

THE EFFECTS OF STORYTELLING: INTEREST AND UNDERSTANDING
IN A FOURTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
For Master of Education in Collaborative Teaching and Learning

Education

Graceland University
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
December, 2004

Abstract

Understanding and interest in two fourth grade social studies classrooms were hypothesized to be affected by storytelling. Three measures of attitude were used to test the hypotheses that students' interest and understanding would increase through the use of storytelling. Pre- and post treatment Likert scale item surveys, as well as student and teacher journals were used to test attitude. Pre- and posttests were used to measure student understanding. Results of the posttest were compared with facts embedded in the Southern Fairy Tale to demonstrate student learning. The hypothesis was supported through these data measures.

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Introduction

Purpose

My teaching assignment includes teaching two sections of fourth grade social studies. During the past 16 years I have tried a variety of approaches to sustain my students' interest and enhance the learning of social studies' concepts. These techniques have ran the gamut from 'by the book read and regurgitate' to role-plays of assembly lines to construction paper maps to three-dimensional diorama displays. As I have used various teaching methods I have added them to my teacher's bag of tools. Some of these tools have served me well and others were quickly retired. Yet, through all these techniques, I felt something was missing. My students were not doing well in social studies and the glazed looks on their faces demonstrated their low interest level.

As part of Mid-Prairie Community School District's Social Studies Curriculum Committee, I have been involved in many discussions about social studies. I was an active participant in examining and eventually adopting a new series for the 2003-2004 school year. I was also involved in the writing and adoption of grade level benchmarks for our district. Throughout all of these meetings the topic of student involvement was a continual concern. It seems to plague social studies' classrooms across the grades. The district benchmarks were created to allow teachers to use the text as a springboard toward more project-based teaching. Our committee was drawn toward projects due to our own frustrations, not a research base. Through this action research study I feel better

equipped to look at what is happening and base my next step on the research of learned professionals.

As I have matured in my teaching (and my life) I have been intrigued with the use of story to convey information. I work in a building with an amazing storyteller, kindergarten teacher, Pat Anderson. As I listened to tales of her family and life I learned about her as a mother, as a teacher, and as a human being. I was fortunate to visit her classroom as a parent and watch her interact with her kindergarten students. She wove a web of stories that invited students to step inside and learn how to interact with the world of school and language. These stories took them down the hall, “Hands at your sides, face forward, looking cute,” to the drinking fountain, “One bubble gum, two bubble gum, three bubble gum, switch” and out into the world. As a fourth grade teacher I wondered if my students remembered these sayings and stories...absolutely. They may not remember a fourth grade concept, like the directions north, south, east or west, but they do remember how Mrs. Anderson explained how many paper towels to use when washing their hands, “One, two, three that’s enough for me.”

This realization brought me back to my teaching of social studies. Would incorporating story into the social studies curriculum increase student’s interest and understanding of the study of the United States? If students were invited to visit the United States through stories about the different regions, would they be better able to connect life in different places to their own lives, thus learning the content?

Terminology

Throughout this study the term story will refer to a narrative tale used to pass images from one person to another. Storytelling, then, refers to the act of orally telling that tale to a single listener or a group. This telling includes intonation, repetitive language, eye contact and descriptive imagery. The term fairy tale frame refers to the basic story encapsulated in a familiar fairy tale. This frame will be used to build a story focused on one area of the South. Story cards refers to 3 X 5 cards of drawings and words from the story to be used to aid memory during retelling. Student interest refers to the students' attitudes about social studies as indicated on the Likert scale item survey (see Appendix A). A Likert scale item survey is simply a list of questions about social studies where students will rate their response from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The South is mentioned several times in this study. That is the title used by the Harcourt Brace fourth grade social studies text for the region of United States including: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Context of the study

The study was conducted with two fourth grade social studies classes at Kalona Elementary School during the fall of the 2004-2005 academic year. Kalona Elementary is a preschool-5th grade building in the Mid-Prairie Community School District. There were 243 students in attendance at Kalona

Elementary during the fall semester of 2004-2005. The majority of the students come from white, middle-class families, and rural or small town homes.

Kalona is a rural community 17 miles south of Iowa City, Iowa. The town is nestled along a river bottom bordered by rich farmland on all sides. Because of this, Kalona boasts an active sales barn, a booming farm implement business, and the largest feed mill around. Kalona's real claim to fame, however, is the Amish community in the surrounding countryside. The beauty of Amish quilts and the simplicity of their orderly farms draws tourists from all over. This tourist trade provides jobs for many area families. Kalona also includes two manufacturing plants: Kalona Plastics and Civco. Kalona, however, is primarily a bedroom community for Iowa City, with most of the parents commuting for jobs.

There were two sections of fourth grade for the 2004-2005 year, each containing 17 students. Students in each section included various abilities ranging from those identified as gifted and talented to students requiring resource assistance. The majority of the students fell in the average range. The students travel back and forth between the two fourth grade classrooms throughout the day. The sections are mixed for reading and math. Each fourth grade teacher is in charge of a reading group. Math is team-taught. I am the head teacher for social studies. I will have each class forty-five minutes four times a week. An associate will be present during social studies to help struggling readers.

Review of the Related Research

In Robin More's (1987) article he explained the purpose of storytelling as a simple way to share images. The process of learning a story is like watching a

film in your mind – each scene becomes a clip that the teller attempts to share with the audience. It's at that point when storytelling becomes truly amazing, because the listeners also create film clips, which move through their mind as the story unfolds. These images tap into their own inner world and no two listeners' images would be the same. In this way storytelling creates something new between the teller and the listeners. This is an important lesson for beginning storytellers. Rather than memorizing the story, they should be learning the images. This works the imagination in a way that children desperately need. More believes storytelling's success lies in the fact that it helps students to 'see' the world in a different way. Students listen to stories with more than just their ears, they use their hearts and minds as well.

Zigo (2001) takes us along the path of narrative and how it relates to struggling readers. Her study examined ways that struggling readers and writers make meaning with narrative. She discovered that students were much more involved with their learning when they were given time to talk about new concepts and connect these to their own lives. Zigo's study concluded with the suggestion that teachers allow time for conversations to grow to ensure that connections to learning are secure.

Macken (2003) looked at using six different picture books to teach geography standards to second graders. She quotes Berson, Outzts and Walsh (1999, 85) who explained how important it is to use literature in geography studies. This literature brings distant places to the students and helps them understand how different people live. She also references McGowan, Erickson,

and Neufeld's 1996 finding that there are very few studies that test using literature to teach concepts in social studies. Macken's own study demonstrated positive links between reading and discussing picture books and teaching geography. She did note the need for vocabulary instruction to enhance students' understanding.

Phillips (2000) studied the effects storytelling had on listening, comprehension, and building classroom community with preschoolers. He told a story, led the discussion, and provided a variety of follow-up activities. Due to the interactive nature of storytelling, it was plain to see how much the preschoolers understood the stories and referenced them as they played in their own world. Phillips noted the strong boost to imagination through storytelling. This occurred because the images were only sketched out in the story, allowing the listener to fill in the details in a way that related personally to them. Through this the story became much more personal. Because he noticed increased creativity, he felt this demonstrated a story's ability to bring children in to the story by engaging more of their senses.

Bustamante (2002) explained the process that River Oaks Elementary School went through as they reinvented themselves as a community of learners. Through formal training, book discussion groups, and the study of experts, the staff set forth on a journey to discover the voices of students and teachers alike. Teachers set out to help children see the importance and value of their voices. Starting in the youngest grades, children were taught to respect and listen to one another's stories. From here teachers helped students understand that there is a story behind every story. Thus, began an ongoing search to find the real story

being told, not just the surface one. Through this process the staff discovered that telling and listening to one another's stories built bridges between students and teachers and between students and the curriculum. As a result of those bridges, River Oaks Elementary School was changed. Bustamante concluded with a challenge for teachers to not only encourage students to tell their stories, but for teachers to tell their own stories as well. What a teacher does is a powerful role model.

Kajder (2004) helped urban high school students tell their own digital stories. This was a two-week project in which students were challenged to write a story about their own lives, add images, and complete an iMovie to share the tale. Kajder built on her personal philosophy that engaging students was the teacher's most important responsibility. She found that her unmotivated students became involved when they were able to use their own words and share their own world. She discovered that by combining her students' interests and the idea of story, students were able to move beyond a simple reading of what the text said. At the conclusion of this project she wrote:

While I was working here to lead students to understand published personal narratives, my goals were much bigger. Not satisfied with having students only read someone else's words or experiences, I wanted students to struggle with their words and experiences, to work as writers and readers, and to reinvent their understanding of how they functioned within that role. I wanted them to tap into powerful

communication tools to tell their story verbally, visually, and powerfully. (Kajder, 2004, p.67-68)

Mello (2001) conducted a study examining how fourth grade students would respond to storytelling of traditional texts. He met twice monthly, with students to tell them a story and talk about it. He found that students compared their world with the images created in the tale. This comparison encouraged students to discuss gender roles, heroes and heroines, and changes in their traditional lives. However, his most surprising discovery was that students were often more interested in the way the story was told rather than the content. The connection between the listener and the storyteller was the hook for these students. He concluded, “The act of telling, combined with the content of the stories themselves, became the link that connected the learner with both interpersonal and intrapersonal realms. Therefore, narratives are found to be seminally important in development of children” (Mello, 2001, p.13).

Throughout my research I found one writer quoted again and again. Kieran Egan has written extensively about teaching as storytelling. He explains how very important the idea of story is, perhaps even the most important of man’s inventions (Egan, 1989). Egan feels that stories are successful due to their details. These details make stories easier to remember than a list. This fact made stories useful when early man depended on oral language to pass information from person to person. It follows that the use of story today makes anything easier to remember. Egan takes this idea a step farther. He explains that stories not only aid memorization, they also give meaning to whatever is learned. This is profoundly

important in education. When information is presented as a story, students are much more likely to remember the details. He encourages teachers to view lessons as stories instead of only objectives.

Combs and Beach (1994) build on Egan's ideas. They demonstrated ways that stories create links to the past and the present when they are incorporated into a social studies curriculum. They encourage teachers to allow children to tell their own stories as well as listen to the stories of others. Combs and Beach stressed the importance of beginning with what the child knows and moving to the mechanics of storytelling from there. They included a framework for this process. In the first step, students use one-on-one talk to tell about their own lives. The second step calls for students to sit shoulder to shoulder and help one another get the events of the story down. Step three asks pairs to focus on making the story more interesting by adding details and examining the choice of words. An extension activity is for students to participate in "Tellers Theater," where a common story is told with each child picking up the story and sharing the next section.

Through my years of teaching I have witnessed story in many different ways. This narrative thread arrives with the students as they enter my room, but I have relegated it to the coatroom shelf along with their book bags. I have not capitalized on the power and strength of this literacy tool. Through this literature research has convinced me of the need to bring story into my classroom in as many ways as possible.

Storytelling provides the listener with an opportunity to connect what they are hearing with what they already know. Since it is such a simple method of

teaching (More, 1987), I have overlooked the power of story. As students take what they hear, jumble it up with what they know, and create a new reality, they are able to adjust their understanding of the world (Phillips, 2000). This is a perfect springboard for social studies. As I help students move beyond the world of Kalona, Iowa out into the unknown United States, they need tools to merge the known to the abstract (Macken, 2003). Story provides the framework by allowing the imagination to add details to what they know (More, 1987.) When conversations are added to storytelling, students' understanding deepens even farther (Zigo, 2001). Through discussions and opportunities of shared storytelling, community is created in the classroom (Bustamante, 2002). When students interact with the story they are able to see below the surface of the text (Bustamante, 2002).

Storytelling and narrative could be viewed as separate tools to increase comprehension of the subject matter. But, when they are paired with Egan's philosophy of teaching as a form of story (Egan, 1989), the real change occurs. Story then becomes not only a method, but also a philosophical shift that must occur. For instruction to become meaningful for the students, teachers need to view our social studies curriculum as a great story – the story of our culture (Egan, 1989).

Focus of the study

As a result of my research I focused on the big question: Will student storytelling increase their interest and understanding of the South region of the United States? Using the South region as described by Harcourt Brace, students

worked in groups of four to learn to tell a story about the South. These stories were written and learned by the students.

Students worked in small groups to choose a fairy tale frame. The groups researched a specific area of the South and recorded details about the area. These details were woven into the fairy tale frame as they created their own Southern Fairy Tales. A modified storyboard aided the writing stage and 3 X 5 story cards helped their memories during the retelling. Following direct instruction of storytelling techniques, students practiced in pairs (Combs & Beach, 1994) to hone their telling skills. Students shared their Southern Fairy Tales at a Storytelling Festival. During the Festival they met in pairs with a student from the other social studies class. Each student had an opportunity to hear four Southern Fairy Tales and tell their own a total of four times. Throughout the process there were opportunities for journaling and conversations (Zigo, 2001).

To test my hypothesis I administered a Likert scale item survey to find out students' attitudes toward social studies. Following the treatment described above, I administered the same survey. Students also took a pre- and posttest over the South. This was a teacher created test following the objectives of the district social studies text. Student and teacher journals were the final piece of data collection.

There are many variables over which I had no control. They include:

- Reading levels of the students in the classrooms
- Students personality limitations in regards to sharing in a group
- Students absences

Summary of the Introduction

I have long been drawn to the idea of story and how it connects tellers and listeners. I have enjoyed both the role of storyteller and listener in a variety of settings. Through my own storytelling experiences I know how much I interact with the story, learning the text inside and out to create the images I share. As a result of my research, I have become more convinced of the educational power of the story. As a way of applying this understanding, my fourth grade students will share in the Southern tradition of storytelling by participating in a Storytelling Festival, thus increasing their interest and understanding.

Methodology

Introduction/Design

This study employed the action research method to answer the question: Will storytelling increase students' understanding and interest in the South region of the United States? The research was conducted with two sections of fourth grade social studies classes. Each section was divided into four groups. Each group created a Southern Fairy Tale based on a well-known fairy tale frame. The groups added details to their Southern Fairy Tales frame based on their research of one area of the South. The final activity was a Storytelling Festival where students told their Southern Fairy Tale one-on-one with a student from the other section. Each fourth grader told their Southern Fairy Tale and listened to another's story four different times. I administered pre- and posttests created from the South unit in the Harcourt Brace fourth grade social studies textbook. Likert scale item surveys were given to determine students' interest level in social studies prior to and following this treatment. Finally, I compiled information from student and teacher journals. This treatment occurred during the first six weeks of the 2004-2005 school year.

Subjects

Two sections of fourth grade students were used in this study. Each section consisted of 17 nine and ten year old students. There were five boys and 12 girls in each of these sections. The majority of these students were from white, middle class, two-parent families.

The classes were evenly divided with regard to ability. There were no students in the school district's Academic Special Talented Program. Eligibility

for this program is based on Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores and Cognitive Ability Tests administered in third grade. The fact that no student met the eligibility requirements reflects the average ability of the entire fourth grade class.

Likewise, there were very few students who were part of Kalona Elementary's Resource program. This eligibility is based on Child Study Team recommendations. Current academic abilities, the results of a social worker's consultation, and both parent and teacher recommendations are all considered prior to placement in this program. Four students in these classes had IEPs (Individual Education Plans) written for reading and math. These students were a part of the regular classroom for all subjects except reading and math. Each of the four received direct reading and math instruction from the Resource teacher.

Kalona Elementary has a history of aiding students in the Special Education program through the one-on-one help of teacher associates. These associates are a part of the classroom during the instruction of subjects requiring extra help for these students: i.e. social studies, science, writing, or spelling. In the fourth grade classroom there are two different associates who assist. Each of these women has been helping in these classrooms for several years. They are quite familiar with the curriculum and with the teaching styles of the two fourth grade teachers.

I taught social studies to both sections, while the other fourth grade teacher taught science. I had my own homeroom for social studies four mornings a week from 9:45-10:30, and the other section from 12:45-1:30, Monday through Thursday.

Instrumentation

A variety of data was collected for this treatment. This data collection consisted of paper and pencil tests, a teacher journal kept throughout the process, and a sampling of student journals.

To help determine the interest level of the students, I gave a teacher developed, Likert scale item survey to reflect their attitudes toward social studies the first day of the treatment (see Appendix A). The same test was given at the end of treatment. Changes reflected by these two tests were analyzed and reported.

At the beginning of the treatment, students took a pretest over the South (see Appendix B). This was a teacher-created test based on objectives from the fourth grade Harcourt Brace social studies text. At the close of treatment, the same test was administered. The data were compared with special attention being paid to responses given by multiple students.

The final data source was anecdotal comments. Students' journals provided information about the process, as well as students' feelings toward the different aspects of the treatment. My teacher journal was used for reflection and summarizing throughout the treatment.

Procedures

In order to determine whether storytelling has an affect on student interest and understanding in social studies, two sections of Kalona Elementary fourth graders were used. The study took place at the start of the 2004-2005 school year. Each of the two sections met with me for 45 minutes, four times a week.

This treatment included direct teaching, whole class discussions, small group work, and individual journaling. To demonstrate the process we began this treatment with the creation of an Iowa fairy tale. This was developed through whole class discussions and brainstorming. As a class we generated examples of Iowa language, places, people, and animals. These were recorded on chart paper matching the resource sheet students would be using (see Appendix C). The class then generated a list of fairy tales from which to choose. With this information we created a story map (see Appendix D) using one of the fairy tale frames. Then it was time to write an Iowa fairy tale. Using the story map, the class divided the action of the story into four sections. Small groups of students were assigned a section of the story to write. This was compiled into a class fairy tale (see Appendix E). This activity provided a model for the next step of this process.

In the next phase of treatment students worked in small groups, assigned by the teacher, to research a specific area of the South. Those areas include: Appalachia (Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee), Ranching (Texas, Oklahoma), Bayou (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama) and Slavery (all of the South). Each group randomly selected the area they focused on. They completed the research using a variety of fiction and non-fiction picture books provided by the teacher. Appendix F includes a bibliography of the books used. This information was then organized on a research sheet (see Appendix C).

Using the previously generated list of fairy tales, student groups decided on a fairy tale frame to use for their story. The small groups read a copy of their

chosen fairy tale in its original format and filled in a story map (see Appendix C) to show the path of the story. Students checked in with the teacher following their mapping.

Using both the fairy tale story map and the research lists students created a new story map of their Southern Fairy Tale. From this map students wrote their group story. Students composed their Southern Fairy Tales using the iBooks from Kalona Elementary's mobile iBook lab. The processes of typing, editing and saving to the server were reviewed individually with each of the four groups of students. The writing process continued for several days with the students checking with the teacher at the end of each day. A hard copy of each Southern Fairy Tale is included in Appendix G.

In the midst of the writing stage I felt it was important for students to have a clear sense of what the final story could look like. To demonstrate this I read a fractured fairy tale to the students. I did not show the pictures, instead I asked them to focus on how the details of the story showed information about an area of the South. Following the reading we talked about how the author wove details into the story line. Appendix F includes a list of these fractured fairy tales.

At this point the treatment shifted into storytelling mode. Throughout the first weeks of this study, I told several stories about the South. Each story was based on a different area the students were researching. These oral tales were based on picture books from the various areas. Appendix F includes a list of the stories from which I chose. Following each storytelling session the class spent a few moments to discuss what they heard or 'learned' about the South, and what

they noticed about my storytelling. This included a discussion about my use of story cards. These were 3 X 5 cards with images from the story drawn on them to remind me of the different parts of the tale.

As a group finished writing their story, each student began creating his or her personal story cards. I encouraged students to make these personal with pictures and words to be used as simple reminders as they told their tales. The cards were numbered and clipped together.

When the groups finished work on their cards, we took time for a class discussion on the important aspects of storytelling including; eye contact, word choice, voice volume, and details. I used personal examples of my own storytelling to illustrate the need to control volume and speed. We also discussed the difference between memorization and telling. I stressed the need to focus on telling, not memorizing.

To segue into the next phase of this treatment I explained how I prepare to tell a tale in public. I talked about the number of times I practice a tale before I tell it to a group of people. I mentioned where I practice and why I don't memorize the tale. At this point the students were ready to begin practicing their own stories. The first step was "Shoulder to shoulder" telling (Combs and Beach, 1994). For this, students paired up in their groups and told their Southern Fairy Tales to each other with their shoulders touching. Following this practice time, students moved to "teller's theater" (Combs and Beach, 1994). For this they told their Southern Fairy Tale in their small groups with each student taking their turn

and building on the one before. For each of these practices students used their story cards.

As a final practice, before the Storytelling Festival, students partnered up with one person from another group in their class to tell their tale. This practice, with their own classmates, helped build confidence. They told their Southern Fairy Tale to several other people in their class, each from one of the four groups. This allowed them to hear all the stories from their own classroom, as well as practice their own tale. Following each of storytelling opportunities, students recorded what they learned about the other area in their journals.

The Storytelling Festival paired students from each of the classes. They told their story four times and listened to four other tales. This event was the culmination of much hard work. As a final step students were invited to record what they had learned about each area on chart paper.

Throughout the treatment, students were given writing prompts for their journals. These prompts were meant to help the students focus their thinking about what they were doing and to help them reflect on their learning. Students also used their journals to record what they learned from the stories they listened to during their practice and the Storytelling Festival.

The treatment closed with the administering of both the posttest and the Likert item scale survey. There was also time to discuss what they learned and their reactions to it.

Lesson plans for this treatment are included in Appendix H. The plans are written for four days each week of the six weeks of instruction.

I made many assumptions during this treatment. These included:

- Students would have an understanding of what working cooperatively in a group entailed
- Students would be familiar with well known fairy tales
- Students would be comfortable composing a story in a group setting
- Students' maturity would allow them to work through these assignments
- Both of the sections would have the same amount of time to work on the stories
- Time allotted would be adequate for the assignments made

Limitations of the Study

There were a variety of limitations to this study. One of these limitations was the student's shyness and hesitancy to tell a story. This treatment required students to tell their story to many different people. Each time they told, they were the sole storyteller. This created a nervous situation for some students. Those without a natural inclination to be in the spotlight faced a challenge. There weren't other options for these students. Storytelling requires a storyteller. I tried to help diffuse this situation by providing ample practice time. I know from my own experience the better you know a story the easier it is to tell.

Another limitation of this study was the differences between the two sections of fourth grade. My own students and I created a relationship beginning the first day of school. This relationship was based on the amount of time we

spent together, as well as the give and take of all the small details that occurred throughout the day. I only spent 45 minutes, four times a week with the students in the other section. Since, I did not know these students as well, this changed the way I interacted with them. This also affected students' comfort levels as they created and shared stories, as well as their attitudes toward social studies.

Therefore, I focused on creating connections with the students in the other class. I set aside a few minutes each day to chat with the class about myself in order to allow them to get to know me better. I believe this helped to ease their fears and create a safe atmosphere in which to work together.

The biggest limitation of this study was the timing of this treatment. Normally, my social studies year begins with a unit focusing on the entire United States. One component of that unit is a memorization of all the states and where they are on a map. This lays the groundwork for all the following social studies units. Each following unit takes a region of the United States and studies it in more depth. This foundation was not laid this school year. Instead, with very little background we began our study of the South. This proved to be a difficulty for many students. They did not come into fourth grade with a working understanding of the states in the United States. Instead, I needed to remind them again and again of the area we were studying. However, I do not feel this is a long-term difficulty. I will be able to make up this glitch throughout the rest of the year.

The final limitation included in the timing of this unit was the lack of classroom community. In a typical school year I would have spent more time building community in discussions and small sharing events before I asked

students to take on a storytelling activity. Both of the fourth grade classes rose to the challenge. They encouraged each other, worked well in groups and became a community in a short amount of time. It makes me wonder if the nature of storytelling helped this happen as Phillips (2000) and Bustamante (2002) suggest. This would be an area for additional research.

Timeline

This study took place during the first weeks of the 2004-2005 school year. The timeline for this treatment provided details six weeks. A simplified version of the six-week timeline follows:

Week one.

1. Day one

- a) Teacher told story about the South
- b) Pretest and pre-treatment Likert Scale survey

2. Day two

- a) Teacher told story about the South
- b) Introduced the research page on chart paper
 - i. Filled in the categories on the board using Iowa

3. Day three

- a) Brainstormed list of fairy tale ideas
- b) Created a class story map for the Iowa fairy tale

4. Day four

- a) Small groups wrote the Iowa Fairy Tale

Week Two.

5. Day one

- a) Teacher told Iowa fairy tales
- b) Groups drew a slip of paper reading
 - i. Appalachia, Ranching, Bayou, Slavery
- c) Filled out for research page using picture books, nonfiction books

6. Days two-four

- a) Researched area and fill in the research sheet

Week Three.

7. Day one

- a) Teacher told story about the South
- b) Each group chose the fairy tale frame
- c) Each group read a typical version of that fairy tale
- d) Each group created a story map on their tale

8. Day two

- a) Groups finished their story maps

9. Day three

- a) Teacher read fractured fairy tale
- b) Discussion about how to weave details of the region into fairy tale

10. Day four

- a) Groups created a story map of their Southern Fairy Tales

Week Four.

11. Days one-two

- a) Teacher told story about the South
- b) Groups wrote their Southern Fairy Tales on the iBooks

12. Days three-four

- a) As the groups finished writing their Southern Fairy Tales
 - i. Began creating story cards
- b) Each group member created their own story cards

Week Five.

13. Day one

- a) Class discussion over the stories the teacher has told
- b) Students finished their story cards

14. Days two - four

- a) Students finished their story cards
- b) Shoulder to shoulder with their group members
- c) Began practicing their Southern Fairy Tales in a circle sentence by sentence (Teller's Theater)

Week Six.

15. Day one

- a) Students practiced their Southern Fairy Tale with someone from another group

16. Day two

- a) Story telling festival

17. Day three

- a) Post test
- b) Post-Likert scale survey

Findings

This study asked the question, “Would storytelling have an affect on interest and understanding of the South region of the United States?” To test this hypostesis two classes of fourth graders were studied. Each group was divided into four smaller groups. These groups researched an area of the southern United States through fiction and non-fiction picture books. Using a well-known fairy tale frame, students wove information from their research into a Southern Fairy Tale set in their specific area of the South. These areas included: Appalachia, Bayou, Ranching, and Slavery. Each small group worked together to compose their Southern Fairy Tales on iBook computers. As a memory tool each individual then created 3 X 5 story cards to record images of their Southern Fairy Tale. The culmination of this treatment was a Storytelling Festival. Students met with a partner from the other classroom to tell their Southern Fairy Tale. This pairing occurred four different times. Following each telling, students listed facts in their journals about the area of the Southern Fairy Tale they heard. These facts were compiled on chart paper and discussed as a whole class.

Assessing students’ attitude is not an easy accomplishment. To examine the change in attitude two different measures were used. Pre- and post Likert scale item surveys were compared along with students’ personal journals.

A review of the Likert scale item surveys showed several interesting changes. Based on the Likert scale item surveys, the number of students who strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement “Social Studies is my favorite class” actually went down by one from 17 students at the pretest to 16 at the post.

The number of undecided students increased, but the number who strongly or somewhat disagreed with the statement decreased. This shows a small positive change in attitude.

The number of students who stated that they enjoyed social studies class remained constant. Nineteen students either strongly or somewhat agreed prior to treatment and nineteen strongly or somewhat agreed following treatment. But, within these nineteen there was a change. There were only six 'strongly agreed' responses prior to treatment. This climbed to ten following treatment.

Students seemed to strongly agree that learning about the United States was important. There was no change in these attitudes before and after treatment. However, the data seem to indicate that they did not feel as strongly that, "Learning about the U.S. is interesting." The number of students who agreed with this statement actually fell from 21 at pretest to 17 following treatment.

One of the most marked changes in the data came with the statement, "I like to learn about history." There were 11 students who strongly or somewhat agreed with this statement, while 11 were undecided and 12 strongly or somewhat disagreed prior to treatment. These responses changed to 16 strongly or somewhat agreeing, seven undecided and 10 strongly or somewhat disagreeing post treatment.

Table 1 displays a comparison of the pre- and posttest Likert scale item survey results. The original Likert scale item survey (see Appendix A) included nine questions. Three of these items were not directly related to the treatment, so were not included in Table 1.

Table 1

Pre- and Posttest Results of Likert Scale Item Surveys over Social Studies Attitudes

| | Strongly Agree | | Somewhat Agree | | Undecided | | Strongly Disagree | | Somewhat Disagree | |
|--|----------------|------|----------------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| SS is my favorite class | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| Learning About the U.S. is important | 24 | 25 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Learning about the U.S. is interesting | 12 | 13 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| I enjoy SS class | 6 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| I like to Learn about history | 4 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 7 |

Student journals were peppered with positive feedback about the project. Students' writings recorded their nervousness at the start of the treatment when the thought of telling stories was first introduced. "I feel nervous and excited because I'm not really ready but I'm looking forward to hear somebody else's story," one student wrote. This seemed to be a common theme. "I feel a little scared," added another. One went further, "It would make me work harder."

The tone changed as the treatment progressed into the practicing stage. Students' nerves gave way to anticipation. "I fell very excited about this and I am ready." Another student demonstrated this change in attitude this way, "Well, I was nervous at the start but when we practiced I though this is easier than I thought it would be. I'm excited to tell my story." Another fourth grader described it this way, "It will be kind of inbaresing...It mite be like you wrote your own ... it makes you feel like you are a part of some thing..." One student clearly demonstrated this progression of attitude change, " I would like to be a teller becaue it is fun to tell storys I was surprised because I usaly like to be a listen(er)."

Students' journals also reflected on the positive effects of practice with their peers. "I learned from her that I should use exsreshin (expression) and to pause a lot more...I would like being the storyteller because I like to tell storys. And I fell (feel) very ready to tell my story to a lot of people," one fourth grader wrote.

As students reflected on the success of the storytelling festival this same positive attitude surfaced. "I loved the experience of telling and listening to the

stories. I think we need to do this more often for SS because you can learn more about a certain place.” Another stated, “ I liked telling the most because I got to use different voices and say it different at different times. I think it was a good idea.” One student noted, “I fell (feel) good about doing this out loud to everybody, it feels good.”

Student shyness and hesitancy to tell in front of others was a stated limitation for this study. One fourth grader was particularly shy and voiced her fears and hesitancy to me. Her biggest concern was telling her story to boys. As a teacher, I respected her wishes and scheduled her to tell only to girls in the Storytelling Festival. It was especially interesting to follow her progress in snippets of her journal reflections through the entire treatment. “I like working alone. I think it’s better...I really hate telling people storie esxpeacily in front of a class unless there kindergardner’s...I kind of liked it but not much I guess I won’t mind doing this again but somehow I just feel nerovs but if it is a friend or a girl I knew then I’m comafortable.” This change from fear to success demonstrates the power of storytelling and it’s potential effect on one student’s attitude about herself and her abilities.

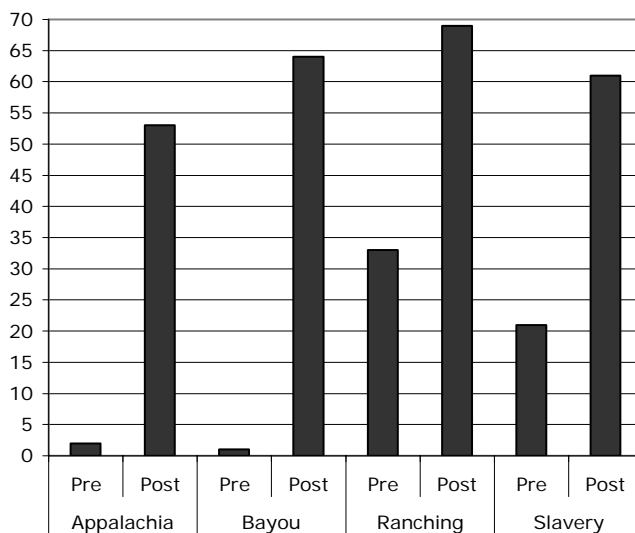
The second part of the initial question asked if storytelling would increase students’ understanding of the South. This was measured via pre- and posttests. These tests included four open-ended questions about each of the four areas of the South.

As a way of documenting what students learned from each Southern Fairy Tale, they recorded facts in their journals. This happened after each story they

listened to during the practice and the final Storytelling Festival. The facts were later recorded on chart paper and discussed as an entire class. Included in this list of facts were some that really were unrelated to the South, but were details about the particular story. These appeared on the posttest as well. Appendix J contains a complete list of all pre- and posttest responses.

Pretest results were quite straightforward. Students knew very little about each of the four areas. There were very few responses. In contrast, the posttest provided a wide variety of student responses. Figure 1 compares the number of pretest and posttest responses.

Figure 1 Comparison of the Number of Pre- and Posttest Responses



To further analyze what students learned from the Southern Fairy Tales, I compared student responses on the posttest to a written copy of each Southern Fairy Tale. Appendix G includes a copy of each of these fairy tales with the

phrases, which appeared in the posttest responses, highlighted (see Appendix J). I then compared the total number of responses on the posttest to the responses that were facts from the Southern Fairy Tales. Figures 2-5 illustrate these comparisons.

Figure 2

**Comparison of Southern Fairy Tale Facts vs.
Other Facts on the Appalachian Section
of the Posttest of the South**

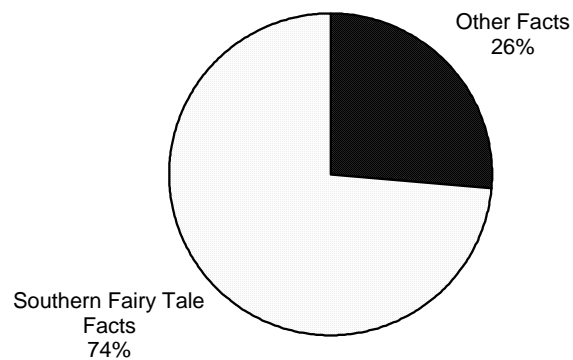


Figure 3

**Comparison of Southern Fairy Tale Facts vs.
Other Facts on the Bayou Section
of the Posttest of the South**

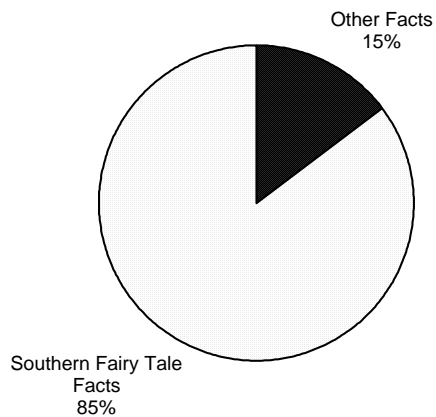


Figure 4

**Comparison of Southern Fairy Tale Facts vs.
Other Facts on the Ranching Section
of the Posttest of the South**

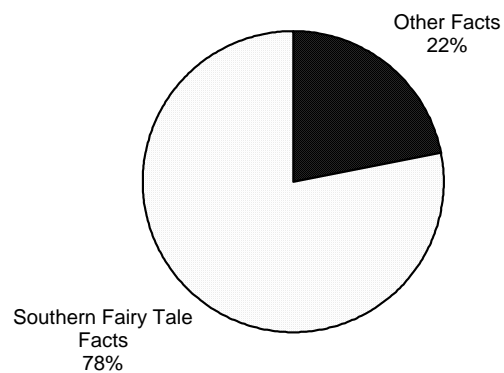
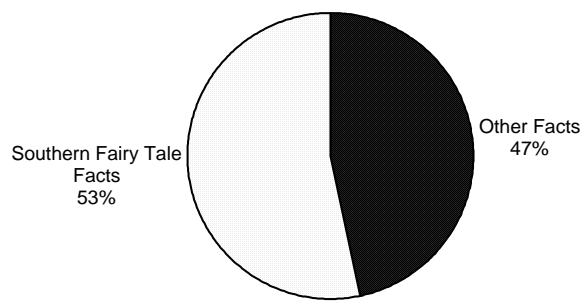


Figure 5

**Comparison of Southern Fairy Tale Facts vs.
Other Facts on the Slavery Section
of the Posttest of the South**



Conclusions

Storytelling provides an emotional tie between images created in the mind and the spoken word (More, 1987). This connection provides a method of learning new material by connecting it to images already learned. The process of telling a story embeds this knowledge more deeply into the teller (Egan, 1989). In fact, it has been described as becoming a part of the teller (Phillips, 2000). The connection between the teller and the listener builds on this emotional tie (Mello, 2001). By creating a verbal image the storyteller shares the world of the story with the listener (Macken, 2003).

Fourth grade students experienced this connection throughout this treatment. In small groups these students researched an area of the South and wove details from their research into a Southern Fairy Tale. This tale was learned through various methods of practice, including creating story cards of the images in the fairy tale, shoulder to shoulder practice, and “Tellers Theater” (Combs and Beach, 1994). Following this period of practice a Storytelling Festival was held. The purpose of this festival was for students to learn facts about other areas of the South. Posttests were administered to determine changes in students’ attitudes about social studies and their understanding about the South.

The big question throughout this treatment was whether storytelling would have an effect on students’ attitudes and understanding of social studies. It seems to me the answer to both parts of this question was a resounding yes. The results of this treatment show a positive trend in both attitude and understanding.

When looking at these improvements it is impossible to isolate storytelling and its affects. Rather, I believe there are several factors contributing to this change. Some of these factors do not follow directly from the storytelling portion of the treatment.

First, this project was a new twist for the students. Textbooks have been used in past social studies classrooms at Kalona Elementary. Research for their Southern Fairy Tales moved students out of texts and into picture books. This seemed to appeal to many of the students. By borrowing books from the University of Iowa Curriculum Laboratory, I was able to supplement my classroom library and the Kalona Elementary school library. This provided books students had not read previously. I believe this also contributed to their increased interest.

Secondly, creating their own stories to teach other students seemed to intrigue fourth graders. There are not many opportunities for fourth graders to be the experts and teach their peers things they have learned. This treatment provided students with that occasion. Then, they were taken a step farther. Instead of just regurgitating their research facts in a report, they needed to weave the facts into a story. This required higher thinking and the classes rose to the challenge. Creating a story in a small group encouraged dialogue, compromise, and teamwork. This novel approach to sharing seemed to connect with the groups. They were excited and focused on the task at hand.

Thirdly, most fourth grade students love to be in the spotlight. This project provided an opportunity to meet that urge. There was initial hesitancy, but

through extensive practice each story became a part of the student telling it. This was clear when I listened to individual group members tell their stories. Although they began with the same Southern Fairy Tale, each version was just a bit different, demonstrating how the storyteller shapes the story to fit himself. This project also encouraged trust between students. To share with another is not always easy. Yet, each of the students willingly shared their tale, not once, but many times.

These factors contributed to the positive final outcome. Yet most of this information is not hard data. Rather, it is the result of my reflections and 17 years of teaching experience. To provide hard data, the treatment depended on three different data sources. These included students' journals, pre- and posttests and my teacher's journal.

The Likert scale item survey did not completely answer my questions about attitude change. It seemed to me, students filled these surveys out quite quickly, with little time to reflect on the choices they were making. The Likert scale item survey also included too great a diversity of questions. I think it would have been more effective had I included only the six questions reported in Table 1. Instead, three additional questions about working in small groups were included. I feel this confused the focus of the survey for the students (see Appendix A).

The tool that showed the largest change in attitudes turned out to be the students' journals (see Appendix I). These tracked the changes from concern and

fear early in the treatment to enjoyment and hope for a similar project. That seems to be a large attitudinal change.

I had expected my teacher's journal to act as a tool in which to reflect the changes going on throughout the treatment. Instead, my journal became more of a daily summary of the class. I did not utilize it to record my reflections and observations as I had hoped. Thus, it is not included as a data source.

The pre- and posttest data demonstrates the changes in students' achievement. As Figure 1 shows, students knew more about the areas of the South at the end of the treatment than they did at the outset. Students began with a very minimal knowledge of each of the four areas. This knowledge increased for all areas following the treatment, as illustrated by an increased number of responses. With this initial information, I was interested in exactly what students had learned. An analysis of the posttest results showed a wide variety of responses (see Appendix J). I examined the written copies of the Southern Fairy Tales to find the exact phrases that appeared on the posttest (see Appendix G). Figures 2-5 illustrate the comparison of the facts learned in the story and the total number of responses on the posttest. The section of each pie representing the facts from the Southern Fairy Tales is larger than the piece showing other responses. I think this demonstrates the success of this treatment.

I find it interesting to note that there were additional correct responses not directly connected to any of the Southern Fairy Tales. I believe that as students were reminded about the animals, people, language, and places for each of the areas of the south their memories were primed to recall other related details. The

research about storytelling seems to support this (Mello, 2003). For example, in the Ranching area none of the stories specifically mentioned farms or ranching. Yet farms, ranching, animals, and country were all given as posttest responses. These facts are related to wheat, which was included in one of the Southern Fairy Tales, and what students already know about farming and ranching. It could be argued that students really did not learn this from the storytelling treatment. This treatment does not directly address that. Instead this treatment demonstrates that using storytelling in a social studies curriculum seems to encourage connections between other previously known facts and new information.

Action Plan

Were I to do this treatment again, there are several things I would change. The timing of this treatment was the largest limitation and would be the first change I would make. In a typical fourth grade year, I would begin with a unit on map skills and the United States. This unit provides students with an overview of the entire country and introduces them to the idea of regions in the United States. Another component of this unit is the memorization of the states in each Harcourt Brace United States region. Since this treatment needed to begin as the school year began, students did not have this background. I found my fourth graders trying to catch up throughout the treatment. I think this lack of preteaching affected some. To provide some background, each student spent one day working with a map of the South, labeling each state and coloring in the areas we were focusing on. This was sufficient for some, but for others it was not enough. In the

future I would make sure I had laid the groundwork prior to research of any given region.

Another adjustment would be to use tape recorders to track the changes in the students' Southern Fairy Tales as they progressed through the practice stage of the treatment. As I listened to students tell their stories, I realized that changes were occurring as they practiced. I did not have a way to keep track of these changes. Instead, I had only the initial typed story and the story cards. Both of these data sources were a frozen moment in the storytelling progression, not the end product. Tape recorders would be helpful for the students to listen to their own tales and for the teacher to evaluate the process.

I would also videotape each student telling his or her tale. This was a big project with a wonderful final product. I wish I had an artifact of that final product. Unfortunately, I don't. In the future I would schedule time for each student to tell his or her story to a camera. A compilation of these stories would make an effective class archive of facts; one that students would be able to visit again and again.

There are several areas of future research I would like to pursue. It would be interesting to try this storytelling process without using a fairy tale frame. The familiar fairy tale created an easily adapted framework. Would it be more difficult for students to create and remember a story without relying on a fairy tale? What would happen if that framework did not exist? Would this encourage more facts to be incorporated into a story? Perhaps the fairy tale frame could be an alternative adaptation for struggling students rather than the norm.

It would also be interesting to try this treatment individually rather than in small groups. Would the project be as effective if students were working alone? How much did the conversations that occurred throughout the process contribute to the end product?

This action research treatment has reminded me of the need for variety and student involvement in social studies. Through this treatment I was able to share my love of stories and storytelling with students. My action plan is to continue this aspect of the treatment. I plan to continue to tell my students stories for each region of the United States. I also plan to provide opportunities for individual students to learn and tell stories about a region. I think this research introduced the power of the spoken story to my fourth grade students. Several have asked if we will be doing more storytelling. Perhaps offering these students an opportunity to learn and tell a story to the class would encourage them to continue as storytellers.

Finally, I want to continue to adapt my teaching to the idea of “teaching as story” (Egan, 1989). I am very intrigued with Egan’s idea of viewing a lesson as a story. I have experienced the power of telling images to students. My eyes have been opened to many possibilities. As a life long learner and a teacher I plan to seek out ways of incorporating my own story into the life of my classroom.

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Appendix A

Likert Scale Item Survey of Social Studies Attitudes

SOCIAL STUDIES ATTITUDES

NAME: _____

Circle the number that answers each question.

- 1 -strongly agree
- 2-somewhat agree
- 3-undecided
- 4- somewhat disagree
- 5-strongly disagree

1. Social Studies is my favorite class. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I like to work in small groups. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Learning about the U.S. is interesting. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I would rather read than draw. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I enjoy social studies class. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Working in small groups is hard work. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Learning about the U.S. is important. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I like to learn about history. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I would rather work alone. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B

Pre-and Posttest Over the South

Pretest/Posttest

Name.....

What do you know about the Appalachian area of the South?

What do you know about the bayou area of the South?

What do you know about the ranching area of the South?

What do you know about slavery and the Civil War?

Appendix C
Research Sheet

| PEOPLE | LANGUAGE | PLACES | ANIMALS |
|-----------------------|----------|--------|---------|
| | | | |
| RESEARCH AREA: | | | |
| TEAM MEMBERS: | | | |

Appendix D

Story Map

Story Map

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Setting: | Characters: |
| Problem: | |
| Plan to solve the problem: | |
| | Event: |
| Event: | |
| | Event: |
| Resolution: | |

Appendix E
Iowa Fairy Tales

4-1 Iowa Fairy Tale
PETER PAN IN IOWA

Once upon a time there was a man named Peter Pan and his fairy Tinker Bell. There was a family that had 3 kids named Wendy, John and Michael. All of a sudden Peter Pan flew in with a four-wheeler. The kids were scared! Peter Pan said that it was OK. Wendy said who are you? I'm Peter Pan. Let's go to Lost Island Water Park. OK said Wendy. Wait she said my brothers they are sleeping wake them up said Peter Pan. So she did;. Then they learned how to fly. So they flew off on his four-wheeler.

They got to Lost Island and Captain Hook was on his tractor shooting manure balls at them. Peter told tinker bell to take Wendy and the boys to the hideout. While Peter was playing with Captain Hook Tinker Bell started to go very fast because she didn't want Wendy to follow her Wendy started to chase Tinker Bell and then Tinker Bell went to get the lost boys. She woke them up she told them to shoot Wendy down. And they almost consented. But Peter saved her. Then they all went to the hideout together.

The pirates captured the lost boys John and Michael. Chief of the Pirates said Where's Tiger Lilly. Who's Tiger Lilly said the Lost boys? John and Michael. Meanwhile Peter Pan and Wendy are at Lost Island Water Park. Awhile later Peter and Wendy went back on their flying 4 wheeler. And they saw that John and Michael were captured then went to look for them and flying manure balls tried to knock them down. They hid behind a bushed cloud. Then they went down to fight them and saw Michael and John. And Wendy ran to get them. All of a sudden Tinkerbelle sprayed stuff on the pirates and turned them into cats. But the cats came out of the door before she got to tem. The pirates and the captain of them pirates name is Puss.

We're at the fight cats vs. Peter Pan. Here come the cats in their tractors. Here comes Peter Pan on his flying tractor. Ding Ding Ding the tractor pull race has now started. We will be having the most insane tractor pull race of the year it will be on highway 1. The pirates have been picked up for going too slowly. The 4th grade police Peter Pan is still on the run. Peter Pan is ahead by a mile. The cats have caught up.. It's anybody's race. The winner is....Peter Pan. The cat lost control of the tractor. Now we will be giving out trophies. In first place is Peter Pan. We will b giving him a dried up manure trophy. For the last place cats they will get corncobs with the corn already eaten off. Now the cats are pirates.

The end

4-2 Iowa Fairy Tale
GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE HORSES

Once upon a time there was a horse family; mom, dad and the little pony. The mom is making oat muffins and they just came out of the oven and since it was hot they didn't want to wait at home so they went on a long walk. Goldilocks is walking in the forest. She takes the wrong path. And she bumps her head on a tree and goes to the wrong house.

She saw muffins and oats and she tried the biggest bowl and she said, "EW, there's skunk spray in this bowl." She tried the middle bowl, "There's frog eggs in my muffins." Then she tried the littlest one and said, "That's just right." And she ate it all up.

Goldilocks goes into the living room and sits on papa's saddle. "Too big." Goldilocks says. Goldilocks sits on mama's saddle and says, "too big." Then Goldilocks sits on the little horse's saddle and says, "Just right." Goldilocks goes in to the stable and goes in to papa's stable. Out jumps Herky. Goldilocks says, "Way too big!" Goldilocks goes to Mama's stable and out jumps a deer. Goldilocks says, "Just a little bit smaller." Goldilocks goes into the little horse's stable and out jumps a cat. Goldilocks says, "just right." Then she falls in a deep dark sleep.

MMMMH I'm hungry. So am I said mama horse. Let's go inside, said papa horse. Where's our food?" said the horses? What's that noise? It's coming from our hay. "There's a girl in my hay," said baby horse. Neighhhhhh AAAAA. There's a horse in here said Goldilocks. Goldilocks was so scared she climbed up to the hayloft. She was so scared that she jumped out of the window. Suddenly she saw big mean Junkyard dogs on motorcycles and they chased her into a cornfield. Right when they were coming to beat her up, the horses came and saved her. And they scared the dogs who got on their Harley Davison's and the front dog said, "Let's get out of here." And goldilocks and the horses lived happily ever after.

Appendix F
Storytelling Resources

Storytelling Resources

Teacher Storytelling Ideas

Bruchac, J., & Ross, G. (1995). *The Story of the Milky Way: A Cherokee Tale*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.

DeSpain, P. (2000). *Sweet Land of Story: Thirty-Six American Tales to Tell*. Little Rock: August House Publishers, Inc.

Haley, G. E. (1992). *Mountain Jack Tales*. New York: Dutton Children's Book.

Johnston, T. (1996). *How Many Miles to Jacksonville?* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Ransom, C. F. (1996). *One Christmas Dawn*. Bridgewater Books.

Ransom, C. F. (1995). *When the Whippoorwill Calls*. New York: Tambourine Books.

Ransom, C. F. (1995). *The Promise Quilt*. New York: Walker & Company.

Reneaux, J.J. (2001). *How Animals Saved The People: Animals Tales From The South*. New York: Morrow Junior Books.

Hayes, J. (2001). *Juan Verdades: The Man Who Couldn't Tell a Lie*. New York: Orchard Books.

Fairy Tale Frame Stories

Aylesworth, J. (1998). *The Gingerbread Man*. New York: Scholastic.

Evetts-Secker, J. (2004). *Little Red Riding Hood*. Cambridge: Barefoot Books.

Moser, B. (2001). *The Three Little Pigs*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Sanderson, R. (2002). *Cinderella*. Boston, Little, Brown.

Fractured Fairy Tales

Amoss, B. (1994). *The Cajun Gingerbread Boy*. New York: Hyperion.

Compton, J. (1994). *Ashpet: An Appalachian Tale*. New York: Holiday House.

Compton, K. & J. (1993). *Jack The Giant Chaser: An Appalachian Tale*. New York: Holiday House.

Hulling, J. & P. (2002). *Puss in Cowboy Boots*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Johnston, T. (1992). *The Cowboy and the Black-eyed Pea*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Ketteman, H. (1997). *Bubba, The Cowboy Prince: A Fractured Texas Tale*. New York: Scholastic Press.

Salley, C. (2002). *Epossumondas*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.

San Souci, R. D. (2003). *Little Pierre: A Cajun Story from Louisiana*. New York: Harcourt.

South Research

Slavery.

Bial, R. (1997). *The Strength of These Arms: Life In The Slave Quarters*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Erickson, Paul. (1998). *Daily Life on a Southern Plantation, 1853*. New York: Lodestar Books.

McKissack, P. & F. (1994). *Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Olenyik, B. (2004). *A Good Night for Freedom*. New York: Morrow, Holiday House.

Winter, J. (1988). *Follow The Drinking Gourd*. New York: Knopf.

Appalachia.

Bial, R. (1997). *Mist Over The Mountains: Appalachia and Its People*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Houston, G. (1988). *The Year of The Perfect Christmas Tree: an Appalachian Story*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Lyon, G. E. (1990). *Come A Tide*. New York: Orchard Books.

Roberts, E. M. (1922). *Under the Tree*. Cadmus Books.

Rylant, C. (1985). *The Relatives Came*. New York: Bradbury Press.

Rylant, C. (1982). *When I was Young In The Mountains*. New York: Dutton Children's Books.

Wells, R. (1997). *Mary on Horseback*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Bayou.

Applet, K. (1995). *Bayou Lullaby*. New York: Morrow Junior Books.

Bial, R. (1998). *Cajun Home*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Fleming, C. (2004). *Gator Gumbo: A Spicy-hot Southern tale*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Kroll, V. (1995). *Sweet Magnolia*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.

Ranching.

Sonneborn, L. (2002). *The American West: An Illustrated History*. Fair Street Productions.

Smith, E. B. (1983). *The Railroad Book*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Cherry, L. (1994). *The Armadillo From Amarillo*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Jakes, J. (1986). *Susanna Of The Alamo: a True Story*. San Diego: Gulliver Books.

Freedman, R. (1985). *Cowboys Of The Wild West*. New York: Clarion Books.

Appendix G
Southern Fairy Tales

Appalachia

Once upon a time there was a family with 3 girls and 2 boys. Annie was the youngest in her family and lived in **West Virginia**. Annie got in trouble and ran away to her aunt house while her family was behind looking for her. They got their coats and left their family house to try to find her.

Annie got lost on her way to her aunt's house. When she was walking she met a mule. The **mule** started talking with Annie. The mule said to Annie, "where does your aunt live?" Annie told him where she lived. But Annie did not know that the mule was an animal that escaped from an animal jail. He kidnapped Annie and put her in a sack, and took her to a wooden house. The mule sat her in a chair and tied her up and taped her mouth shut.

The mule didn't know that the house was Annie's aunt's house. Her aunt was outside doing laundry when they got there. The mule saw Annie's aunt and kicked her and left her lay.

The family searched one more time and decided to go their aunt's house. They found her tied up in the wooden house with her aunt. Annie's aunt saw the mule go up to the **mountains** to trick another family in the mean time Annie's family went to Annie's aunts house and found them tied up in two chairs. After they untied Annie's aunt and her Annie's aunt said that she saw the mule go up to the mountains to trick another family so the all went up to the mountains and finally they got there and found the mule trying to trick the family, but instead Annie's family was the one who tricked the mule. They tricked him by making him think that they were the family but they weren't we'll they stepped forward and the mule stepped back

And the mule fell off the mountains and died, and Annie's family and her aunt got home safely.

The End

THE THREE LITTLE KITTENS AND THE BIG BAD BULL DOG IN APPALCHIA

Once upon a time, there were three little **kittens** lived with their mother in **Appalachia**. The mama cat tells them that they had to move soon but they should be aware of the big bad **bulldog**. So they moved. The first little kitten made her house out of sticks. The second little kitten made her house out of stones. The 3rd little kitten lived with the 2nd little kitten. Then the big bad bulldog destroys both of their houses by starting fires on both of the houses by rubbing 2 sticks together. Then the big bad bull dog keeps chasing the three little kittens up the trees. They were scared! So the kittens made a plan. They decided to put boiling milk mixed with water from the streams under the window where the big bad bulldog always came in. The bulldog always came in that way because the 3 little kittens liked to keep that window open. When the bulldog came in through the window he faked like he died but he got up. He got burned but he didn't want to show it! Then he started calling them names and saying, "sticks and stones will brake my bones but word will never hurt me." In the end the three little kittens all lived together happily ever after. The bulldog never bothered them again in the Appalachia Mountains because he did not want to get burned ever again! THE END

Little Red Fox and the Big Swamp Gator

Once upon a time there was a little red **fox** going to her grandmother's house. On the way to her grand mother's house she met a big hungry swamp **gator**. She told the **swamp** gator where her grandmother lives. When she went to pick flowers for her grandmother the swamp gator left for the fox's grandmother's house. When the swamp gator arrived at little fox's grandmother's house he jumped onto the bed and ate grandmother up. On the way little red fox met Vene , a venomous **snake**. Little red fox told Vene where her grandmother lived. Vene went to her grandmother's house to find what is the loud snoring in grandmother's bed. When Vene went in to the house he found that it was the swamp gator. Then little red fox went on with picking out flowers. Then Vene bit the swamp gator with is venomous fluids into the swamp gator. That killed the swamp gator instantly. Then Vene took a knife from the kitchen and cut a big slice of the swamp gator. Then little red fox went to all of the commotion. When Vene cut her grandmother out little red fox asked her grandmother if she was okay. Little red fox's grandmother said she was fine. Then little red fox's grandmother asked Vene if he would like to stay for tea and cookies. Now the swamp gator is dead and everyone lives happily ever after!

Juliette In The Swamp

Once upon a time there was a gal named Juliette, and there was a prince named Jean-Paul. Juliette lived in a cabin and Jean-Paul lived in a castle. Juliette's mom died and her dad got remarried. She had two evil stepsisters and a evil step mom. Her step mom made her work. Her sisters got whatever they wanted. Juliette was very pretty and her stepsisters were very UGLY!! But Juliette wore rags and her sisters wore beautiful dresses. So people didn't think she was pretty at all. They were having a royal **swamp** ball. They laugh and dance and they eat. Her sisters were invited but she was not. Her sisters made her make their dresses and everything else. Juliette still knew she could get to that ball somehow. She went, her fairy **turtles** she was so surprised when they came. She didn't know who they were. They got her a ride on a motor boat. When she got there she danced with the prince. Then it was midnight, she had to go. When she went out she turned back to wearing rags. But thankfully nobody saw her. The next day the prince was looking for the girl that her danced with. He found Juliette's gold tooth. It was on a lily pad. When it was Juliette's turn to try the tooth. It was hers. The next few weeks they got married and lived happily ever after.

THE END

THE THREE ARMADILLOS

Once upon a time there were three **armadillos** that lived in **Texas**. They lived with their mom and they were old enough to live by themselves.

The first armadillo made a house out of **wheat**. The second armadillo made the house out of **cactuses**. And the third armadillo built a house out of bricks and there was a chimney on top. The big horned sheep found the first armadillo's house and the big horned **sheep** said that I will run your house over so he did, then he ran to the other armadillo's house. Then the first armadillo ran to the second armadillos house and the first armadillo ran to the second armadillos house and when he got there the big horned sheep came to the house and said let me in or I'll ram into your house so they So then the armadillos ran to the third armadillo's house and they said "brother we need to come in the house because the big horned sheep is chasing us. The big horned sheep try to blow down the house. So he puffed and he couldn't blow the house down. So the ether two armadillo thanked and thanked the third armadillo. But they didn't know that the big horned sheep was on their chimney. But then they heard banging on the roof and then the third armadillo was very smart so he knew that the big horned sheep was going to try get in the house by the chimney so he could eat them. Then the third armadillo got a big kettle with boiling water. So then the big horned sheep went down the chimney and then he burnt his butt and he cried and went home.

THE END

COW GIRL RIDING HOOD

Once upon a time there was a little girl named cowgirl riding hood. Her grandma was sick so her mom told her to go get some milk from the cows. on the way to grandmas house she went to the store to buy some oatmeal with the money that her mom gave her. After she bought the oatmeal she was going to grandmas house and an **armidillo** popped out of the prairie. And then the armidillo said were are you going and cowgirl riding hood said I'm going to my gradmas house. Because she is very sick so I have to give her this food. So the armidillo said okay. And then she went to her grandmas' house and when she got there the armidillo had gobbled her grandma. Cow girl riding says to the armidillo what big brown eyes you have all the better to see you with grandma what big teeth you have all the better to eat you with my dear! and then a **eagle** came and chopped its head off and fed it to her baby's. The End...

The gingerbread men

Once upon a time there were a lot of gingerbread men that lived in a gingerbread house in **Arkansas**. Their names were Fred, Ed and Tom. One day Ed went to the gingerbread store to get gumdrops while Ed was walking home evil cats captured Ed. While Fred and Tom were at home they wondered where Ed was, because it was taking him such a long time. So Fred and Tom went out looking for Ed so then evil cats captured them. One by one every gingerbread man in the town got captured. The gingerbread men had to wear **leg chains** made out of licorice so they would not be able to go anywhere they put a giant jawbreaker at the end. The gingerbread men had to **work day and night** cleaning the evil cats' litter boxes. Then during the night the little mice came and chewed Fred, Ed, and Tom's leg chains. One by one they chewed the leg chains of every gingerbread person until they were **all free**. All the gingerbread men decided to go north for freedom. They were going and going and going until they had to cross a lake full of crocodiles. They made a boat out of gumdrops and crossed the lake before any crocodile could eat them. Once they were across the lake they came to the Appalachian Mountains that were made out of giant gummy bears. They had to make a plan to get over the mountain. So they knew what they were going to do so each one of them picked up a rock and threw it at them so the rocks got stuck on their eyes. Then they were at the top of the mountain, but then there were sour gummy worms at the bottom that were shooting jellybeans. So the gingerbread men found some turtles, got on their backs, and slid down the mountain like a speeding bullet. Once they were passed the sour gummy worms they were in Iowa and they had reached freedom. They lived happily ever after.

The people to freedom

Once upon a time there was a bunch of slavery people named Molly, Joe, Aunt Katy, Arnold and the **master** of them. All of them were getting **sold** except the master. They tried to **escape** but they got caught and the master started **whipping** Joe, Arnold and smacking Molly and Aunt Katy. They tried to except again and they got out of town. Then the master caught them and locked them in a shed. Aunt Katy had a hair pen and she unlocked the shed and they went to go hide again. They hide in a haystack but a tornado blew it down and they almost got caught. Then they hide in a log shed and a hurricane blew it down. Then they hide in a brick house and the master went away because of the bad weather. They found a canoe in the water. When they got in the canoe there was a hole so they put a cork in it. Then they got free to **Canada**. When they got there Joe and Molly got married and they had twins Gorge and Hattie and they lived haply ever after. The End.

Appendix H

Lesson Plans

Week one

1. Day one
 - A. Teacher told story about the South
 - B. Pretest and pre-treatment Likert Scale survey
 - C. Student Journal - What do you think it will be like to be the storyteller?
2. Day two
 - A. Teacher told story about the South
 - B. Introduce the research page on chart paper:
 - i. language, places, people, animals, other
 - C. Fill in the categories on the board using Iowa
 - D. Student Journal – What is your favorite fairy tale?
3. Day three
 - A. Using the journal from yesterday - brainstorm list of fairy tale ideas
 - B. Choose class fairy tale for the Iowa story
 - C. Create a class story map for the Iowa story
4. Day four
 - A. Divide the Iowa Fairy tale into four sections based on the story map
 - B. Divide the class into their storytelling groups
 - C. Assign each group a section of the story
 - D. Reminded what the goal of the activity is
 - i. to teach others about Iowa through the story
 - ii. to practice the steps we will be taking for the Southern Story tale
 - E. Time for the groups to write.
 - F. Student Journal – how well did your group work together?

Week Two

5. Day one
 - A. Teacher told - Iowa fairy tales
 - i. Talk about what worked and what didn't in the Iowa fairy tales
 - B. Groups draw a slip of paper reading
 - i. Appalachia, Ranching, Bayou, Slavery
 - C. Fill out for research page using picture books and nonfiction books
 - D. Student Journal – is this the area you were hoping for? Why or why not?
6. Days two-four
 - A. Researched area and fill in the research sheet
 - B. Student Journal – What is the most interesting thing you learned?

Week Three

7. Day one
 - A. Teacher told story about the South
 - B. Each group choose the fairy tale frame of their choice,
 - C. Each group read a typical version of that fairy tale

- D. Each group create a story map for their tale
- E. Student Journal – what do you think about the storytelling Mrs. Swantz is doing? What do you like or not like?
- 8. Day two
 - A. Groups finished their story maps
- 9. Day three
 - A. Teacher read fractured fairy tale
 - B. Discussion about how to weave details of the region into the Southern Fairy tale
- 10. Day four
 - A. Using research sheets and fairy tale story maps create a story map of their Southern Fairy tale
 - i. included details about their area
 - B. Student Journal – How do you think your group is doing?

Week Four

- 11. Days one-two
 - A. Teacher told story about the South
 - B. Groups write their stories on the iBooks
 - C. Save the story to the server each day and print out a hard copy
 - D. Student Journal – Did the story map help your group with the Southern Fairy Tale writing?
- 12. Days three-four
 - A. Teacher told story about the South
 - i. Follow with a discussion about the story cards I've been using
 - B. Daily feedback from the teacher about how they are doing and what needs to be added to their stories
 - C. As each group finishes writing their stories
 - i. meet one-one with the teacher
 - ii. teacher explain the idea of capturing images of the story on story cards
 - D. Each group member create their own story cards

Week Five

- 13. Day one
 - A. Class discussion over the stories the teacher has told
 - i. what does it take to be a good storyteller?
 - ii. Make sure intonation, repetition and speed are mentioned
 - iii. Discuss the difference between memorizing and learning
 - iv. What does it take to be a good listener?
 - B. Students finish their story cards
 - C. Student Journal – how are you feeling about the process?
- 14. Days two - four
 - A. Begin practicing their stories Shoulder to shoulder with their group members
 - B. Practice in a circle sentence by sentence with their group members
 - C. Partner up with another student and practice

- i. Be sure to write down what you learned when you listen to someone else's Southern Fairy Tale

D. Student Journal – would you rather be a teller or a listener?

Week Six

15. Day one

- A. Students continue practicing with someone from another group
 B. They continue recording what they learned in their journals
 C. Student Journal – tomorrow is the big day...are you ready?

16. Day two

- A. Story telling festival
 i. schedule partnering one member from each area with a student from the other section – number represent students

| APPALACHIA | SLAVERY | BAYOU | RANCHING |
|------------|---------|-------|----------|
| 1 | 5 | 9 | 14 |
| 2 | 6 | 10 | 15 |
| 3 | 7 | 11 | 16 |
| 4 | 8 | 12 | 17 |
| | | 13 | |
| 18 | 21 | 25 | 30 |
| 19 | 22 | 26 | 31 |
| 20 | 23 | 27 | 32 |
| | 24 | 28 | 33 |
| | | 29 | |

| ROUND ONE | | ROUND TWO | | ROUND THREE | | ROUND FOUR | |
|-----------|----|-----------|----|-------------|----|------------|----|
| 1 | 18 | 1 | 21 | 1 | 27 | 1 | 30 |
| 2 | 19 | 2 | 22 | 2 | 28 | 2 | 31 |
| 3 | 20 | 3 | 23 | 3 | 29 | 3 | 32 |
| 4 | | 4 | 24 | 4 | 25 | 4 | 33 |
| | | | | | 26 | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| 5 | 21 | 5 | 26 | 5 | 30 | 5 | 18 |
| 6 | 22 | 6 | 27 | 6 | 31 | 6 | 19 |
| 7 | 23 | 7 | 28 | 7 | 32 | 7 | 20 |
| 8 | 24 | 8 | 29 | 8 | 33 | 8 | |
| | | | 25 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 9 | 25 | 9 | 30 | 13 | | 12 | 21 |
| 10 | 26 | 10 | 31 | 9 | 18 | 13 | 22 |
| 11 | 27 | 11 | 32 | 10 | 19 | 9 | 23 |
| 12 | 28 | 12 | 33 | 11 | 20 | 10 | 24 |
| 13 | 29 | 13 | | 12 | | 11 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 14 | 30 | 14 | 18 | 14 | 21 | 14 | 28 |
| 15 | 31 | 15 | 19 | 15 | 22 | 15 | 29 |
| 16 | 32 | 16 | 20 | 16 | 23 | 16 | 25 |
| 17 | 33 | 17 | | 17 | 24 | 17 | 26 |
| | | | | | | | 27 |

- ii. Remind students to record what they had learned following each Southern Fairy Tale

- iii. Students record what they learned on large charts labeled: Appalachia, Ranching, Slavery and Bayou

B. Student Journal – how did the festival go?

17. Day three

- A. Follow-up discussion
- B. Post test
- C. Post-Likert scale survey
- D. Student Journal – would you like to do this type of project again?
Why or why not?

Appendix I
Student Journal Responses

Student Journal Responses

1 – It might be fun or not fun I don't know...

2 - Maybe scary to tell a story. Maybe like it. Maybe think it is fun. It is fun to listen to you it makes me feel confident in my self and you help us understand.

3 – I would like it maybe but I'm uasly shy so I would be pretty nervios. I like when you read to us and it deosn't make me that nervous. I felel nervous and exited because im not really read but I'm looking forward to her some body elses story so I do think that its going to be fun! I'm nervous just a little but I think im ready. And I would like to do both becasue there fun.

4- I don't think I will like being a story teller I do love your stories and I'm of scared that we have to tell a story. I'm kind of scared. I am very nervous

5 - I relly like being the listenere I think I'm ready to tell to the other class

6 – It would be kind of scary to read it in frot of a lot of people but not if their wernt a lot of people! I think you are good at it. I think it would bge kind of had, But I like it when you tell storys to us! I feel kind of nervus I think I'm ready and I can't wait till I get to here the other storys that the other people rote!! I thought Cody's story was really good because he had a lot of esiting parts...I really like to tell my story and I am sort of nervus for the festible but I think I can do it and I also like it that I can now remember it and I like to tell really really really well.

7 - It will be kind of inbaresing. ..It mite be like you wrote your own book it will be exciting it makes you feel like you are a part of some thing it makes you feel like you are doing a good job...I think it is going to be hard and fun but I think that if some people just konsentrat on one bookit will be easear...I feel excited and I feel good that I get to hear the ether classes stores and I think I am ready I think it will be fun and I think every body will have a good story...I would like to see how good I do. But I would like to listen to hear peoples storys and to see how good they do.

8 – Hard and fun it would make me nerves and excited. And it would make me work harder. I am excited to tell the story that our group is working on. I am ready but I am nervous. I can't wait to hear the other class tell there story. When we're done I going to tell it to my family. .. I like to be the teller because I get to see what there faces look like. And I like to listen because I want to hear other storys.

9 – I fell a little scard. I won't to hear outh pepols storys. I like lesning. becous it gets cifusing sometimes. I think I am redy.

10 - It will be kind of weird and then it will be kind of fun,. I think it will be lots of fun making it up to. But I don't have very much ideas thoe. I think it will be fun telling the stories but then not.

11 – it makes's me neves. It is funer then the hole class working to gater. I like it but I am getting neres to tell a story.

12 – I think it will be fun to tell a story. I tought it was good working in a grop. ..I like it better when you read I wont rellay like it when we have to read it. I fell very excided about this and I am ready. I learned from Tayler that I should use exsreshin and to pause a lot more. I would like being the storyteller because I like to tell stories. And I fell very ready to tell my story to a lot of people.

13 – It might be kinda fun. I think it could be fun or it could be boring it just depends on what your story is about. Well I was neavas at the start but when we praticed I thought this is easier then I thought it would be. I 'm excited to tell my story.

14– It will be fun but I will be nurvis very nurvis. I like it when you read story's to us, but I don't what to do one of my own.

15 – I like it when y ou tell your stories. You are really good story teller. I don't reallywant to tell stories. I think it will be fun exiteing, scary. I hope it is fun. I would rather be the listener becaue I don't like to tell stories and I like to listen to stories.

16- I like the idea, it might be hard though, I'm not sure. I would rather be a teller because lost of people mumble. I like that it is over because it was hard to tell my astory so many times,. I liked this. I hope we can do something like this again.

17 - I liked it better than what we did in 3rd grade. I thought it was fun. I hope we get to do it again. Alls we did in 3rd grade was learn about Indians in social studies But now we get to do stuff on the computer and make stories

18- I would like to be a teller because I leike to make weird sounds and read

19 - I very excited about writing the stories. I liked being a teller because I can kind of tell stuff that I want to. I loved the expeirence of telling and listening to the stories. I think that we need to do this more often for SS because you can learn more about a certain place.

20 - I like it very much because I got to read to my friends a lot and that was very fun but it was scary because I need to read

21 - I liked telling the most because I got to use different voices and say it different at different times. I think it was a good idea.

22 - I will be hard to write a story it is confusing. I feel ready and nervous.

23 - I not ready I think it is going to take a long time. I want to do more. I had fun doing these. The hardest part is what the story is about. I like when we read a story to people

24- I think it will be fun doing this, but in the Iowa fairy tales my group argued a lot. It was mostly fun when we drew the pictures and told our stories at the end. I think it would be fun to move on to another project kind of like this one.

25- Teller because I have read the story so many times that I know it by heart. I like learning is useful studies like this I think it is fun telling stories. I really want to do it again

26 - It might be fun but I'm not sure. I think it will be kind of fun.I think I'm ready to tell the story. I think it's going to be fun to tell the story But I do need to work on being slower because I read kind of fast....I would like to be a teller because it is fun to tell stories I was surprised because I usually like to be a listener

27 - I like working alone I think it's better and like history learning about the world. Listener because I really hate telling people stories especially in front of a class in less than kindergarten's...I kind of liked it but not much I guess I won't mind doing this again but somehow I just feel nervous but if it is a friend or a girl I knew then I'm comfortable

28- I feel good about doing this project
I feel good about doing this out loud to every body it feels good...

Appendix J

Complete List of Posttest Responses

| Results of Pre-and Posttest Over the South | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Appalachia | | Bayou | | Ranching | | Slavery | |
| Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| 32 - don't know | 3 - story detail | 33 - don't know | story detail | 24 - don't know | story detail | 17 - don't know | 5 - story details |
| tall trees | 2 - trees | misty | | gets hot | no answer | yes | no answer |
| Appalachian mountain | 2 - Appalachian Mountains | | 28 - swamps | farming | farms | 2 - long ago | |
| | part of the South | | 12 - alligators | heard of it | | separated families | |
| | WV, VA, TN, NC | | 2 - crocodiles | 2 - Texas is here | 17 - Texas | heard of it | |
| | 29 - mountains | | people work hard | hard work | | colored people | |
| | 2 - different animals | | talk a lot | 2 - cows | | bad thing/servant | really bad |
| | cold | | a lot of trees | animals | 3 - animals | underground railroad | |
| | 3 - mules | | 4 - animals | | 22 - armadillos | white don't like | |
| | eagles | | talk different | | 3 - cactus | escape | 11 - escape |
| | 3 - WV | | lakes | | coyotes | 2 - black people | 2 - black people |
| | bull dog | | 4 - foxes | | hawks | civil war - fight | fought against one another |
| | kittens | | 2 - turtles | | 2 - country | work for people | work hard |
| | bear | | 2 - snakes | | 8 - sheep | Harriet Tubman | Harriet Tubman |
| | VA | | frogs | | 2 - eagles | Grandpa in it | |
| | PA | | 2 - Louisiana | | have an accident | Clara Brown | |
| | | | hot | | wheat | Lincoln led the USA | Abraham Lincoln |
| | | | | | 2 - Oklahoma | USA war | |
| | | | | | 2 - hot | 1/2 wanted slaves and 1 didn't | |
| | | | | | ranching | people work for rich | |
| | | | | | | same time | |
| | | | | | | no slaves in America | |
| | | | | | | it was hard them | |
| | | | | | | 5 - person who told them what to do was mean | |
| | | | | | | master | |
| | | | | | | 3 - slaves pushed around | |
| | | | | | | 2 - people sold | |
| | | | | | | 5 - to Canada for freedom | |
| | | | | | | 2 - might live in Arkansas | |
| | | | | | | 7 - chained | |
| | | | | | | 3 - whipped | |
| | | | | | | 2 - Civil War killed a lot of people | |
| | | | | | | cruel | |
| | | | | | | people get treated bad for how they looked | |
| | | | | | | Florida | |
| | | | | | | people were killed and taken as slaves | |

Appendix K

IRB

