

THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING AND PERSONAL NARRATIVE
IN COGNITIVE, MORAL, AND ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

By

Julia Harriet Anderson

A Project Submitted to the Faculty of
The Evergreen State College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree
Master in Teaching

2007

This Project for the Master in Teaching Degree

by

Julia Harriet Anderson

has been approved for

The Evergreen State College

by

Dr. Anita Lenges, Member of the Faculty

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Love and thanks to Anita for actually reading this beast and enjoying parts of it. My folks deserve a huge shout out for supporting me in this grand educational endeavor and calling me with inspirational words. To my partner in crime, D2, aka Kristen Sluiterspice. Without her, I would have been an android through this process. Laughter is god. Wine doesn't hurt either. Hugs to Rion for walking me through the world of research and being so generous with his time. Thanks to slug for mad beats and giggles at 2:13am while I was typing Chapter Three. Lastly, thanks to me for not being a derelict and actually committing to something and carrying it through. Go big burkie!

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of incorporating storytelling and personal narrative creation in pre-elementary and elementary curriculum on cognitive, moral and oral language development. An examination of the history of storytelling in education with regards to intellectual and moral character development reveals an extensive usage of storytelling as a tool to guide and instruct children in the cultural norms and educational goals of their society. A critical review of the literature reveals relationships between storytelling and oral language development as well as an intimate connection between personal narrative creation and moral development. Conclusions from these peer reviewed studies generally support the implementation of storytelling into literacy programs regarding comprehension, oral language, and story cohesion. However, critical issues surrounding the inclusion of narrative based curriculum into pre-elementary and elementary classrooms, such as teacher's misinterpretation of different cultural groups' story sequencing, the accommodations and support needed to assist children with oral language delays and learning disabilities in narrative production, and overemphasis and over reliance on storytelling within a reading and writing curriculum, had important implications for teachers assessing the significance of storytelling based pedagogy. Suggestions for further research are provided; such as an investigation into the impacts of personal narrative creation upon individual and collective identity development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....	i
APPROVAL PAGE.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Rationale.....	2
Definition of Terms.....	9
Statement of Purpose.....	10
Summary.....	10
CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Historical Overview.....	11
Origins of Storytelling in American Education.....	13
Cognitive Psychology and the Revival of Storytelling.....	15
Summary.....	19
CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Oral Language Development.....	21
Comparing Storytelling to Other Literacy Methods.....	35
External Conditions Effecting Storytelling.....	47
Drama and Pretend Play.....	54
Educator Influence and Impact.....	60
Moral Development.....	70
Summary.....	88
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION.....	90
Introduction.....	90
Summary of Findings.....	91
Classroom Implications.....	95
Implications for Further Research.....	97

Summary.....	97
REFERENCES.....	99

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

On an intrinsic level, every person has a story of self, a personal narrative that defines and portrays individual experience and self-concept. Storytelling is a crucial activity humans perform to translate their individual private experience into a public, culturally negotiated form (Mishler, 1995). Generally, children begin telling personal narratives at age of two and tell many fictional and factual narratives before ever entering a classroom (McCabe, 1991). Hymes (1984) argued that first-person narrative is the primary means by which children make sense of their experience. Therefore, what children remember and comprehend from new stories depends critically on the kinds of stories they are accustomed to telling.

This chapter provides a comparison of cognitive and moral development theories in relation to oral storytelling and personal narrative creation in pre-elementary and elementary school-age children. The concept that stories characterize and define identity, individually and collectively, was explored in the work of Jung (1969) who identified a series of specific and formal elements within world mythologies that have become primary archetypes. He argued that each archetype represented a core psychological function common to all humans. Jung's archetypes were found symbolically within traditional tales and are depicted in a variety of forms. Many archetypes occurred repetitively in myths from widely divergent geographical areas and Jung believed that to be evidence of a "collective conscious" that connected peoples, cultures, and time within a generative force (Jung, 1969).

Rationale

The view of storytelling presented in this paper rests on two assumptions about conversational speech: (1) that it is a pervasive and culturally organized feature of social life in every culture, and (2) that it is a major mechanism of socialization and self discovery (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972). Oral traditions are vehicles for conveying vital information towards a shared understanding of cultural, physical, and educational ideals and practices. Dewey (1938) warned that negating socially constructed and shared experience by merely viewing the individual as an autonomous, spontaneous entity would result in barbarianism and complete loss of culture and progress. Dewey argued that true knowledge and learning can only result from a rich, critical analysis of past understanding and mechanisms. Growth and evolution must also include intellectual and moral direction as humans need guided practice with social norms and tools in order to participate effectively within their culture by means of advancing it (Livo & Reitz, 1986).

This literary and research based investigation will be exploring the question: *What are the effects of incorporating oral storytelling and personal narrative creation into classroom curriculum on pre-elementary and elementary school children's cognitive, moral and oral language development?* The introductory paragraphs will begin with a brief orientation to the background of oral storytelling and first-person narrative creation in regards to education. Second, will be an explanation of socio-cultural implications and theories of cognitive and moral development in comparison to traditional theories of development. Third, will be a counter-argument against implementing storytelling in educational environments as a pedagogical tool using the traditional learning theory and discussion of the evolution of the traditional learning theory looking at the social learning

theory's view of storytelling in education. Following, will be a definition of terms, statement of purpose, and a summary of Chapter One.

Orientation to Storytelling and Personal Narration

As pedagogical tools, oral storytelling and personal narrative development have deep roots to ancient times. Language existed long before writing, the oldest stories shared were verbal myths, legends, and folktales, detailing lessons learned and experienced by elders and predecessors, as well as unanswered questions that continued to baffle and amaze (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). As long ago as 25,000-30,000 years BCE, humans were painting complex depictions of spiritual, ritual, and educational techniques and traditions on rock masses and cave walls. Moral tales conveyed the first codes or laws that promoted and enforced harmony, cooperation, and combated social qualms within early human populations. Folk literature, religious texts, and mythological legends continue to shape modern discourse, educational curriculum, and cultural identities as well (Mello, 2001). Stories, these ubiquitous discourse forms, are of great historical and formative interest in early language acquisition and literacy education, particularly in light of increasing sociocultural diversity of students in public education classrooms (Sawyer, 1976). Through stories, teachers can learn of their children's cultures, diverse experiences, prior knowledge, and of their connections to family and friends.

Cognitive and Moral Development: Socio-culturists versus Traditionalists

“One philosopher argued that, if we listen carefully to children, we can see the ways in which they are little philosophers: they ponder the deepest metaphysical and ontological problems in their own way in an attempt to bring cognitive order to the

universe” (Matthews, 1980). The process by which humans learn to construct moral and cognizant judgments through storytelling and personal narration is significant (Schank, 1990). Recalling and creating stories engages the brain in a cross-cortex dialogue, which literally stimulates neuronal networks that are the essential biological building blocks of learning (Zull, 2002). Memory recall inspired through storytelling is the episodic kind of remembering, which utilizes the right frontal cortex of the brain, responsible for holistic integrative thought. The action of recall is unique in that most other aspects related to storytelling and narrative creation employ the left frontal cortex, which is the detail and structure oriented portion of the brain. The act of and participation in storytelling seeks to solidify connections and make meaning both from the minute details and the larger framework of prior experience and understanding (Zull, 2002). Therefore, without the big picture, the facts are far less compelling and contextualized to a learner.

Language is the fundamental way we change our ideas into actions (Zull, 2002). Stories first arise in the context of relationships, when small children acquire the potential to verbalize experiences for themselves and others. Children’s involvement in personal narrating helps to build intimate relationships with other people, including more experienced members of their culture, who wittingly or unwittingly expose them to storytelling practices and legacies (Miller & Moore, 1989). Research on language socialization and moral development has shown that the flow of social and moral messages is relentless in the myriad of small encounters of every day life (Miller & Moore, 1989). This suggests family members socialize young children into systems of meaning by involving them, intentionally and unintentionally, in particular kinds of conversational and instructional discourse.

Socio-cultural psychologists theorize that children's development occurs incrementally and actively within the cultural context of the child's social environment (Miller, 2002). Understanding culture to be a shared practice of beliefs, values, knowledge, and symbol systems, it also encompasses social institutions such as schools and churches, as well as the tools and objects needed to maintain and operate a society. (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). By participating in the activities of a culture, such as rituals, family and personal narratives, and kinship structures, children's development occurs from the gradual increase in responsibility, flexibility, and capability with cultural tools as they move toward adulthood. Therefore, it is within the confines of this interdependent relationship that adults and more capable peers provided the tools and instructed children in the appropriate usage of these tools within their society (Rogoff, 1990).

Understanding intelligence through a Piagetian lens requires an examination of an individual's ability to cope with a changing world through continuous organization and reorganization of experience (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). Focusing on the child as a distinct individual, in which the child's construction of reality moves sequentially from concrete physical interaction with objects to symbolic representations allows for a continuum of growth and development (Furth, 1970). Children 2 to 7 years old occupy the preoperational stage, meaning they are not yet able to think logically or abstractly, and their world is constructed through the child's egocentric perception. Without reason, children in this stage problem-solve using instinctive thought and appearances, referred to as transductive reasoning (Furth, 1970). Much of this developmental time period is preoccupied with symbolic play, in which the child distorts reality and implies

representation of an absent object. Children are essentially experimenting with the boundaries of their reality as it is quickly changing to acquire valuable experience and flexibility both cognitively and socially.

Because moral ability, like conceptual thinking, gradually matures as individuals learn to live within their environments, educators concerned about facilitating its growth need a reliable framework for understanding its development. Certain frameworks designed to identify specific stages of moral development, such as Kohlberg's (1984), provide a limited framework for socio-constructivist theorists and educators because they rely mainly on knowledge of moral effects, and understanding effects alone does little to clarify how and why they develop. Vygotsky (1978) conceptualized an alternative description of intellectual and moral developmental processes than Kohlberg's stage-theory, in which children actively move through continual zone of proximal development, scaffolded by role models and mentors further towards the goals and values inherent in that given culture or society. From the Vygotskian approach two prominent theories of moral education: the cognitive-developmental view, which focuses on a child's active construction of new cognitive structures, and the character education view which purposes that moral development results from exposing children to stories about virtue and moral character (Crawford, 2001).

The major significance of Vygotsky's (1978) conception of moral development was that it recognized the fundamentally dialogic nature of all learning and dialogue, no matter where or how it happened, was considered morally valuable according to his conception, because it gave rise to care, concern, and compassion, for oneself and others. Although the words children used to describe syncretic relationships in Vygotsky's

observations did not correspond with objects in factual ways, he claimed that those objects played the role of what will later become abstract concepts in so far as they act as a medium of communication between children and adults. An example would be a 3-year-old child using a readily available object to represent something altogether different, such as a toy block representing a toy truck, and even though the bond between word and object is a purely subjective one for the child, adults have little trouble communicating with the child because, as Vygotsky (1978) noted, the child's and adult's meanings of a word often "meet" in that concrete object and this suffices to ensure mutual understanding.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that just as various developmental levels related to conceptual thinking exist co-extensively in individuals, different levels leading to moral ability may also co-exist in individuals. Because Vygotsky's theory of moral development was multi-faceted and non-unidirectional in quality, his model differs significantly from theories such as Kohlberg's (1984), which focused on measuring a person's progress towards moral maturity on the basis on universal developmental standards. Kohlberg's conception of development primarily in terms of a hierarchy of stages or levels suggested a trajectory model that moved increasingly towards self-sufficiency and autonomy, because superior levels become increasingly independent from inferior levels of functioning (1984). In contrast, to have conceived development, like Vygotsky (1978) primarily in terms of a reflective awareness of present social interaction suggests a trajectory that is driven by mutual or participatory experiences, towards states of deeper interdependency.

Traditional and Social Learning Theories Perspective on Storytelling

Traditional learning theorists argue that learning is a change in behavior over time as the child reacts to the environmental stimuli (Miller, 2002). Headed by theorists like B.F. Skinner, the traditional learning theory emphasizes behavior modification over time through experiences of positive and negative reinforcement. Skinner was not interested with internal, emotional and psychological factors, rather he was focused on shaping behavior externally with rewards, neutrality, and punishment directly correlated to the child's action towards the environment. Therefore, traditional learning theorists are inclined to view storytelling and personal narrative creation solely as modes of entertainment with little to no cognitive demand or educational credential (Miller, 2002). Pedagogical models congruent with the traditional learning theory, such as Direct Instruction, also do not support or implement avenues of first-person narration or oral storytelling in the classroom, as in this theory, teachers hold content knowledge that is dictated to student's in third-person narrative.

A limited connection between first-person narrative creation and the traditional learning theory comes in the evolution of the traditional learning theory to include social influences on behavior. The social learning theory emphasizes observation of others' behavior in one's social milieu and committing that observation to long-term memory before actually enacting the behavior personally (Miller, 2002). Social learning relies heavily on explicit modeling and memorization and oral storytelling relies upon the listener's undivided attention and ability to retain cultural information throughout a series of myths and legends which seemingly build upon each other. Specifically, oral traditions designed to teach modes of survival could be connected within pedagogical practices derived from the social learning theory, as the teller models appropriate

behavior through explanation of experience. A further link between oral storytelling and the social learning theory comes from the teacher's elicitation of student's prior knowledge such that the student has the opportunity to retain and internalize the observed behavior. The student is therefore able to connect old with new, much like storytellers use familiar characters, setting, plot structures, and genres to connect with the members of their audience.

Definition of Terms

It is essential to define and explicitly clarify the terminology as it is used in this paper. I am interested in describing the effects of storytelling and narration, and by effects I include potentially positive and negative, external and internal, relating to cognitive and moral development in children. Incorporating, merely suggests using storytelling and narrative as a pedagogical tool in addition or congruent with existing curriculum and learning activities. Storytelling is much more difficult to define as it is so innate and inclusive of many genres, styles, and methods. In this paper, storytelling is a process where a person (the teller), using vocalization, a narrative structure, and/or dramatic and mental imagery, communicates with other humans (the audience) who also use mental imagery and in turn, communicate back to the teller through verbal and non-verbal responses (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). First-person narrative refers to a story of personal experience and in much of the research described in Chapter 3 of this paper, is defined as two or more utterances addressed to the listener(s) that describes a specific past event or grouping of past events that occurred to the teller or the company surrounding the teller (Williams, 1991).

Pre-elementary and elementary aged children encompass roughly three to nine year-olds, particularly in reference to the research discussion. It became apparent that children younger than early elementary age would need to be included as language development typically began around age two. Chapter 1 has given a brief overview of cognitive and moral development from many theoretical perspectives, and that foundation is the premise by which critique and consideration of the historical and research was founded.

Statement of Purpose

This paper will discuss and examine the historical and research literature concerning storytelling and personal narrative in regards to cognitive and moral development of pre-elementary and elementary school children. Therefore, this paper analyzes historical trends and influences of storytelling in education, qualitative and quantitative research concerning oral language development in a diverse population of participants, storytelling compared to other methods of language and literacy acquisition, external conditions that effect storytelling, drama and pretend play, important aspects of African American narrative style, teacher impacts upon storytelling as a pedagogy, and moral development in storytelling. Conclusions, concessions, and speculations for further avenues of research will also be discussed.

Summary

Storytelling has a rich and inclusive history that expands over thousands of years and continents. This paper specifically is investigating what effects storytelling and narration have on cognitive and moral development in pre-elementary and elementary

age children. The following chapter will continue examining the historical trends in education and cognitive psychology with regards to storytelling.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The history of storytelling is incremental and vast and the perspective taken in this chapter focuses on the relationships between storytelling and language acquisition, as well as, a brief outline of storytelling in public education. To preface cognitive and moral aspects of storytelling, the chapter discusses the major players in developmental theory and how these theories relate to storytelling as a developmental tool. This chapter synthesizes crucial events in the history and development of storytelling and cognitive psychology.

Historical Overview

Based on archeological record, scientists theorize that when the Homo Sapiens' brain evolved into an organism biologically capable of producing and manipulating abstract and rational thoughts and of creating vocal noises, storytelling was born (Pellowski, 1990). From crude beginnings, languages developed within familial and tribal collectives. People used language to convey everyday deeds and ideas, necessities and fears, applicable to their existence and for the perpetuation of the species. Languages became more sophisticated and complex through educational and ritual practice and people's imaginations and facility to think abstractly further developed (Pellowski, 1990). The ability to effectively convey information, emotion, and mysticism through story became a source of power and status for those capable, as many times survival depended upon concise oration. Conceptually storytellers held the first remnants of history, with the

narration of ancestral lineages and of the passage and significance of time. Words, essentially, became humankind's most vital tool.

Researchers theorize that persuasive and captivating storytellers within tribes emerged and discovered that adding elements of drama, visual arts, and sound could embellish their stories and engage their audiences. Early storytellers told of encounters with animals or other tribes, as well as created explanations for natural phenomena, such as thunder and lightning with members of their community. Descriptions of the supernatural, through deity, animal, and nature worship, deemed the position of storyteller as a spiritual translator between known and unknown worlds. Ancient prehistoric drawings and paintings of animals, people, and symbols communicated crucial information regarding seasonal changes, hunting and gathering techniques and locations, as well as depictions of nomadic and semi-nomadic existence (Greene, 1996). In essence, this was the beginnings of an educational legacy, as those more experienced in the tools and trades of a culture passed necessary information through story to children and young adults.

Around five thousand years ago the Sumerian tribes in southern Mesopotamia developed the first known phonetic writing called cuneiform (Pellowski, 1990). It officially marked the end of prehistory and the beginning of recorded history. The idea of placing intricate marks on a clay tablet, associated with specific ideas and concepts, was a giant imaginative step in humankind's intellectual development (Vansing, 1985). Words, whether from vocal sounds or in written form, conveyed mental pictures which had explicit and implicit meaning attached. Storytellers created myths, rituals, morals, laws, and religions from experiences real or imaginary, and defined many early

institutions of cultures and society. Moses, Confucius, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, and Gautama Buddha were all great storytellers or the products of great storytelling, which spawned the world's great religions and universal moral codes.

Origins of Storytelling in American Education

The common school movement of the 1830s and 1840s in the United States argued that the purpose of public schooling was to cure social, economic, and political problems in society through moral reformation. One of the reform movement founders, Horace Mann, called for moral redemption in education and sought to instill a Protestant Christian foundation in all of America's children. Mann demanded the use of the Bible as the primary text for every child in every classroom, as he believed through Christian moral education, societal divisions would be cured and violence would cease (Spring, 2005). The common school movement became the driving impetus for continued efforts to merge moral education with public schooling.

In the 19th century, the rise of nationalism in European countries resulted in many of the large collections of stories that became very popular in American culture. To preserve the tradition of the folk, folklorists and other collectors would record the stories they heard and preserve them by publishing them. The most well known of these collections was the Grimm brothers' *Kinder und hausmächen* (Household Stories), first published in Germany in 1812. Likewise, Peter Asbjornsen and Jorgen Moe collected stories in Scandinavia; Alexander Afanasiev recorded Russian folktales; and Joseph Jacobs collected stories in England (Thompson, 1946).

The first systematic use of storytelling with children was not in libraries but in kindergartens. When German immigrants moved to North America in the 19th century,

they brought the kindergarten movement with them. Originated by Friedrich Froebel in 1837, the kindergarten movement introduced storytelling as a critical component for passing culture and moral values onto young, impressionable children (Bishop & Kimball, 2006). Storytelling instruction became an integral part of the curriculum for instructors in kindergarten training schools, and in 1905 the first American storytelling text was published--How to Tell Stories to Children, by Sara Cone Bryant (Greene, 1996).

When public libraries in North America began to flourish in the mid-1800s, most did not include children's books, much less allow children in the library. Many had restrictions that refused admittance to patrons under a certain age, the particular age varying from library to library (Stearns, 1894). However, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, service to children in public libraries developed as part of the social reforms initiated during the Progressive Era. These changes included educational reforms as well as the institution of playgrounds, settlement houses, and an increased demand for reading material aimed at children (Stearns, 1894).

It is impossible to determine which public library was the first to have a children's story hour, but many story hours made appearances around 1900 in various locations, including the Pratt Institute Free Library in Brooklyn, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and the Buffalo Public Library (Bishop & Kimball, 2006). Also at this time, public libraries were influenced by Marie Shedlock, an English storyteller. Shedlock had been a teacher for 25 years when she decided to retire and become a professional storyteller. Following 10 successful years of giving storytelling lectures and recitals in Great Britain and France, she came to North America to embark on a recital tour that lasted several

years. She gave storytelling recitals, lectured to teachers and librarians, and taught storytelling skills as part of the Carnegie Library Training Class for children's librarians in Pittsburgh (Pellowski, 1990; Thomas, 1982). Shedlock's lecture tour coincided with the beginning of formalized training for librarians in North America. Librarians who studied at the Carnegie Library Training Class were hired in public libraries all across the United States and Canada and had tremendous influence on the use of systematic storytelling programs in libraries (Bishop & Kimball, 2006).

Such early 20th century storytelling programs stimulated children's interest in reading and developed children's skills in fluency and comprehension (Sterns, 1894). During this time, children's librarians were adamant that the benefits of storytelling went far beyond mere entertainment. Librarians found that books read aloud in sharing circles during storytelling programs were quickly snapped up by eager children who wanted to look through the pictures and talk about the characters and events (Kimball, 2003).

Cognitive Psychology and the Revival of Storytelling

Attempts to understand the mind and its operation go back at least to the Ancient Greeks, when philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle tried to explain the nature of human knowledge. The study of mind remained the province of philosophy until the nineteenth century, when experimental psychology developed. In the late 1800s, Wilhelm Wundt and his students initiated laboratory methods for studying mental operations more systematically. Within a few decades, however, experimental psychology became dominated by behaviorism, a view that virtually denied the existence of mind (Vitz, 1990). According to behaviorists such as J. B. Watson, psychology should restrict itself to examining the relation between observable stimuli and observable

behavioral responses (Kurtines & Grief, 1974). Talk of consciousness and mental representations was banished from respectable scientific discussion. Especially in the United States, behaviorism dominated the psychological scene through the 1950s.

Around 1956, the intellectual landscape began to change dramatically. Miller summarized numerous studies which showed that the capacity of human thinking was limited, with short-term memory, for example, restricted to around seven items (Kurtines & Grief, 1974). He proposed that memory limitations could be overcome by recoding information into chunks, mental representations that required mental procedures for encoding and decoding the information. At this time, primitive computers had been around for only a few years, but pioneers such as McCarthy, Minsky, Newell, and Simon were founding the field of artificial intelligence. In addition, Chomsky rejected behaviorist assumptions about language as a learned habit and proposed instead to explain language comprehension in terms of mental grammars consisting of rules (Kurtines & Grief, 1974).

A surmountable movement in the 1960s to revive oral storytelling and folk tradition impacted not only pop culture but also public education. The cultural movements of the sixties toward the reconstruction of folk art forms was part of an attempt to recapture meaningful values by a generation revolting against the dominant culture of the time. This trend continued into the 1970s, when the art of storytelling, which previously had been largely the domain of anthropologists and folklorists, began to enjoy its greatest renewal of popular interest since the turn of the century. In 1974 the first American contemporary storytelling festival was launched in Tennessee, which provided the

impetus for the creation of the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling (NAPPS).

Revered teachers, from Homer and Plato, to Li Po, and Gandhi used stories, myths, parables, and personal narratives to instruct, to illustrate, and to guide the thinking of their students (Pellowski, 1990). The resurgence of interest in narrative and storytelling can be seen in many content areas within early elementary and higher education classes, such as reading workshops, history, and the social sciences, both theoretical and applied. Acting against the mechanistic philosophies of behaviorist psychology, cognitive psychologists beginning with Freud and Jung began with new energy to investigate the symbolic power of stories (Vitz, 1990). Jung's language of "motif" and "archetype" became widespread and influential with the monumental success of Campbell's work, such as *Myths to Live By*, in 1972. Campbell focused on the universality of fundamental themes in world mythology and how those themes informed daily modern society (Vitz, 1990). Three years later, Bettelheim published *The Uses of Enchantment*, which quickly became a classic in the storytelling tradition because it established the theoretical paradigm that stories fill a basic psychological need in emotional, moral, and social development (Pellowski, 1990).

During the 1970s and 1980s, Piaget's works also inspired the transformation of European and American education including both theory and practice, leading to a more 'child-centered' approach. Piaget said, "Education, for most people, means trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society . . . but for me and no one else, education means making creators. . . . You have to make inventors, innovators—not conformists," (Bringuier, 1980, p.132). He saw children as active agents in their own

development, in which they gradually increased their operative capacity for understanding the world from multiple perspectives, rather than a static, senses-based egocentric experience (Furth, 1970). Especially applicable to pre-elementary and elementary aged children, was Piaget's pre-operational stage of development. In this stage, children between 2 and 7 were yet capable for logical reconciliation of the events in their world. With growing fluency in language, children in this stage were able to represent the world through mental images and symbols, but those symbols depended solely on the perception and intuition (Furth, 1970).

After studying the works of Piaget, Kohlberg became fascinated with children's cognitive development and moral reasoning. He wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1958, outlining what is now known as Kohlberg's stages of moral development. Of these stages, the pre-conventional level of moral reasoning was especially common in elementary school children, which coincided with Piaget's pre-operational stage (Thoma & Rest, 1999). The reasoning process of children in the pre-conventional stage consisted of moral judgments derived directly from consequences to the self. In addition, children in both Piaget's and Kohlberg's stage were unable to recognize that others' points of view are any different from their own view.

Many challenges to Piaget and Kohlberg ensued, including recognition of an important adaptation of Piaget's theory, which holistically encompassed cultural impacts on cognitive and moral development. Vygotsky approached development from an eastern philosophical stance, far different than the autonomous individual in Piaget's and Kohlberg's theory (Miller, 2002). In the Vygotskian-sociocultural view, culture was embedded in the human experience and human development and behavior could only be

understood within that context. This “child-in-context” referred to both the historical and societal environment present in the child’s reality as well as in that child’s familial past (Miller, 2002). Socio-cultural psychologists exalt the importance of language between adult and child, as a crucial transmitter of cultural information, essential for that child’s development.

Summary

With language came storytelling and with storytelling came culture. The depth and significance of storytelling in humankind’s legacy is insurmountable. Stories are tools that weave cultures and families together. However, this chapter has discussed the importance of storytelling in the history of education and cognitive psychology. Through story, educational and moral messages are conveyed, which span generations of time and people. In an effort to understand the power and conventionality of storytelling as a moral and pedagogical tool, many studies have been conducted. The following chapter will examine aspects of storytelling and development through a critical analysis of qualitative and quantitative research studies.

CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter briefly summarizes and critiques qualitative and quantitative research literature related to the relationships between cognitive, moral, and oral language development in pre-elementary and elementary age children, within the scope of storytelling and narrative creation. The purpose of this chapter is to carefully examine findings from a wide body of research perspectives and uncover limitations within the research. The peer-reviewed journal articles presented here encompass many conceptions of moral and cognitive development, as well as of storytelling and narrative. To fully explore this complex and multifaceted question, several key issues surrounding the formation and utilization of storytelling and narrative in regards to cognitive, oral and moral development are detailed and analyzed. The journey begins by unfolding the nature of oral language development, as language is a foundation of storytelling and oral language development begins prior to student's entering school. Next will be a comparison of storytelling to other educational methods and assessments of language and literacy acquisition, followed by an examination of the external conditions effecting oral language development and storytelling. Language development and narrative production will be further investigated through the lens of drama and pretend play as a specific mode of practicing communication and storytelling. Of special note for educators will be an overview and examination of norms and practices surrounding narrative production in classrooms, with reflection upon crucial stylistic differences in narratives among cultural

groups and potential impacts educators have upon oral language development and narrative production in their students. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of conceptions and implications of moral development through story and narrative sharing and creation.

Oral Language Development

The research articles in this section studied the development of oral language and literacy skills through a variety of storytelling and personal narrative creation tasks and tests. Fundamental to the discussion within these articles is how storytelling and narration impacts language development and cognition, as well as how children's understanding of story structure and story comprehension incrementally builds and matures.

In a qualitative study, Rymes (2003) examined how narratives emerge from talk in classrooms. She described two contrasting contexts, one in which narrative elicitation occurred primarily in two-person dialogue with the teacher and the other in which narrative elicitation emerged through multi-party dialogue after the official literacy lesson had ended. The study took place at a small town elementary school in the southeast. Research began as a case study of one second grade, English Language Learner (ELL), Rene. The student had been held back in second grader and was in danger of being designated a candidate for Special Education as a result of his poor academic performance. Rymes met with Rene weekly after school to read books and draw pictures in his journal. She attempted to have him narrate his drawings but he always refused and was very self-conscious about his difference, as he was the only ELL student in his classroom.

During his first year attempting second grade his teacher Ms. Ray had placed students with the lowest reading scores in a remedial group where she would elicit narratives by modeling narration to the group and calling individually on students to participate. Narrative elicitation during Ms. Ray's class came in the context of a literacy lesson and was designed directly to tie to a reading text, consisting of exclusively student-teacher dialogue. Rene became even more reclusive in this setting and produced not one narrative in his first year of second grade (Rymes, 2003). In contrast, his next year repeating second grade, Rene was pulled out of his second grade classroom to meet with a teacher of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Ms. Spring's group taught her exclusively ELL students decontextualized phonics instruction and narrative elicitation occurred exclusively outside of literacy and language instruction, at the end of class following the lesson. Narrative elicitation was unconnected to the texts and was orchestrated through a combination of student and teacher talk, and this condition led to a personal narrative from Rene, co-authored by two peers in his group (Rymes, 2003).

When critically examining this study, it is important to note that Rymes took extensive field notes, audio- and video tape, recording a total of 22 sessions in the two years of Rene's second grade experience. She drew conclusions that Ms. Ray's attempts to extract a narrative from Rene actually hindered his ability to share his personal experience because in the context of the literacy activity Rene never treated his teacher's modeling as an invitation to participate, rather it eliminated the necessity for him to share at all (Rymes, 2003). In contrast, Ms. Spring displayed no attempt to tie storytelling to the curriculum and instead built her questions out of pieces of information she already extracted in previous discussion with Rene. In Ms. Spring's class, the students also were

able to engage in co-narration after the lesson and students were able to assist and embellish each other's narrations.

Rymes acknowledged many extraneous factors that also could have played into Rene's sudden interest in narrative production, such as increased experience in classroom activities, ESOL pull out where he was in an inclusive environment, and out of school influences. She also presented her own initial bias of phonics based instruction as opposed to whole-language. The strength in the research design derived from the absolute focus on one student through two years of observation. However, there is nothing to compare Rene's experience to, such as other students in the ESOL program. What is intriguing about this study in regards to personal narrative creation is that it suggested that ELL students might benefit from conversational style dialogue that was not contextualized within a lesson plan. Knowing and engaging student's personal history may open doors for students already at a disadvantage in Standard English oral and literacy skills.

Speece and La Paz's (1999) study examined the relationships between oral language and literacy in a two-year, multivariate design. In addition to the researcher's general interest in mapping normal variation of oral language skills, they developed a working model of the relationships among the oral language and literacy measures to guide interpretation of the subtypes and to develop hypotheses on the differences between subtypes on literacy measures (Speece & La Paz, 1999). The model primarily focused on the metalinguistic skill of phonemic awareness and the discourse skill of oral narration. Speece and La Paz hypothesized that some children exhibit a particular strength in oral narration, and that this strength would assist them in mastering beginning reading tasks

and in making meaning of texts. They further speculated that across the three aspects of oral language measured in their model, (metalinguistics, structural language, and narrative discourse), it would be possible to identify reliable subtypes of children and that these subtypes would be differentiated and validated by performance on reading and spelling skills in kindergarten and first grade (Speece & La Paz, 1999).

The site selected for this investigation was a metropolitan Title I public elementary school with a diverse population of 59% Caucasian, 18.1% African American, 12.3% Asian, 10.1% Latino, and 0.3% Native American students. Five teachers and their classrooms participated in the study, four of the teachers were Caucasian, one was African American, and all were female. The final sample consisted of 88 kindergarten students in year one and 67 first grade students in year two for follow-up testing of the original kindergartners. The battery of oral language and beginning reading measures included both norm-referenced and experimental tasks, utilizing a variety of standardized tests assessing oral language classification measures, such as semantics, syntax, metalinguistics, and narrative discourse, as well as, reading validation measures, such as print awareness, invented spelling, and comprehension (Speece & La Paz, 1999).

Narrative discourse was assessed by a familiar story production task where the children were asked to tell one of their favorite children's stories and a maximum of five prompts were given to elicit the story from each participant. All stories were audio taped and transcribed and the variables of interest in this study focused on the number of propositions, the number of episodes, and the number of complete episodes. An episode was defined by the researchers as a sequence of events that included any type of story

information and ideally, had a beginning, middle, and an end, which represented evidence of story structure (Speece & La Paz, 1999). Each episode was classified as complete or incomplete based on these criteria.

Students in this study predetermined through testing and evaluation to have high oral narrative tendencies and skills (HN) exhibited strong narrative ability in the story re-tell assessment, with average performance across the other language variables (Speece & La Paz, 1999). As well, subtypes with significant, ($p < .001$), HN skills achieved higher scores on the listening comprehension task (Speece & La Paz, 1999). Students designated as HN were predominately African American, female, and eligible for free lunch. However, HN students were significantly lower performing ($p < .01$), at word decoding and attack than students identified as high performing phonemic awareness skills, HA, who were predominately Caucasian and both male and female students (Speece & La Paz, 1999).

Based on these findings, Speece and La Paz theorized that linguistic factors such as phonemic awareness and narrative discourse abilities make their most significant contributions to reading achievement at different points of early literacy development for different cultural and racial groups. This study also suggested that phonological awareness should be standardized in kindergarten and first grade classrooms for all students, as HA students were the most proficient at word decoding and attack, two skills highly emphasized in early literacy education (Speece & La Paz, 1999). Speece and La Paz elaborated that narrative ability and literacy skills in African American students would only be strengthened by specifically targeting phonological skills in early literacy

programs. No other racial groups as described in the sample were specifically mentioned throughout the study.

Researchers typified students into strict and distinct categories of oral language and literacy skills. The findings described that racially, students were exclusively segregated between HN consisting of only African American students and HA being highly associated with Caucasian students, and no other racial profile was mentioned. Hypothetical assumptions embedded within the research and conclusions, such as the implementation of phonics based instruction in early literacy reading programs, were not credible based solely on these findings. Evaluating the legitimacy of story structure with Western story structure to include a beginning, middle, and end negated many different cultural groups' stylistic and narrative alternatives.

Curenton, Wilson, and Lillard (2000) examined false belief perseverance in low-income children through participant interviewing of an ethnically diverse Head Start preschool population. Participants included 36 African American and 36 Caucasian preschool children between the ages of four and five. The false belief task, as it was defined in this study, sought to understand a sharp watershed between a stage of child's development in which children have a sort of "transparent" reading of mind and reality and a stage in which they show a capacity of having an "opaque" reading of mind and reality, that is, they can easily distinguish between what is the case and what people believe is the case after reading a text (Curenton et al., 2000). Children were given a false beliefs task embedded within a narrative, in which they were shown a wordless picture book, Mercer Mayer's, *Frog, Where Are You?*, then asked to look at the pictures, while listening to the experimenter reading the story from memory. Children were then

asked to retell the story, using the pictures as they had heard it from the experimenter. Afterward, children were asked forced-choice questions about the character's thoughts and memory/story comprehension, assessed from the experimenter's original versions. Half the questions were embedded with false clues, such as, "Do you remember a character named Tim from the story? He was an awful toad right?" In this case no such character would have been mentioned.

A Race X Age ANCOVA was conducted with the language score as the covariate. Language scores from the language and cognition subscale of the Early Screening Inventory were used as the covariate because prior research conducted by the researchers had indicated a relationship between language ability and false belief performance (Curenton et al., 2000). Results revealed a difference between African American ($M = 1.01$) and Caucasian ($M = .44$) children's performance, ($p < .05$) (Curenton et al., 2000). Specifically, African American children ($M = .39$) had significantly greater scores than Caucasian ($M = .11$) on the questions regarding false belief and comprehension (Curenton et al., 2000). Over half (58%) of the African American children answered at least one of the narrative questions correctly, while only 27% of the Caucasian children answered correctly. The researchers speculated that the African American children's success on the narrative questions could be due to their cultural experience with storytelling. With such a small sample, making general claims was premature. However, differences in oral language development between cultural groups must be understood to better assist in all children's acquisition of literacy skills.

The intention of Marjanovic-Umek, Kranjc, and Fekonja's (2002) study was to explore the development of children's storytelling, an important ability of children's

pragmatic use of language, within the broader context of children's language development. They defined key elements for evaluating developmental levels of children's storytelling, specifically in terms of story coherence, its structure and connection amongst separate parts, and cohesion, construction of the story (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2002). The criteria for evaluating the coherence of a child's story in the study was divided into five different developmental levels: 1. story without a structure; 2. a story with a structure and simple descriptions of illustrations; 3. a story with a structure and simple temporal action sequences; 4. a story with a structure and descriptions of the characters' thoughts, emotions, or the relations among them; 5. a story with a structure and casual goal-based sequence of events (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2002). The criteria for evaluating the coherence of the story was referring to the thematic arrangement, linear arrangement with and without thematic leaps, of the story and the means for preserving the reference, literal repetition and repetition with pronouns (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2002).

This study assumed that children of different ages did not possess the same concept of story and used the coherence and cohesion criteria to compare 45 stories told by four-, six-, and eight-year-old boys and girls. The children were divided into three age groups: Group 1: children aged 4.0 – 4.6 years; Group 2: children aged 6.1 – 6.6 years; Group 3: children aged 7.6 – 8.2 years (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2002). To examine developmental characteristics of storytelling, an un-standardized test of retelling a story was used. The children first read and then were asked to retell H.C. Andersen's story, *The Princess and the Pea*, from its Slovene picture book illustrated edition. The children had the picture book at their disposal and testing was individual in a private room at the

school. Children's narratives were transcribed verbatim. When coherence of stories was analyzed, significant differences, ($p < .01$, $p < .01$, $p < .05$), in developmental levels among the three age groups were found (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2002). The coherence criteria, one through five, mirrored the age groups development in storytelling, with many of the youngest children demonstrating basic skills while progressively increasing storytelling complexity and sequencing with age.

The results also showed that most six-year-olds in the study were already achieving the highest level of story cohesion with thematic continuation. Overall, this study demonstrated that the developmental level of storytelling was congruent with the age of the child (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2002). The research was based on a hypothesis that different aged children possessed different concepts of story and this study provided a strong base of data and reliable procedures assessing the results, lending itself to high confirmability between the process and the product. Perhaps the children's familiarity with the very popular story used in the procedures impacted their ability to retell based on age, such that older children would be more versed in the story and therefore more fluent in retelling it.

In an effort to understand links between oral and written language development, Kaderavek and Sulzby (2000) analyzed responses of children with and without language impairment during the formulation of two narrative structures: oral narrative and emergent reading. The first analysis focused on the actual production of these two genres. Secondly, the focus was on context variation and examining linguistic variations in response to contexts of oral narrative and group differences, between those with and without language impairment. The data came from two groups of two- to four-

year-old preschool children from a midsized Midwestern city. All children were from white middle- to upper-middle-income homes. A language speech pathologist had identified all the SLI participants previous to the study. Ten children had been diagnosed with specific language impairment (SLI) and 10 children had typically developing language (TD) (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000). The children with TD were matched to participants in the SLI group by chronological age and gender.

Researchers made six home visits and collected emergent reading and oral narrative language samples. Each session included one pretend play with a toy and one book reading, in which the mother and child interacted with the toy or the book on three occasions across the six visits (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000). During these mother-child interactions, researchers' video- and audio-taped each encounters. After the third mother-child interaction with each of the books, the researchers asked the child to read the book, consequently gathering two emergent readings for each subject, and the most sophisticated example was used for analysis. The researcher also obtained oral narratives during these home visits by engaging the child in "natural" and "comfortable" conversation (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000). Three standard prompts were used with all children and each child's most sophisticated example of an oral narrative was used for analysis. In either case, if a child refused to participate it was noted. The language samples were transcribed both by the original researcher present for the home visits and familiar with the child's speech patterns and then by a research assistant trained in transcription but unfamiliar with the details of the study with an interjudge reliability of 97% (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000).

Transcript sets were reviewed for all 20 children to determine which children gave even a minimal response to the elicitations for oral narrative and emergent readings. From those, there were 15 samples of oral narratives: ten TD and five SLI. A slightly different set of 15 children produced emergent readings: nine TD and six SLI. Thus, five children with SLI did not respond to invitations to tell a story and five children, one TD and four SLI, did not attempt the emergent reading task. The children produced significantly more clauses ($p < .01$), in emergent readings ($M = 25.1$) than they did in the oral narratives ($M = 6.33$) (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000). When comparing the two contexts, the children demonstrated greater lexical diversity within the emergent reading context ($M = .72$) than in oral narrative ($M = .65$). Kaderavek & Sulzby declared this significance statistically significant, ($p < .05$).

Children also demonstrated a greater use of reported speech, the use of dialogue carriers and direct quotation, as part of emergent reading productions ($M = 15\%$) in contrast to the absence of reported speech in oral narratives ($M = 0\%$). When considering all narratives that were produced, there were no significant differences between children with SLI and the children with normal language abilities in their use of reported speech (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000). Overall, the children with SLI produced narratives in smaller proportions than the children developing typically in the sample (50% compared to 100%). There were differences in the age at which oral narratives occurred in the two sets of children; children TD produced scorable oral narratives as young as 2.4; the youngest child with SLI producing an oral narrative was 3.1 (Kaderavek & Sulzby, 2000). The small number of narratives collected from only Caucasian middle- and upper-middle class children with and without learning disabilities limited the reliability of this

research. Emergent reading is an important educational tool and this study provided insight into the applicability and purpose of it in an early literacy curriculum for developing cognitive skills in comprehension. Also, important is the connection to oral language development in student's with specific language impairments and how to appropriately assist those students in narrative and written language skills.

Celinska's (2004) study was designed to increase the knowledge base about the narrative skills of children with Learning Disabilities (LD). In this quest for more understanding, Celinska investigated three avenues of the topic: (1) examine both referential and evaluative aspects of narratives to broaden the scope and nature of insights into the characteristics of narrators with LD, (2) investigate narratives of past personal experience to expand existing knowledge about narrative abilities of these children beyond the mastery of fictional narratives, and (3) elicit narratives on self-selected topics during conversational interactions to increase the naturalistic nature of the elicitation context. With this framework, Celinska specifically examined if children with LD differ from their typically achieving peers with respect to length, referential, evaluative structural organization, and global coherence of personal experience narratives generated in naturalistic conversation.

The participants were 60 fourth grade students, 32 boys (M group) and 28 girls (F group). All participants were proficient Standard-English speakers and the participants with LD (LD Group, N=30) were matched individually with the typically achieving participants (NA Group, N=30) for chronological age and gender (Celinska, 2004). All participants with LD met two research criteria: (1) a Full-Scale IQ score within or above the average range, and (2) an absence of a diagnosis of emotional disturbance (Celinska,

2004). The NA participants were selected from students who performed at or above grade level in at least two core academic areas. The procedure for collecting narratives in this study was called the “conversational map.” The interviewer initiated a casual conversation and encouraged spontaneous narrating on self-selected topics relating to the child’s recent experiences (Celinska, 2004). Interviews were 20-30 minutes in length and several prompts were given if necessary to keep the child engaged in narration for that time period. After eliciting narratives, the child was administered a standardized oral language test and all the interviews were audio taped and consequently transcribed verbatim.

In all, 378 narratives were collected: 179 from students with LD and 199 from NA students. A group by gender ANOVA on the mean number of clauses per narrative revealed no significant main effects for group: ($p = 0.674$, gender: $p = 0.968$), or group by gender: ($p = 0.733$) interactions (Celinska, 2004). Similarly, the narratives produced by boys, $M = 16.0$ and girls, $M = 16.1$, were of similar length. All participants, regardless of group status, LD or NA, or gender, fulfilled the representational and evaluative functions of narratives using a variety of structural components with a similar relative frequency. However, a group by gender ANOVA was conducted to compare LD and NA groups and M and F groups on the proportion of narratives with high points revealed a significant main effect for group, ($p = 0.027$), and a significant group by gender interaction, ($p = 0.027$) (Celinska, 2004). Simple effects analysis for group indicated that the difference between girls with LD and NA girls was significant, ($p = 0.003$) and the difference between boys with LD and NA boys was non-significant, ($p = 1.000$) (Celinska, 2004). Therefore, the significant main effect for group and the

significant group by gender interactions revealed by ANOVA were due to the difference between girls with LD and NA girls, with the former producing fewer narratives with high points than the later.

Generally, Celinska's study indicated that the narrative abilities of students with LD resembled their typically achieving peers. However, significant group differences were revealed with respect to the inclusion of high points in narratives. Among all participants, girls with LD were least likely to relate narrative structural components to form hierarchical coherent structure with a high point as a central organizing element (Celinska, 2004). Because high points are typically marked by extensive evaluation that conveys the importance and meaning of the recounted event, they assume a central role in communicating the narrator's perspective on the recounted events (Celinska, 2004). This study was congruent and directly ties to research in cognitive development of typically achieving students and students with learning delays or disabilities. Although the sample was relatively small for a quantitative study, the methodology and results were congruent and several narratives were collected and analyzed. There was no hint at the SES or racial profile of the participants which many have an impact on the generalizability of the study.

This body of research exploring oral language development raised several important points to consider. Language that occurred in authentic, meaningful contexts appeared to aid children's development of skills and confidence in oration and narration. These studies suggested that development of early language skills in children was an incremental continuum; however proper identification of impairments or challenges in particular students is essential for future success in oral language and perhaps literacy.

Comparing Storytelling with other Literacy Methods

This section looked at a variety of commonly used literacy activities, skills and assessments in pre-elementary and elementary school classrooms and compared them to storytelling and narrative creation and inclusion. Activities such as picture-tell, story-read, and story-tell were compared to storytelling and narrative for their contribution to children's development in story comprehension and structure.

In a kindergarten classroom of predominately Bilingual English speakers, Magee and Sutton-Smith (1983) conducted a qualitative research study in which storytelling tasks, such as the creation of an authentic original story and the creation of a story from a picture and a picture book, were assigned and examined as common examples of literacy opportunities these children had in their classroom. Three of the children's storytelling responses from the classroom of 19 students were carefully studied. These three children, age five, were chosen for their average achievement in literacy based on their teacher's recommendation. When they told stories based on a single picture with implied action, their responses contained a relatively small total number of words, ($M=78.9$), with no elements of story structure or narrative (Magee & Sutton-Smith, 1983). However, children used a large number of different words to describe the characters, background, and action in the story.

Children responded to the story-picture condition as if the researcher had said, "Tell me what you see in this picture." The single picture elicited extensive vocabulary and descriptive language, but no story structures or connected discourse occurred, which indicated no association with the higher order functions of language, such as reasoning, predicting, or projecting (McGee & Sutton-Smith, 1983). Magee & Sutton-Smith

claimed from their findings that picture narration was more effective as a tool to develop vocabulary and description rather than as a means to build story language or language that elicits cognitive connections. When researchers asked the three children to create a story from a series of eight wordless pictures, similar results occurred. The children tended to describe verbatim the pictures, one by one, with no story cohesion. Children told disjointed stories, with no markers of time that could only be understood in conjunction with the pictures. Researchers then asked the students to tell an original story about anything they wanted, and the three children told long, involved stories containing many more words ($M=175.4$), with story conventions, such as a beginning, middle, and/or end (Magee & Sutton-Smith, 1983). Some of the narrations by the children were modifications of folktales or fairytales. The stories also included more spontaneous use of language functions than in the single picture task, especially cause and effect reasoning, and projecting using character dialogue (Magee & Sutton-Smith, 1983). In telling an original story, the children were less bound by visual stimulus and were more likely to tell an actual story with appropriate conventions and narrative structures.

The thorough study of three children's narratives allowed researchers to spend more time unpacking these individual's experiences. Details regarding the children's ability to utilize both their native language and Standard English were not given, but could impact the children's story cohesion and comprehension depending upon the fluency of the students in English considering the sample was predominately bilingual. This study alluded to the need for teachers to differentiate between activities which may be better suited to build a descriptive vocabulary and ones that encourage higher order

thinking and cognitive demand like personal narration stimulated from authentic questioning that pertains to the child's experience.

The purpose of a study conducted by Trostle and Hicks (1998) was to compare the effects of storytelling versus story reading on the comprehension and vocabulary development of 32 middle class British Primary School children, ranging from seven to eleven years. The 32 children were sub-grouped by gender, 16 boys and 16 girls, relative age, and literacy ability as defined by the teacher's filling out a Likert-type survey rating each student high, average, and low according to reading comprehension, oral reading, and vocabulary skills. The result was eight groups of four children per group with four "story read" groups and four "story-tell" groups. Each group was comprised of one low ability, one high-ability and two average ability readers.

Fundamental to this study, were two hypotheses generated from several bodies of research (Baker & Green, 1977; Morrow, 1997; Merritt, Culata & Trostle, 1998) related to story reading and storytelling. First, was that children exposed to adult storytelling of selected children's literature will score significantly higher on measures of comprehension of story line than will children who are exposed to adult story reading of the same children's literature titles. Second, was that children who are exposed to adult storytelling of selected children's literature will score significantly higher on measures of story vocabulary than will children who are exposed to adult story reading of the same children's titles (Trostle & Hicks, 1998).

Over a six-week period, the 16 story-tell children experienced a *Character Imagery* storytelling by a researcher or student teacher. This storytelling method involved the storyteller dressing as the protagonist in the story, while using captivating

and dynamic verbal and non-verbal body language (Trostle & Hicks, 1998). This method involved the teller becoming all the main characters, but always returning to that of the protagonist while narrating uncharacterized pieces of the story. The other 16 children witnessed a story reading by a researcher or student teacher. Stories were read verbatim, yet expressively from the text. Prior to the study, all children completed three days of training involving both storytelling and story reading in which all the stories in the study were read or performed by a researcher. Titles were selected based on length and complexity of story, appropriateness for *Character Imagery* storytelling and for story reading, and for appropriateness of the given age groups (Trostle & Hicks, 1998).

Story reading and telling sessions were 20 minutes each and no discussions followed either activity. After each 20 minute session of story reading or telling, one researcher tested each child individually in the small group of four, first for vocabulary and second for comprehension. 13 vocabulary words and 12 comprehension questions were given after each story, regardless of story-read or story-tell grouping. An equal number of questions involving interpretive, analytic, critical, and creative levels of comprehension taxonomy was given to each participant. A zero to two point's scale was determined and assigned for each answer to the comprehension questions.

Results of Trostle and Hick's study were compared to their original two hypotheses. According to their research, results of the ANOVA showed significant difference between the story-tell and story-read groups, ($p < .02$), in which participants of the story-tell condition achieved better performance on the comprehension test and the vocabulary test, ($p < .01$), than did those in the story read condition. To negate effects of ability, group homogeneity was determined by performing an ANOVA on the results of

the comprehension and vocabulary tests. This analysis uncovered no significant differences due to student ability as rated by their teachers regarding reading and vocabulary skills for comprehension, ($p < .85$). In addition, an ANOVA on the comprehension results, ($p < .93$) and vocabulary results, ($p < .73$) was performed based on gender and no major differences for either were uncovered. The data was congruent with both hypotheses predicting that the storytelling conditions would be more conducive to building comprehension and vocabulary than story-read in this study (Trostle & Hicks, 1998).

Trostle and Hicks' conclusions and results showed a strong congruence with their hypotheses. Children were assigned ability levels by the teacher on a Likert-type scale, and Likert scales are not valid indicators in qualitative research. Fortunately, they used other assessment methods, including testing and found no significant differences between the participant groups. Regarding cognitive development of children as literate members of classrooms and society, this study showed that literacy experiences in which students make personal connections and meaning from texts and story, such as the Character Imagery storytelling program, has the potential to advance some children's ability to critically analyze and integrate literature from many perspectives and contexts.

Myers (1990) conducted an informal qualitative study on the nature of children's responses in two storytelling situations: to stories read verbatim from books and to the same stories adorned, edited, and revised by an oral storyteller. Using her husband Tim as the storyteller and her two sons after school program, Extend-A-Care (EAC), as the research site, Myers conducted video and audio tape recordings of the EAC children as they listened to Tim read and tell stories. The children participating in the study were

primarily middle- to upper-middle class families, including a large number of children of graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin. Participants, including Myers two sons, were divided into groups according to age: Group A consisted of seven- and eight-year-olds and Group B consisted of nine- and ten-year-olds. The number of children participating in the study varied between six and twelve due to attendance during the four week period of research.

Myers studied the videotapes of four stories from the four weeks of research. She also kept written records of non-verbal responses the participants made during each story. Her focus was on the types of questions the children posed after the story read and story tell as well as audience participation and attentiveness. Two stories were read and two stories were told to each group. All four stories were American tall tales. Tim asked the children questions specifically targeted at increasing comprehension and participation. For example Tim would ask Group A, “Do you know what it means to rustle cattle?” and he also pressed the children with questions regarding the nonsensical elements in the stories (Myers, 1990). In this study, the storyteller Tim influenced the results greatly. He asked 30 questions during a storytelling session and only 3 when he was story reading. His reasoning behind the significant difference was his preference for storytelling as opposed to story reading. Children, therefore, responded or commented on the stories 58 times during storytelling and only nine times during story reading (Myers, 1990).

Conclusions Myers drew from her data were that a unique collaboration between storyteller and listener existed in the storytelling conditions that were absent from story reading. Myers interviewed the participants after they had experienced all four sessions of storytelling and story reading and asked which method they preferred. Children in the

study said that enjoyed told stories best because it was more interesting and physically entertaining. Eight-year-old Rachael said that she liked told stories because she created her own visualization of what was happening and that she could imagine it clearer (Myers, 1990). When the participants were asked which method they would want their teacher to employ, interestingly all students said story reading. Myers assumed this was the result of the abundance of story reading that occurs in classroom settings and that storytelling is generally a practice performed outside of school situations.

The researcher's provided concessions for the intimate nature of the familial connections to the participants and situation. Tim's preference for storytelling admittedly affected his performance in the storytelling conditions as he was far more animated and engaging with the students than in story-read. Powerfully demonstrated in this research was that the teller greatly impacted the quality and intention of the story for those listening and participating. For Tim, his natural inclination for storytelling changed his entire demeanor in a positive way and teachers need awareness of such personal preferences to avoid sending overtly positive or negative messages regarding material. For educators, self awareness of affiliations with curriculum material and methodology seems critical for the avoidance of biasing student's perceptions especially towards content less personally pleasurable to the instructor.

Investigating the influence of teacher's storytelling on children's comprehension, Feitelson, Kita, and Goldstein (1986) studied the effects of reading to first graders under traditional whole-class conditions, without changing the teacher's familiar patterns of teaching style and classroom organization. In first grade classrooms, teachers normally did not read to children except in connection with children's own reading from primers.

Texts in first grade primers consisted of stories with moral, descriptive passages, poetry, and verses from the Old Testament. For this study, teachers were asked to read from a 15-volume series about the pranks of a monkey, Kofiko, which was a very popular book series amongst elementary school aged children.

Five first-grade classrooms, of 139 children from the most “disadvantaged” suburbs of Haifa, participated in the study. Three of the five first-grade classrooms were assigned at random to the experimental condition and the other two to the control condition. All children were given a pretest, a vocabulary subtest of the standardized Hebrew version of the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI), and a posttest consisting of three subsets: (a) Technical Reading; (b) Comprehension; and (c) Picture-story Telling Task (Feitelson et al., 1986). Children had the most difficulty with the Picture-story Telling Task during the pretest. Unless explicitly told to sequence the six pictures together, students told stories about each picture individually, without story sequence or continuity (Feitelson et al., 1986).

The teachers of the three experimental classes were asked to read to their students for the last 20 minutes of the day five times a week. Teachers in the control classes were asked to continue teaching as before and asked not to increase the amount of reading aloud to their students. This experimental phase lasted for six calendar months of the school year. Challenges to the validity of the study resulted from teachers’ unwillingness to abide by the set reading schedule in the experimental groups and teachers disagreeing with the text choice, Kofiko, and as a result, dropped out of the study. By the second month of the study only 88 children continued on as participants with only one experimental classroom still in the study. Following the six months, the remaining

children were tested individually and randomly so that testers did not know which treatment the children had been assigned (Feitelson et al., 1986). In addition to the posttests, the study was documented by a diary kept by the school counselor, classroom observations, and interviews with the coordinator of the lower primary grades, with the three experimental teachers, and with the children in the experimental classes (Feitelson et al., 1986).

Following a Mann-Whitney U-test, examining the mean score of the children remaining in the experimental class on the vocabulary subtest revealed significantly lower scores, ($p < .001$), than children in the two control classes. Researchers concluded this was the result of school personnel failing to assign children to parallel classes as they had been promised before conducting the experiment. To adjust for this assumed bias, two comparisons were carried out for each measure: (a) a comparison between the control and experimental groups without taking into account the pretest; (b) a comparison between the control and experimental group that compared the different scores, pre versus post, on each measure for the two groups (Feitelson et al., 1986).

The posttests, a Mann-Whitney U-test, in technical reading showed that children in the experimental class significantly, ($p < .001$), outperformed children in the control classes (Feitelson et al., 1986). Reading comprehension was assessed by a five-term multiple-choice test, five being the highest score, zero being the lowest. On average, children in the experimental class answered more than four questions correctly and a Mann-Whitney U-test showed that their mean score was significantly, ($p < .007$), better than the children in the control class. When comparing the posttest only, children in the experimental class did slightly better with the picture-story-telling task. However, when

adjusted for the pretest differences, the gain of the children in the experimental class were significantly higher, ($p < .001$) (Feitleson et al., 1986).

Overall, researchers made several claims from these results, such as, that low SES first grade students who were read to by their regular teachers for 20 minutes each day, five days a week for six months had significantly better results on various comprehension and active use of language measures than did their counterparts in the same school who during that time engaged in other learning activities (Feitleson et al., 1986). Researchers' concluded that mediating adults who read stories aloud helped students' develop skills and strategies of use in understanding written texts. This study would seem to support Rogoff's (1990) conception of the beneficial relationship between master and apprentice, in which more capable peers assist learners through modeling and appropriate support.

Assessment of early literacy skills in children using tools and tests reflective of children's language and literacy acquisition was the focus of a quantitative study in which Bandian (1982, 1988) administered the Holbrook Screening Battery (HSB) on a group of 180 kindergarten students to test emergent literacy skills. These initial results were compared to a follow up test conducted on 129 of the remaining children from the original study once they were in the third grade to examine the accuracy of kindergarten literacy screening in predicting strong or poor readers by the third grade. The HSB administered in 1982 and 1988 was predominately phonics and decoding focused and had only minimal story comprehension questions. Testers evaluated story sequencing and coherence using a traditionally Western perspective, including a linear beginning, middle, and end.

Using the Gates-McKillop scale, in which the deficit to define poor readers increased with age, 10% of the children were poor readers (Bandian, 1982). Nine years later, Bandian (1988) conducted a final follow up study of the group, nine years after the kindergarten test was administered, when the majority of the students were in eighth grade. The aims of the follow up study were to examine the long-term prediction of reading over nine years, to determine the number of poor readers and children with reading disability at grade eight, to follow the progress of poor readers and other high-risk children from grades one through eight, and to examine characteristics of children who were poor readers at grade eight in relation to the characteristics of other high-risk children and of the total group (Bandian, 1988).

By the spring of grade eight, 116 of the original 180 participants were still attending the schools in the sample town. The personal characteristics of the 116 children followed through nine years of schooling were known through developmental questionnaires filled out by the parents at the time of the kindergarten screening (Bandian, 1988). Characteristics examined were birth history, family history of learning disability, birth order, history of speech delay, and socioeconomic status. Compared with the total number of good readers, the total number of poor readers were 2.6 times more likely to have a history of two or more birth complications and 2.7 times more likely to have a family history of a learning disability, 3.4 times more likely to have a speech delay, and in the lowest SES status (Bandian, 1988). The seven false positives (low scorers on the HSB, but good readers by grade three), were similar to the poor readers in having a poor birth history, but only half as likely to have a family history of learning disabilities (Bandian, 1988).

In the nine-year follow up study, all participants had been tested with the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) and the reading test criterion was the Reading Comprehension subtest. This test was statistically comparable to the HSB tests administered in kindergarten. To examine changes in reading comprehension skills from grades three to eight, 110 subjects who were tested at both grades were divided into quartiles for scores at each grade (Bandian, 1988). There was good consistency between grade three and grade eight in reading comprehension performance. At each grade 43.6% scored in the top quartile and 10% in the lowest quartile, with only slight changes in the two middle quartiles (Bandian, 1988). The 12 children who were poor readers at grade eight had all been identified and tested in school. Nine of the 12 had appeared to be at risk because of low HSB scores in kindergarten (Bandian, 1988).

Bandian concluded that in this cohort of children, individual performance in reading appeared to have been largely determined by third grade. The 10% who were defined as poor readers followed a progressively downward course from third grade on despite early identification. However, 55% of the children who appeared to be at risk in kindergarten were average readers by grade eight. Bandian speculated that early intervention and special literacy services were contributing factors to the student's later successes, as well as, "developmental catch-up," in that slow starters caught up with their typically performing peers over time. The process of maturation captured in this study from kindergarten to eighth grade is a source of critique as so many external and non-related changes happened in the participants over this timeframe. Correlating the kindergarten and third grade tests and the parent questionnaire with student's performance seemed weakly connected and no concessions were provided.

Of significance to early literacy educators, is the possibility that some student's success in reading, oration, and writing can be defined as early as kindergarten. Though SES and ethnicity was not provided in this study, of interest was the possible conflict of the assessment with the participants' cultural groups. Assigning sweeping labels, such as poor reader to children from limited assessment tools, seems problematic unless stated specifically, which this study did not. Without implementation of alternative literacy activities and lessons for these students, there is potential for student's to systematically fail throughout their educational career.

Studying these articles as a collective, several interesting themes emerged regarding storytelling and other literacy activities. Foremost, the inclusion of several techniques and pedagogical tools was highlighted as beneficial for students developing oral and literate skills. Story reading and picture book discussion were tools perhaps best suited for building children's vocabulary and understanding of description, while storytelling and narration built children's ability to comprehend and relate to both the material and those experiencing or sharing in the stories. Overall, many literacy avenues, including phonics, narration, story-tell, and read, were necessary for language and literacy acquisition and proper assessment of early literacy skills required inclusion of all such tools for an accurate understanding of student ability.

External Conditions that Effect Oral Language and Storytelling

These articles examined external conditions and variables which impacted the effectiveness and quality of storytelling as a pedagogical tool. Such factors as repetition and dyadic settings are discussed in relation to the cognitive demand and overall comprehension achieved during these situations.

Morrow (1985) investigated whether repeated practice in storytelling could improve kindergartners' comprehension of stories. In addition, children's retellings of stories were analyzed for inclusion of story elements and for syntactic complexity of oral language. The following research was comprised of two studies. The first investigation sought to determine if retelling a story after listening to it would improve comprehension of that story. The second study was the result of intriguing results compiled from the first study and focused further on the effects on comprehension, as well as other skill areas, under conditions of frequent practice with explicit guidance during the retelling of stories (Morrow, 1985).

The purpose of Study 1 was to determine if retelling a story after listening to it once, without frequent practice or guidance in retelling, would improve a child's comprehension and recall of that story. Four kindergarten classrooms, with a total of 59 children participated in the study, 25 girls and 34 boys, with no mention of ethnicity or SES. This study took place in the spring of the children's kindergarten year and the mean age of the children was 5.7 (Morrow, 1985). After listening to a story read aloud, children in the experimental group individually retold the story. The control group participants were asked to draw a picture about the story. From these conditions, Morrow sought to identify if the process of retelling enhanced a child's ability to answer structural questions about the story and if it enhanced the child's ability to answer literal, inferential, and critical questions about a story.

As mentioned there were two groups in the study, an experimental group, which after listening to the story and engaging in a brief post-read discussion, individually retold the story to the researcher with no prompts. There was also a control group, which

after listening and discussing the same story, was asked to draw a picture about the story. The experimental and control groups had ten minutes to complete the retelling and the drawing. Both groups participated in the same listening format as a whole group and children were not likely to be familiar with the stories as they were recently published.

The question and answer comprehension pre-tests were administered without prior treatment. One book was used for all the pretests and two different books were used in the comprehension posttest to increase generalizability (Morrow, 1985). One half hour after a story was read to the children, research assistants administered posttests on a one-to-one basis. An analysis of covariance was conducted for each of the posttest measures: traditional question scores, story structure questions, and total comprehension scores. Analysis of the traditional question and story structure question scores on the posttest showed no significant differences between the experimental and control groups. However, the analysis for the combined test scores showed a small but significant difference between the experimental and control groups, ($p < .05$) (Morrow, 1985). Results indicated limited improvements for the experimental group over the control group, but only in the total comprehension scores was the difference significant.

A second study conducted by Morrow provided children with frequent practice in retelling, and they were guided in their retellings by an adult who focused on the structural framework of a story. Study 2 utilized the same procedures during treatments as did the first study. However, eight treatments were administered, and during the story retellings, guidance was provided when needed. The second investigation examined if practice and guidance in retelling stories improved a child's ability to answer structural and traditional comprehension questions about stories, as well as, if it would improve a

child's ability to retell stories by including more structural elements of a narrative (Morrow, 1985). The second study employed 17 kindergarten classrooms located in both urban and suburban public school districts. There were 82 total children in the study, 39 boys and 42 girls and the study took place in the fall of their kindergarten year when the mean age of the children was 5.2 (Morrow, 1985). Again, there were two groups in the study, the experimental and the control, and using a table of random numbers from a gender segregated list, three boys and three girls were selected from each of the 17 classrooms as participants in this research and divided into the experimental and control groups proportionately.

Student teachers administered treatments once a week for eight weeks. The format for reading the stories was the same as described in Study 1: after listening to the same story the control children were asked to draw a picture describing the story and the experimental group was asked to retell the story individually with the student teacher (Morrow, 1985). The comprehension question pretest was the first test administered and one half hour after the story was read, tests were given to children individually, without any treatment. In the tenth week of the study the story retelling posttest was given without any treatment. Story retellings were analyzed for inclusion of story structure elements of setting, plot episodes, resolution and for sequence. To determine reliability, evaluators independently scored the same 12 tests. The mean correlation between evaluators was .94 for total retelling scores (Morrow, 1985).

The analysis of posttest scores on comprehension questions, ($p < .005$), story structure questions, ($p < .005$), and combined test questions, ($p < .001$) showed significant gains for the experimental group over the control group. The analysis of the total story

retelling scores on the posttests indicated that the experimental group also scored significantly better than the control group, ($p < .003$). When the categories of story structure were considered separately, the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in areas of theme, ($p < .05$), and resolution, ($p < .006$), but there were no significant differences between the groups in setting, ($p < .186$), or in plot episodes, ($p < .110$).

Morrow concluded that frequent practice and guidance in retelling rather than simply review or rehearsal a particular story increased comprehension amongst kindergartners. The positive correlation between oral comprehension scores in the experimental group and the total retelling scores indicated that the skills acquired from practice in retelling was potentially related to improved performance in both areas. This study had high internal and external validity as increasing practice directly correlated with increased comprehension, as was presumed from the initial study. This could be reconstructed in another classroom setting with similar results. Additional research is needed to show if underlying cognitive changes are responsible for the increased scores on the tests in this investigation.

The primary question of this study conducted by Hayes and Casey (2002) was if co-action involved in group storytelling might predispose children to create more mature narratives than those composed by children individually. The model of story competence expected of preschool children was outlined in this study and contained three characteristics: (a) a solid use of past tense; (b) an episodic structure; and (c) use of linguistic devices that enhanced cohesiveness (Hayes & Casey, 2002). Hayes and Casey embarked on this study because relatively few researchers had examined either how

children come to form notions of stories or what mechanisms, such as group storytelling, might be used as formal educational experiences to enhance such notions. Previous research, (Krauss & Glucksberg, 1969), had indicated that preschool age children showed high levels of egocentric speech and had difficulty coordinating successive statements made by two speakers. Because group storytelling seemingly required coordination of this type, group production may adversely affect the coherence or cohesion of the narrative.

Thirty-six children, three- and four-years-old, were randomly assigned to either an individual or a dyadic condition and were taken to a testing room by an adult experimenter. Participants assigned to the dyadic condition were paired with a classmate. All the children in the study were shown a picture of a frog and instructed to compose a story based on the picture. The experimenter began each story by saying, “Once upon a time, there was a big green frog...,” while simultaneously writing this statement on a large pad of paper (Hayes & Casey, 2002). Their verbatim responses were written on the paper, in sequence, by the experimenter. The children were verbally encouraged to create as complete a story as possible. Participants in the dyadic condition were allowed to speak freely in whatever order they wished, setting their own pace and taking turns, while the experimenter noted changes in speaker on a small pad. After the children were finished, the experimenter transcribed the statements verbatim and they were analyzed and coded for the following dependent measures: (a) story length; (b) use of past tense; and (c) logically connected discourse (Hayes & Casey, 2002).

Results yielded that dyadic stories were longer than individual ones. The analysis based on the number of words used in completing a story demonstrated a significant main

effect for the condition, ($p < .05$), but not for age, ($p < .10$), or for the interaction of those two variables, ($p < .10$) (Hayes & Casey, 2002). To gain insight into the level of stories generated, Hayes and Casey examined the proportion of propositions manifested in the past tense. They found that the proportions of past tense use in the individual condition were 40% and 88% for the young and older participants respectively. An ANOVA of the proportion of propositions that contained the use of past tense revealed no significant main effect for condition, ($p < .05$), but it did reveal a significant interaction of condition with age, ($p < .01$). This interaction was caused by the older children in the individual condition who expressed their stories more frequently in the past tense than did the children in the dyadic condition (Hayes & Casey, 2002). Finally, individual, rather than dyadic story generation produced the highest proportion of logically connected discourse. An ANOVA of the number of propositions that were logically connected revealed a significant main effect for condition ($p < .05$). This finding confirmed for Hayes and Casey that successive statements within the stories generated by individual children were more logically interconnected than were those statements generated by dyads.

This study was one of the first to examine group influences on young children's ability to generate stories. The results demonstrate that the effects of dyadic storytelling are mixed. Children produced longer narratives in the group setting, but individually generated stories contained a higher percentage of logically connected statements and demonstrated a greater use of past tense (Hayes & Casey, 2002). Cognitively, students of this age group may be developing different necessary skills from both activities. The experimenter began each story elicitation with a traditional western fairy tale introductory statement; "Once upon a time." This potentially constricted the students' individual

formatting of their narrations and also provided students with a schematic hint if they were familiar with fairy tale story structure.

This body of research discussing external factors that influenced oral language and storytelling development in children detailed important clues about using storytelling effectively in classroom environments. Children able to repeat or retell stories were more likely to comprehend and internalize the material and make meaning. Situations in which children could create a dyadic story produced mixed results. Stories were longer but not as fluent or connected. Guidance, however, was necessary for children to fully utilize storytelling as a tool to expand oral language skills and develop deeper understanding.

Drama and Pretend Play as a Different Form of Storytelling

This section describes the impact of dramatization in storytelling and structured conditions of symbolic pretend play. These articles build upon the similarities and differences between dramatization, pretend play, and storytelling and how each effects student's story comprehension, understanding of story structure, and narrative cohesiveness.

Hoyt (1992) hypothesized that children would exhibit significantly better comprehension and story memory by using dramatic story reenactments than those children who reconstruct stories in teacher led instruction and art activities. Two kindergarten classes were identified to take part in a four week instructional period and randomly assigned to treatments. One sample had four stories orally read to them followed by four retelling techniques: role-playing, puppet theatre, flannel board, and pantomiming (Hoyt, 1992). The other sample had the same stories orally read to them, however, these stories were followed by teacher instruction and an art activity related to

the story. Both samples received sequencing strips that they were directed to glue the in correct order on a piece of paper. The strips were reduced photocopies of main parts of the story.

During the four week period, the number of correct sequencing strips per child in each sample was collected and the samples total mean scores were tested for any significance (Hoyt, 1992). According to Hoyt, there was a 21.35 point difference between the means of the samples in which reenactments were used after listening to a story, as compared to doing an art activity. Students correctly produced a mean of 75.30 sequencing strips after participating in a story reenactment and a mean of 53.95 following the art activities, at the end of four weeks (Hoyt, 1992). The difference was found to be statistically significant, ($p < .05$) (Hoyt, 1992).

Conclusions drawn from this data by Hoyt were congruent with her hypothesis that children will exhibit greater comprehension and story memory by using dramatic story reenactment than those children who reconstruct stories in teacher led instruction and art activities. The significant 21.35 point difference between the two samples was used as evidence to support her conclusion. Such a significant difference in the samples could also be the result of the novelty effect on students, as the drama conditions were new to the students and more engaging than activities they had participated in previous to the studies implementation.

Henderson and Shanker's (1978) study consisted of 28 second grade students. The area of focus in this study was student's comprehension ability when exposed to two different variables: basal readers with workbooks and dramatization activities with group discussion. All were African American and came from a low-socioeconomic area. The

sample consisted of three groups: Group A, primer; Group B, first reader; and Group C, second reader. Group assignments were based on results of the basal reader achievement tests given at the school. Ten students were assigned to Groups A and C. Eight students were assigned to Group B. Sixteen tests were constructed for each reading group to be given at the conclusion of each story and follow-up workbook or drama sessions.

A total of 48 tests were given. Each test consisted of five objective items: two multiple choice questions on recognition and recall of details, two questions on sequencing of events and one question on main ideas (Henderson & Shanker, 1978). This study can be described in two phases. During Phase One, Groups A and C were exposed to the basal reader and interpretive dramatics, while Group B was taught by the basal reader and workbook method. When eight stories had been completed by each group, Phase Two began, which consisted of the reversed presentation of activities. For both methods, the teacher's manual was followed for presenting new vocabulary, decoding skills, and silent and oral reading activities.

For the traditional method, workbook pages on story comprehension were given to the students as reinforcement activities. Children worked independently and then a teacher constructed comprehension test was given. The interpretive dramatics groups received no workbook pages pertaining to story comprehension. Instead, the groups dramatized the stories and all children participated for each story which resulted in the stories being acted out more than once (Henderson & Shanker, 1978). The teacher then discussed with the group what was accomplished during the dramatization and to see whether critical elements of the story were accurately interpreted (Henderson & Shanker,

1978). When all students had participated in the dramatization, a final discussion was held to review what was accomplished and at this point the tests were given.

Researchers used the t-test to determine the significance of the raw scores on the teacher-constructed tests. The t-ratios for the differences of the mean scores for the three categories of comprehension tested were 10.20, 13.80, and 10.61 for recognition of details, sequencing of events, and generalizing the main idea (Henderson & Shanker, 1978). In each case these were significant, ($p < .001$), indicating that the students achieved much higher scores in all three areas of comprehension during the dramatics sessions (Henderson & Shanker, 1978).

Kim (1999) examined the effects of pretend play and storytelling upon narrative recall in four- and five- year-old children. The focus of Kim's study was on the developmental differences between storytelling and pretend play, short-term and long-term memory and encoding and inferences. Kim defined encoding as bits of information presented in a situation that accesses knowledge structure relevant to the problem, such as identifying the terms in a verbal analogy or recalling the main characters in a story. Inferring was described as the cognitive processes employed to show one or more relationships between objects or events.

Engaging children in retelling a story reflects a holistic concept of reading comprehension (Kim, 1999). Retelling requires the reader or listener to integrate information by relating parts of the story to one another and to personalize information by relating it to one's own background of experience and knowledge. Kim argued that children's pretend play and narratives are basic developmental factors for understanding children's views of the world and their experience. A total of 32 children, 13 females and

19 males, all attending preschool and kindergarten participated in Kim's study (1999). The majority of the four- and five-year-old children resided in middle and upper-class homes. The mean educational level of the parents was 17.4 years. Of the children, 88% were European American, 3% were Asian American, and 9% were African American.

The study had three different phases: (a) storytelling phase with pictures and dolls, (b) the research phase, (c) long-term retention phase one week later. The story, *Who is in Rabbit's House?* is an African folktale about a rabbit, and was read aloud to all children individually prior to the start of the study. Immediately after reading the story, in Phase A, the children were randomly divided into four groups: Groups 2 and 4 focused on pretend play reenactment of the story with dolls and asked eight comprehension questions, and Groups 1 and 3 were shown picture cards from the story to induce recall and asked eight comprehension questions of the story. One week later, in Phase B, Groups 2 and 4 were presented with the dolls and asked to re-enact the story of Rabbit's House once again. They were asked the eight comprehension questions. Groups 1 and 3 were presented with the original picture cards and asked to re-tell the story of Rabbit's House, followed by the eight questions. At Phase C, three days following B, no picture and no doll conditions took place. Only the eight comprehension questions were asked, to assess encoding and inferences.

All sessions were tape-recorded and spontaneous discussions relevant to research were later transcribed. Subsequently, each narrative was transcribed verbatim and was coded for its narrative structure and verbal situation. There were three parts to the data analysis focusing on the difference between storytelling and pretend play, the effects of storytelling and pretend play upon immediate and long-term recall, and between encoding

and inferences. All data were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences.

The results of Kim's study originated in the analysis of whether the levels of narrative structure were influenced by storytelling and pretend play. There was a significant difference between storytelling and pretend play during Phase A, ($p < .001$). In the narrative condition, there are four different levels of narrative complexity, which were non-response, short description, sequential, and plotted. Children in the pretend play scenarios demonstrated a higher level of narrative structure than those in the picture cue storytelling condition (Kim, 1999). At Phase B, there is also a significant difference between storytelling and pretend play with regard to recall of complex narrative structure, ($p < .001$). The children in the pretend play condition did considerably better with dolls than the children in the storytelling condition who had only pictures to facilitate recall. During Phase C, there were no cues available as memory aids and both the storytelling and pretend play groups performed at relatively the same level ($p < .05$). The advantage of the pretend play appears to be related to the presence of representational knowledge, which was absent in Phase C. Both storytelling and pretend play groups performed similarly in regards to encoding and inferences, with the only significance in the MANOVA resulting from time effect, ($p < .001$).

Kim's qualitative study focused on upper and middle-class, predominately Euro-American children. Use of an African folktale was an interesting choice. There was no explanation if it was a traditional folktale or if it had been adapted to fit the genre of a standard western folktale. There was no definition of storytelling and differentiation between storytelling and pretend play was somewhat misleading, as it seems both are

modes which enable different verbal and kinesthetic properties, but they are none the less both forms of storytelling narrative creation.

The relevance of understanding pretend play and storytelling as methods of cognitive and social development seems innate in the nature of childhood. Pretend play emerges regularly in typically developing children and it emerges early at roughly 18 months and rapidly becomes more complex and frequent (Kim, 1999). Much of early cognitive development is concerned with children's increasing flexibility and competence in understanding the relationship between the concrete and abstract worlds. Pretend play and storytelling are avenues for children to practice and comprehend complex emotional, social, and situational experiences. This concept of experiential development is essentially Piagetian and directly corresponds to his theories of cognitive and moral development (Furth, 1970).

Educator Influence and Impact on Oral Language Development

The research articles in this section describe the influence and impact of teachers' facilitation of storytelling and narrative activities. They detail the potential positive and negative impacts of teachers' engagement and potential avenues of miscommunication and improper assessment of children's oral language development. Most importantly, the articles describe the process of enabling and disabling children in their quest to make meaning from stories and express themselves fully. The discussion within the research is focused on children from different cultural groups and genders in public education classrooms; however these articles focus predominately on African American children's experience as the research was limited regarding other cultural groups. Within the

research, similarities and distinct stylistic differences emerged between African American and Euro-American children, which educators need understanding and training towards.

Hansen's (2004) study documented how kindergartners talked about story in a supportive environment, focusing on two components: (a) What kind of questions did the teacher ask to promote meaningful talk after a story read aloud? and (b) What kind of responses did the teacher make to further children's ability to transact with text? Hansen had many years of professional collaboration and observation with the kindergarten teacher leading the classroom of 22 children present in the study. The school setting was suburban and student's came from a largely white, middle-class neighborhood. Data came from two distinct classroom procedures: large- and small-group discussion, which was videotaped by the researcher. In large-group discussion, all children listened to the same text read aloud by the teacher. Children made comments and built upon each other's responses in teacher-facilitated conversation (Hansen, 2004). Small-group discussion involved half the class, divided into small groups of four or five children who had read the same picture book. While the teacher led the other half of the class in science investigations, the small groups independently engaged in discussion of a common picture book.

Hansen transcribed the videotapes into segments of dialogue from categories such as teacher talk, teacher expectations, students using existing strategies to make meaning, and students developing understanding of story. Three codes made up the larger category of "Teacher Talk." The codes were defined as setting the climate, questioning techniques, and responding to student standards. Hansen made several conclusions from the transcriptions. First, was that the teacher gave her students something to talk about in

regards to the texts and allowed an extended period of class time to do just that.

Secondarily, the teacher expected that the young children would be capable of providing literary responses and held them accountable for thinking through their own ideas and ideas of others (Hansen, 2004).

Changing the context for discussion contributed to the children's literary growth (Hansen, 2004). In large-group discussion, participants were allowed to share individual meanings and listen to interpretations of others so they could re-evaluate or confirm their initial reactions. Small-group discussion let four or five children who had read the same book work through the process with more opportunity for their voices to be heard. Most crucially, Hansen inferred that the most significant act committed by the teacher which encouraged literary development in the children was making meaningful and significant time for the children to investigate and discuss the literature and illustrations. The findings raise attention to the importance of time and collaboration in children's process of making meaning through literary exploration and discussion. Teachers that facilitate student driven discussion are guiding students toward the development of crucial social skills as well as building self-concept and perception through sharing personal revelations and experience.

Looking at the transition in oral language and literacy experiences from a home-based environment to a school setting, Michaels (1980) conducted a long-term ethnographic study to examine urban first graders' shift in strategies from home-based conversational discourse to writing-based strategies common in public education classrooms. This report focused on "sharing time" in one urban first grade classroom that was part of the larger study. Sharing time in this classroom was a reoccurring classroom

activity, where children were called upon to give a formal description of an object or narrative account about some past event. Michaels' question regarded differential treatment of African American and Euro-American children during sharing time, such that the teacher greatly influenced the amount of practice certain children acquired doing literate style accounting. She conducted audio- and video-taping of over 50 sharing episodes in the classroom during the course of an entire school year.

Michaels found that sharing intonation was an integral feature of sharing discourse and occurred in no other classroom speech activity, other than role-playing. In this classroom, which was 50% Euro-American and 50% African American, Michaels identified two contrasting, but very comparable intonation patterns. The contour used primarily by the Euro-American children was a gradually rising contour, stretching the last word or two of a tone group. The accompanying utterance was often syntactically complete and indicated that there was more to come followed by a significant pause. The second intonation contour used exclusively by African American children occurred in independent clauses and was characterized as a lilting high rise-mid fall contour. This intonation pattern could be mistaken by a listener without knowledge of such a contour as a false start (Michaels, 1980).

Michaels noted that the teacher played a crucial role in structuring the child's discourse and in providing an example of the kind and form of discourse she considered appropriate during sharing time. After analyzing the data of the teacher's interactions during sharing, it became apparent to Michaels that the teacher had an underlying schema of what constituted "good" sharing and that this schema had an implicit literate bias. The teacher expected a decontextualized approach, far removed from conversationally based

embedded accounting. Euro-American children's narratives were more closely aligned to the teacher's expectations (Michaels, 1980). The discourse of Euro-American children tended to be tightly organized, centering on a single topic or series of closely related topics. In contrast to the topic centered style, African American children were far more likely to use a topic-chaining style that is loosely structured talk which moved fluidly from topic to topic, dealing primarily with accounts of personal relations (Michaels, 1980). This kind of discourse was difficult to follow thematically, for those who like the teacher in the study, expected narratives to focus on a single topic with a succinct beginning, middle, and end.

Michaels concluded that the teacher was better able to collaborate with the children who used topic-centered style of discourse, both in her questioning skills and comments. With many of the African American children, the teacher appeared to have difficulty discerning the topic and predicting where the child was going. Her questions were often mistimed, stopping the child mid-clause, and in one 20 minute sharing session, the teacher interrupted African American children 17 times as opposed to only three times with the Euro-American children's narratives (Michaels, 1980).

When Michaels interviewed the teacher at the end of the school year, she said that many children in her first grade class simply did not know what they wanted to say in advance and were, "talking off the tops of their heads." Michaels noted that the teacher had consistent problems with certain children during sharing time and supposed this was the result of her embedded narrative schemata that directly opposed many of the African American children's narrative discourse style. Such mismatches over discourse patterns resulted in differential amounts of practice doing literate-style accounting for the children

in the classroom. Michaels closed with the acknowledgement that in as much as sharing time was an activity that promoted the development of prose-like oral discourse; such differential treatment may ultimately affect these children's progress in learning to write topic-centered, discursive prose.

Focusing on the language socialization practices of African American middle-class children and their families, Williams (1991) conducted a qualitative study to determine whether stories of personal experience occur as part of the every day lives of African American middle-class children and to uncover the ways stories of personal experience function to affirm these children's literate identities. This study investigated personal storytelling as a conduit through which values, beliefs, and identity are transmitted to middle-class African American children. Participants in Williams' study were four- and five-year-olds, three boys and two girls, all of whom lived in a predominately African American middle-class neighborhood in Chicago. All lived in single family households, had mothers with at least two years of college training and that were employed, and fathers with at least two years of college. In two families of the participants, both parents were second-generation middle class and at least one parent in the other families was second-generation middle class with the partner being either first-generation or working-class. All the families attended church regularly.

Williams conducted naturalistic observation of stories of personal experience, supplemented by a narrative elicitation task of an observational nature. Mrs. Smith, a local community member for over 30 years worked with Williams to choose the five participants. Williams visited the Sunday school in which all participants attended and observed for four months prior to the study. Through her observations at the school she

was able to pick the five children for the study. Each family was visited at home once or twice before the data was collected. The research was gathered in two home visits following the introduction meetings. The official first visit involved one hour of audio-taped observation. In her visits, Williams stated she “attempted to maintain a stance that was naturalistic to the communicative norms of the family” (p. 404). The second visit began with another half-hour of observation followed by a maternal elicitation task in which mothers were asked to provoke their children into telling a story of personal experience (Williams, 1991). Mothers had half an hour to elicit stories from their children.

Williams defined a story of personal experience as two or more utterances addressed to the listeners that described a specific past event or a grouping of past events that occurred to the child or to the company kept by the child. Frequency, content, and structure of the children’s narratives were analyzed from a total of eight hours and 84 child stories of personal experience. Personal storytelling occurred at an average rate of 7.6 stories per hour, ranging from three to twelve stories per hour for the five participants (Williams, 1991). A significant subset of stories revealed an intersection of stories of personal experience and performances of literacy and the successful acquisition of literacy skills. Doing well in school, especially in reading and writing, were highly reportable events in this African American middle-class community. An important aspect of the children’s identity revolved around sharing experiences from school or church, two highly influential institutions frequently attended by the children. Williams argued that the children in her study were acquiring the secondary discourse of school through use of a primary discourse, personal storytelling, which was framed within the

context of their daily lives. She believed through rehearsing and espousing these seemingly ordinary stories of schooling and church related experiences, that these children are being instilled and socialized into a fundamentally cultural way of being, that of a literate self who values schooling and literacy (Williams, 1991).

The intimacy within this study is apparent both in its small sample size and in the personal involvement of Williams in picking the participants and her interactions with them and their families. By getting to know the community, Williams could appear more authentic within the social and familial settings where she conducted her research. Participants and their families would act more naturally, as one of her goals in the research. A powerful idea posed in this research is that a positive sense of self with regards to literacy acquisition and ability can be a catalyst for students to actively inquire and strive for more literary experiences and development.

The intended purpose of Craig and Washington's (2002) study was to develop quantified descriptions of the oral language performances of typically developing African American children at the time of school entry. Their concern was identifying appropriate oral language assessment for African American children beginning school, such that students would not be punished for dialectical differences and falsely identified with language disabilities or impairments. The participants were 100 African American preschool and kindergarten aged children, who were judged typically developing by their teachers and parents. Fifteen- to 20- minute spontaneous language samples were collected from all participants during dyadic free play, in which each child wore a microphone and samples were audio recorded. This task intended to probe the use of active and passive voice distinction. The protocols were administered by an African

American female examiner who spoke African American English (AAE) to the children (Craig & Washington, 2002). Free-play language samples were transcribed and scored for amounts of dialect (AAE), units of average length of communication, amounts of complex syntax, and number of different words.

Results showed that every child in the study produced one or more of the AAE forms in the transcribed language samples and 93% of students produced one or more instances of complex syntax within the samples (Craig & Washington, 2002).

Considered across the breadth of 100 participants, the samples of approximately half the students evidenced conjunctions, either in the form of a non-infinitive conjunction, coordinate, or subordinate conjunction (Craig & Washington, 2002). Responses to Who, What, Where, and Why questions, demonstrated a significant main effect for grade, ($p < .036$), as kindergartners achieved higher scores ($M = 58.0$) than preschoolers ($M = 53.2$) (Craig & Washington, 2002). This research design and attention to address the participants' specific dialectical needs by utilizing a research assistant fluent in AAE showed high confirmability and a focus on learning about African American students' use of oral language in this study. This study further demonstrated the necessity for appropriate oral language assessment in a congruent manner with the personal background and experience of the students in literacy programs.

Interested in gender bias demonstrated by teachers analyzing language functions in early childhood education, Erickson (2000) collected parent-child language samples from twelve five-year-olds on videotape. A predefined set of language functions was applied during the transcription of the tapes, identifying six specific functions of language in the children: regulatory, instrumental, interactional, personal, heuristic, and

imaginative (Erickson, 2000). Forty-five women teachers from kindergarten and first grade classroom settings volunteered to participate in the study. The teachers were trained to recognize and correctly label each of the functions heard in the first twelve language episodes from only female students. They were then asked to identify the language functions heard in each of the remaining 24 video clips, language clips which alternated male and female language users.

Results of this experiment showed that the correct answer score data indicated equivalence in all teachers' ability to identify the language functions of both genders of children (Erickson, 2000). However, the comparison of error score data indicated wide gender disparity in erroneous identification of language functions. For example, the teacher error patterns when instrumental language functions were performed and assessed in regulatory functions: males 27, females 11 ($p < .03$); interactional functions: males 19, females 9 ($p < .05$); heuristic functions: males 9, females 1 ($p < .01$), males were over-identified as incorrectly using the function (Erickson, 2000). There was no description of how the teachers were trained and what measures were taken to confirm the validity between the independent variable, the student's gender and the dependent variable, the teacher's bias. Erickson concluded that errors in interpretation of male and female language functions allowed for the potential of misidentification of language functions and therefore, meaning intent of the children. Broadly, the child's potential to make meaning is reliant upon the listener's potential to extract meaning and Erickson argued that the potential to be understood was the reason the child learned language in the first place. Because learning language is dependent upon accurate and appropriate developmental expectations of the listener, it was possible that the teacher's inappropriate

expectations, as seen in the error patterns of this study, could trigger a self-fulfilling prophecy of gender different language development.

Overall, after reviewing articles concerning educator's impact on children's development of oral language and literacy skills, awareness appears to be a crucial factor in assisting all children in their academic needs and goals. Teacher education programs, such that educators are constantly informed on new research and knowledge about important and valuable differences in oral language style and development, are possible means for addressing injustice and ignorance in classrooms. Also, opportunities for self-reflection and collaboration with other educators could help combat internalized bias and prejudice amongst and towards cultural groups and sexes.

Moral Development through Storytelling and Narrative

This final section of research discusses theories of moral development in relation to storytelling and personal narrative exploration. Articles describe varying views and depictions of development, both from acclaimed theorists and from children's own perspectives in relation to the creation of identity and moral reasoning.

Autonomy and fierce independence have long been referred to as culminating achievements of child and adolescent development in Anglo-American culture. However, this attitude and construct of self is deeply rooted in philosophical traditions of Europe and North America. It is important to recognize that many other countries and cultures have a far more interdependent and familial sense of personal goals and self. Miller, Wiley, Burger, and Rose (1998) investigated different constructions and goals manifested throughout early childhood by studying the developmental pathways which reinforced such Euro-American children. They examined personal storytelling as a

medium through which Euro-American children begin to construct themselves with regards to this acquisition of independence.

This study compared young children and their families from two European American communities in Chicago, one working class (Daly Park) and the other middle class (Longwood). Both communities were predominately Catholic. Six children and their families participated from each of the two communities. Each sample was balanced by gender and the focal children were aged 2.6 at the first observation and 3.0 during the second. Researchers chose this age group because children's verbal fluency is generally well-established and they have become avid narrators of their own experience (Miller et al, 1998). All of the participants lived in two parent households. Daly Park parents were high school graduates whereas Longwood parents were college graduates. Over 48 hours of audio and video recording was collected during this particular study. Mothers were always present during the observation sessions. The researcher visited the homes prior to the first taping session to enhance rapport with the families.

Video recordings were examined for co-narrations of personal experience, and all speech by the narrating child participant was transcribed verbatim. Gestures, actions, and paralinguistic information were also described where appropriate. Each transcript was checked at least three times by two different transcribers. A co-narration of experience was defined as an episode of talk involving three or more utterances describing a particular past event or a class of past events in which the child portrayed himself or herself as the protagonist (Miller et al., 1998). Stringent estimates of intercoder reliability addressed the boundaries of co-narration such that the coders independently identified the first utterance and the final utterance of each narration. The percentage of

agreement under these conditions was 87%. Frequency and length of co-narrations were analyzed in both communities as well as the number and ending practice of conflicts between the child narrator and the mother co-narrator.

A total of 278 co-narrations were observed in Daly Park, compared to 112 in Longwood. On average, families in Daly Park produced many more co-narrations, $M = 46.33$, median = 47, range = 11-71, than families in Longwood, $M = 18.67$, median = 13.5, range = 9-34 (Miller et al., 1998). Compared to their mothers, the Daly Park children initiated .37 (median = 31) of all co-narrations whereas children in Longwood initiated .50 (median = 55.5). The distributions of child initiations in the two communities (Daly Park, range = .20-.60; Longwood, range = .00-.80) indicated similar patterns.

The majority of narrative conflicts occurring in both communities centered on the specific details of a past event. A total of 98 conflicts happened in the co-narrations, 66 in Daly Park and 32 in Longwood. There was a tendency for conflicts to occur less frequently in Daly Park, where they occurred in .18 of the co-narrations, compared with .32 of the co-narrations in Longwood (Miller et al., 1998). Although there was little difference between the two communities in the proportional rate and length of conflicts, it is important to note that because Daly Park children participated in many more co-narrations than Longwood children, they received twice as much experience of narrative conflicts. Mothers in Daly Park were found to get the last word an average of .34 of the conflicts, whereas mothers in Longwood were found to get the last word in only .08 of the conflicts.

In Daly Park, mothers tended to contradict their children's claims in a direct and explicit manner. When prompting children, mothers were sometimes quite stringent in their definitions of what counted as an accurate response. In this type of conflict, the child practiced defending his or her claims against a determined opponent, whereas in Longwood this oppositional style rarely occurred. Instead, Longwood mothers went to considerable lengths to avoid overt correction or contradicting their child's narrative account. Longwood children often ended up affirming their original claims and co-narration was non-oppositional as mothers had less directive verbal and non-verbal mannerisms (Miller et al., 1998). In contrast, the role Daly Park children played in narrative conflicts was more overtly confrontational when they stuck to original claims during personal narration and more cooperative when they acceded to their mother's correction.

From this research, the process by which autonomous selves developed was captured in descriptions of children's participation in one frequently occurring self-way, personal narration. This study provided multifaceted analyses of how young Euro-American children begin to develop independence through the medium of co-narrative personal storytelling.

Miller et al. claimed that many early childhood educational practices, including show and tell, embodied an implicit middle-class ideal of self expression and identity that was insensitive to class and cultural differences within American society. They concluded that teachers participated in ways that were similar to the ways in which the middle-class mothers in the current study participated. For example, show and tell situations in many elementary classrooms are protective spaces for children to share

feelings and experiences without challenge. Therefore, although being able to defend one's own perspective or experience in the face of resolute opposition, which is similar to the version of autonomy promoted by working class families in this study, would support an autonomous self expression, there may be little room in early elementary grades for working-class children to express themselves in this way.

Further examining narration as a means of self-development, Kaderavek, Gilliam, Ukrainetz, Justice, and Eisenberg (2004) examined aspects of self-assessment, metacognitive ability, and oral narrative production in 401 children, 195 males and 206 females, between five and twelve years of age. This study was developed in an effort to uncover age-, gender-, and competency-related factors affecting children's oral narrative production abilities and self-evaluation of narrative performance. The participants were recruited as part of a series of studies supporting the development of the Test of Narrative Language (TNL). Following completion of TNL tasks, children from sites in Ohio (n = 111), New Jersey (n = 88), Wyoming (n = 85), Virginia (n = 72), and Texas (n = 45) were asked to self-rate the quality of their narratives (Kaderavek e. al., 2004). Participants included 313 White, 48 African American, 25 Hispanic/Latino, and 10 "Other" students. For this project, each child took part in two tasks – the TNL and a self-rating scale – in an approximately 20 minute test session. The TNL is a measure of comprehension and expression of connected speech used to tell stories (Kaderavek et al., 2004). The reliability of the TNL was .88, which was within an acceptable range for test reliability in this study (Kaderavek et al., 2004). Examiners collected data on children's ability to comprehend and tell stories in three formats: (a) with no picture cues, (b) with five sequenced pictures, and (c) as a story retelling in response to a single picture after being

given a model story (Kaderavek et al., 2004). The self-rating task was a designated 5-point rating scale that consisted of a simple line with drawings of five faces from very sad to very happy.

The TNL was administered by a trained speech-language pathology student and each student completed it individually. Standard scores were computed by the test developer following analysis of the total national database and subsequently assigned to each participant in this study. The self-rating scale was administered immediately following the completion of the TNL. The first set of analyses revealed through independent t-tests that a significant, ($p = .0003$), gender effect favoring female for production of subset scores, females, $M = 10.8$ and males, $M = 9.6$, and self-ratings of narrative quality, ($p = .003$), males, $M = 3.96$ and females, $M = 4.19$ (Kaderavek et al., 2004). Analysis of the means demonstrated that female participants performed better on the Production subtest of the TNL and rated themselves higher on narrative production (Kaderavek et al., 2004).

The independent variable of age was investigated using a one-way ANOVA. Results indicated no significant differences for the Production subtest, ($p = .72$). There was, however, a significant difference for self-rating of narrative performance, ($p = .0001$). Children, ages 10 to 11 had a significantly, ($p = .05$), lower mean of self-evaluation than children between the ages of five and nine (Kaderavek et al., 2004). There was an apparent difference in accuracy of narrative self-rating between the older age group and the younger. Of the younger children, 85% overestimated their performance, whereas 43% of the older children did (Kaderavek et al., 2004).

The congruence between the research design and results provided high credibility in this research and these results could be reproduced in other contexts due to the methodology. Because the data indicated that young children are not particularly accurate as self-evaluators of narrative performance, intense adult scaffolding and use of other metacognitive strategies should be implemented to help children understand why some stories are successful and others are not (Kaderavek et al., 2004).

Interested in the aspect of metacognition and internalization of story in children, Mello (1997) conducted a qualitative research study designed to focus upon children's responses and experiences to storytelling in the classroom. She posed questions such as, "What was happening in the minds of students as they listened and reacted to stories?" and "What kinds of connections might the students make between listening to storytelling and other types of listening experiences such as watching television or listening to music?" (Mello, 1997). Her participants were eight fourth and fifth grade students attending a public middle school. These children came from white, working class and middle class families and were attending a special needs classroom for "academic support" in reading during a portion of the school day (Mello, 1997). Every other week, for the duration of the study, Mello came into the classroom and told stories for approximately forty-five minutes per session to the eight students. She described that her telling style was interactive and theatrical, with no set text or script (Mello, 1997). The stories themselves came from a wide variety of sources and cultures including Germany, Egypt, Kenya, the Pacific Northwest, and Appalachia. In addition to world tales, she told a variety of personal memories and family stories as well.

After the storytelling sessions, students met with Mello in interview groups. Interviews were taped and transcribed, and these interviews became the main source of data. Interview sessions lasted for an hour or more and consisted of students sharing their impressions and experiences as listeners. In addition, students often talked about what had been said in previous conversations and brought up illustrative points regarding their thinking, demonstrating a significant level of reflectivity and curiosity about storytelling (Mello, 1997). “This deep reflectivity on the part of the participants helped to establish thick data leaving me with the impression that students had given authentic accounts of their own thinking” (Mello, 1997, p. 7). Students in the study also described to Mello what it was like to be a listener. The act of listening to a story, was for them, a powerful and creative experience, one that was perceived as active and inclusive (Mello, 1997). Students repeatedly defined their listening as proactive by using words expressing participation and personal involvement such as voicing events from the story in first-person narrative (Mello, 1997). Storytelling was perceived by the students differently than television watching or listening to music because the students could make their own meaning and imagery. Children self-reporting their perceptions after experiencing the story could be influenced by the interviewer, as the relationship between interviewer and participant was not described. The use of multi-cultural stories was an inclusive measure which added to the validity of responses from the participants.

Framing a child as an individual actively acquiring knowledge and experience in social settings, Holland, Thomson, Henderson, McGrellis, and Sharpe (2000) studied children at the center of developmental action, not merely en route to the status of adult, but in the incremental process of forming moral identity. Holland et al. argued that moral

and physical competence was entwined. More generally, it was through the embodiment of social practices, or the embedding of social practice in the body, particularly control over the body and its functions, where the child becomes “civilized” and a competent social agent. Within this argument, a third factor in moral and cognitive development manifested, which was the process of building maintaining relationships in an effort to secure stability of social order (Holland et al., 2000). With this theoretical backdrop, research was conducted in eight schools located in five distinct district areas in the United Kingdom, involving students aged 11-16. Focus group discussions (56), and individual interviews (52) were conducted with all the students. Group participants were asked to make judgments from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a range of value statements, and the statements and their positions were discussed. An average of six statements was discussed each session and these discussions were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded, as well as the individual interviews (Holland et al., 2000). Statements used in this analysis were those grouped under the general heading “Moral Development and Rules,” and broken into subcategories based on the topic. Major themes and levels of agreement were entered into a grid so that responses from the schools and age groups within the schools could be compared on levels of consensus and emerging themes.

From the individual interviews, Holland et al. paraphrased the young students’ responses and defined moral development as a process, one in which the child grows away from dependency and modeled morality into an independent moral agent. This process was understood by the participants as experiential and age related. The interviewees also described a process of trial and error and punishment and reward through reminisced memories about testing and recognizing boundaries set by an

authority figure (Holland et al., 2000). Punishment, as described by several participants in the study, was understood in relation to violence exercised on the body through spanking and physical isolation. Holland et al. argued that the students were being to recognize that the locus of authority moved from external, where the dependent moral learner trusts in the authority of an adult, to internal, where trust is in the authority of the self. Also, students in the discussion groups unanimously believed that if an individual was physically capable of committing a crime, that the person was morally responsible for what was done. When age was considered within the study, the researchers found congruence between increasing age and growing tolerance on a range of moral and ethical issues (Holland et al., 2000).

In reviewing the claims of the study, the use of individual interviews balanced with whole group discussion adds credibility to the student's ability to respond authentically outside of a purely peer driven setting. To further understand the results, a description of SES and ethnic background of the participants would have provided insight into aspects of moral development seemingly evaluated from a Western framework of morality.

In an examination of the development of empathy in childhood, the objective of Marjanovic-Umek, Kranjc, and Fekonja's (2000) study was to test whether a one-month implementation of a new multicultural pre-school curriculum could help improve pre-school children's sensation to cultural differences. In order to explain the effects of the program, researchers based the curriculum on theories of developmental psychology, including the development of empathy, language, and social cognition in pre-school children (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2000). The new curriculum was constructed from the

following principles: (a) children perceive and understand the world through pretend play in social environments, (b) they develop and learn in active relation to their social and physical environment, and (c) they develop their unique social and individual identity through interaction with peers and adults in a child care centre (Marjanovic-Umek et. al., 2000).

The preschool centre participating in the experiment carried out a one-month program of multicultural education, which centered mainly on fields of language and social activities. The sample of this study included two groups of children, and Group 1 consisted of six children, ages 6.6 to 7, who were videotaped during free symbolic play and had various multicultural toys at their disposal. Group 1 listened to stories read aloud and reenacted the stories during symbolic play. This group also played with a classroom of special needs students, with an emphasis on establishing social interactions, communication, and cooperation. The last day of the experimental program, Group 1 was again videotaped during symbolic play, after hearing a story read aloud. The same story was read to children in another pre-school classroom, who were the same age as the children in Group 1, but who had not been exposed to planned multicultural education activities and toys during symbolic play. Six children from this classroom were selected as members of Group 2. A partly structured interview was conducted with both experimental Group 1 and control Group 2. Questions related to the story and focused on the message of the story, description of characters, and what the characters were feeling in relation to each other (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2000). The videotapes of the experimental and control groups' symbolic play were analyzed.

Analysis of verbal communication after the new curriculum was implemented showed no qualitative changes in the use of language when compared with the children's play before the multicultural experiment was conducted (Marjanovic-Umek et al., 2000). Children in the experimental group noticed that many new and different toys had been added since the new curriculum and generally did not play with the multicultural toys. Marjanovic-Umek et al. speculated that after the multicultural education the children possessed more information and knowledge about the fact that people and cultures are different, but that they did not incorporate this new knowledge into their cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social behavior in play. There was no theoretical framework for analyzing moral development, such as a particular model to interpret the results through, which limited the scope and significance of the findings in this study.

Interested in how student's learn from folktales, myths and legends and how characters and gender roles in folktales and other traditional stories act as educational and developmental models, Mello's (2001a) study examined the validity of storytelling as a teaching method and as a developmental tool to assist children's construction of identity and gender roles. This qualitative study focused primarily on telling stories aloud to students and encouraging responses from the listeners. Two methodological perspectives informed the procedure of the study. First, was grounded practice, in which the research method evolved as data were collected, examined, and meanings were negotiated. Students in this study discussed preferences and reacted to qualities of characters in the stories. As the study progressed, participant's reflections deepened and protocol questions were changed in order to address student input (Mello, 2001a). Second, was

grounded in the discourse of children and used children's perspectives and stories as the primary data for understanding the research question.

The participants in this study were students, aged nine to eleven, from working class and lower-middle class families. A fourth grade classroom in a New England mill town was the chosen site for the study. All 18 students in the classroom were invited to participate in the study. However, 11 of the 18 were specifically chosen to be part of an in-depth focus group based on reading and writing fluency. Children who were rated average readers by the Jerry Johns Reading Inventory, the test used by the school district to evaluate student's reading group placement, were selected to be members of the focus group. Of these 11 students, four were girls and seven were boys. Data collection focused on participants' reactions to 26 hero and heroine stories from world cultures that were shared aloud. Over the course of the school year, students were asked to participate as active listeners in monthly storytelling presentations executed by the researcher/storyteller. Storytelling sessions took place inside the classroom and each session was taped and transcribed. After telling the stories, a period of informal questions and comments took place, lasting approximately 30 minutes. In addition, in-depth interviews with the core group participants were conducted.

Throughout the nine months of this study, children explored questions that focused on gender roles characterized in the chosen folktales, myths, and legends that were read aloud. Data from the study were taken from a wide variety of interview arrangements including whole-class feedback sessions, private interviews, same-gender groups, and mixed-gender groups. Each interview was transcribed and coded for recurring themes, words, and phrases. A similar process of coding was used to examine

students' responses to each individual story. During the interviews and group sessions, students' responded by talking about their opinions of characters' behavior, their preferences for various heroes and heroines, and their views on gender roles that story characters portrayed. In general, these conversations showed that participants' understanding of the roles heroines and heroes play was based on their attitudes toward the gender of the character rather than what the character actually did (Mello, 2001a). Despite the fact that the majority of stories told to the students portrayed proactive female characters, the idea that heroes were male and that men were heroic because of their gender was prevalent among the students (Mello, 2001a). All the boys and girls in the study related male heroism to physical prowess and female heroism to physical endurance, creative problem solving, and effort (Mello, 2001a).

As the students in this study made connections with gender roles described in the stories, they also began to reflect on the value and power of gender roles in their own identities. The role of men and the role of heroes in stories were coupled in students' minds. Stories about imaginary heroes caused students to discuss the men in their lives. Men were valued most highly as warriors, teachers, fathers, and saviors, especially by the boys. Men's roles were defined by the participants as risk takers, soldiers, enforcers, adventurers, and that they had more freedom and were more active than women (Mello, 2001a). All seven boys who participated in the study talked about their excitement and pleasure in hearing about heroes who fought monsters. Mello identified that boys' interest in battling monsters was the result of a socializing effect that comes from bullying and the behavioral expectation that boys will be violent and aggressive in order to demonstrate their gender identity. According to the student's in the study, it was

mostly men who committed violent acts and who engaged in physical violence (Mello, 2001a).

Women's roles were defined as predominately social and relied heavily on creating relationships and caring for those in need. The caring aspect of women and heroines is related to the caring voice that Gilligan discussed as being a stage in feminine moral development (Livo & Reitz, 1986). Heroines, like the real women in the participants' lives, were highly valued for their ability to care (Mello, 2001a). However, students did not associate caring, kindness, and intelligence with power. Heroines were considered less powerful by the students than heroes and could only take on aggressive male roles if they were also nice, supportive, and helpful (Mello, 2001a). Many participants shared their emotional and psychological reactions to story events. Their responses suggested that they were combining the messages contained in the folktales with social messages from real life, attempting to create a new understanding of their world and their own concepts of gender relationships.

Further investigating the power of folk history and tradition in moral development, Mello (2001b) conducted a qualitative arts-based study designed to examine children's responses to character roles portrayed in traditional world texts. The intent of this study was to investigate how the art of storytelling impacted students' development and to look at what students might learn from folk tales after hearing them told aloud. At the beginning of the study, students discussed preferences and reacted to the qualities of characters in the stories. As the study progressed, their reflections deepened and protocol questions were changed in order to better represent and challenge the students' thinking, reflectivity, and input. Stories and questions were presented to

students in a conversational manner and responses were recorded. Dependent upon students' feedback, future questions were reworked and reinterpreted to better fit student interest and inquiry (Mello, 2001b). Mello addressed validity issues by using methodology that included on-going collaborative approaches to discussion and investigation of research questions, by paying attention to disconfirming and divergent data, and by collecting multiple data from multiple sources as a way of checking her own assumptions, biases and beliefs.

Because Mello saw storytelling as a highly verbal and auditory art form, one small Fourth-grade classroom participated in her study. Students involved in the study were from a New England mill town of working class, working poor or welfare poor parents of Euro-American or Native American backgrounds and all were between the ages of 10 through 12. Data collection took place over the course of one school year and the texts selected were from a variety of world tales from multicultural sources, including myths, folk and fairy tales as well as sections of epics, legends, and fables. Throughout the duration of the study, students were asked to participate in twice-monthly storytelling sessions executed by Mello. After story were read, students met in small groups for in-depth interviews, which were taped and transcribed, and became the bulk of the data used in analysis. However, no explanation of conditions within the interview situations was provided and the potential for bias or influence from the interviewer was a threat to the validity of this study. During these interviews, students repeatedly discussed the plots of stories by relating them to their own life experience (Mello, 2001b). Mello referred to this as a transactional relationship between reality, memory, and imaginary/narrative worlds. Transactional relationships help learners to contextualize both their prior

knowledge and what is unknown. Data indicated that combining storytelling with post-performance discussions enhanced student's ability to clarify and examine their value systems (Mello, 2001b). When students were presented with a variety of stories from disparate cultural texts, they began to examine their own biases and conceptions. In conclusion, Mello argued that storytelling needed to be understood as a way of knowing, and as such, needed to be recognized as a valuable educative tool.

In an attempt to understand similarities and differences in moral reasoning across world cultures, Baek's (2002) study examined the universality and the specificity of the development of moral reasoning across individual differences such as cultural background and gender, against the applicability and possible insufficiency of Kohlberg's scoring system. Baek specifically explored Korean children's age and gender in relation to moral stages, the use of moral orientations and the children's unscorable responses to Kohlberg's hypothetical dilemmas, in comparison with responses of British children, in order to examine what aspects of Korean children's moral reasoning represent universality and specificity, respectively. A total of 128 children participated in the study, with equal numbers of children aged 7, 10, 13, and 16 selected from Korean and British cultures, specifically from the capital cities of Seoul and London. Kohlberg's moral judgment inventory was used in the interviews and consisted of three dilemma stories, which were appropriately adjusted to the age and cultural needs of the participants and translated into Korean. The children were interviewed at their schools for approximately 30 minutes and each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed afterwards for scoring.

Raters scored the children's response to dilemmas in two ways in order to examine moral stage and moral orientation. The scoring followed Kohlberg's manual, *Measurement of Moral Judgment, Vol. II: Standard Issue Scoring Manual*. Baek (2002) studied the applicability of Kohlberg's moral stage model for both Korean and British children by analyzing age, gender, and cultural differences in the development of moral stages. The results showed a strong tendency for moral stages to increase with age, $p < .01$. Neither cultural or gender difference was indicated within the limits of this sample. This study showed that Kohlberg's theory of moral stages was applicable to both Korean and British children. Baek found general age tendencies in that the use of ideal and fairness orientations increased with age, whereas the use of egoistic orientation decreased. The children evenly expressed their moral reasoning for the three dilemmas as a whole by using the five orientations, (normative, egoistic, utilitarian, ideal, and fairness), (Baek, 2002). There was a strong tendency, ($p < .01$), among Korean girls to use utilitarian orientation more frequently than British girls and Korean boys in the dilemmas.

Baek also found that some responses of the Korean children were un-scorable according to Kohlberg's manual. Kohlberg's criteria judgments for young children were based on the assumption that all children made moral decisions in order to avoid punishment, to seek rewards, and to obey the power of authority (Baek, 2002). Most responses of the British children at the age of seven corresponded with Kohlberg's criteria judgments. However, when making a moral decision, five of the seven-year-old Korean children in the study took into account the emotional aspect of a certain person in the dilemma (Baek, 2002). What was different from Kohlberg's claim was that many

Korean children referred not only to the physical consequences, but also to emotional aspects to explain their judgment. This would suggest that further testing and comparison needs to be conducted using Kohlberg's criteria as well as alternative methods of analysis. The researchers' objectivity and hesitancy to generalize the findings demonstrated high credibility of the research design and reporting.

Overall, this discussion of moral development through the lens of storytelling and narrative production and internalization raised important questions for educators. Children seemed to develop a sense of self-concept and accountability through exploring narrative and through shared stories of experience. The metacognitive and highly reflective nature of personal narrative creation has the possibility of assisting the development of empathy and moral reasoning. Gender roles and cultural norms are deeply embedded in these shared stories of experience, and educators need awareness of stereotypes and bias deeply woven within many folk stories commonly brought into classroom environments, such that classrooms can be inclusive environments for all children.

Summary

This chapter summarized and examined qualitative and quantitative research in regards to the oral, cognitive, and moral development of pre-elementary and elementary school age children through an analysis of storytelling and narrative procedures. Storytelling and narrative construction described in the research showed neutral and positive effects upon comprehension and development of story structure. Importantly, these studies lend themselves toward a balanced pedagogy surrounding oral literacy acquisition that is rich with many opportunities for children to internalize, reflect, discuss

and enact personal and external story situations. In the next chapter, I will be drawing conclusions and further questions from the body of research and historical background presented in previous chapters.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

We all have a basic need for story, for organizing our experiences into tales of important happenings. The storytelling self is a social self, who declares and shapes vital relationships through the mediating power of words. Characters depicted by children, teachers, and professional authors, are given life through shared mental pictures and verbal rhythms expressed in personal narratives and stories. This chapter will summarize similar trends as well as differing results from the qualitative and quantitative research presented in Chapter Three and how these findings relate to the historical framework detailed in Chapter Two. Then I will discuss the implications of incorporating the use of storytelling and personal narrative creation into pre-elementary and elementary school classrooms. Finally, I will suggest avenues for future research and investigation that will further expand knowledge and understanding of storytelling as a cognitive and moral tool.

The view of storytelling presented in this paper rests on two assumptions about conversational speech: (a) that it is a pervasive and culturally organized feature of social life in every culture, and (b) that it is a major mechanism of socialization and self discovery (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972). The flow of social and moral messages is relentless in the myriad of human verbal and non-verbal exchanges that occur in every day life. This paper explored, both historically and through analysis of current research, how these messages impact cognitive and moral development, specifically when conveyed through story and personal narrative. The next section will discuss conclusions derived from the research literature.

Summary of Findings

In Chapter Three, several different aspects and avenues of storytelling were researched and analyzed beginning with the research regarding oral language development. The discussion amongst different research perspectives demonstrated the vastness of the topic, even within the umbrella of storytelling and narration. However, a common theme which emerged was that language occurring in authentic, meaningful contexts appeared to aid children's development of skills and confidence in oration and narration. These studies suggested that development of early language skills in children was an incremental continuum. Bandian's (1988) quantitative study acknowledged that early detection of oral language delays or disabilities had a direct correlation to student's future academic success. Regarding age, Marjanovic-Umek et al. (2002) identified indicators that age directly correlated to a child's oral language development, as older children had a more elaborate sense of narrative ability comprehension of story structure and story cohesiveness. Speece and La Paz (1999) examined phonological instruction, including word attack and decoding, as a potential building block for all early education students, including students with high narrative ability. These findings support Rymes (2003) results, in that skills based instruction with time given for personal sharing outside of instruction, proved most valuable for student's literary and oral development.

The discussion grew to involve other commonly used methods implemented in elementary and preschool classrooms to aid language and literacy acquisition. Magee and Sutton-Smith (1983), Trostle and Hicks (1998), Myers (1990), and Feitelson et al. (1986) agreed that storytelling was an important addition to literacy instruction, which included such activities as picture-tell, story-read, and primer only reading programs, in

building student's reading comprehension. Myers' (1990), and Trostle and Hicks' (1998) studies both acknowledged potential bias towards storytelling, however, an interesting similarity between the findings was that comprehension skills seemed to be correlated to student engagement, as the storytelling conditions were designed to captivate students.

External conditions effecting storytelling included repeated and guided practice of retelling and narrating stories, as well as, dyadic versus individual storytelling (Morrow, 1985; Hayes & Casey, 2002). Not surprising, students who regularly practiced narration and story-retelling improved on their comprehension and retelling strategies as opposed to students without adult scaffolding and practice (Morrow, 1985). Similarly in regards to comprehension of story structure and cohesiveness, student's in the dyadic versus individual storytelling condition demonstrated far better storytelling skills when orating individually than in small group situations (Hayes & Casey, 2002). Age was a dependent variable in this study, as older students were more capable of explicating story cohesiveness than younger participants. These findings are similar to Marjanovic-Umek's et al. (2002) findings within oral language development, as age directly correlated to ability to comprehend story elements.

The fourth section discussed the effectiveness of incorporating opportunities for students to utilize symbolic pretend play and drama when expressing personal experiences or stories (Hoyt, 1992; Henderson & Shanker, 1978; Kim, 1999). Both drama and pretend play increased comprehension in the participants of these studies and in Hoyt's (1992) study it was a significant gain over using art activities to reconstruct stories. This sweeping consensus amongst the studies presented within this collective could be the result of less significant and effective control conditions in each study. The

use of drama and pretend play in educational environments was not common practice in the classrooms observed, and student's interest and success could be a short-term response to unfamiliar but entertaining conditions. However, an important conclusion from this section was that developmentally, pretend play was a crucial experience children sought to make sense of the world around them (Kim, 1999).

Crucial factors impacting African American children's oral language development and narrative style unfolded through the examination of several articles. Michaels (1980) and Williams (1991) found that African American children had distinct differences in narrative intonation and style, as well as, the cultural socialization in language development than Euro-American children of a similar age. Such differences left unacknowledged in public education classrooms could have significant repercussions for African American student's oral language development, if teachers misdiagnose and misinterpret the conversational structure and intent behind communicatory measures (Michaels, 1980; Craig & Washington, 2002). As an educator, this section proved the most important for instilling equitable literacy education that aimed to properly assess and assist all children developmentally. The potential impact teachers had on their student's ability to develop oral language skills continued to be investigated through a new body of research. Hansen (2004) described the value of "teacher talk" and scaffolding, to help student's develop narrative skills and modes of self-expression. By devoting significant time for story analysis and meaningful discussion, students were better able to develop critical thinking and processing skills (Hansen, 2004). On the contrary, teachers in Erickson's (2000) study demonstrated that teacher's could also dramatically hinder and misidentify oral language functions in student's speech, merely

based on gender differences. Overall, the research alluded to the importance of teacher's assisting all students in making meaning and critically analyzing text by avoiding avenues for intentional or unintentional bias.

The final section examined moral development through storytelling and narrative. Miller (1998) concluded that working-class and middle-class Euro-American children have different familial and cultural influences upon their development of an autonomous self. Through this study, she examined the relationship of teachers and children from different SES, and how practices such as circle-time and show-and-tell were predominately directed toward a middle-class narrative style and custom. These findings were similar to Michaels' (1980) results, which detailed the impact of a teacher's potentially exclusionary practices in sharing time on the student's oral language development. Mello (1997) and Kaderavek et al. (2004) proposed that age significantly impacted a child's ability to reflect and be meta-cognizant about narrative ability and self-perception. As children aged, these studies suggested that children's facility to self-assess increased. Similarly, Holland et al. (2000) examined the incremental process of children forming moral identity in relation to age. Older participants explicated far more complex and multifaceted conceptions of justice, social practice, and punishment than the younger participants, who expressed static understandings of right and wrong through their own experience.

Baek's (2002) study detailed the applicability of Kohlberg's moral stage model to Korean and British participants. The study concluded that Kohlberg's model was unable to assess Korean children's understanding of emotional influences in moral dilemmas, and therefore, was potentially inadequate for non-western conceptions of morality. When

examining children's empathy and understanding towards cultures and experiences unfamiliar to their own, Marjanovic-Umek et al. (2000) and Mello (2001b) had differing conclusions. Marjanovic-Umek et al. (2000) found that implementing a multicultural curriculum into a pre-school classroom did little to improve children's acceptance of difference, whereas Mello (2001b) found that children in her study expressed improved ability to examine bias and cultural conceptions after experiencing a multicultural storytelling project.

Classroom Implications

Historically, storytelling has been used as a pedagogical tool to impress moral and cultural values and norms, as well as, in literacy instruction and oration. Research findings discussed in Chapter Three positively defined storytelling as a practice designed to enhance oral language and identity development. Overall, the message conveyed from the historical and theoretical framework suggested that narration and storytelling are methods of enhancing children's development of a moral and cognizant self. Storytelling and narration, however, were tools not exclusionary to other important instructional tactics. Children described in the qualitative and quantitative research of Chapter Three, needed balanced literacy instruction, which supported their development both educationally, emotionally, and personally. Furthermore, pre-elementary and elementary school students needed teachers aware of the array of narrative discourse styles and practices, in order to fully support children's growth and participation.

As an educator, I have utilized and will continue exploring storytelling as a means of building classroom community and as a tool within literacy instruction. Specifically, the research base presented in this paper has shown me the significance of using story in

identity development, both for individuals in my classroom as well as for the classroom community. Creating stories of self as well as a collective could be a powerful tool towards building empathy, compassion, and support systems within my students. Children need to be authentically and intrinsically motivated to achieve goals and acquire knowledge. Entering explorations into literature and language with a strong sense of self-to-text connection or self-to-community connection enriches learning potential and opportunities.

Personally, I feel most compelled from the research studies which examined race and gender issues pertaining to oral language development and storytelling practices and purposes. Within the construction of Chapter Three, I found myself reflecting upon my own practice with students during literacy activities. My ignorance regarding different cultural groups and ethnicities' use of language and story deeply concerned me and after compiling and comprehending this socio-cultural and historical research base, I realized ways I could improve my pedagogy towards inclusive and non-bias practice. Truly connecting and bonding with students and their families is incredibly important in this quest for classroom equity and academic excellence. What I do not know can and will hurt my students and their families. Learning the stories of my students, of their heritages and cultural connections, and facilitating a safe environment for sharing, questioning, and reflection is my passion and my profession. Practicing the art of storytelling and personal narrative is a gift I definitely will share with my students and continue to further develop in myself. Furthermore, conducting and sharing this research is an impetus along my personal and professional journey out of ignorance towards understanding.

Implications for Future Research

For thousands of years, humans have reflected on the value and nature of storytelling. Interestingly, there was a limited research base regarding personal narrative creation and its applicability in early education. Much of the qualitative and quantitative research focused on literacy acquisition through storytelling methods. However, very few studies examined the cognitive and moral implications of narrative creation. Generally understood as an activity performed during sharing time in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, expressing personal experiences and reflections was all but absent from classroom curriculum.

My initial passion and interest in investigating storytelling as a tool for building classroom community also proved challenging with the limited research base. Classrooms are places of diverse experience and rich personal history. The discussion and research pertaining to personal narrative creation as a means for developing a sense of self and of community within classrooms was almost non-existent, especially outside of research concerning moral development. Another crucial avenue for further investigation was the effects of storytelling on oral language development in children of color. The lack of an accessible knowledge base for educators could negatively impact teachers' ability to equitably facilitate and assess learning in all children, and therefore the knowledge base needed further development.

Summary

Listening, observing, remembering, and practicing are primary ways that all people learn basic skills from early childhood on. Stories and storytelling lie at the heart of human experience. Since the beginnings of humankind, we have shared through

stories the events, beliefs, and values that make us who we are and form our families, communities, and cultures. These modes also were essential in learning survival skills in ancient pre-literate times. Many ancient as well as contemporary skills are learned through a person to person communication involving storytelling and demonstration. Some of these stories have been collected in myth and canonized in scripture. Others have become literary classics. Looking inward, story patterns and characters intertwine with the hard-to perceive forces that shape our lives. Looking outward, story-threads join us to a larger cultural fabric. The most important stories may be those we share with family and friends, but all help preserve memory, explain our present, and imagine our future.

This paper discussed the theoretical, historical, and literary framework of storytelling in early education and has attempted to provide a balanced and critical review of many perspectives and experiences regarding moral and cognitive development. The rich and vast collection of knowledge regarding storytelling as a moral and cognitive tool could only begin to be applied within this examination. However, implications and hesitations of storytelling and personal narrative inclusion into classroom curriculum have been briefly overviewed and analyzed.

REFERENCES

- Ackerman, B. P., Paine, L., & Silver, D. (1991). Building a story representation: The effects of early concept prominence on later casual inferences by children. *Developmental Psychology, 27*, 370-380.
- Arends, R.I. (1997). *Classroom instruction and management*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Baek, H. (2002). A comparative study of moral development of korean and british children. *Journal of Moral Education, 31*, 374-391.
- Baker, A., & Green, E. (1977). *Storytelling: Art and technique*. New York: R.R. Bowker.
- Bishop, K., & Kimball, M.A. (2006). Engaging students in storytelling. *Teacher Librarian, 33*, 28-31.
- Brinquier, J. (1980). *Conversations with jean piaget*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Craig, H.K., & Washington, J.A. (2002). Oral language expectations for african american preschoolers and kindergartners. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 11*, 59-70.
- Crawford, P.D. (2001). Educating for moral ability: Reflections on moral development based on vygotsky's theory of concept formation. *Journal of Moral Education, 30*, 114-128.
- Curenton, S.M., Wilson, M.N., & Lillard, A.S. (2000). The role of narratives in low-income, black children's false belief performance. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 63*, 263-285.

- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Touchstone.
- Dyson, A.H., & Genishi, C. (1994). *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Erickson, K.A. (2000). The potential for teachers' gender bias in their response to children's oral language functions. *Child Language*, 21, 193-203.
- Erikson, E.H. (1980). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Feitelson, D., Kita, B., & Goldstein, K. (1986). Effects of listening to stories on first graders' comprehension and use of language. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 20, 339-356.
- Furth, H.G. (1970). *Piaget for teachers*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Greene, E. (1996). *Storytelling: Art and technique*. New York: R.R. Bowker.
- Gumperz, J.J., & Hymes, D. (1972). *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Hansen, C.C. (2004). Teacher talk: Promoting literacy development through response to story. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 19, 115-128.
- Hayes, D., & Casey, D.M. (2002). Dyadic versus individual storytelling by preschool children. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 163, 445-460.
- Henderson, L., & Shanker, J. (1978). The use of interpretive dramatics versus basal reader workbooks for developing comprehension skills. *Reading World*, 239-243.
- Holland, J., Thomson, R., Henderson, S., McGrellis, S., & Sharpe, S. (2000). Catching on, wising up, and learning from your mistakes: Young people's account of moral development. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 8, 271-294.
- Hoyt, L. (1992). Many ways of knowing: Using drama, oral interactions, and the visual

- arts to enhance reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 45, 580-584.
- Jung, C.J. (1969). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Kaderavek, J.N., & Sulzby, E. (2000). Narrative production by children with and without specific language impairment: Oral narratives and emergent readings. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 43, 34-49.
- Kaderavek, J.N., Gilliam, R.B., Ukrainetz, T.A., Justice, L.M., & Eisenberg, S.N. (2004). School-age children's self-assessment of oral narrative production. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 26, 37-48.
- Kim, S.Y. (1999). The effects of storytelling and pretend play on cognitive processes, short-term and long-term narrative recall. *Child Study Journal*, 29, 19-38.
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). *The psychology of moral development: essays on moral development*. San Francisco: Harper Row.
- Krauss, R.M., & Glucksberg, S. (1969). The development of communication competence as a function of age. *Child Development*, 40, 255-266.
- Kurtines, W., & Grief, E. (1974). The development of moral thought. *Psychological Bulletin*, 81, 453-470.
- Livo, N.J., & Reitz, S.A. (1986). *Storytelling process and practice*. Littleton: Libraries Unlimited.
- Magee, M. A., & Sutton-Smith, B. (1983). The art of storytelling: How do children learn it? *Language Arts*, 60, 4-12.
- Mann, B. (1980). Gender bias in early childhood educators' identification pre-

- kindergarten language functions. (Doctoral dissertation) University of Missouri-Columbia.
- Marjanovic-Umek, L., Kranjc, S., & Fekonja, U. (2000). Child development in the context of multicultural pre-school education. *Child Development*, *41*, 613-623.
- Marjanovic-Umek, L., Kranjc, S., & Fekonja, U. (2002). Developmental levels of the child's storytelling. *Journal of Child Language*, *11*, 457-473.
- Mello, R. (1997). Creating pictures in my mind: A qualitative study of children's responses to storytelling in the classroom. *The Journal of Massachusetts Reading Association*, *26*, 4-10.
- Mello, R. (2001a). Cinderella meets ulysses. *Language Arts*, *78*, 548-554.
- Mello, R. (2001b). The power of storytelling: How oral narrative influences children's relationships in classrooms. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, *2*, 1-13.
- Merritt, D., Culcatta, B., & Trostle, S. (1998). *Narratives: Implementing a discourse framework*. San Diego: Singular Publishing Group.
- Michaels, S. (1980). Sharing time: An oral preparation for literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, *45*, 44-70.
- Miller, P.J., & Moore, B.B. (1989). Narrative conjunctions of caregiver and child: A comparative perspective on socialization through stories. *Ethos*, *17*, 292-311.
- Miller, P.J., Wiley, A.R., Burger, L.K., & Rose, A.J. (1998). Constructing autonomous selves through narrative practices: A comparative study of working-class and middle-class families. *Child Development*, *69*, 833-847.
- Miller, P.J. (2002). *Theories of developmental psychology*. Florida: Worth

- Publishers.
- Morrow, L.M. (1985). Retelling stories: A strategy for improving young children's comprehension, concept of story structure, and oral language complexity. *The Elementary School Journal*, 85, 648-661.
- Morrow, L.M. (1997). *Literacy development in the early years*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Myers, P. (1990) Stories from print. *Language Arts*, 67, 824-831.
- Pellowski, A. (1990). *The world of storytelling*. New York: H.W. Wilson.
- Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rymes, B. (2003) Eliciting narratives: Drawing attention to the margins of classroom talk. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 37, 380-403.
- Sawyer, R. (1976). *The way of the storyteller*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Speece, D.L., & La Paz, S. (1999). The relevance of oral language skills to early literacy: A multivariate analysis. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20, 167-190.
- Stearns, L.E. (1894). Report on reading for the young. *Library Journal*, 19, C81-C87.
- Thoma, S.J., & Rest, J. (1999). The relationship between moral decision making and patterns of consolidation and transition in moral judgment. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 323-333.
- Thomas, F.H. (1982). The genesis of children's services in the American public library. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 43, 3147A.
- Thompson, S. (1946). *The folktale*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Trostle, S., & Hicks, S.J. (1998). The effects of storytelling versus story reading on

- comprehension and vocabulary knowledge of british primary school children.
Reading Improvement, 35, 127-136.
- Vasina, J. (1985). *Oral tradition as history*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Vitz, P.C. (1990). The use of stories in moral development: New psychological reasons for an old educational method. *American Psychologist*, 45, 709-720.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Williams, K.P. (1991). Storytelling as a bridge to literacy: An examination of personal storytelling among black middle-class mothers and children. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 60, 399-408.