to grasp these concepts easily and with little effort. Throughout this study, I found that by allowing the students' needs to drive our lessons, they did in fact learn English concepts effortlessly and these lessons then became more meaningful to the language they were trying to use, read or write. Most teachers may think that allowing their students to drive their curricular focus unsettling. Ironically, the areas of need that the students themselves addressed coincided nicely with the standards that I needed to cover. The chart below shows the mini topics I addressed based on the students' needs and the standards that they reflect.

Mini Lessons Covered and PA Standards Addressed Throughout Study

Mini Lesson Topics Covered Throughout Research Study	PA Standards Addressed
<p>Writing Mini Lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The who, doing what of a sentence • Stretching simple sentences • Paragraph elements • Beginning, middle, and end • Matching words with pictures • Adding details • Using illustrations to convey information • Using your voice when you write • Writing a strong lead • Using talk bubbles • Describing the setting • Different types of writing styles • Establishing your purpose for writing • Cause and effect 	<p>1.4 Types of Writing 1.5 Quality of Writing 1.6 Speaking and Listening</p>
<p>Reading Mini Lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making connections while reading • Text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world • Focused lessons on reading strategies for independent readers • Use of picture cues • Re-reading skills • Attending to visual information • Monitoring self-correction • Try it and read on • How to choose a book • How to abandon a book • Locating story elements • Different reading genres 	<p>1.1 Learning to Read Independently 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas 1.3 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature 1.6 Speaking and Listening</p>
<p>Grammar and Phonemic Awareness Lessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of speech • Punctuation skills • Capitalization rules • Common patterns in English spelling • Short/long vowel sounds • Increasing sight vocabulary 	<p>1.7 Characteristics and Functions of the English Language 1.6 Speaking and Listening</p>

Figure 21. Mini Lessons and PA standards

Along with allowing the students' needs to drive my instruction, I provided the students with independent reading time. We called it SSR or silent sustained reading time during class. Stephen Krashen (1995) proposes that the most meaningful of student tasks during the school day is picking up a book and simply reading. Many school districts and schools themselves mandate that students read everyday for a certain amount of time. Unfortunately, my school does not have a set time frame for daily in-school reading. However, I found that implementing a program within my classroom, where my novice ESL students read for fifteen minutes a day, provided them with some much needed structure and quiet time for reading to occur. This time was some days spent listening to a read aloud by one of the students, myself, or a book on tape. I found that my students came to look forward to SSR time and would question me if I had forgotten to schedule in the time. On one particular day, Andrew said, "Um, Mrs. Warren, you forgot to read to us today. If you not read, I can finish read in my book, I on a good part today!" Providing this time for sustained reading, even at this early level of second language acquisition, when many other teachers may think it impossible, was very important to the structure and development of my students' reading fluency abilities. The students' reading abilities were also monitored through the completion of Developmental Reading Assessments, or DRA's at the start and conclusion of this study. I normally monitor my novice ESL students' developmental reading process four times a year, in August, December, February, and May. Five of the students showed gains in their reading proficiency levels, with one significantly increasing from a level 30 to a level 38.

Two students' DRA levels stayed consistent from their August to December assessments. The following chart summarizes the oral fluency levels and DRA levels of my students throughout this research study.

Table 1. Students' DRA levels Pre and Post Study

Student's Name	August DRA level	December DRA level
Amber	24	24
Andrew	24	28
Drew	28	30
Natalie	28	34
Tiffany	30	38
Rebecca	24	24
Matthew	18	20

Assessing the students at the start of the year and then in December, allowed for the students to see how they were improving. It was important for me to allow the students to see the joy in simply improving, and not stress the exact number of words they were reading correctly at any given time or their DRA level in particular, but instead it was more important to stress that they were learning and they were attaining more language each and everyday. I feel that through formal assessments, such as a DRA, teachers can better meet the needs of their students and tailor make lessons to help the students meet their needs. Once certain goals were attained, for example, when a student was able to demonstrate better retelling skills, then I would share this positive information with the

student. Allowing the students the enjoyment that comes with attaining a goal provided them with the experiences of success that they all needed during this, their early second language acquisition period.

“The less stress and more fun connected to the process, the more easily it is accomplished” (Delpit, 2002, p.40). Another teaching strategy that was pertinent to the success of this study was the use of drama and art. It is important to me, as an ESL teacher, to make learning fun and enjoyable. Throughout this study, I tried to make the stories we read come alive, through artistic renditions of the tales to dramatically role-playing the story itself. The more I made learning to be a fun and exciting process, the more I felt the students were engaged throughout the entire study. In particular, the students wholeheartedly felt that when we acted out the stories we read through short impromptu plays, and when they performed our dramatic reenactments of *SpiderElla*, and *Cinderella Outgrows the Glass Slipper*, they not only enjoyed the experiences, but they felt they learned a lot from the activities. The following are excerpts from an exit sheet given to the students after we performed the play *Spiderella*.

I liked playing the prince. I don't know why, cuz I a girl, but I liked it...I liked putting on da clothes the best.

Doing this is fun, I like more than just reading, it fun to move desks and stand and say the story like that.

Mrs. Warren, you crazy, but a good crazy, no teacher do this with me, I like acting like the fairy, the wings help me say the lines two!

I like it we can do different story , I want to be narrator next time, they talk a lot!

Figure 22. Exerpts from student exit sheets

Through art, the students were able to depict their meaning of the stories we read. In one assignment the students were asked to depict their favorite part of the classic fairy tale *Cinderella*. By allowing the students to express themselves through art, those students whose writing may have been more limited were able to depict their meaning through pictures. Below, two students' depictions show how much effort and thought went into their use of art to display their meaning.

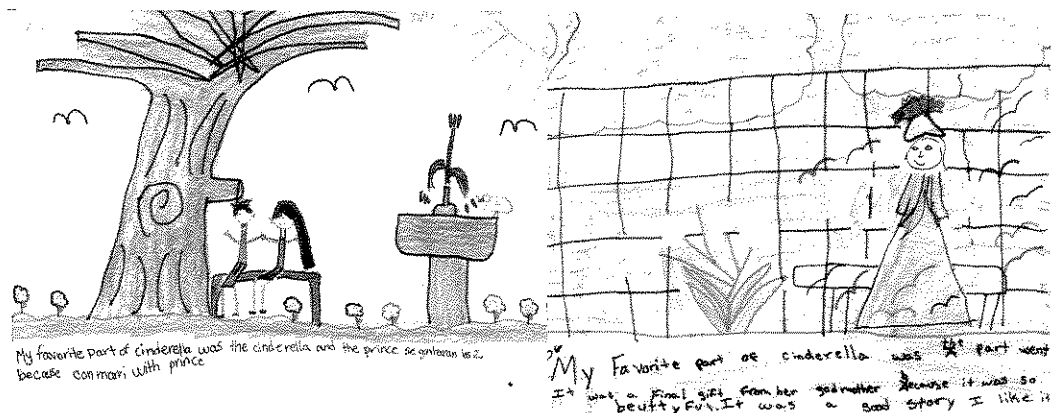


Figure 23. Students' Cinderella depictions

Total Physical Response, making words, and establishing students' prior knowledge were some other teaching strategies I practiced throughout this study. During this study I practiced elements of Total Physical Response, TPR, developed by James Asher (1977). Asher's methods provide learners with basic

speaking vocabulary needed to uphold communicative language through the use of gestures or spoken commands by the teacher. Although I am not a proponent of this theory as a whole, I do believe it to be essential practice as an ESL teacher to use the art of motion when teaching novice ESL students. I many times throughout this study and in my normal teaching practices, have engaged my beginner ESL students through the use of acting out what I am trying to convey or want my students to do. For example, if I wanted students to understand the word dally from our readings, I would demonstrate the word by physically demonstrating someone dilly-dallying while telling them that I was dallying. This physical display of meaning was essential in my everyday undertaking of this study. Without this practice, I don't think my students could have understood half of the information I shared with them. I also feel that regular education teachers that practice this type of "show and tell" style while teaching ESL students are the most productive at their craft.

“As teachers we need to make word study active, so that students not only expand their knowledge of words but learn to make powerful connections they need, to understand the internal structures of words, as well as, their shades of meaning” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001, p.377) During this study, it was very important to use the words from the stories we read in word mini-lessons. The words that I chose for our “making words lessons” many times were words the students had difficulty reading or understanding as well as words that connected to the grammatical topics we were studying. For example, one of our making words lessons involved the word imaginary. Below is an example word-sorting

mat that the students would work through using the word imaginary found in our readings.

a	a	i	i	g	m	n	r	y
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Let's Make Some Words

NAME _____

1. a grown up boy: _____

2. what we breathe: _____

3. _____ I go to the bathroom?

4. something a sweater is made of: _____

5. past tense of run: _____

6. use all the letters to make a word that means make- believe or not real:

Figure 24. Making Words Mat

“Any learning a child encounters in school has a previous history” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 84). Establishing the prior knowledge of all of my students was essential throughout this study and in my classroom in general. Knowing what previous learning experiences the students were bringing to this study as well as their past educational experiences as a whole helped move our classroom forward. Without looking at what each of the students’ previous histories were, I would not have been able to justly teach or expect what I did from each and everyone of the students. Through understanding their previous histories, I was able to help each student to contribute their own individual experiences to our classroom discussions and in turn become a valuable member of what Vygotsky (1978) calls a “classroom community member.”



*While learning English in an integrated language arts setting,
students' actions influenced their academic growth.*

“The teacher can not think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication” (Freire, 2004, p.77). The manner in which the students involved in this study communicated with me was crucial to their academic growth. Without the communication that we shared, I don't believe I would have seen the growth that I did. The first form of communication that the students and I engaged in was through the completion of dialogue journals. Although this study did not imply the specific use of the method coined Whole Language from the mid 1980's, this study did employ many of its design objectives. The use of authentic literature rather than artificial, specially prepared texts and exercises designed to practice individual reading skills while integrating reading, writing, listening and speaking were important components to this study. Another was the use of dialogue journals used to communicate between teacher and student. The use of dialogue journals is suggested as a means to connect with the student's individual learning gains and areas of weaknesses, as well as a means to communicate with the students personally as to aid them in their overall well being (Richards & Rodgers 2001). Within this study, students' dialogue journals became the oil that made our educational wheels turn faster. The following are examples of dialogue journals that the students and I shared. Each was a conversation that allowed the students

to meta-cognitively speak of their learning; personally connect with their teacher and connect the stories we were reading to one and other. I cannot think of another communication method that would have allowed for as much interaction between teacher and student, as the dialogue journals provided. Due to the students' response to them, dialogue journals still play an important role in our daily classroom lives. I don't think the children would ever let me stop them because they really have relied on them as a means to communicate with me.

Along with dialogue journals, students were also active participants in their academic growth through their completion of original fairy tales. Originally planned as culminating activities at the end of each fairy tale study, these original tales the students created became the center of the students' educational experiences. After the completion of the students' first original tale the following conversation took place:

Natalie: "Mrs. Warren, we do dis more?"

Mrs. Warren: Well, I was hoping that all the students would like to write more original stories. Is this something you would like to do?

Natalie: Yes, I no think I can, but you make me believe, it all make-believe so anytin can happen! I can write beautifully!

Mrs. Warren: Of course you can write beautifully! I am so proud of you already.

Natalie: Thank you, dis class make me smart, I feel smart when I write story.

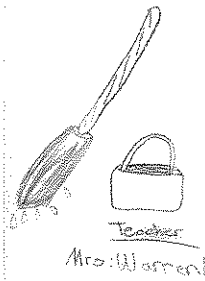
The conversation with Natalie early in this study allowed me to see the importance and the empowering effects that writing had on the students. These

students are new English speakers! They aren't the kids to volunteer in class. They are, most days, simply trying to just make it through the day, and here, Natalie was telling me that writing stories made her feel smart. It was one of my proudest moments throughout this study. The students not only enjoyed writing their original tales, but through the writing of them, they became writers and through the reading of over 40 books, they became readers!

Freeman and Freeman (1998) in their book *ESL/EFL Teaching: Principles for Success*, clearly outlined seven principles ESL teachers should base their lessons on. They believe if ESL teachers follow these seven principles, they can help all their students succeed. Their seven principles are: Learning proceeds from whole to part, lessons should be learner-centered, lessons should have meaning and purpose for students now, lessons should engage students in social interaction, lessons should develop both oral and written language, lessons should support students' first languages and cultures, lessons should show faith in the learner to expand students' potential. I believe that through the major components of this study, the creation of original fairy tales, all seven of the above principles were met easily by all the students involved in this study. The following are only some of the stories the students involved in this study created.

Figure 25. Natalie's Original Fairy Tale

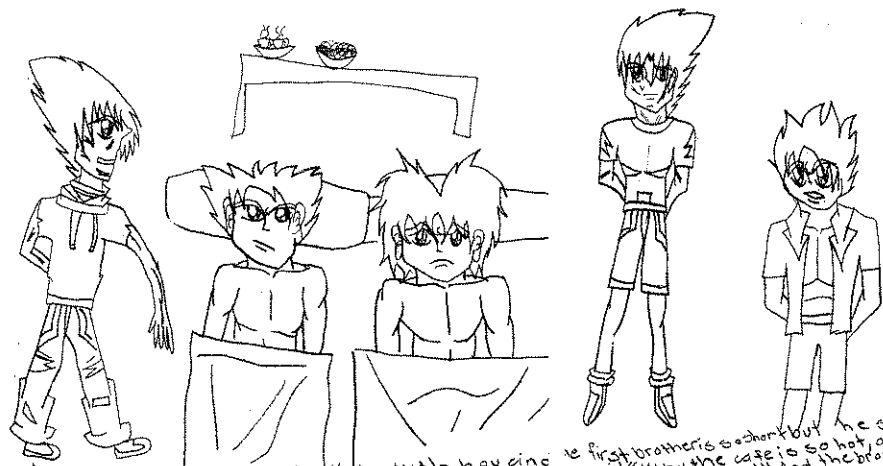
THE Little boy Cinder



Date: 11/10/06
by: [redacted]



One morning, the little boy cinder needed clean the cup, shirt, pants, shirt, anything. He needed clean the house, cut the grass and cook the food and cafe.



The 2 brother woke up and call the little boy cinder came to room of 2 brother give the food and cafe

The first brother is sad but he so mean with me. he said "Why the cafe is so hot, are you want lips is big and touch!!" And the brother want he get the room, the little boy cinder is so sad and get out room. The 2 brother said "why him is so little".



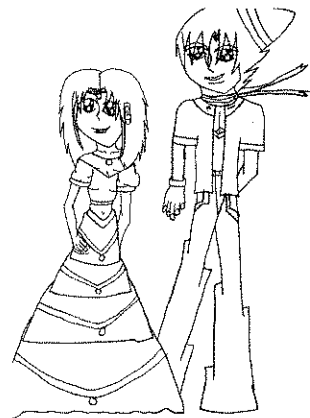
The little boy is cry and one god father of he come in and say why you cry. The little boy answer my sister is so mean and every day I need listen to brother. The god father said ok, now I gift you one little bunny look like you is so small. And the small bunny is so lucky for you when you go any where.



Now every the little boy play with the small bunny and when he eat, he give the bunny a food.



Now every the little boy play with the small bunny and when he eat, he give the bunny a food.



The princess see him is so hand some and she want he dance with her. Her ask him what your name? He said My name is Jack. What your name is princess she said My name is Victoria.



The little boy surprise because why she is small look like me. And he run away because bunny said you can go ... o'clock you need come back here. When he run a lost the ties, the princess run with him but hit into so faster, the princess see the green ties of the little boy cinder.



The princess want find him any where. She is so miss the little boy hand some. The findly the princess find the little boy and she want to marry him.



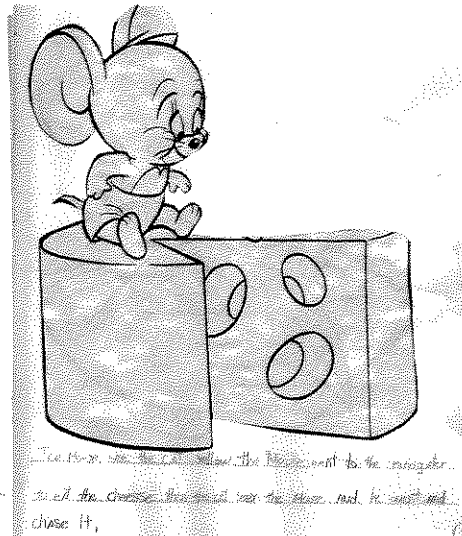
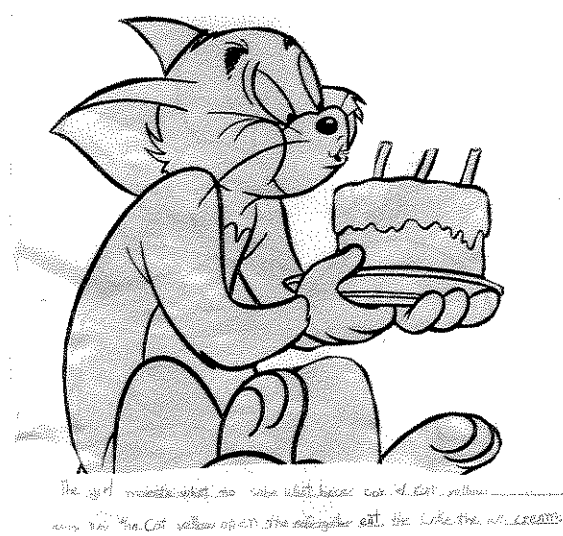
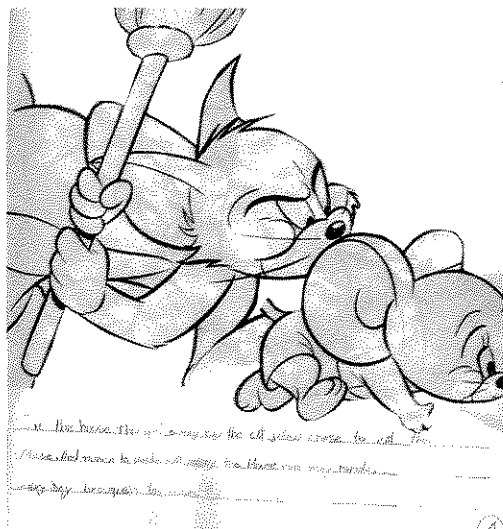
The 2 step brother heard the princess want every day go dance with her. The two brother is so happy and said "tonight I'm nice only my." The brother ever tell this for little boy cinder because 2 brother see him is so small but every body go the castle not a small.

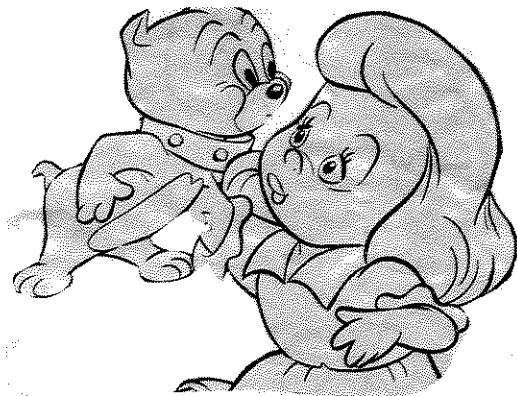


The little boy at home is so sad, the small bunny changes for he is so handsome and now he can go dance with the princess.

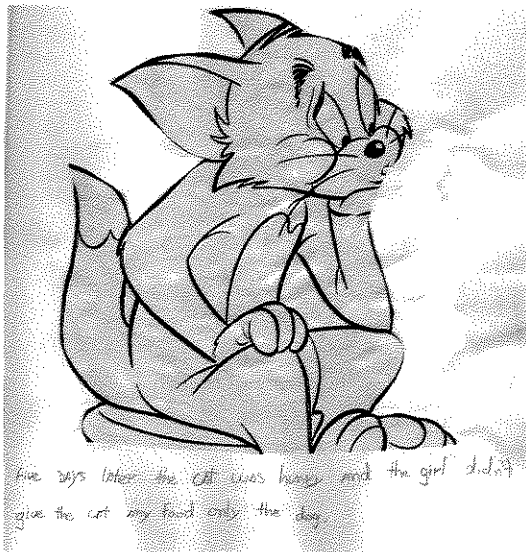
Figure 26. Rebecca's Original Fairy Tale

Miss Yellow
cat

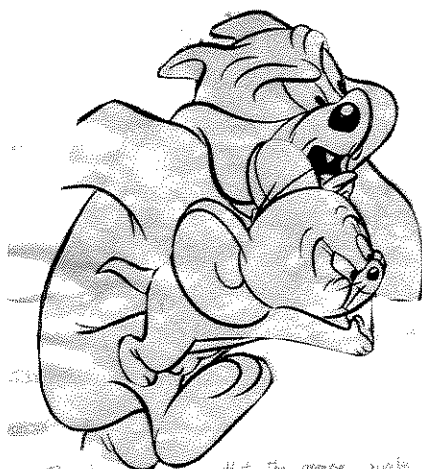




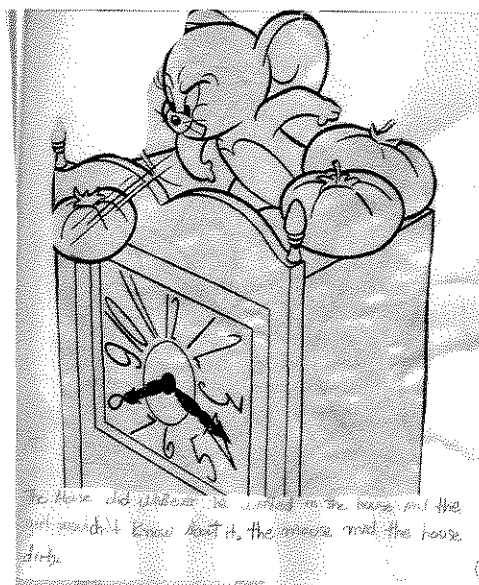
one day the girl bought herself a dog. then the cat
 found out and he got mad because the girl liked the
 ④ dog more.



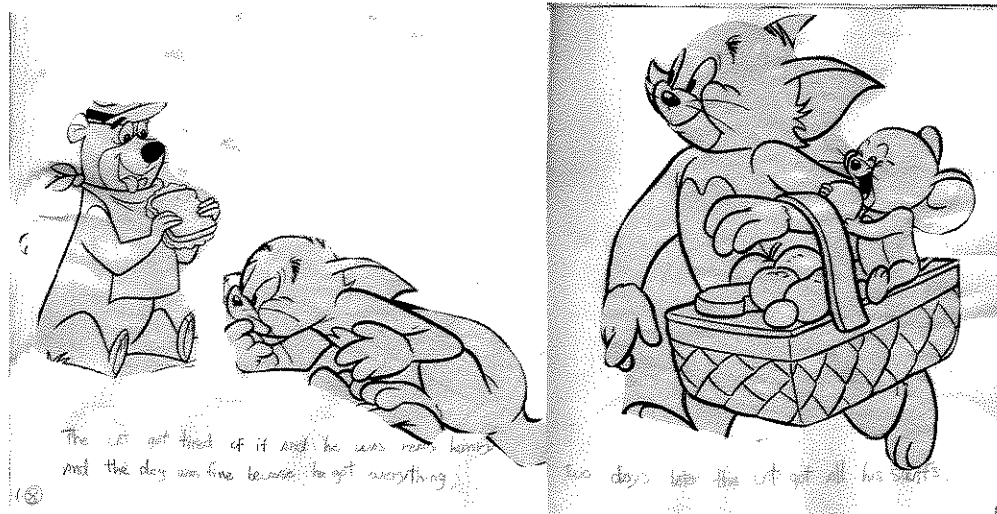
five days later the cat was hungrier and the girl didn't
 give the cat any food only the dog.



The long dog was that the mouse made friends
 with the dog and then the cat got mad because he
 didn't have no friends and he was like now there is two
 ⑥ verses me.



The mouse did whatever he wanted in the house and the
 girl wouldn't know about it, the mouse made the house
 dirty.



Novice ESL students' lack of basic reading skills affect the speed of their academic growth.

“At the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know” (Freire, 2004, p. 90). The mere nature of the participants of this study can be viewed as students with some academic limitations. As Freire said, we should look at our students as people who are simply trying to learn more than they already know. So, the students in this study obviously all performed at different academic and proficiency levels, but they all learned more than they knew at the beginning of the school year. Although I have shown the successes that most had during this research period, some others did suffer with little to no major academic improvements.

Some participants in this study lacked the basic reading skills, which needed to be addressed on a daily basis in order to be able to complete some simple tasks. The areas of weakness that I observed were the lack of word attack skills, phonemic awareness skills, reading fluency ability, and prior knowledge. These all impeded the academic process of these students. I found ways to help aid them through these areas of deficiency.

In order to make sure that all the students had proper word attack skill tools throughout this study, I provided the students with short mini lessons based on Debra Housel's book, *Word Wise: Interactive Lessons to Develop Strong Word Attack & Spelling Skills*. Through this text's mini lessons, I sought to correct their lack of word attack skills by holding lessons that aimed to help the students identify 120 of the most common word parts in American English, help students predict vowel sounds in multi-syllabic words, help students be able to apply essential vowel rules, and confidently decode unknown words. These lessons seemed to aid in the students' increase in reading fluency, measured by our weekly reading probes.

Weekly reading probes were used to measure the students' progress in accelerating their reading fluency. The DIBELS, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development was used. These reading probes are designed to be short, one minute, fluency measures used to routinely measure the development of pre reading and early reading skills. DIBELS reading probes were used on a weekly basis throughout this study. These probes were not only used to measure

fluency, but were also used to determine specific problem areas for the students. For example, through the use of the DIBELS reading probes (see appendix I), I was able to see which students were having trouble aspirating their ending consonant sounds, which students did not understand the formation of long vowel sounds, others had difficulty with multi-syllabic words. These probes aiding in providing the students with the best-individualized education aimed to help improve their reading skills. The following chart shows how each student's reading fluency changed throughout the course of our four-month period. DIBELS outlines average words read correct per minute (WRCPM) at a second grade level to be between 90 and 100 words. The end of second grade should attend the aim of 90 to 100 words read correctly. I choose the second grade probes due to the students' average DRA scores I attained in late August.

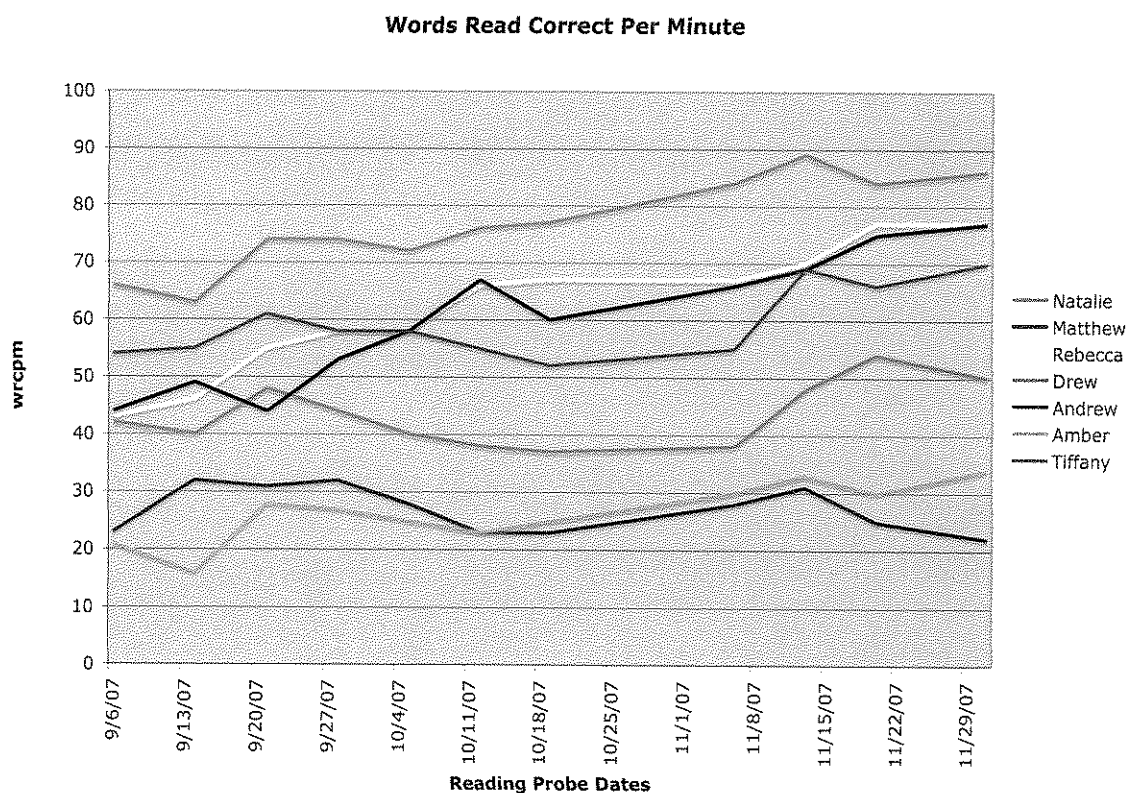


Figure 27. Words Read Correct Per Minute Graph

The above graph shows how the students' WRCPM increased throughout our research time. Both Amber and Matthew showed the least amount of improvement in WRCPM, however the other students all seemed to be moving towards the second grade norm.

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency is measured by the amount of words read correctly per minute, as outlined above. A further breakdown of the WRCPM is laid out to determine those students who are considered at risk for not showing significant fluency progress. DIBELS categorizes students to be at either, at risk, some risk or low risk for lack of sufficient progress. The chart below shows the WRCPM and the risk levels each represents for second and third grade.

DIBELS Benchmark Goals and Indicators of Risk
Three Assessment Periods Per Year

Second Grade

DIBELS Measure	Beginning of Year Month 1 - 3		Middle of Year Month 4 - 6		End of Year Month 7 - 10	
	Scores	Status	Scores	Status	Scores	Status
DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency	NWF < 30 30 <= NWF < 50 NWF >= 50	Deficit Emerging Established				
DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency	ORF < 26 26 <= ORF < 44 ORF >= 44	At risk Some risk Low risk	ORF < 52 52 <= ORF < 68 ORF >= 68	At risk Some risk Low risk	ORF < 70 70 <= ORF < 90 ORF >= 90	At risk Some risk Low risk

Third Grade

DIBELS Measure	Beginning of Year Month 1 - 3		Middle of Year Month 4 - 6		End of Year Month 7 - 10	
	Scores	Status	Scores	Status	Scores	Status
DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency	ORF < 53 53 <= ORF < 77 ORF >= 77	At risk Some risk Low risk	ORF < 67 67 <= ORF < 92 ORF >= 92	At risk Some risk Low risk	ORF < 80 80 <= ORF < 110 ORF >= 110	At risk Some risk Low risk

Figure 28. DIBELS Benchmark Goals <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/benchmark.php>

According to the chart above, Natalie, Rebecca, Andrew, and Tiffany are at low risk for needing any special remediation for academic progress. Drew may be at some risk for needing reading intervention and Matthew and Amber are at risk for needing special services to correct their reading fluency if they do not show significant improvements by the end of our school year. I believe that with further time those students who are labeled at risk, will continue to improve their WRCPM and increase their reading fluency.



When novice ESL students make connections between their educative experiences and their lives, authentic and meaningful learning takes place.

Making my students thoughtful, independent readers who look deeply and understand what they read is what I strive for. Authors Susan Zimmermann and Ellin Oliver Keene write extensively on how to achieve this with students in their book, *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching comprehension in a reader's workshop*. The techniques outlined in their book stress the need to teach children what good readers do when they read. Through this study I tried to stress that good readers make connections with the text they read. They make text-to-text connections, text to self-connections, and text to world connections. Teachers need to model the connections they make while they read and encourage their students to do the same. I feel by teaching and modeling for my students how to critically look at text, they have become active readers, readers that have moved beyond literal recall.

Throughout my students' journal responses they started to become critical readers by making the above connections. The following are examples of just some of the connections they noted in their dialogue journals. In all of them, we can see how the students began to internalize their learning and how they moved beyond simple recall to elements of critical thinking.

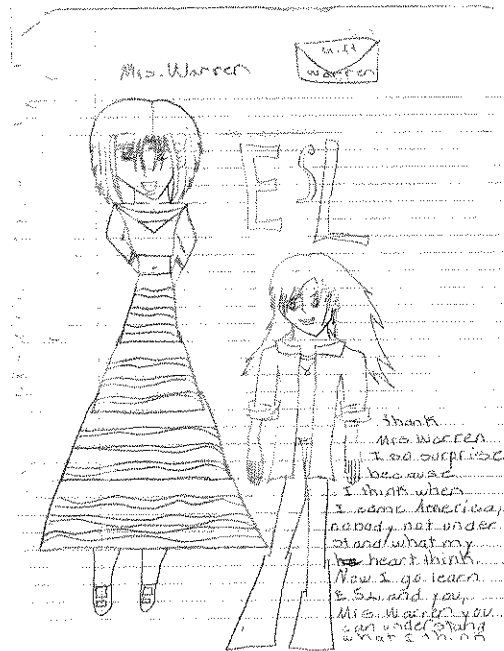


Figure 29. An Entry from Tiffany's dialogue journal

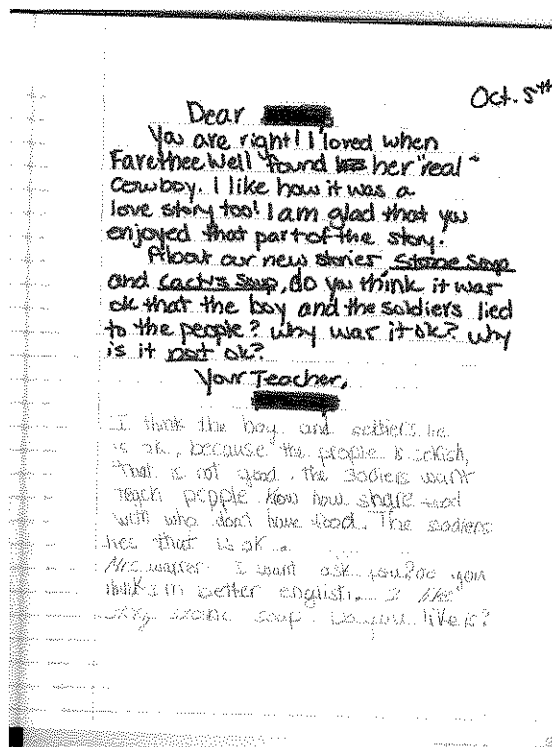


Figure 30. An Entry from Natalie's dialogue journal

Dear Teacher Mrs. Warren
 I'm sorry teacher I like the
 because stories I very enjoy what
 your picture of the books the life
 character of I like the thing happen
 in me story.
 do you know something? I need more
 help yours what the English because
 I'm hispanic I like your ESL
 class.
 your student

Figure 31. An Entry from Drew's dialogue journal

Nov. 9th

Dear [redacted],
 Yes, I too like writing letters
 to you. I enjoy hearing your thoughts.
 If you don't understand something
 in a letter I wrote you, you need
 to ask me so I can explain it.

Tell me more about how you
 use our stories at home. You told
 me you read our stories to your brothers
 and sisters. Explain this to me.
 When? Which stories? Why do they
 like to listen to your stories?

Love Your Teacher,
 Mrs. Warren

Dear Mrs. Warren

I will but it is not my
 sister is. My brother and
 cousin I will explain it I may
 school with them and they
 want story time and they
 said yes so I try to
 read. My dreamer is in

Kindergarten and Mr. Cougle is
 in 3rd grade I explain it.

Mrs. Warren is it true
 what you said at school that
 you sleep in the chowch?
 Explain it to me? or why
 Mrs. Warren do you like
 to read? and I like
 when you tell a story
 like you act like the
 people in the story do
 you like to act? Why not me?
 why?

your student
 Amber

go →

stop

Figure 32. An Entry from Amber's dialogue journal

A dialogue entry written by Tiffany, pictured below explained what she felt she needed to do in order to be a good student.

oct 30

What do I need to do to be a good student?

1. Do all my homework
2. Listen to my teacher say
3. When I talk wrong, I can't talk back to teacher
4. Don't talking when teacher tell what homework and what I need to do
5. Don't talk Langue VietNameese when teacher say don't talk VietNameese in the class. Only English
6. When teacher talk with me and the people can't laugh are talk like dies.
7. Don't be lazy do the homework or I say my homework is home but teacher see my homework in my folder.
8. Don't be fact think at home and when I go back school I say I'm sick.

Figure 33. Another Entry from Tiffany's dialogue journal

Another very important outcome from this study was the meta-cognitive learning that the students had begun to project in their everyday lessons and in their journal responses. In one particular conversation with Drew, he shared his feelings about the study we were concluding.

Drew: Mrs. Warren, you mean we no read these books no more?

Mrs. Warren: Well, I hope you continue to read the books you enjoy reading, it can be fairy tales or other kinds of stories, that is up to you.

Drew: But, I liked dis kind. I like-ed this kind cuz I go to different countries. You know, we read a book from Africa, it like I goed there.

Mrs. Warren: Yep, isn't that the best part about reading books!

Drew: Yeah, I nevered thinked that before...it like I really smart when I read. When I read, I know dat I make my mind bigger. I want to read until my mind blow up!

Mrs. Warren: Wow, I hope your mind doesn't blow up Drew, but I understand what you are saying.

Drew: Yeah, dis was cool, I never thinked I can read like dis, and now I can. Reading make you smart, everyone should read more.

Mrs. Warren: You are totally right. This is why I love to read!

Drew: Mrs. Warren?

Mrs. Warren: Yeah?

Drew: Mrs. Warren, thank you for teaching me dis, to read I mean...I knowed how to read, but you teached me to really read...you know under the words.

Mrs. Warren: Yes that is what I hoped you would have learned.

Drew: Well I did!

The meta-cognitive aspects of Drew's conversation with me are good examples of the learning my students achieved during our study. The students had begun to feel that they were true readers, something perhaps they had never felt before, and obviously had not felt in English. Drew's words about shows how he had learned to, "read under the words" that he had learned that there is more to a story than the words that the author places on the page. He had learned more about how to learn and he had taken ownership of his learning. This ownership is priceless and I hope the other students felt the same way.

In their post study surveys, which were read to the students, the students' opinions certainly changed from the start of our study. The following chart represents the changes seen through the students' completion of their pre and post survey answers with regard to grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening. These results were gathered through a compilation of the how each of the students' answered questions based on a three-tiered scale: no way, sometimes, and yes (see appendix E). The students' answers did show little improvement in their listening skills after the completion of our research period, however their feelings towards writing and reading in particular, increased tremendously.

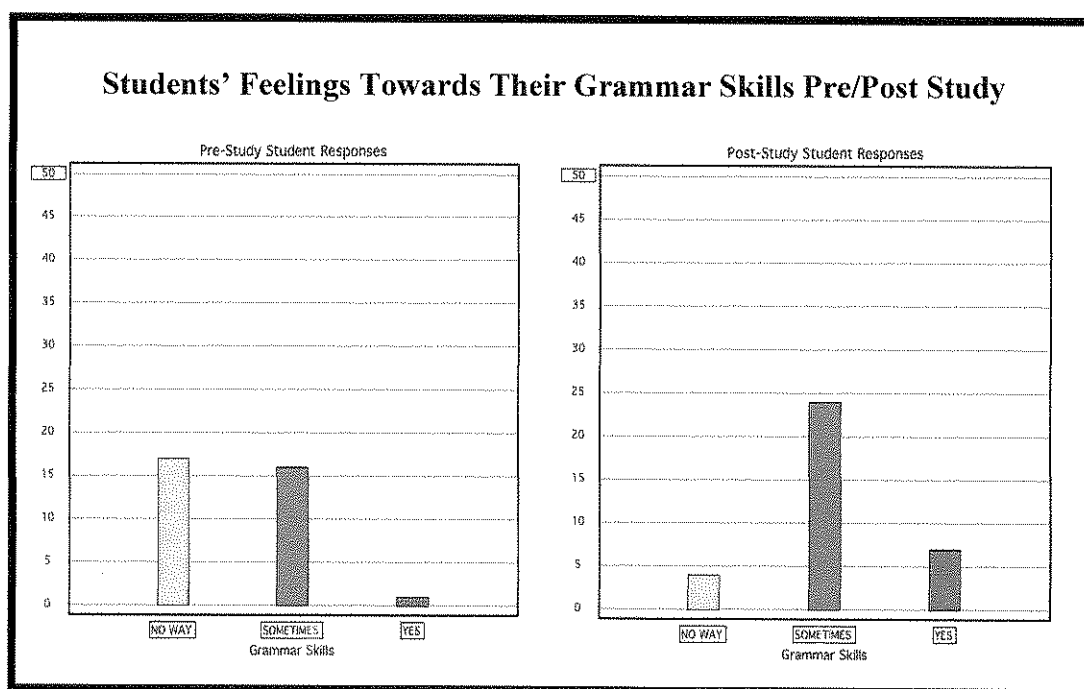


Figure 34. Grammar Skills Graph

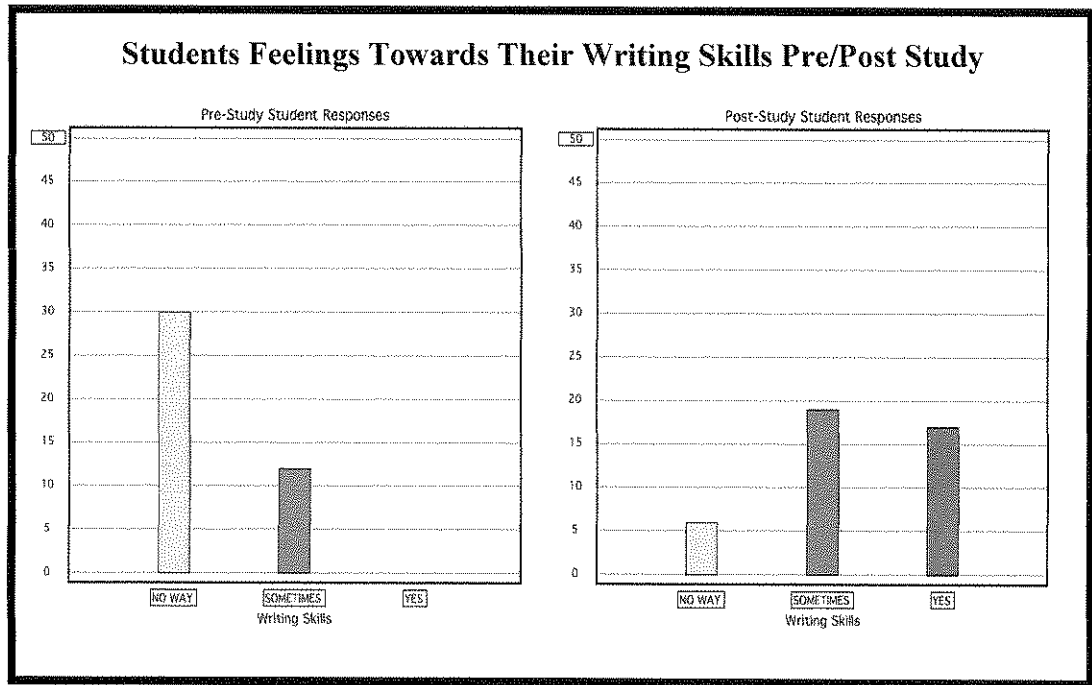


Figure 35. Writing Skills Graph

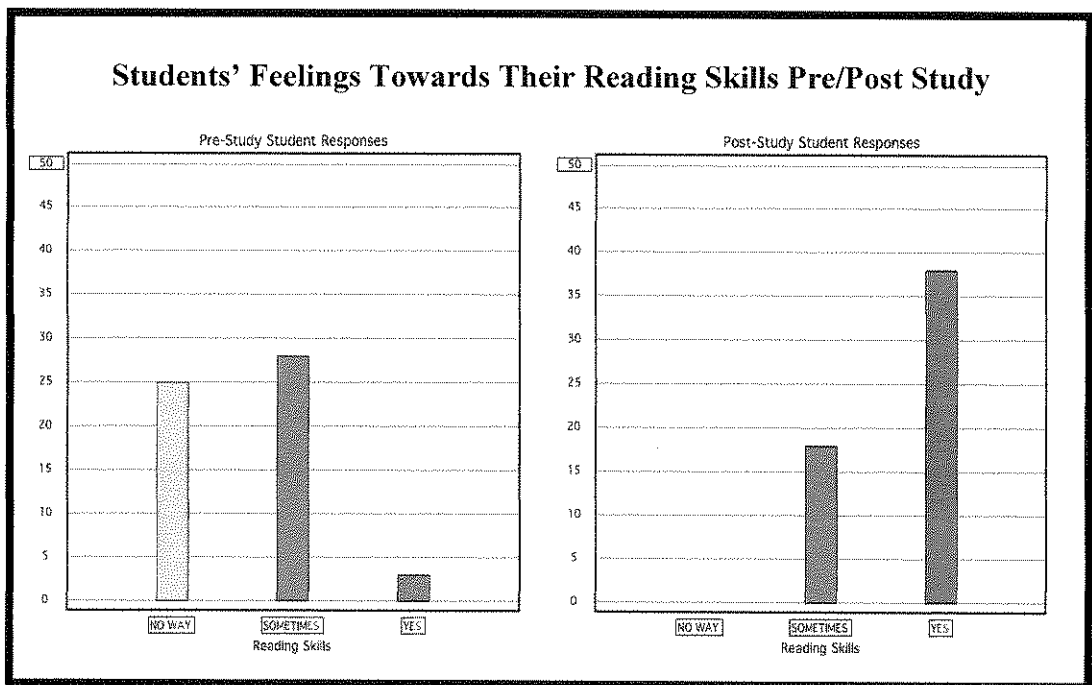


Figure 36. Reading Skills Graph

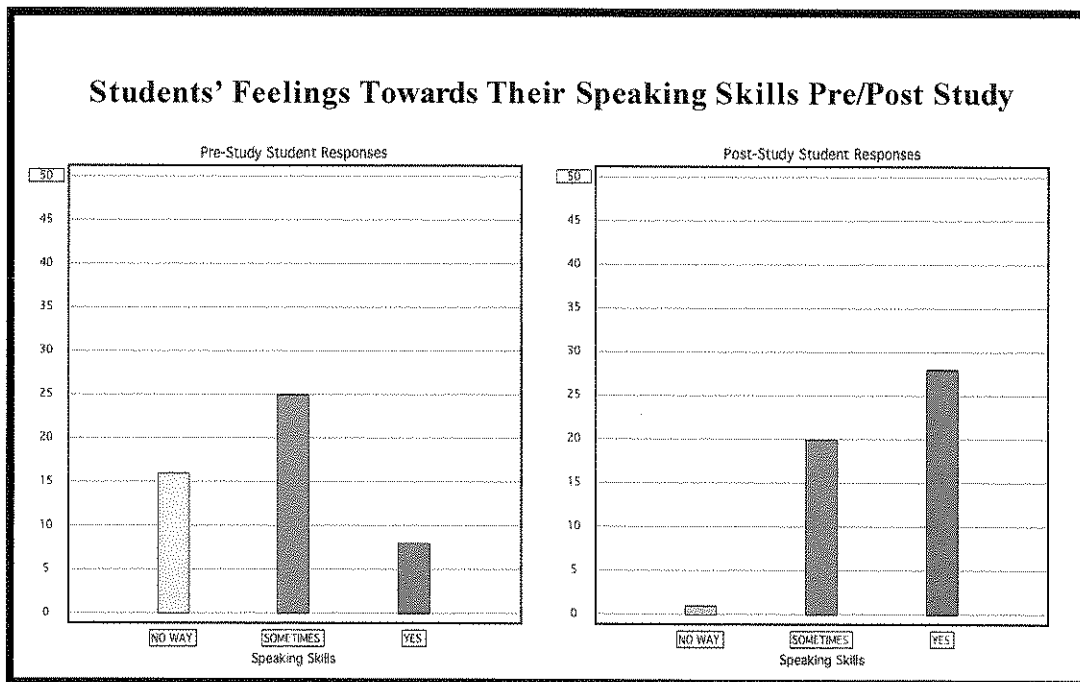


Figure 37. Speaking Skills Graph

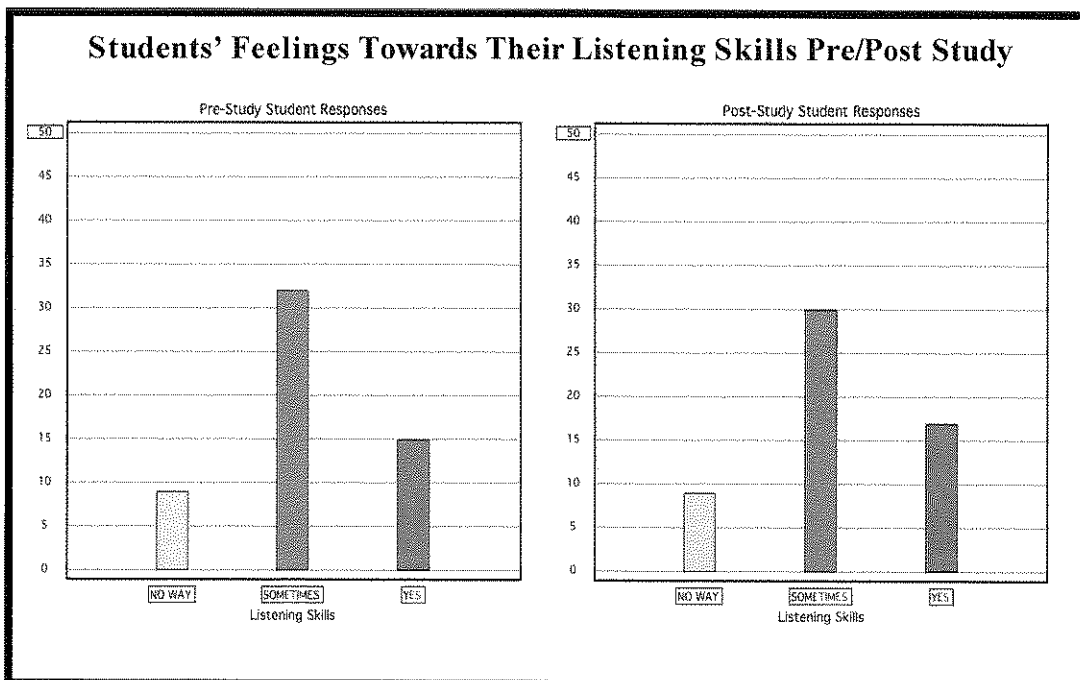


Figure 38. Listing Skills Graph

NEXT STEPS

I have always wanted to find a way to make the teaching of English in an ESL classroom meaningful and holistic in nature, doing away with teaching in compartmentalized boxes: “now let’s learn grammar;” “now let’s learn how to read;” “now let’s show you how to write a good sentence.” So many teachers fall victim to this type of practice. Through this research study, I wanted to see if I could teach all the modes of the English language through the act of reading authentic literature, and I feel I was successful.

Due to this research study, I feel I will be forever changed. First, simply due to the nature of teacher action research, I will forever view my classroom through proactive researcher eyes. I will look to correct problems that may arise through process orientated gathering of ideas in order to find answers to my problems. I will look to other experts in my field and see how their findings affect me. However, completing this action research process has also taught me how to view research through critical discerning eyes and to not believe somebody’s findings will work for everyone’s classroom.

As noted by the students’ DRA levels, in this particular research study, the students’ English proficiency level both aided and impeded the process I undertook at making meaningful and holistic learning experiences. Due to the participants’ lack of English ability, many times re-teaching and establishing prior knowledge had to be done in order to move forward. As well as much time was spent on early reading and word attack skills that would not be needed in different

ESL leveled classrooms.

Working with beginner ESL students also aided in the enjoyment and excitement of working with fairy tales. Since fairy tales are a curricular subject area that kids can easily relate to coming from many different cultural backgrounds, the novice ESL students were at ease from the start of this study. If this study involved higher English proficiency students, their excitement with this reading genre may not have been the same. Also, I feel that this genre in particular is quite appropriate for the age level of fifth and sixth grade elementary school students and perhaps wouldn't be as powerful of a study if it were completed with older students.

I would hope that this study enables other ESL teachers to look at ways to make their teaching practices more enjoyable and meaningful for their students. Within our profession, many times we feel helpless and overwhelmed with the pure essence of making our students proficient in English. This study suggests that this awesome task can be accomplished through many different forms, and in particular, it can be completed within an environment where the modes of language are integrated together in order to de-compartmentalize the teaching of ESL.

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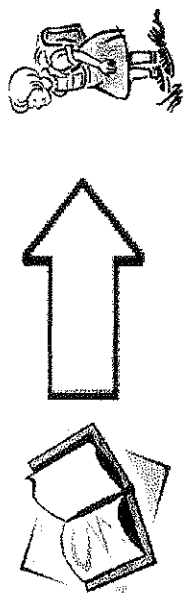
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APPENDIXES A- K

Appendix A

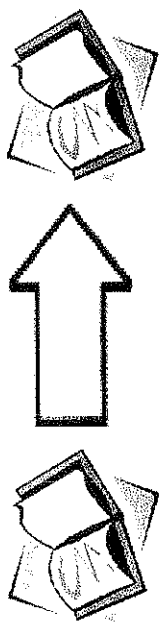


Text to Self Connections (TTS)

That reminds me of...

That made me think of the time...

I can relate....



Text to Text

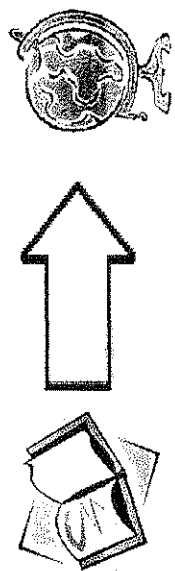
Connections (TTT)

This part is just like...

That reminds me of...

I read another book where...

This is similar to...



Text to World Connections (TTW)

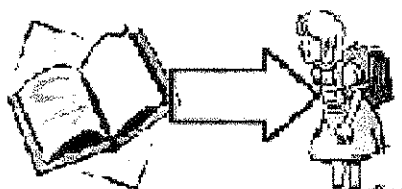
That reminds me of...

This is like...

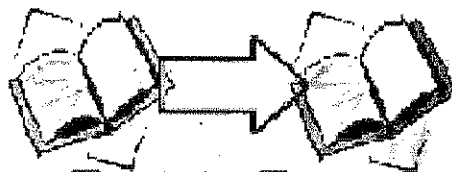
I know about this... but I didn't
know that.

Appendix B

**Think as you
Read!**



Text to Self



Text to Text



Text to World

Appendix C

Name: _____

Date: _____



Making Text to Text Connections



In this text...	That is like...

Name: _____

Date: _____

**Making Text to Self Connections**

The author said:	That reminds me of...

Name: _____

Date: _____

**Making Text to World Connections**

In this text...	That makes me think of...

Appendix D

Student Interview Questions

September (Language Arts Focus)

1. Describe your language arts class last year. What was your favorite part of class? What was your least favorite part of class? Why?
2. What kinds of stories did you read in your language arts class last year? What are your favorite kinds of stories to read? Which is your least favorite? Why?
3. What kinds of things did you write about last year? Can you remember any of the topics in particular? Did you like the writing projects that you did?
4. How were you taught to write? Did your teacher make you edit your writing? Did you learn to edit other students' writing? Did you have a daily language review each day to practice?
5. What types of things did you learn in grammar class? Do you remember anything in particular that you learned? Did you enjoy learning grammar? Do you think that grammar is important to study? Why or why not?
6. If you could be the teacher of our language arts class this year, what stories would you want us to read? What would you want us to write about? What would you want us to learn?
7. If you could be the teacher this year, how would you set up our room for language arts class? Would you change anything, what? Why?

Student Interview Questions

September (Curricular Focus)

1. This year we are going to learn about fairytales. Can you tell me what you know about fairytales? Which ones have you read? Which ones have you just heard about? Where have you heard fairytales? What do fairytales have in common?

2. Now I am going to ask you some questions about specific fairytales. Tell me anything you know about them. It is ok if you never heard of them before because we will be reading some of them in our class.

Can you tell me the story of Cinderella?

Can you tell me the story of Jack and the Beanstalk?

Can you tell me the story of the Princess and the Pea?

Can you tell me the story of The Three Little Pigs?

Can you tell me the story of Little Red Riding Hood?

Can you tell me the story of Stone Soup?

Can you tell me the story of The Emperor's New Clothes?

Student Interview Questions

December (Language Arts Focus)

1. Describe our language arts class so far this year. What was your favorite part of class? What was your least favorite part of class? Why?
2. Describe to me your feelings about the stories we read so far. Did you enjoy the stories we read, which ones? Which ones did you not enjoy? What did you learn from reading them?
3. How has our class been like other language arts classes that you have had? How has our class been different?
4. How did you feel about creating reviews of all the stories we read? Did you enjoy that? Did you enjoy reading other student's comments on the stories we read?
5. How do you feel about that fairytale that you wrote? Did you enjoy creating all the pages for it and having it published?
6. What do you want me, as your teacher, to keep doing in class? What do you want me to stop?
7. Do you think you have become a better reader, writer, speaker and listener of English now, as compared to how you felt in August? Why, in what ways?

Student Interview Questions

December (Curricular Focus)

1. We read and discussed many fairytales so far this year. What can you tell me about fairytales? What is specific to this genre of writing?
2. We have read many stories so far this year. What were some of your favorite stories? Why?
3. We used computers to write reviews of the stories we read. How did you feel about using them? Did you enjoy using them? Did you enjoy reading others reviews of the same stories you read? Why?
4. You had to work in groups almost everyday with other students in the class. Did you enjoy working, reading, writing, speaking and listening to others in your group? Why or why not?
5. How do you feel about the mini-lessons that we had in class? Do you think it was easier or more difficult to learn this way? Why? How?
6. You worked independently and with partners in your center time. How do you prefer to work? Did you enjoy the center activities themselves? Do you feel that centers helped you learn to read, write, listen and speak in English better? How? Why?

Appendix E

What do you think? Student Pre and Post Survey

Directions: Please respond to each question by circling one of the three faces. Choose the face that best describes your feelings about each statement.

GRAMMAR

1. I like learning English grammar.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

2. I like doing practice exercises to learn grammar.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

3. I use what I am taught in grammar class, in my writing.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

4. After learning something new in grammar class, I try to use it when I speak to someone.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

5. I feel confident in my ability to use correct grammar.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

WRITING

6. I think I am a good writer.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

7. I make sloppy copies before handing in a piece of writing to the teacher.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

8. I reread what I write.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

9. I have other students read my writing before I make my final copy.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

10. I enjoy writing.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

11. I like writing about what I read.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

READING

12. I think I am a good reader.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

13. I like to read for fun during my free time.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

14. I like reading long stories/books.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

15. I like having time to read silently in class.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

16. I like reading with a partner.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

17. I feel comfortable reading in front of the whole class.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

18. While I read, I ask myself questions to see if I understand what I am reading.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

19. While I am reading, if I find a word I don't know, I write it down so I can check what it means later.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

Listening

20. I think I am a good listener.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

21. I listen carefully to other students in my class.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

22. I think it is easy to listen to my teacher when she is speaking.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

23. I like listening to stories read out loud.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

24. It is easy to understand stories when they are read out loud to me.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

25. I think students like listening to my ideas.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

26. I think it is easy to listen to books on tape.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

27. When I am listening to the teacher, I feel like I understand what she is saying.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

Speaking

28. I think I can speak English really well.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

29. I am not embarrassed by my accent when I speak English.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

30. I think people can understand me when I speak in English.

NO WAY	SOMETIMES	YES
☹	☺	☺

31. I think I have enough time to speak to other students during class.

NO WAY

SOMETIMES

YES



32. I like discussing stories that I read with other students who read the same stories.

NO WAY

SOMETIMES

YES



33. I take turns talking when I am in a group.

NO WAY

SOMETIMES

YES



34. I share my opinions on stories with other students in class.

NO WAY

SOMETIMES

YES



Appendix F

August 18,

2006
Laura A. Warren
5907 Lehigh Lane
Bath, PA 18014

Dear Laura A. Warren:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has accepted your proposal: "Once Upon a Time...the recorded learning experiences of intermediate ESL students with classic and modern day variant fairytales." Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSIRB Chair.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be.

Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this letter, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB before implementation.

This letter has been sent to you through U.S. Mail and e-mail. Please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone (610-861-1415) or through e-mail (medwh02@moravian.edu) should you have any questions about the committee's requests.

Debra Wetcher-Hendricks
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review
Board
Moravian College
610-861-1415

Appendix G

August 28, 2006

Dear Mr. Steckel, Mrs. Symia and Mr. Viglianti,

I am currently taking courses toward a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction at Moravian College. These courses assist me in implementing effective teaching methods in my classroom and will help me reflect on my teaching practice as well.

From, August 28th to December 22nd, I am required to conduct a systematic study of my teaching. My research will examine the impact of using classic and modern day variant fairytales in the teaching of grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening in my beginner ESL classroom. Exposing our ESL students to an integrated language arts program is a valuable teaching method that I expect will provide our students with more valuable and enjoyable learning experiences.

I will be gathering information to support my study through student interviews, surveys, work samples and participant observations. All students will have the opportunity to provide feedback to me through these methods. I will only use information collected from students who have permission to participate in the study in any written reports of my research. All of the students' names will be kept confidential as well as the names of teachers and other staff members. No names will be included on work samples or in any reports of my study. All research materials will be kept in a secure location in my home. All data gathered during my study will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

All of my beginner ESL students will be participating in the integration of fairytales as part of the regular ESL curriculum; therefore no student will be singled out as a participant or non-participant. Our students will only be considered participants if I receive written permission from their parents. Our students may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Withdrawal will not affect the student's grades. If a student withdraws, he or she will still be required to participate in the classroom activities, but I will agree that I will not use any data pertaining to the student in any written reports of my research. Parents will be asked to notify me in writing if their child wishes to withdraw from the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about my research at any time, please contact me. My faculty sponsor is Dr. Charlotte Zales. She can be contacted at Moravian College by phone at 610-861-1300 ext: 7958 or email at crzales@moravian.edu.

If you agree to allow me to conduct this research in my classroom, please sign below. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Laura A. Warren

I support and understand that Mrs. Warren will be collecting data as part of her research on using fairytales as a means to establish an integrated language arts curriculum in her beginner ESL classroom.

Principal's signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H

August 28th, 2006

Dear Parents or Guardians,

I am currently taking courses toward a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction at Moravian College. These courses will assist me in implementing effective teaching methods in my classroom and will help me reflect on my teaching practice as well.

From, August 28th to December 22nd, I am required to conduct a systematic study of my teaching. My research will examine the impact of using fairytales in the teaching of grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the beginner ESL classroom. My research will also examine the effects of a reading and writing workshop setting in an ESL classroom along with individualized learning experiences in centers. Teaching the elements of the English language through reading is a valuable teaching technique that I expect will provide your child with more enjoyable learning experiences.

I will be gathering information to support my study through student interviews, surveys, work samples and observations. All students will have the opportunity to provide feedback to me through these methods. I will only use information collected from students who have permission to participate in the study in any written reports of my research. All of the students' names will be kept confidential as well as the names of teachers and other staff members. No names will be included on work samples or in any reports of my study. All research materials will be kept in a secure location in my home. All data gathered during my study will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

All students will be participating in this integrated language arts setting as part of the regular ESL curriculum; therefore no student will be singled out as a participant or non-participant. Your child will only be considered a participant if I receive your written permission below. Your child may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Withdrawal from this research study will not involve any penalty to your child's grades. If you or your child decides to withdraw from this study, your son or daughter will still be required to participate in the classroom activities involved in the study, but I will agree that I will not use any data pertaining to your child in any written reports of my research. If you or your child wishes to withdraw from this study, please inform me through written communication.

If you have any questions or concerns about my research at any time, please contact the principal at 610-250-2440 or me in writing. My faculty sponsor is Dr. Charlotte Zales. She can be contacted at Moravian College by phone at 610-861-1300 ext: 7958 or email at crzales@moravian.edu.

Please choose the appropriate box below if you do or do not approve of your child being a participant in my teacher research study and return the bottom portion of this letter with your child to me. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Laura A. Warren

I understand that Mrs. Warren will be observing and collecting data as part of her research within her classroom. I understand that my child does not have to be included in her research findings if I chose not to. If I agree to have my child participate, his or her name will be kept confidential and no student will be categorized as a participant or non-participant in this study. All the students will be expected to complete the required work throughout this study as part of their regular ESL curriculum.

Child's name: _____

Yes, my child may be a participant of this research study.

No, I chose not to have my child be a participant of this study.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix I

Riding the Bus to School

I ride a big yellow bus to school. I stand on the corner of our street with my friends and we wait for the bus. My friend's grandma waits with us. When it's raining, she holds an umbrella to keep us dry. Sometimes when it's cold she brings us hot chocolate.

I leave my house to walk to the bus stop after my parents go to work. I watch the clock so I know when to leave. Sometimes mom phones me from her office to remind me. Sometimes she can't call, so I have to be sure to watch the time.

Our bus driver puts his flashing yellow lights on and then stops right next to us. When he has stopped he turns the red lights on so all the cars will stop. He makes sure we are all sitting down before he starts to go. He watches out for us very carefully.

My friends and I are the first ones to be picked up by the bus. We like to sit right behind the bus driver and watch while he picks up all the other kids. We know where everyone lives. By the time we get to our school, the bus is almost full. Sometimes the kids get noisy and the driver has to remind us to keep it down. He says their noise makes it hard for him to concentrate and drive safely. I am glad that our bus driver is so careful.