The Effects of Using Storytelling on Reading Comprehension Through Drama and Theater

Marie Milord
The College at Brockport

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The Effects of Using Storytelling on Reading Comprehension Through Drama and Theater

by

Marie Milord

Spring 2007

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State University of New York College at Brockport in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Science in Education
The Effects of Using Storytelling on Reading Comprehension Through Drama and Theater

by

Marie Milord

APPROVED BY

Advisor

Date

2nd Reader

Date

Director, Graduate Programs

Date
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The Effects of Using Storytelling through Drama on Reading Comprehension Through Drama and Theater

Abstract

This paper was written to determine the effect that storytelling, drama and theater have on reading comprehension. Past research has shown that integrating the arts in the core subjects results in higher academic achievements with students (Dickinson et al., 1997). Further research has shown that incorporating drama and theater in the curriculum help children to construct meaning in a real way (Furman, 2000). Storytelling in the classroom is also a way to get students actively involved in their learning.

In this paper a four week curriculum was set up to determine if incorporating storytelling, drama and theater during the students reading time would increase their reading levels. A baseline Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) was administered prior to implementing lessons. A final reading assessment was administered to determine any changes in the students’ reading levels.
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Recently Kenneth (Tiny) Glover, a well known storyteller, visited my third grade classroom. I was pleasantly surprised by the impact that his storytelling had on my students. They were mesmerized, excited, interested and curious as he told one of his favorite tales. As I watched the interaction between the storyteller and my students, I was certain that I could use this method in my classroom as a teaching tool. I also wanted to incorporate two of my favorite art forms, which are theater and drama, into storytelling lessons with the children.

The purpose of this project is to examine the effects of storytelling on reading comprehension through the integration of the arts, primarily focusing on theater and drama. Will the fusion of storytelling, theater and drama motivate upper emergent readers to read more, resulting in increased reading comprehension?

Characteristics of students who are reading at the transitional stage are those readers who are reading more fluently (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). These readers frequently utilize early reading strategies such as decoding. They are beginning to read longer and more complex texts. These readers are the ones who are now searching for meaning in their stories.

A large percent of the students in the Rochester City School District are below grade level in reading. In the year 2005-2006 there were 52.7% third graders who did not meet the New York State English Language Arts Standardized Test. These students have been
identified as reading below grade level. With laws such as No Child Left Behind, (NCLB 2001) intending to close the achievement gap of students, there is an emphasis on improving reading in many inner city schools such as mine. Third grade students must demonstrate that they are meeting state standards in the English Language Arts. A way of measuring these standards is to test the students’ reading comprehension skills. I want to explore a new approach to reading instruction that may have a positive effect on my students’ reading comprehension.

My school’s comprehensive reform model is America’s Choice. This reform model seeks to enable all students to be fluent readers by the end of the third grade (NCREL, 2000). Under this model reading instruction, called Reader’s Workshop is extensive and structured. Much work and research supports that employing this format aids students with reading comprehension. This model employs Irene Fountas’ and Gay Su Pinnell’s guided reading method (1996). The basic premise of this model is part of the time the students are reading a variety of text independently at their own reading level. These levels are determined after taking a Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA). Another part of this model is that when the students are finished reading independently they are then grouped together according to their similar reading levels. For example, in my third grade classroom there are currently six different guided reading groups. The levels range from a level 10, considered below third grade reading to a level 30 which is at grade level.

In doing this project, I combined some of my interests in theater along with an already well-balanced reading instructional program. I also incorporated storytelling to
see if it would spark an even greater interest in reading, as well as, increase my students’ reading comprehension skills.

Below are some of the terms and definitions that will be used in this paper:

**Reading Comprehension**- The ability to understand information that is presented in written text. (Learning Strategies Database, 97 pages. Retrieved April 9, 2007 from the World Wide Web: [http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/reading.html](http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/reading.html)). Reading comprehension is also constructing meaning from print (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). It is synthesizing information from the text and integrating it with existing understanding.

**Drama**- A literary form involving parts written for actors to perform. A literary composition usually in dialogue form, that centers on the actions of characters. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/drama](en.wikipedia.org/wiki/drama). Drama is the process. (Sun, 2003)

**Theater**- Dramatic literature or its performance: drama. The quality or effectiveness of a theatrical production. Dramatic materials or the use of such materials. [www.thefreedictionary.com](www.thefreedictionary.com). Theater is the production. (Sun, 2003)

**Transitional Readers**- Read silently most of the time, have a large core of known words that are recognized most of the time, integrate sources of information such as letter-sound relationships, meaning, and language structure, have flexible ways of problem solving words, including analysis of letter-sound relations and visual pattern, read phrasing and fluency at appropriate levels (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001, p. 8)
Transitional readers are beginning to handle more complex text with short chapters and more interesting characters. They can summarize texts they’ve read. They are growing more aware of story and text structures and can use mapping strategies to help organize their thinking (Taberski, 2000, p. 16)

**Creative drama**—Creating an experience by which students may come to understand human interactions, empathize with other people, and internalize alternative points of view and develop an understanding of learning through drama (Tatar, 2002).
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Numerous studies have been conducted to link the effects of the arts and their importance to education (www.newhorizons.org). The benefits of the arts and their connection to education show that students who participate in arts activities such as drama improve their academic achievement (American for the Arts. n.d.). Direct links are being discovered as to the benefits the arts have in education. Research in this area continues to grow. In the area of language arts when a component of the arts such as drama is integrated into the reading curriculum students experience more meaningful learning. They are more actively involved with the text (Chauhan, 2004; Doty et al., 2001). The use of storytelling has been linked to improved literacy and language development. When children participate in storytelling it can increase reading comprehension (Bayly, n.d.). While children are listening to stories, they are forced to focus because there is no page and no picture to rely on. They must visualize the setting, character, problems and other parts of a story. These are comprehension skills that must be acquired and applied when students are reading in order to gain understanding.

The Arts in Education

In a study by Dickinson, McKean and Oddleifson (1997), Dickinson et al. not only support music and the visual arts that traditionally have been the center of attention, they also take the position that all four art disciplines, music, drama, dance and the visual
arts play an indispensable part in education and in the classroom. Dickinson et al. from the University of Washington noted that in an elementary school in Seattle every student from kindergarten to fifth grade participated in a dramatic performance each year. The school also experienced a rise in reading skill achievement. Many fourth and fifth grade students’ reading scores were increased by two levels (Dickinson et al., 1997).

Dickinson et al. also cited from a 1995 report by the United States Department of Education that when the arts are used as a means to teach academic subjects, they served to improve understanding of content. Incorporating the arts in the classroom helps to improve regulatory behavior. Furthermore, it helps to improve student behavior in areas such as problem solving and motivation to learn.

Howard Gardner (1983), Harvard University professor, indicated that people are born with eight human intelligences. Three of which are directly linked to the arts. The intelligences include:

- Linguistic intelligence sometimes referred to as word smart
- Logical-mathematical intelligence- number smart
- Spatial intelligence- picture smart – Art- Individuals with this intelligence are visual learners and tend to connect through art.
- Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence- body smart – Dance and movement individuals who learn best through movement and physical experiences.
- Musical intelligence- music smart – musical learners- These individuals are more auditory learners and can learn through rhythm and sounds.
- Interpersonal intelligence- people smart
- Intrapersonal intelligence- self smart
• Naturalist intelligence- nature smart  (Armstrong, n.d.)

Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences states that there are many ways by which learning can take place. Linguistic intelligence and logical mathematical intelligence have, for many years, been the dominant forms in teaching in our schools. Gardner states that alongside these two intelligences, verbal and logical mathematical, the remaining intelligences can be seen as the foundation for learning the visual arts, music and drama.

In applying Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Barry Oreck, noted dancer and art educator in New York City, observed significant positive changes in students with more musical, kinesthetic, and artistic tendencies when the arts were integrated into the other academic areas (Deasy, 2002). Oreck (2006), observed how dance was used in a school to assess students’ understanding of molecular bonding. Motion enabled the students to experience more memorable learning. The students were engaged and motivated.

The arts are major contributors to human intelligence. They help the mind to expand and to function at its highest capacity. When the arts are involved, conventional thinking gives way to creativity. Furthermore, the arts can serve as a bridge for the richly diverse population of students in today’s school. Due to this diversity, instruction in the classroom should not focus primarily on students absorbing information dictated by the teacher. The arts in essence provide a practical way whereby different learners can be reached. Artistic expression or creativity holds no barriers. Consequently race or culture is not a hindrance when the arts are involved (Deasy, 2002)
Visual Arts

There are many ways by which the integration of the arts has been shown to be successful in the classroom. When the visual arts are integrated with reading there is an increase in letter recognition and reading readiness (Brookes, 1997). Preschool students are taught to look at illustrations when learning to read primary books. The pictures in stories help them to understand the actions in the story, giving insight to the events which enables them to decode the words. Students are also required to use picture prompts to create stories, a skill measured in the fourth and eighth grade New York State Achievement Test. Visual arts are also used to teach history. The famous paintings and different forms of art work are introduced to students in order for students to form an understanding of time periods and various cultures.

Fluency in reading comes as result of visual acuity. Bruan and Chilcoat (Lin, 2002) reported that comic books have always been very popular with children. These researchers explained that because of the high levels of visual cues in comic books they can be useful in the language arts classroom. The high level of visual stimulation motivated the students to read more. Dickinson et al. (1997) reported a study of elementary school students who drew characters of the subjects they read in their books. These students scored higher on reading comprehension tests.

Music

According to the National Association for Music Education (MENC), the study of music has been known to increase students’ achievement in verbal and mathematical tests (MENC, n.d.). Dickinson et al. (1997) stated that first graders demonstrated higher level reading scores than their control groups when taught melodies and folk songs. To further
support the relevant role that music plays in learning, a survey of Hungarian students (Dickinson et al., 1997) ranked them first in science achievement amongst seventeen other nations. Research has linked this outcome to the fact that Hungarian students participate in intense music programs starting at the kindergarten level. Music has also been linked to retention such as learning math facts or concepts sung to music. When music is incorporated into the curriculum, children are able to experience the wholeness of language. Learning in the Arts (2000) stated that “brain scans taken during musical performances show that virtually the entire cerebral cortex is active while musicians are playing (Learning in the Arts: Crossing Boundaries, 2000, p. 14).

American for the Arts (n.d.) concluded that using music in the classroom, especially in the area of language literacy, is a great tool to use. It helps to improve listening, speaking, reading and writing. This can be seen in the early years of schooling as children attend childcare, preschool and kindergarten. Many popular children programs such as Sesame Street, Barney, Backyardigans, Dragon Tale, and Doodle Pops help to foster language development. Young children’s vocabulary and sentence structure expands as they watch, repeat, and sing along to the music and songs learned during these shows.

Dance

Another area in which the arts have had positive effects on learning is through the use of dance. In using dance, studies have shown that learning through movement and rhythm can make abstract ideas more understandable to students. The noted author of Teaching the Three R’s, Ann Green Gilbert, who is also the director of the Kaleidoscope Dance Company, believes that dance is the key to learning. She conducted a study of two
hundred and fifty third grade students from the Seattle public schools. The students were taught language arts concepts though dance activities and movement. At the end of the twenty weeks these third graders were tested. The students whose teachers incorporated movement in the classroom scored 13 percent higher on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) than the students who received “traditional” instruction (Gilbert, 1997).

When students are engaged in activities such as giving a dance performance they must memorize the choreography, rehearse and collaborate with each other. In doing so they are developing critical thinking skills, perseverance and persistence, all of which are applicable to other areas of learning.

Drama

Drama can also be viable tool in the classroom. It can be an effective way to bring any subject to life for a student. It can serve as a personal connector to what a student is learning.

In a study conducted by Sherry Dupont (2000), fifth grade students who employed creative drama as part of their instructional strategy scored higher on the Metropolitan Reading Test than those who did not. Creative drama builds and enhances knowledge skills. It also creates a more positive attitude towards learning. Children are eager and willing to work cooperatively with one another. In primary school, pre-school and kindergarten, drama is a tool utilized to teach many concepts and to develop students’ social skills. The children are taught to act out nursery rhymes. In doing so, they are learning to memorize and improvise. These are important strategies needed by emergent readers. Emergent readers are children who are starting to obtain a “network of strategies and skills to help them establish control over print and develop as readers”
These readers recognize high frequency words and understand that print contains a message.

Learning is a social process. Children learn by interacting with each other as partners in small groups. The opportunity to talk with others while learning through drama contributes to the rate and depth of understanding. Middle school students who use drama to act out algebraic equations, literature, or even historical events are learning through experience. The learning thus becomes more personable and memorable.

Drama and Theater in Relation to Reading Comprehension

How can drama and theater be directly linked to reading comprehension? Reading comprehension as it is defined by Doty, Popplewell and Byers (2001) is the process by which the reader constructs meaning with the interaction of texts. Over the past 25 years understanding the process of comprehension has changed. In an article by Reynolds (2002), he challenged previous research conducted by Gough (1971). Gough’s initial analysis was that reading was a linear mechanical process. He also explained reading as being a passive process. After decoding, reading quickly led to comprehension from the reader. This was the premise that led teachers for many years to focus mainly on decoding words and phonics.

These findings of Gough’s soon became highly scrutinized as being “too sequential and inflexible”. Researchers (Reynolds, 1992; Reynolds, 2002) concluded those variables outside of the body of text such as titles, pictures or other variables, including the reader’s objectives or point of view, are imperatively relevant to comprehension. Early classroom educators understand that there are many different
strategies for understanding new vocabulary. Good readers are able to assess meaning and apply it to the text. A study of over one thousand fourth graders' oral fluency found that fluency rate and accuracy were all highly related to comprehension (Pinnell et al., 1995). Reading is the construction of meaning. Comprehension is not a product of reading but the process.

In a study entitled the Nature of Reading Comprehension (Reynolds, 2002) an identical reading passage was given to a group of sophomore college students. Each group understood the passage in relation to what they already knew. Their prior knowledge and experiences influenced how they interpreted the passage. Reader's oral language is their primary source for anticipating what may happen next in text; checking whether their reading makes sense as well as their understanding of the world are all critical factors for comprehension.

Reading is a multi-faceted process that includes more than just decoding words. When teaching reading, classroom teachers must incorporate a series of methods and activities that will promote reading comprehension. One of these methods and the basis for this research is storytelling.

**Storytelling**

Storytelling is not a new process. Storytelling has been around since the beginning of time. It was the principle way of telling and recording history. Storytelling is relating a tale to one or more listeners through voice and gestures (NCTE, n.d.). Storytelling provides an immediate interaction between a teller and a listener. It is a method by which imagination can be stimulated and in turn leads to higher cognitive level in student's responses (Aiex, 1988). Storytelling is a powerful and effective tool in
teaching language acquisition (Honeygan, 2000). When children are listening to stories they are developing skills that will prepare them for more complex literature. In a study conducted by Phillips (n.d.), he stated that vocabulary development and oral language were more advanced in children who are continuously exposed to various stories.

Not only can storytelling be linked to language literacy and development, it is also important to other areas of learning. As cited in an article by Speaker (2000), Reed documented the increase in attention span, listening skills and accuracy of recalling sequencing ability of children exposed to storytelling on a regular basis. Many studies have been done on storytelling and its effect on learning, particularly in the area of language literacy. In one study, to provide a basis for implementing storytelling in the classroom researchers, Speaker, Taylor and Kamen (2004) assessed changes in verbal fluency in a group of preschool children. This study analyzed each child’s language ability before and after multiple sessions of a storytelling program. The results concluded that each child within this group improved language skills when storytelling was implemented in the curriculum. Though each child’s language development grew at different rates, each child made growth in his/her overall expressive language acquisition. This research strongly supports the use of storytelling as part of the curriculum for every preschool child.

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 1992) storytelling provides elementary school age students the opportunity to listen, retell and even act out stories, all of which are important components to comprehension. In using storytelling, comprehension can also be reinforced through activities such as learning story structure, the ability to visualize, learning new vocabularies and relating ideas to
their own lives and the world. When comprehension is at work, the student or participant can make connections to other stories. Storytelling is normally a process that does not include pictures or other visual props, as a result the listeners must use both the left side and right side of the brain to process what they are hearing (Woodward, 2002). When children listen to stories they develop a sense of structure that helps them to understand more complex literature (Pedersen, 1995).

**Benefits of Including Storytelling in the School Curriculum**

Storytelling promotes a wide range of skills. Storytelling can expose children to different social and cultural experiences. Telling stories, especially those of the past, can serve as a link from the past to the present and into the future. Children are able to make connections to a world outside of themselves. Furthermore, young children are able to learn appropriate listening behaviors and show an increase in attention as they are listening (National Storytelling Press, 1994).

In the area of comprehension, when listening to stories children acquire new and meaningful vocabulary. Children learn basic skills such as visualization, prediction and story structure which are vital elements of reading comprehension. Storytelling also helps to improve critical thinking skills because as children are listening they are anticipating how the story will unfold. Therefore, through storytelling, children are able to acquire a greater culture of literacy. According to Storytelling Arts, Inc. (2002), a professional development provider for the New Jersey Department of Education, the further benefits of storytelling in the classroom are that students:
- Attain meaningful vocabulary when listening to stories
- Are exposed to cultural diversity through multicultural stories
- Play with the sound of language as they repeat rhymes and chants
- Increase their ability to visualize
- Become emotionally attached to what they are listening to, in turn producing motivation for remembering and retelling
- Learn to tell stories, honing oral language skills and building self confidence
- Motivation to read increases

Outside of the classroom storytelling provides the following benefits:

- Allows students to share the wisdom of international folk tales that will help them think about values and ethical dilemmas in the short term and possibly influence future decisions in the long term.
- Allows students to discuss the obstacles and possibilities in life through the metaphors that stories offer.
- Provides an avenue for children to think about the world outside of themselves.
- A platform for the expression of ideas. (Storytelling Arts Inc, 2002)

When storytelling is combined with techniques such as drama or theater it can serve as a significant intervention tool for reading.
Benefits of Drama in the Classroom

The word drama and theater [for the purpose of this research] will be used interchangeably and will be in referenced to the educational classroom setting. Drama in the classroom setting is at times referred to as:

- creative dramatics
- creative drama
- process drama
- educational drama
- improvisational drama
- developmental drama
- informal drama (Sun, 2003)

These terms as explained by Tatar (2002) all fall under an “umbrella concept” that incorporates the many forms of improvised and informal drama that is used in classrooms.

The terms drama and theater are respectively referred to as process and production (Sun, 2003). Drama is a means of motivation for young children. It also promotes emotional growth. Drama in the classroom is a way to make any subject come alive. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) stated that using drama in the classroom places the learner in situations that seems real. Teachers who use drama in the classroom say they see an increase in their student’s listening ability. They also have a greater level of confidence in their student’s ability (Prescott, 2003). In spite of earlier findings research continues to show that classroom teachers are hesitant to use drama in the classroom.
Researcher Pin Yun Sun (2003) compiled a list as to some of the reasons why teachers are reluctant to use drama in the classroom:

1. Teachers are easily overwhelmed by the various terms used in drama and theater.
2. Dramatic activities tend to be seen as time consuming and unnecessary.
3. Since most teacher education program do not offer courses related to drama and theater, teachers are unfamiliar with facilitating dramatic activities.
4. Dramatic activities are so playful that teachers might be afraid that children will not take learning seriously. (Sun, 2003)

However, more research is finding that with the emergence of drama in the classroom in the form of Reader’s Theater (RT), teachers are finding it easier to integrate drama in their classroom (Rasinski, 2003). No longer does drama have to be an isolated subject taught only at the secondary level as part of performance studies, but it can be viewed as part of an integrated curriculum in the elementary grades as well. In a 2003 article, Jennifer Prescott reported the successes of an elementary teacher in North Carolina. Fourth grade teacher Lorraine Griffith started using drama in her classroom after noticing the frustration of her students in reading. Griffith used drama in the form of Reader’s Theater (RT). After ten weeks her students’ reading level increased by one full grade. Griffith continued with this technique in her class. By the end of the year her students had gained three years of growth (Prescott, 2003).

The use of drama in the classroom is essential to the development of literacy in the early stage of reading. Children involved in dramatic activities during reading and writing construct holistic and meaningful communication (Furman, 2000). They are able to gain meaning in a real way. Their learning is more concrete. When children read they
are using the same requirements needed to understand drama. Reading, like drama, is a way to interpret the world. Not only can students find meaning through drama, they are also able to formulate new ones.

An article titled, *Drama Relationships to Child Development* (http://www.angelfire.com/) supported arguments by two child theorist, Lev Vigotsky and Jean Piaget, that explained how effective classroom drama is to early childhood learning. Vigotsky suggested that thinking can be related to social interactions that people have with one another and “that out of these children create their own way of thinking which incorporates what they see around them.” Vigotsky called this internalization. This method of internalization social speech transference and is one of the methods used to create and understand characters in literature, develop understanding in an improvisation and analyze content in drama (www.angelfire.com.).

Piagetian theory ensues the same pattern as classroom drama. Piaget believed that children learn through interaction with their surroundings and environment. When drama is used in the classroom it creates an “interactive situation” whereby the learner is interacting with others in the classroom, the classroom environment itself and maybe other aspects of their surrounding.

Drama in the classroom can help to reshape students’ thinking, building knowledge upon knowledge. It should also be noted that drama in the classroom promotes cooperative learning, especially in the language arts curriculum. While engaging in dramatic activities students must rely and interact with each other. There are numerous approaches to drama in the classroom. This research focuses on drama in the area of language arts, primarily in reading comprehension.
When drama is used in the classroom teachers are able to see instant results. Students readily anticipate drama. Students who are involved with drama reveal skills and strengths that the classroom teacher may not have seen before (Kelner, K., Flynn, R., 2006). Below are some of the ways that drama can be effective in the classroom (Dale et al., 2000; Cramer et al., 2003; Kelner and Flynn, 2006)

a) Drama is a motivator for students, it can help students to facilitate and participate in reading. Drama can help to scaffold learning.

b) Students can learn symbolic representation in drama such as using a picture of a cat for the letter or the sound of c.

c) Drama provides conditions for repeated oral reading which increases fluency.

d) Drama helps students to obtain meaning from text through seeing, speaking and doing.

e) Drama helps in grammar development.

f) Through dramatic activities students are exposed to different genres of literature.

g) When using dramatic activities in the classroom, students are able to self monitor their involvement and their ability to stay on task.

h) Finally, drama can be used as an assessment tool. Teachers can easily observe students in their dramatic activities assessing their comprehension of a story.

There are endless ways to bring instruction to life when dramatic activities are used. Drama and theater help to educate the child as a whole. What is learned through drama remains learned (Dickinson, 2002).
An ancient Chinese Proverb states this:

Tell me and I will forget.

Show me and I will remember.

Involve me and I will understand.
Chapter III

PROCEDURES

Introduction

In this project I wanted to find out if storytelling along with drama and theater would have an effect on my students’ comprehension. During our language arts block, referred to as reader’s workshop, I incorporated storytelling, drama and theater. As stated in the earlier part of this teacher action research my interest in storytelling and drama stem from having a well known, local storyteller in my classroom. Mr. Kenneth “Tiny” Glover, a member of the Artist-in-Residence Program in the Rochester City School District, spent a semester in my classroom. His role was to introduce and engage my students in the art of storytelling. Within the first twenty minutes of his initial visit I was amazed at how attentive and focused my students were. In a classroom with children of diverse and special needs, Mr. Glover was able to capture their attention. When the story came to an end, Mr. Glover asked the class some questions relating to the story. A shy student who generally does not participate was engaged and answered questions. At the end of the session my students were excited and wanted to know when Mr. Glover would be coming back.

My students’ eagerness and enthusiasm were in fact an important part in doing this research.
Purpose

The purpose of this study was to find out if my students’ comprehension in reading would increase if drama and theater were implemented along with the use of storytelling. I used storytelling as a tool as part of our language arts block. I also wanted to know what the effects would be if drama and theater were also incorporated. Would using drama and theater affect my student’s comprehension? I was already impressed with my students’ enthusiasm towards storytelling during Mr. Glover’s initial visit. Would that eagerness remain the same if they became storytellers themselves? How would they feel when they had to dramatize their story?

To implement this study two sets of curriculum units were designed. The first topic was the water cycle integrated with drama and theater, the second was fables integrated with storytelling, drama and theater. Throughout both units the storyteller (Mr. Glover) continuously engaged the students in the art of storytelling and the importance of gestures, voice, movement and the important role they play in understanding a story. Lesson plans and activities that incorporated storytelling and drama were carried out. Throughout the units the students were monitored and observed by the classroom teacher. Test and survey were administered and quantitatively analyzed to find out if the implementation of storytelling drama and theater had an effect on students’ comprehension.

Participants

This study took place in a third grade in the Rochester City School District. The school has partnered with Young Audiences of Rochester (YAR), an organization aimed
at improving learning in and through the arts. As part of this program, the school had a range of artist residencies conducting classroom workshops with the students.

There were twenty students in the classroom, fourteen girls and six boys, all of African descent. The classroom is an integrated classroom consisting of five children with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP). The children’s services ranged from Educationally Related Services (ERSS) to speech services. Two of the children were labeled as learning disabled (LD). One of the students recently arrived in Rochester from another country and was receiving services for students who are not yet proficient in the English language. This student was receiving services known as English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). There were students receiving individual and group counseling for social and emotional issues. With the exception of six students, the rest of the class was receiving Academic Intervention Services (AIS), an additional service for children who do not meet the state standards according the previous year’s Stanford 9 comprehensive reading test. Also, nineteen of these students took part in the Extended Day after school program.

The classroom consisted of a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, and a part-time paraprofessional. During the course of this study, the artist in residence, Mr. Glover, spent ten, forty-five minute sessions in the classroom. During these visits Mr. Glover would engage the class in telling various stories, folktales and fables (See Appendix H)

The aim of this study was primarily targeted for students who are reading below the recommended grade level according to the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) used by the Rochester City School District (See Appendix A). In my classroom there
were seven children who had been identified as reading below grade level. Their reading levels ranged from DRA level 10-G, an end of first grade reading level, to level 20-K, a mid-second grade reading level. These levels were significantly below third grade reading level. Although all students participated in the study, my observations were concentrated on these seven students. Would the integration drama and theater help to increase the students’ reading comprehension? Would their reading level increase according to the DRA?

**Procedures**

It has become mandatory that third graders now take the New York State Standardized English Language Arts Test (ELA). A major part of this test is reading comprehension. There is a great push throughout the Rochester City School District that all children must meet the standards. In an effort to do so, the implementation of the arts was integrated with my language arts block, specifically Reader’s Workshop. This curriculum project would break into two parts. Dramatic activities will be utilized throughout both units.

Before starting with the project the students completed the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) (See Appendix I) to determine their current reading level. A final DRA was administered at the end of this project to ascertain any changes in the students’ reading levels after implementing storytelling, drama and theater. The two parts of the project are described below:

- Part one was a unit on the water cycle, ending with a dramatized performance of a story that the students developed. They wrote, rehearsed and performed all that they learned and understood about the water cycle. It was important that the
students demonstrated comprehension by including all parts of the water cycle as they did their performance.

The school where I currently teach is a performance magnet school at the elementary level. The students are familiar with drama performance. As part of their special subject areas, they regularly participated in a performing arts class.

I began the first part of this project by assessing prior knowledge on the water cycle. The students did a pretest on what they knew about the water cycle from previous grades (See Appendix C). There was also a survey to assess what the students knew and what they thought that drama and storytelling were (See Appendix B). I began our activities by reading a book on the water cycle. Throughout this unit the students maintained a journal that detailed their thoughts and ideas about the activities.

- Part Two entailed a unit on fables, ending with students producing a dramatized performance of their own fable demonstrating comprehension that all fables teach a lesson. In this unit the students became storytellers by developing their own fables, then telling the story.

As with the previous unit the students were given a pre assessment survey to find out what they knew about fables and storytelling (See Appendix D). They also kept a journal.

Tiny Glover was an integral part of this study. His role as a storyteller was the model for the students to emulate when they became storytellers. Mr. Glover told different fables (See Appendix H) over the course of his visits before the students began working to create their own. He wanted to teach through fables, some of the basic components of character education such as listening, sharing, compromising, respect and
being a friend. In order for the students to demonstrate understanding of fables, it was important for them show in their own fables that characters are usually animals and that a lesson must be learned at the end. Mr. Glover discussed these components of fables each time he told a story. After each visit from Mr. Glover, the students participated in planned lesson activities (See Appendix G).

Since I utilize an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, various subject areas are brought into the ELA time block. While learning about a country in social studies, students are reading books about that country during Reader’s Workshop, writing a report during Writer’s Workshop or solving a math problem based on that country’s population during Math Workshop. During Part one of this project students integrated science into their Reader’s block as they learned about the water cycle through drama and theater. Part two of this project focused more on language arts reading as the children created their own fables using components of storytelling with drama and finally theater as they performed their stories for the rest of the class.

**Instruments of study**

A major part of this teacher action research project was for the children to keep a journal. In this journal they were instructed to keep their ideas, thoughts, questions and reflections that had to with storytelling, drama and theater activities. As a component of our Reader’s Workshop, my students maintain a reading journal. This new journal specifically would be utilized as a reflection to the storytelling, drama and theater activities. The students would reflect on what took place during the lessons. The journal was used for tasks such as:

- explain a character from one of the stories told by the storyteller
• write a sequence of events from a story that was told by the storyteller
• or, what was the lesson learned from a fable told by the storyteller, etc.

In the first part of this research a survey was used to assess the children’s knowledge of drama, theater and storytelling. A part of this survey also assessed the students’ attitude toward these subjects (See Appendix B). There was also a pretest assessing their prior knowledge of the water cycle (See Appendix C). At the end of the two weeks, a test (See Appendix E) was given to determine what new knowledge they gained during this unit. I also assessed the students’ prior knowledge of fables (See Appendix D).

As part of my own professional development, I kept a journal to record my ongoing observations of my students’ behaviors, attitudes and understanding of subject matter. I particularly observed two of my students, student A which I will refer to as Rashawn and student B as Tamika. Rashawn has been labeled LD (Learning Disabled) is reading significantly below grade level at a level G. One of Tamika’s goals on her IEP (Individualized Educational Program) is to increase social skills primarily being able to work cooperatively in a group; Tamika is also reading below grade level. A skill needed for drama and theater is working cooperatively within a group.

Using the Diagnostic Reading Assessment, at the completion of the two units, the students’ reading levels were assessed to determine if comprehension increased.

Results of the pre and post surveys were also analyzed qualitatively to determine the changes in attitudes, knowledge and behaviors in regards to drama, theater, storytelling, and reading comprehension.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA)</td>
<td>Pre and Post test to assess students’ reading levels before and after study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre test on the water cycle</td>
<td>To assess students’ prior knowledge on the water cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on knowledge of drama and storytelling</td>
<td>To assess students’ prior exposure to the arts components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of knowledge on fables</td>
<td>To assess students’ knowledge of what is a fable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>For students to record their notes, such as parts of water cycle or characters in the fables, moral of story, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories by Tiny Glover</td>
<td>Storyteller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post test on the water cycle</td>
<td>To assess content knowledge gained after unit on water cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post test on fables</td>
<td>To assess content knowledge gained after unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fable graphic organizer</td>
<td>To help students create stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Rubric</td>
<td>To help students meet drama performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fable Rubric</td>
<td>To help students meet criteria for what is included in a fable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This project was set up to examine if the implementation of storytelling through drama and theater would have an effect on students' reading comprehension. Would the use of drama and storytelling as part of the reading block increase the students' comprehension? Would it motivate the students to read more? In search of these questions a series of test were conducted. The students' reading levels prior to the intervention were assessed. Their attitude and knowledge of drama and storytelling also prior to the intervention were surveyed. At the end of the study, these surveys and test were again administered to determine any changes. A final reading assessment was also administered.

**Pre-Survey and Pretest**

Prior to starting this project all of the students were tested to determine their reading levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
<th>Starting DRA Level (Level/Letter)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>10 / F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>18 / J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>18 / J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>24 / L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>24 / L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>12 / G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the beginning of the unit, the students were given a survey to assess what they knew about storytelling and drama. The survey consisted of six questions (See Appendix B). The results of the survey are reported in Table 1 and 2. Four of the responses were rated according to the following scale:

1 = I don’t know anything about it/I never heard of it

2 = I have heard of it/But I don’t know anything about it

3 = I have heard of it/I know a little bit about it

4 = I know a lot about it
Table 2

Students and Knowledge of Storytelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Response#1</th>
<th>Response#2</th>
<th>Response#3</th>
<th>Response#4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of storytelling?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about storytelling?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of drama and theater?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about drama and theater?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 20

There was an overall greater number of students who knew very little about storytelling. Out of the twenty students only nine stated that they had ever heard of storytelling. Furthermore, half the class stated that they did not know anything about it.

There was an observable difference in looking at responses that had to do with drama and theater. Twelve of the twenty students responded that they had heard of drama and theater. Ten of the students answered that they knew something about drama and theater, but not much.

Parts of this pre-unit survey also assessed whether or not the students had ever participated in drama, and if they had ever listened to a storyteller. The following table indicates their responses.

Table 3

Students Prior Participation in Drama and Storytelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever participated in a drama?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever listened to a storyteller</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 20

31
The result of this survey showed that more than half of the class, 13 students had never listened to a storyteller. Eleven of the twenty students had never participated in dramatic activities.

Before implementing the unit the students also took a pretest to assess their prior knowledge of the water cycle. There were three questions on this test. The first two were taken from the third grade science curriculum from the Rochester City School District.

1. What is the water cycle?
2. What are the parts of the water cycle?
3. Would you like to learn about the water cycle?

The results of the pretest showed that 100% of the class did not know what the water cycle was and were unable to name its parts. Consequently, with the exception of one out of the twenty students, they all answered that they would like to learn about it.

Before starting the second unit on fables the students were also given a survey to assess what they knew about this subject. They were given four questions. The first question: Do you know what a fable is? Was scored on a 1 to 4 point scale with

1 = I don’t know anything about it/I never heard of it
2 = I have heard of it and don’t know anything about it
3 = I have heard of it / I know a little about it
4 = I know a lot about it
Two of the questions had yes or no answers. The last question the students were to write whatever it is they knew about fables. The results of this survey are reported in table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response#1</th>
<th>Response#2</th>
<th>Response#3</th>
<th>Response#4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you know what a fable is?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 20

The results of this survey indicated that nine of the twenty students had never heard of fables. Two of them had heard of fables but did not know anything about them. Nine students said they had heard about fables and knew a little bit about them. No one in the class indicated that they knew a lot about fables. It should also be noted that all of the surveys were given with full teacher assistance. Each question was explained clearly by the examiner and by using examples. The rating scale was further explained by using chart paper, and breaking it down into smaller parts.

The following table showed the students' response and their attitude toward fables

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to learn about fables?</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to like to create your own fable then act it out?</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=20
With the exception of one student, the rest of the class wanted to learn about fables. Eighteen out of the twenty students stated that they also wanted to act out their fables.

**Post-Survey and Post Test**

At the completion of the unit the surveys and post tests were again given to the students to determine if any changes took place. The first post test assessed if the students gained knowledge on storytelling and drama after the unit. The responses were rated on a 1 to 4 scale. The responses were rated according to the following:

- **Response 1** = I don’t know anything about it
- **Response 2** = I heard about it but don’t know anything about it
- **Response 3** = I heard about it/ I know a little bit about it
- **Response 4** = I know a lot about it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Response#1</th>
<th>Response#2</th>
<th>Response#3</th>
<th>Response#4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of storytelling?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of drama and theater?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 20

The results showed that after the unit on the water cycle, 90% percent of the class stated that they knew what storytelling was.
There was a change in response at the end of the unit with the following two questions:

Table 7
Students Awareness after Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever participated in a drama?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever listened to a storyteller</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 20

At the end of the unit on the water cycle the students took a comprehension test to see if they gained knowledge on the water cycle.

1. What is the water cycle?
2. How many parts are there in the water cycle?
3. What are the parts of the water cycle?

The correct answers were:

1. The stages that water goes through from the earth to the air and back to the earth
2. Three parts of the water cycle
3. Evaporation, condensation, precipitation

When asked what is the water cycle? All of the students were able to give a correct definition of the water cycle. They were also able answer the second question correctly stating that there are three parts of the water cycle. The students were also asked a final question about their attitude on their performance of the water cycle unit.

The question and their responses are indicated below.

Did you like performing the story that you and your group created on the water cycle? To this 19 students responded Yes and one student responded No.
At the end of the unit on fables the students took a multiple choice assessment survey (See Appendix H). They were given the following questions

1. What is a fable?
2. Name two things you learned about fables
3. Did you like acting out the fable that you created?

The following table indicates the number of students who responded correctly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Students who Answered Correctly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is a fable?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name two things you learned</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you like acting out the</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fable you created?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this survey indicated that at the end of the fables unit 100% of the students were able to state correctly what a fable was. Ninety percent of the class was able to correctly name two things that they learned about fables. A hundred percent of the class said that they enjoyed acting out the fables that they created.

After the completion of both units, the Diagnostic Reading Assessment was administered to determine if the implementation of storytelling along with drama and theater affected the students’ reading comprehension. The following table indicates a comparison of the student’s reading level before and after storytelling and drama were implemented.
Table 9
Comparison of Before and After DRA Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>Starting DRA Level (Level/Letter)</th>
<th>Ending DRA Level Level/Letter</th>
<th>Number Increased in Level (+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>10 / F</td>
<td>16 / I</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>18 / J</td>
<td>20 / K</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>18 / J</td>
<td>18 / J</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>24 / L</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>24 / L</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>12 / G</td>
<td>18 / J</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>20 / K</td>
<td>30 / L</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>28 / M</td>
<td>28 / M</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student I</td>
<td>24 / L</td>
<td>28 / M</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student J</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student K</td>
<td>28 / M</td>
<td>34 / O</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>38 / P</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>28 / M</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student N</td>
<td>20 / K</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student O</td>
<td>20 / K</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student P</td>
<td>28 / M</td>
<td>34 / O</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Q</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>34 / O</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student R</td>
<td>24 / L</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student S</td>
<td>28 / M</td>
<td>30 / N</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student T</td>
<td>34 / O</td>
<td>38 / P</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 20
Summary

This project was designed to determine if the implementation of storytelling along with drama and theater would have an effect on students’ comprehension. When looking at the result of the comprehension test on the water cycle. It is evident that implementing drama affected the student’s understanding of what the water cycle is. All of the students demonstrated more than adequate comprehension by correctly answering the questions on the test and naming the parts of the water cycle.

On the fables unit the students demonstrated comprehension by correctly answering what fables are. When the students created their fables, 100% of the class included animals as their characters and also made sure that there was a lesson to be learned. They dramatized their story by using appropriate gestures that depicted elements such as sadness or anger or disappointment to convey an understanding of the fables that they created.

The evidence in many of the post DRA levels suggest that students’ comprehension was positively affected with the implementation of storytelling drama and theater due to the increase in reading levels.
Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS and REFLECTIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to find out if using storytelling through drama and theater would have an effect on reading comprehension. I wanted to know if my students would understand more of what they read if components of the arts such as drama and theater were implemented as part of the language arts block. I was also interested to see if the use of drama would increase my students’ motivation to read.

In the course of the four weeks during which this study was conducted, I observed many areas of growth in the students. At the end of the two units, the students’ reading levels were assessed. According to the results more than half of the student’s reading levels were increased. Many of the students moved up at least two levels in their reading. Three of the seven students (student G, student N, and student O) in the classroom who were identified as reading below grade level were now reading at a third grade level. Three of the seven did increase in reading levels but did not make enough gains to be at third grade reading level. There were no changes in one out the seven students originally described as reading grade levels (See Appendix J).

When comparing the pre and post test survey of the water cycle, after using the drama activities, all of the students were able state what the water cycle was. This led me to believe that using dramatic activities did make a difference in helping the students to gain content knowledge. During my observations, I noticed how involved and excited the students were when they were working in their groups. I observed how they were helping each other in understanding the parts of the water cycle. For example, if someone
in the group gave an incorrect definition, someone else, even if it was a student from a different group, would help out by giving a correct explanation. For example, I observed one student explaining through gestures and movement a part of the water cycle to another student. The other student answered: “Oh, I get it now.”

As I was walking around the classroom, I wondered and wrote in my journal: Did that student really understand? The question was answered when I observed that child do a retelling of the definition in her own words. Throughout the water cycle the students worked cooperatively together. I questioned if that made more of a difference then the actual dramatic activities that they were working on. It confirmed what researchers have stated, that using drama in the classroom teaches children to work more cooperatively with one another (Dickinson et al., 1997). It also confirmed that when drama is used in the classroom, children show a greater level of confidence. I observed this with many of my students, particularly with Tamika and Rashawn (referred to in Procedures). As well as learning to become a better reader, one of the goals for Tamika was to increase her social skills. She needed to learn how to positively interact with other students and to be able to do her work. I noticed that while working on the activities, she participated and positively cooperated with her group. Rashwan, labeled as LD, was the student who after being shown a part of the water cycle was able to define that part in his own words.

These events happened throughout the unit. It was interesting to see the students looking for more information on their own. They borrowed books from our classroom library. They were reading books about the water cycle on their own. They shared and explained what they read, demonstrating a motivation to read more and also a comprehension of what they were reading.
In the second unit on the fables the students became storytellers. In this unit the students had to create their own fable stories and then later dramatize them. At this point of the study the students were more knowledgeable and comfortable with the idea of dramatizing a story. They knew that using expression when dramatizing a story helps others to understand what is happening in the story. They communicated to me that when they acted out what they read, it made it easier for them to understand.

This unit was slightly different from the previous one because the students had to create their own stories, be able to narrate their stories, and later act them out. This part of the project also required the students to work in groups with each other. The groups were changed to give the students a chance to work with different individuals. At first I thought that the students would be disappointed to change groups, but when the changes were made, the students’ excitement continued knowing that they would be “acting out” their stories. Their willingness and eagerness was a confirmation that drama is a motivator for learning. It was a new kind of excitement that my students exhibited. They were happy and engaged. They were more interested in their work. As they were working on their fables they were making connections to other stories, an important part of comprehension. One student related the fable, the Grasshopper and the Ants, to a situation in her home. She accurately and amusingly related the characters and their actions to individuals and an incident in her household. At the end of this unit the students were able to create their own fables. They demonstrated understanding of fables by having animal characters and a moral at the end.
A difficult part of this unit was for the students to develop a moral for their stories. One thing I would change in doing this unit again would be to have the class generate a list of lessons or morals. Later on as we proceed with the unit, they would be able to choose one of the morals from the generated list and use it in their stories.

It is my firm belief that using arts components in the classroom such as drama and theater help students to learn better. According to the observations and a final reading assessment I can say that using storytelling techniques with drama and theater helped my students to comprehend more and in turn increased their reading levels. As I continue teaching I will look for ways to incorporate drama in the classroom with the different subjects.
References


Additional Resources


Amrbruster, B. B., Lehr, F. & Osborn, J. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read kindergarten through grade 3* (C. Ralph Adler, Ed.) (pp 47-57). Center for the Improvement of Early Reading (CIERA) and National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)


Harvey, S., & Goudvis, A. (2000). *Strategies that work teaching comprehension to enhance understanding*. Canada: Stenhouse.


Appendix A
Diagnostic Reading Assessment Levels
Appendix A
Diagnostic Reading Assessment levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROXIMATE GRADE LEVEL</th>
<th>DRA LEVEL</th>
<th>Beginning, Middle End of Grade</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
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Appendix B
Pre-survey on Storytelling and Drama
Appendix B
PRE-SURVEY

Name __________________________  Date ______________________

Circle a number that tells how much you know
1- I don’t know anything about it / I never heard of it
2- I have heard of it/ But I don’t know anything about it
3- I have heard of it / I know a little bit about it
4- I know a lot about it

What do you know about storytelling?
1  2  3  4

What do you know about drama or theater?
1  2  3  4

Have you ever been part of a drama performance?
Yes   No

Have you ever heard a storyteller?
Yes   No
Tell in your own words what do you think storytelling is?

Would you like to become a storyteller?
Yes          No

Would you like to create your own story then act it out?
Yes          No
Appendix C
Pre-Assessment on the water cycle
Appendix C
Pre-assessment

Name ______________________ Date ____________________

What is the water cycle?

Name three parts of the water cycle?

Would you like to learn about the water cycle in a play?
Appendix D
Pre-Survey

Name__________________________  Date_______________________

Circle a number that tells how much you know
  1- I don’t know anything about it / I never heard of it
  2- I have heard of it/ But I don’t know anything about it
  3- I have heard of it / I know a little bit about it
  4- I know a lot about it

Do you know what a fable is?

1  2  3  4

What can you tell me about a fable?

Would you like to learn about fables?

Would you like to create your own fable then act it out?
Appendix E
Post-Assessment on water cycle
Appendix E

*Water cycle post test*

Name ____________________ Date __________________

1. What is the water cycle?

2. How many parts are there in the water cycle?

3. What are the parts of the water cycle?
Appendix F
Post-test on fables
Appendix F

NAME: ___________________ Date ______________________

1. What is a fable?

2. Name two things you learned about fables?

3. Did you like acting out the story you created?
Appendix G
Lesson Plans
Prior to starting activities, administer Diagnostic Reading Assessment to get a baseline of students’ reading levels.

**Topic:**
Introduction to storytelling and storyteller
Language Arts/ Storytelling/ Drama

**Objectives**
- To engage students in the art of storytelling
- Students will attend to a listening activity for a specified time
- Students will listen for information and understanding
- Students will be able to identify parts of the story such as setting, characters, problems

**Standards**
*English Language Arts: Listening Standard – ELA.03* - Language for information and understanding.
*Standard Arts I: Theater* - Creating, Performing and Participating in the arts

**Materials:**
Story by Mr. Glover
Journal

**Procedure**
1) Gather students to group area
2) Storyteller explains the art of storytelling, and the importance of gestures, voice, or movement on understanding a story
3) Storyteller narrates a story
4) After the story, ask students comprehension questions such as:
   i. Where did the story take place?
   ii. Who are the characters?
   iii. What was the problem in the story?
   iv. How did the story end?

Closure
Students write a retelling of the story including setting, character and problem in their journals.
Day 2

Introduce water cycle to students

**Topic**

Introduction to water cycle activities
Language Arts- reading comprehension/Drama

**Objectives**

- Students will listen to a story about the water cycle
- Students will listen for key vocabulary of parts of the water cycle
- Students will dramatize vocabulary words using gestures and movements

**Standards**

*English Language Arts Standard 2- Information and Understanding*

*English Language Arts Standard 2- Language for Literary Response and Expression*

*Standard Arts 1-Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts*

**Materials**

Story on the water cycle- A Water’s Journey
Chart paper
Display list of vocabulary words (parts of water cycle) on chart paper for students to see

**Procedure**

- Briefly describe to children new unit that will be taught on water cycle
- Remind children of lesson from day 1 of the important part that non verbal clues such as gestures, voice or movement play in understanding a story
- Tell students in today’s story they will be listening for the key words that are displayed on the chart and when they hear those key words they are to do the assigned movements
- Assign movements to vocabulary words:
  - water cycle-point index finger and rotate around in a continuous circle
  - evaporation- wiggle fingers going up in the air, then halt
  - condensation-raise hands and connect above head forming a big circle
-precipitation- raise hands up the air and wiggle fingers going down

○ Have students become familiar with movements by practicing

○ Students listen to story once without movement.
○ Read story again, this time have children incorporate movements as they are listening.

Closure

Have students reflect in their journals by writing what they liked in today’s activities and why.
Day 3

Topic
Dramatizing parts of the water cycle
Language arts/ Drama

Objectives
Students will act out parts (or concept) of the water cycle story using dramatic movements

Standards
Standard Arts 1- Creating Performing and Participating in the Arts
Standard Arts 2- Knowing and Using Materials and Resources
English Language Arts Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

Materials
Hand a copy of story parts to groups that they will need to dramatize
Have a box of prop materials that students may want to use ready (i.e. yellow paper for sun, blue cloth materials, cotton balls, etc)

Procedures
- Place students in groups of four
- Hand out parts of story that each group will dramatize
- Explain to students that in yesterday’s lesson they were given the movements to act out, but that today with their groups they have to create their own movements.
- Give each group a designated area to work in

Closure
Each group dramatizes parts of story that they were given
Students write reflections of activities in journal
Day 4

**Topic**
Reading Water cycle play
Language Arts/Drama (Reader's Theater)

**Objectives**
- Students will read aloud expressively to convey an understanding of text

**Standards**
*English Language Arts 2*- Language for Literary Response and Expression
*English Language Arts 1*- Language for Information and Understanding
*Standard Arts 1*- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Art
*Standard Arts 2*- Knowing and Using Materials and Resources

**Materials**
A copy of Reader's Theatre story for each student

**Procedures**
- Review the meaning of theater and drama
- Hand a copy of reader's theatre water cycle to each student
- Assign reading parts to students

**Closure**
Students reflect in their journals
Students write in journals:
- What the story (play) was about.
- Explain who the characters were.
- What they learned from the story.
Day 5 and Day 6

Topic
Language Arts/ Drama
Creating water cycle story

Objectives
• Students will create their own water cycle stories

Standards
*English Language Arts Standard 2- Language for Literary Response and Expression
*English Language Arts Standard 1- Language for Information and Understanding
*Standard Arts 1- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts
*Standard Arts 2- Knowing and using Materials for the Arts

Materials
Paper
Pencil

Procedure
  o Explain to students that for the next two days of activities, they will be working in groups to create their own water cycle
  o Go over rubric with students explaining what they should have in their stories
  o Put students in groups of four

Closure
Students work with their groups to create a story.
Day 7 and Day 8

Topic
Practice of performance
Drama/Language Arts

Objectives
- Students work cooperatively in small groups to practice story

Standards
*Standard Arts 1*- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts
*Standard Arts 2*- Knowing and Using Materials and Resources

Materials
Dramatic Performance Rubric

Procedures
- Gather students together
- Discuss rubric with students detailing what should be included in their performance
- Students work together in designated area

Closure
Students reflect in their journals about today's activity.
Day 9 and Day 10

Topic
Performance of water cycle stories
Drama Theater/ Language Arts

Objectives
- Students will dramatize water cycle story
- Students will listen attentively to each group’s performance

Standards
Standard Arts 1- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

English Language Arts Standard 1– Language for Information and Understanding

English Language Arts Standard 3- Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Procedures
- Students gather together
- Discuss rubric with student to explain what they are to pay attention to during each performance

Closure
Students discuss how they rated each others performance.
Students reflect in their journals.
Day 11

Topic
Introducing Fables
Storytelling/Fables

Objectives
- Students take a pre-assessments survey on fables
- Students will preview different fables stories
- Students will learn components of fables stories

Standards
*English Language Arts Standard 1* – Language for Information and Understanding

Materials
Survey
Fable books
Chart paper, marker

Procedures
Hand survey to students
Allow time for students to complete survey
Gather students to meeting area
Go over survey questions
Discuss characteristics of fables
Chart on paper (hang around classroom, students may want to use later)
Display and preview different books on fables
Closure

Students reflect in their journals
Day 12 and Day 13

Topic
Language Arts/ Storytelling/Fables

Objectives
- Students will listen attentively to story to acquire understanding
- Students will accurately paraphrase story that they heard
- Students will apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is heard
- Students will identify moral of story

Standards
English Language Arts Standard 1- Language for Information and Understanding

English Language Arts Standard 2- Language for Literary Response and Expression

Standard Arts 1- Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

Materials
Aesop fable story

Procedures
- Gather students to meeting area
- Review previous lesson of what is a fable
- Students listen to story
- Have discussion with students about the story
- Have a discussion about moral of the story

Closure
Students explain moral of the story in their journals.
Day 14

Topic
Language Art/Storytelling/Fables

Objectives
- Students will participate in dramatic activities

Standards

*English Language Arts Standard 3*- Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

*Standard Arts 1*- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

Materials
Chart Paper
Marker
Fractured tales on index card

Procedures
- Gather students to meeting area
- Discussion of storyteller components
- Teacher model components such as voice, example what would an angry character sounds like or what would a disappointed voice sound like or look like
- Hand groups of students index cards with fables and have them practice those components

Closure

Students reflect in their journals about activities.
Day 15

Topic
How to create a fable?
Language Arts/Storytelling

Objectives
- Students will create a fable story

Standards

*English Language Arts Standard 1*- Language for Information and Understanding

Materials

Fable story organizer worksheets (for each student)
Copy of organizer on chart paper (for whole group instruction)
Fable story rubric
Paper
Pencil

Procedures

- Gather students to meeting area
- Go over organizer on chart paper
- Go over rubric to make sure students understand assignment
- Students work on creating their own fables using organizer

Closure

Students continue to work on creating their own fable.
Day 16

Topic
Students as storytellers
Language Arts/ Storytelling/Drama

Objectives
- Students will retell orally the story that they have created
- Students will use a variety of verbal and non verbal clues (e.g. voice, gestures, expression) to convey meaning
- Students will listen attentively for information and understanding

Standards

*English Language Arts Standard 2*: Language for Literary Response and Expression

*English Language Arts Standard 3*: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

*Standard Arts 1*: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

Materials
Storyboard to retell story

Procedures
- Students gather to listen to each other’s stories
- Have a discussion on the stories that were told

Closure
Students reflect in their journals.
Day 17

Topic
Small groups creating fables
Language Arts/Storytelling/ Drama

Objectives
- Students work in groups to create a fable for performance

Standards
English Language Arts- Language for Information and Understanding
English Language Arts 2-Language for Literary Response and Expression
Arts Standard 1- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

Materials
Fable story rubric
Paper
Pencil

Procedure
  - Go over rubric with students
  - Assign students to groups of four
  - Students work cooperatively in groups to create a fable
Closure

Students continue working together

Students reflect in their journal
Day 18 and Day 19

Topic
Language Arts/ Drama
Students practice for drama performance of fables

Objectives
- Students work cooperatively in a group
- Students will demonstrate ability to tell a story through drama

Procedures
- Review expectations with students
- Students practice with their group’s fable story

Closure
Students reflect in their journals about the lesson activities.
Day 20

Topic
Group performances of fable story

Objectives
- Students will demonstrate understanding of story through dramatization

Standards

*Standard Arts 1*: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the arts.
*Standard Arts 2*: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

*English Language Arts Standard 1*- Language for Information and Understanding

*English Language Arts 2*- Language for Literary Response and Expression

Materials
Performance Rubric

Procedures
- Children gather to watch each of the group’s performance
- After performance students evaluate each group performance according to the rubric

Closure
Students reflect in their journals.

Extension
Students can perform for another class.
Assessments

Give students post survey on fables

Administer final DRA
Appendix H
Fables
The Mice and the Cat on the Wall

The house in the country had stood empty for years. Then the Field Mice moved in. After a while there were so many of them that they filled every nook, corner, crack and cranny of the house.

A Cat heard about this and moved in, too. She never had to leave the house to hunt. She had Mice for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and also, when she felt like it, for afternoon tea.

The Mice became alarmed. Their numbers grew less every day.

"Something must be done," said one of the Mice.

"But what?" said another. "That Cat is much too big for us to fight."

"The best attack is defense," said the oldest Mouse. "We will stay in our holes until the Cat gets hungry and goes away."

The Cat waited for hours and hours. But not a Mouse showed as much as a whisker. After three days the Cat decided she would trick them into coming out of their holes so that she could get at them again. She climbed up the wall, tied her back legs together, and hung herself head down from a nail. She did not make a sound.

"Come on out," said one of the young Mice. "It's safe now. The Cat's dead." But the old Mouse shook his head. He poked his head a half-inch out of the hole and called.

"It's no use, Cat," he said. "You may pretend you're dead, but we know better. We wouldn't trust you if you were hanging up there in a sack. We will not come out as long as you are here."

The Cat did not wait any longer. She untied himself, came down and, with an angry whine, went away.

Once bitten, twice shy.
A Crow had stolen a good-sized piece of cheese from a cottage window and had flown with it into a tall tree. A Fox, who had seen this happen, said to himself, “If I am smart, I will have cheese for supper tonight.” He thought for a moment, and then decided on this plan.

“Good afternoon, Miss Crow,” he said. “How really beautiful you look today. I’ve never seen your feathers so glistening. Your neck is as graceful as a swan’s and your wings are mightier than an eagle’s. I am sure that if you had a voice, you would sing as sweetly as a nightingale.”

The Crow, pleased with such praise, wanted to prove that she could sing. As soon as she opened her mouth to caw, the cheese fell to the ground and the Fox snapped it up.

As he trotted off he made things worse by calling back to the Crow, “I may have talked much about your beauty, but I said nothing about your brains.”

Don’t be fooled by flattery.
The Mice and the Weasels

The war between the Mice and the Weasels had been going on for a long time. The Mice were losing every battle and, after one more defeat, they called a meeting to discuss the situation.

"The trouble is we are poorly organized," said one Mouse.

"The trouble is the Weasels don't fight fair," said another.

"The real trouble," said a third Mouse, "is that nobody is in command of our scattered army. What we need is leaders."

Before the meeting broke up, the Mice had chosen several leaders, and these were named generals. The generals were proud of their position; they insisted on wearing decorations that would show their rank. Besides putting medals on their chests, they placed large, gilded horns on their heads.

All went well until the next battle. The Weasels won again and the Mice had to retreat. Most of them were lucky to escape into their holes. But when the generals tried to follow the other Mice, they could not get into the holes because of their fancy horns. The Weasels caught them easily and ate every one.

_Vanity costs more than it's worth._
The Dog in the Manger

A Dog decided to make his home on a pile of hay that lay in a Cow’s manger. He was asleep when the Cow came into the barnyard for her evening meal.

“Please,” said the Cow, who was very polite, “get down. That’s my food you’re lying on.”

“Go away!” snarled the Dog. “Can’t you see I’m sleeping here?”

“But it’s my food,” the Cow repeated.

“Yes,” added a Donkey who had followed the Cow. “You don’t eat hay, and we do.”

“We need it,” said a Ram who had followed the Donkey. “Hay is for the hungry.”

But the Dog would not let any of the animals get to the manger. He barked and bellowed and tried to bite them when they came too near. Finally, he made so much noise that they had to leave.

Don’t keep those who need something from getting what you don’t need.
The Dog and the Shadow

A Dog who had stolen a large bone was carrying it off in order to enjoy his meal without interference. Crossing a bridge he happened to see his shadow in the unrippled pool. He thought it was another Dog with another large bone and, to his greedy eyes, the other bone looked larger than his. He snarled and made a grab for the other Dog’s bone—whereupon he dropped his own. The bone fell into the water, sank, and was lost, and the Dog slunk away hungrier than ever.

*The greedy man cheats himself, or, when you grasp at the shadow you lose the substance.*
The Eagle and the Tortoise

A Tortoise was not satisfied with his life. He wanted to stop being a Tortoise.

"I'm tired of crawling along, inch by inch, foot after foot, getting nowhere in particular," he grumbled. "I want to be able to skim and dive and float in the air."

He spoke to the Eagle about it. The Eagle tried to discourage him.

"You're not built for flying," the Eagle told the Tortoise.

"Don't worry about that," answered the Tortoise. "I've watched how the birds do it. Even if I haven't got wings, I can make my four flippers act like four stout oars in the air the way I do in the water. Just get me up there, and you'll see I can fly as well as any of the birds. Besides, if you'll carry me as high as the clouds I'll bring you lots of rare pearls from the sea."

The Eagle was tempted, and carried the Tortoise up to a great height. "Now, then," cried the Eagle, "fly!"

But the moment the Tortoise was on his own, he fell from the sky. He fell like a stone, and on a stone he landed. He struck with such force that he was smashed into little pieces.

Be satisfied with what and where you are.
The higher you fly the harder you may fall.
The Goose and the Golden Eggs

A Man had the great good fortune to own a marvelous Goose — every day it laid a golden egg. The Man was growing rich, but the more he got, the more he wanted. Making up his mind to have the whole treasure at once, he killed the Goose. But when he killed her and cut her open, instead of finding a horde of golden eggs, he found that she was just like any other Goose.

Beware of being greedy.
It doesn’t pay to be impatient.
The Frogs Who Asked for a King

The Frogs who lived at liberty in a lake grew tired of their freedom. They sent a petition to Jupiter asking for a ruler. The great god smiled, and threw a log into the lake. The Frogs were awed by the splash it made. They clustered around the log in worship.

Soon, however, they discovered that the log was a lifeless thing, something which could not inspire either their faith or their fear. Again they petitioned Jupiter, pleading for a more potent and powerful king.

This time Jupiter sent down a stork, whose favorite food happened to be Frogs. Within a few hours the Frogs had lost not only their freedom but their lives as well.

Be content with what you have.
The Donkey in the Lion’s Skin

A Donkey once found the skin of a dead Lion. Putting it on, he frightened all the animals by strutting about without a sound. Only the clever Fox was suspicious. In an attempt to frighten him, the Donkey tried to roar. As soon as he heard the familiar bray, the Fox laughed and said, “I, too, might have been alarmed if you had kept your mouth shut.”

Clothes do not make the man.
Your talk gives you away.
The Mice were much bothered by a Cat. They decided to hold a council to see what could be done about the matter. During the meeting a young mouse there said, "If the Cat had a little bell tied to her neck, it would tinkle every time she made a step. This would warn us, and we would have plenty of time to reach our homes in safety."

All the Mice applauded this clever scheme until one of them spoke up and said, "It's a fine plan. But which one of us is going to put the bell on the Cat?"

*It is easier to think up a plan than to carry it out.*
The Lion, the Boar, and the Vultures

It was the hottest day of the summer. The rivers had shrunk; streams had gone underground; springs had dried up. All the animals were suffering from the heat. They roamed about unhappily, trying to find water.

Suddenly a Lion spied a small pool half-hidden in a shady grove. At the same time a Boar saw it, too. Both of them ran to satisfy their thirst.

"Keep away!" growled the Lion. "I am your king, and you must wait until I'm finished."

"You may call yourself king," said the Boar, "but you are a bully. It's a small pool, and if I let you drink first, you would drink every drop."

"Don't you dare talk back to me!" roared the Lion. "Do as I tell you! Off with you!"

"Here I stay," said the Boar between his teeth. "It's my pool as much as it is yours. If you want it, you'll have to fight for it."

So they fought. The Lion leaped, spreading his huge claws like twenty daggers. But the Boar sprang to one side and escaped with nothing worse than deep slashes. Then the Boar charged, using his two sharp tusks, and tore some of the Lion's hide. The struggle grew fierce. The wounds grew worse; both animals were covered with blood. Pausing a moment to catch his breath, the Lion happened to look up. Circling above, he saw a flock of vultures, birds of death who feed on dead bodies.

"Look!" said the Lion. "Vultures! They're waiting—waiting for one of us, or both, to be killed. Let us stop this foolish fighting. Better be friends than become food for others. Come, let us drink together."

In a false quarrel there is no true valor.
Appendix I
Sample DRA tests
The Pot of Gold

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT: PREVIEWING AND PREDICTING

T: Read the title and then say: In this story, The Pot of Gold, a mean man named Grumble caught an elf. Grumble knew every elf had gold, and he wanted this elf's gold. Look at the pictures and tell me what is happening in this story.

Previewing and Predicting
As the student previews the pictures he/she:
- gathers limited information
- gathers some information
- gathers pertinent information
- comments briefly about each event, action
- connects one or two events, actions (e.g., and, then, now)
- connects events, actions with little or no prompting

T: Read the title again and then say: Now read to find out if Grumble got the elf’s gold.

ORAL READING AND STRATEGIES USED

Record the student's oral reading behaviors on the record of oral reading that follows or take a running record on a blank sheet of paper as the student reads. Number the miscues that are not self-corrected.

Page 2
Once upon a time there was a mean man named Grumble. One day he saw an elf in the woods.

Grumble said, “An elf always has a pot of gold. I'll make this elf take me to his pot of gold.”
Grumble took hold of the elf. The elf began to jerk this way and that way. But Grumble didn't let go.

The elf said, "Let me go! Let me go!"
Grumble said, "Take me to your pot of gold. Then I'll let you go."

The elf took Grumble to a big tree. The elf said, "The gold is under this tree. You'll have to dig deep to get it."

Grumble said, "I'll need a shovel to dig with. I'll go home and get one. But first I'll mark the tree so I can find it again." Grumble took off his red scarf and put it on a branch of the tree.

He said, "Now promise you won't take my scarf off the tree."

The elf said, "I promise."
Grumble let the elf go.
Then Grumble ran home to get a shovel.
Grumble said, "Now all I have to do is dig up the gold, and I'll be rich."

When Grumble got back, he looked for the tree that had his red scarf on it. The elf had kept his promise.

He had not taken Grumble's scarf off the tree. He had put a red scarf on every tree.

Grumble began to yell and scream and stamp his feet. But that didn't help at all. So he began to dig, and he may still be digging.

Circle accuracy rate: Word Count 266

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<td>15-17</td>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>26-27</td>
<td>28-30</td>
<td>31</td>
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Phrasing and fluency
Student reads:
- word by word
- in short phrases at times
- in short phrases most of the time
- in longer phrases at times; inconsistent rate
- in longer phrases most of the time; adequate rate
- in longer phrases; rate adjusted appropriately

Intonation
Student reads with:
- no intonation; monotone
- little intonation; rather monotone
- some intonation; some attention to punctuation; monotone at times
- adjusts intonation to convey meaning at times; attends to punctuation most of the time
- adjusts intonation to convey meaning; attends to punctuation
- begins to explore subtle intonation that reflects mood, pace, and tension

At difficulty
Student problem solves using:
- picture
- letter/sound
- letter-sound clusters
- syllables
- rereading
- multiple attempts
- pausing
- no observable behaviors
Appealed for help: ______ times
Was told/given: ______ words

Analysis of miscues and self-corrections
Miscues interfered with meaning: Student:
- no
- at times
- sometimes
- often
- detects no miscues
- self-corrects a few significant miscues
- self-corrects some significant miscues
- self-corrects most significant miscues
- self-corrects most significant miscues quickly
- self-corrects all significant miscues quickly

Comments:
COMPREHENSION AND RESPONSE

Close the book before the retelling and then say:

T: Start at the beginning and tell me what happened in the story.

Highlight or underline information included in the student's retelling on the story overview. Please note the student does not need to use the exact words in order for you to underline the statement, idea, action, or event. Place “TP” by information given in response to a teacher prompt.

Characters: Grumble and elf
Setting/Places depicted in the story: In the woods

STORY OVERVIEW

1. Grumble sees elf—remembers elf has gold.
2. Grumble catches the elf—the elf says, “Let me go!”
3. Grumble says, “Take me to your pot of gold and then I’ll let you go.”
4. Elf takes Grumble to a big tree and tells him, “You’ll have to dig deep to get it.”
5. Grumble marks tree with red scarf.
6. He makes elf promise not to take red scarf off it.
7. He runs home and gets a shovel.
8. He comes back and finds a red scarf on every tree.
9. Grumble begins to yell and scream and stamp his feet.

Ending: Grumble begins digging and “may still be digging.”

Use one or more of the following prompts to gain further information.

1. Tell me more.
2. What happened at the beginning?
3. What happened after ___ (an event mentioned by the student)?
4. Who else was in the story?
5. How did the story end?

Use these questions only if the following information was omitted from the retelling.

1. What did Grumble want the elf to do?
2. What did the elf promise not to do?
3. How did the elf trick Grumble?

Record all other questions asked.
RESPONSE

T: Tell me what you liked about this story.

T: What does this story make you think of?

MAKING CONNECTIONS
The student links to:
- personal experience
- other media or events
- other literature
- other ________________

DRA COMPREHENSION RUBRIC
Circle the number to the left of one statement in each row that best describes the student's retelling. Then add the circled numbers together to obtain a total score. Circle the total score (from 6–24) where it appears in the row of numbers at the top of the rubric to determine the level of comprehension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Adequate Comprehension</th>
<th>Very Good Comprehension</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>3 Requires 2–3 questions or prompts</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INRODUCTION TO THE TEXT: PREVIEWING AND PREDICTION

T: In this story, Touchdown!, someone began to fix up the house next to Alan's, and he and his friends, Russell and Greg, started to worry. Please read the first page aloud to see what you think might happen in this story.

Student reads the first page aloud. If it is an appropriate level, continue with the next question.

T: What do you think might happen in this story?

Prediction(s)

Student
☑ gathers limited information
☑ gathers some information
☑ gathers pertinent information
☑ predicts next possible event or action
☑ predicts several possible events or actions with prompting
☑ predicts several possible events or actions without prompting

T: Now it's time to read and enjoy this story by yourself. When you're done, please come to me, and I'll ask you to tell me the important things that happened in the story.

Student reads the rest of the story silently and then gives a retelling with the book closed.

COMPREHENSION AND RESPONSE

Close the book before the retelling and then say:

T: Start at the beginning and tell me the important things that happened in this story.

Highlight or underline information included in the student's retelling on the story overview. Please note the student does not need to use the exact words in order for you to underline the statement, idea, action, or event. Place “TP” by information given in response to a teacher prompt.
Characters: Alan, his friends Russell and Greg, and Lisa
Setting/Places depicted in the story: Alan’s front yard and the yard of an empty house next door.

STORY OVERVIEW

1. Alan lived next to an old, empty house; Alan and his friends, Russell and Greg, liked playing football in the empty yard.
2. Alan watched each day as men worked on the empty house.
3. One day a man, woman, and a girl got out of a car in front of the house.
4. The boys were worried that they wouldn’t be able to play football in the yard.
5. Next day, boys were tossing football in Alan’s yard; the girl, Lisa, came over and asked boys to play touch football in her yard; Alan said OK and... 

Ending: Lisa and Alan were on the same team; Lisa was a good football player and made a touchdown. Alan began to think about baseball season. Lisa said—“Let’s play some more.”

Use one or more of the following prompts to gain further information.

1. Tell me more.
2. What happened at the beginning?
3. What happened after ___ (an event mentioned by the student)?
4. Who else was in the story?
5. How did the story end?

Use these questions only if the following information was omitted from the retelling.

1. What was Alan and his friends’ problem?
2. How was Alan and his friends’ problem solved?
3. Tell me how Alan’s feelings changed.

Record all other questions asked.

INFERENCE

T: What did the boys learn?

RESPONSE

T: Why did you choose this story?

T: Tell me what you liked about this story.

T: Tell me what this story makes you think of.
MAKING CONNECTIONS
The student links to:
- ☐ personal experience
- ☐ other media or events
- ☐ other literature
- ☐ other __________________________

DRA COMPREHENSION RUBRIC
Circle the number to the left of one statement in each row that best describes the student’s retelling. Then add the circled numbers together to obtain a total score. Circle the total score (from 6–24) where it appears in the row of numbers at the top of the rubric to determine the level of comprehension.

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</table>

ORAL READING AND STRATEGIES USED
Record the student’s oral reading behaviors on the record of oral reading below, or take a running record on a blank sheet of paper as the student reads page 10. Number the miscues that are not self-corrected.
Then Alan saw Russell about to touch Lisa. But Lisa saw Russell too. Just as he was about to touch her, Lisa jumped out of his way, and Russell fell flat on the ground.

Then Lisa started to run, and there was nobody to stop her. She ran faster than any girl Alan had ever seen. She ran faster than any boy he had ever seen. She ran faster than anybody. Even Greg couldn’t catch her, and he was a fast runner.

Lisa ran all the way to the edge of the yard. “Touchdown!” she cried.

The boys ran up to Lisa. “Boy, you can really run,” said Greg.

“I never saw anybody catch such a terrible pass,” said Russell.

Alan gave Russell a dirty look. Then Alan looked at Lisa. “Boy,” he thought, “if she’s that good a football player, I can hardly wait until baseball season. Alan liked baseball even better than football.

Circle accuracy rate: Word Count 155

<table>
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<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>99</th>
<th>98</th>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>7-8</td>
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<td>12-13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Phrasing and fluency
Student reads:
- word by word
- in short phrases at times
- in short phrases most of the time
- in long phrases at times;
  inconsistent rate
- in long phrases most of the time;
  adequate rate
- in longer phrases; rate adjusted
  appropriately

Intonation
Student reads with:
- no intonation; monotone
- little intonation; rather monotone
- some intonation; some attention
  to punctuation; monotone at times
- adjusts intonation to convey
  meaning at times; attends to
  punctuation most of the time
- adjusts intonation to convey
  meaning; attends to punctuation
- begins to explore subtle intonation
  that reflects mood, pace, and tension

At difficulty
Student problem solves using:
- picture
- letter/sound
- letter sound clusters
- syllables
- rereading
- multiple attempts
- pausing
- no observable behaviors
Appealed for help: ______ times
Was told/given: ______ words

Analysis of miscues and self-corrections
Miscues interfered with meaning:
- no
- at times
- sometimes
- often
- detects no miscues
- self-corrects a few significant miscues
- self-corrects some significant miscues
- self-corrects most significant miscues
- self-corrects most significant miscues
  quickly
- self-corrects all significant miscues
  quickly

Comments:
INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT: PREVIEWING AND PREDICTING

T: This wilderness story, Trouble at the Beaver Pond, tells about a beaver family and how the mother saves her kits. Please read the first page aloud to see what you think might happen in this story.

Student reads the first page aloud. If it is an appropriate level, continue with the next question.

T: What do you think might happen in this story?

Prediction(s)

Student
☐ gathers limited information
☐ gathers some information
☐ gathers pertinent information
☐ predicts next possible event or action
☐ predicts several possible events or actions with prompting
☐ predicts several possible events or actions without prompting

T: Now it's time to read and enjoy this story by yourself. When you have finished reading, please come to me, and I'll ask you to tell me the important things that happened in the story.

The student reads the rest of the story silently and then gives a retelling with the book closed.

COMPREHENSION AND RESPONSE

Close the book before the retelling and then say:

T: Start from the beginning and tell me the important things that happened in this story.

Highlight or underline information included in the student's retelling on the story overview. Please note that the student does not need to use the exact words in order for you to underline the statement, idea, action, or event. Place “TP” by information given in response to a teacher prompt.
Characters: Mother beaver, her kits, and an old black bear
Setting/Places depicted in the story: Shore of the beaver pond, stream, beaver lodge

STORY OVERVIEW

1. Mother beaver on log dam watched her two kits play on the shore by the pond; she was uneasy about the kits being on land; they belong in water where they can dive and swim.
2. Mother beaver saw an old black bear coming toward the pond.
3. Mother beaver swam toward the bear and splashed to get his attention; she led the bear away from the kits.
4. The bear almost caught the mother beaver.
5. Mother beaver reached deeper water. She kept swimming downstream and slapping her tail to lead the bear away from the pond.
6. The bear finally gave up and disappeared into the woods.

Ending: Mother beaver swam into the lodge where she found her scared kits.

Use one or more of the following prompts to gain further information.

1. Tell me more.
2. What happened at the beginning?
3. What happened after ____ (an event mentioned by the student)?
4. Who else was in the story?
5. How did the story end?

Use these questions only if the following information was omitted from the retelling.

1. What was the problem in the story?
2. How was it solved?

Record other questions asked.

INERENCE

1. When do you think the kits went back home?
2. What information about beavers and bears did you learn from this story?

RESPONSE

T: Why did you choose this story?
T: Tell me what you liked about this story.
T: Tell me what this story makes you think of.
MAKING CONNECTIONS
The student links to:
- personal experience
- other media or events
- other literature
- other ________________

DRA COMPREHENSION RUBRIC
Circle the number to the left of one statement in each row that best describes the student's retelling. Then add the circled numbers together to obtain a total score. Circle the total score (from 6–24) where it appears in the row of numbers at the top of the rubric to determine the level of comprehension.

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ORAL READING AND STRATEGIES USED
Record the student's oral reading behaviors on the record of oral reading below or take a running record on a blank sheet of paper as the student reads page 4. Number the miscues that are not self-corrected.

Page 4
She sat up on her hind legs and looked around. Where was her brother? She dropped to all fours and found she couldn't walk. She couldn't move!
A gurgling sound came from behind her. She looked over her shoulder, and there was her brother. He was sitting on her tail so she couldn't move. She tried to jerk away, but she was stuck. She jerked again.

Her brother moved off quickly, and she went rolling. Instantly he was after her, and they rolled over and over on the grass, farther and farther away from the safety of the pond.

That was enough for their mother. She slid off the dam and lifted her tail above the water. She was going to bring it down with a loud slap. That was the warning sound that would call the kits back to the pond instantly.

But she waited. Near the kits was a grove of trees, and there seemed to be something moving there. She stayed motionless in the water, alarmed and watching.

Out of the grove came an old black bear. He held his nose high, smelling the air. Frozen with fear, the mother beaver watched him come toward the pond. In no time at all he was between her and the kits.

Too late now to slap down her tail! If she called the kits back to the pond, they would run straight into the hungry bear.

The bear came closer to the pond. He sniffed eagerly at the strong smell of beaver. But his weak old eyes had not yet seen the kits.

Circle accuracy rate: Word Count 264
**Phrasing and fluency**

**Student reads:**
- word by word
- word by word with some short phrases
- in short phrases most of the time
- in longer phrases at times; inconsistent rate
- in longer phrases most of the time; adequate rate
- in longer phrases; rate adjusted appropriately

**Intonation**

**Student reads with:**
- no intonation; monotone
- little intonation; rather monotone
- some intonation; some attention to punctuation; monotone at times
- adjusts intonation to convey meaning at times; attends to punctuation most of the time
- adjusts intonation to convey meaning; attends to punctuation
- begins to explore subtle intonation that reflects mood, pace, and tension
- adjusts intonation to convey meaning; attends to punctuation
- adjusts intonation to convey meaning at times; attends to punctuation

**At difficulty**

**Student problem solves using:**
- picture
- letter/sound
- letter-sound clusters
- syllables
- rereading
- multiple attempts
- pausing
- no observable behaviors
- Appealed for help: ______ times

Appealed for help: ______ times

Was told/given: ______ words

**Analysis of miscues and self-corrections**

**Miscues interfered with meaning:**
- no
- at times
- sometimes
- often
- detects no miscues
- self-corrects a few significant miscues
- self-corrects some significant miscues
- self-corrects most significant miscues
- self-corrects most significant miscues quickly
- self-corrects all significant miscues quickly

**Comments:**
Appendix J
Performance rubric
## Appendix J

### Performance Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement &amp; Gestures</th>
<th>4 Exceeds Standards</th>
<th>3 Meets Standards</th>
<th>2 Working Toward Standards</th>
<th>1 Needs Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students' body movements and gestures clearly show the characters they are performing.</td>
<td>Students’ body and gestures mostly show the characters they are performing.</td>
<td>Students’ body movements and gestures somewhat show the characters being performed.</td>
<td>Students make no body movements and gestures or movements and gestures are not like the characters being performed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>4 Exceeds Standards</th>
<th>3 Meets Standards</th>
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<th>1 Needs Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students use clear expression in their voices that brings the characters to life.</td>
<td>Students use vocal expression that is like their characters most of the time</td>
<td>Students use some vocal expression, but do not do so all the time.</td>
<td>Students speak with no vocal expression or the expression is not like the characters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience Engagement</th>
<th>4 Exceeds Standards</th>
<th>3 Meets Standards</th>
<th>2 Working Toward Standards</th>
<th>1 Needs Improvements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students have the audience’s full attention and the audience reacts to mood and action of the performance.</td>
<td>Students have most of the audience’s attention. The audience reacts sometime to mood and action in the performance</td>
<td>Students have some of the audience’s attention. There is little reaction from the audience to the performance</td>
<td>Students do not keep the audience’s attention. The audience is confused.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Appendix K
Students’ Work Sample
The Ant and the Frog

One day an ant and a frog were arguing, a car came by and hit the frog. The ant then forgot about the argument and helped the frog home.

Moral: Put your differences aside
The T-Rex and the Shark

The two animals were hungry. They only had one fish. The T-Rex and the shark cut the fish in half and they both were able to eat and they weren’t hungry anymore.

Moral: It is good to share
The Cat and the Monkey

The cat and the monkey made a cake but they did not know how to split it. They decided to cut the cake in half so each of them could have a piece. They had a happy meal.

Moral: You must deal with your problem
The Fly and the Butterfly

A fly and a butterfly were moving in a house together. They both wanted the same room. They started to argue over that room. After a little bit they decided to not argue and talk. The butterfly told the fly that she can have the room. They did not argue any more.

Moral: We have to learn to cooperate