EXPLORING THE USE OF PICTURE BOOKS IN DEVELOPING THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

by

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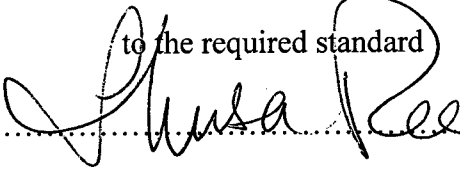
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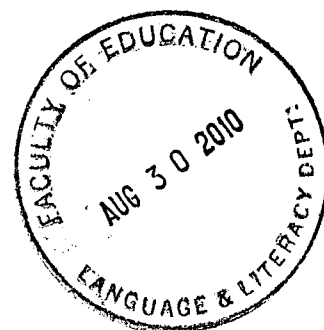
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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore what research says about the effectiveness of using picture books to support language acquisition among students learning English as a second language. The research can be grouped into the following themes: book floods, the effect of using picture books on a specific ability or skill and wordless picture books. Researchers "flooded" communities in the South Pacific and China with high interest western picture books and examined the effect that those picture books had on different learning outcomes related to story structure, oral language and reading comprehension. Other experimental research sough to compare the effects of a book based program as opposed to the use of an audio-lingual highly structured textbook. Lastly, some of the research revolved around case studies or experimental studies on how wordless books can be used to promote language learning. Communities who were exposed to picture books showed significant improvement in oral language, comprehension and use of story structure elements. Other research that was conducted comparing the use of picture books to highly structured texts or exercises found that there was a significant increase in language comprehension, vocabulary and expression when using picture books. Wordless books were also found to be an excellent resource for facilitating language development in students learning English as a second language. In my Connections to Practice section I propose a unit plan created using the different picture book versions of the *3 Little Pigs* with my English language learners. In this unit students will study and explore variations in the *3 Little Pigs* and will participate in activities designed to enhance their language acquisition.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Picture books have enjoyed immense popularity in the classroom over the past few decades within the school system. They have been meaningfully used in classrooms to develop story writing, reading comprehension and oral language skills. Paralleling their popularity is a similar growth in numbers of English-as-a- Second (or third) Language students in Canada. Canada has been a welcoming refuge for those people fleeing war-torn countries and to others seeking a better life and opportunities for their children. The increase in the immigrant population has led to more challenges for educators in how to best develop the language acquisition of these ESL students in the Canadian school system. Various models have been proposed over the years on how to improve the language proficiency of ESL students ranging from structured grammatical exercises to providing interactions with authentic situations and materials.

There has always been much research and debate on how someone can best learn a new language. In the 19th century, vocabulary was taught in lists of isolated words and the focus was mainly on grammar and drills (Brown, 2000). Others worked on repeating sentences over and over again. In the 20th century, language learning emphasized correct pronunciation and grammar. Vocabulary was taught through demonstration of concrete objects and pictures. During the 1930's, the audiological method became popular. When World War II broke out, American soldiers needed to learn to be proficient in different languages so the US military provided funding for intensive language courses that focused on pronunciation and pattern drills along with conversation practice. Material was presented in dialogue form, there was a strong dependence on memorization of set phrases, structural patterns were taught using repetitive

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drills, and there was a reliance on use of tapes and language labs. This method known as the audiolingual method became popular and was used in many language schools overseas.

As an ESL teacher I often run across parents who are much invested (and rightfully so) in the English language learning of their child. They come to me wondering what my philosophy and methods are for teaching English. Many of the students who have learned English in China have done so in tightly controlled situations where the teacher might say a phrase and the student is expected to repeat the phrase to the teacher. Or learning takes place with English language textbooks where vocabulary and content are highly structured and controlled and students work mainly with repetition of words, phrases and pronunciation etc. However, there has been a shift over time from teaching with highly repetitive and controlled tasks to learning in authentic situations with authentic materials.

I have been an ESL and Resource teacher for 4 years. I was lucky enough to get that teaching position a few months after graduating from a teacher education program. However, because I lacked the necessary coursework for teaching English as a Second Language, I accepted the position based on the assumption that I would return to university and complete my Diploma in ESL which I did. During those two years, I studied and learned about the different theories and research on second language acquisition. That knowledge, combined with the experience of teaching in a very multicultural school has led me to this point in time where I have a better sense of why I teach the way I do.

Theoretical Framework

Krashen's Input Hypothesis will frame this study. Krashen (1988) posited what he referred to as the Monitor Model which looks at how input contributes to language learning. He believed that students can acquire language subconsciously, that they acquire the language in a

predictable sequence, that students should receive optimal comprehensible input that is interesting and a little bit beyond their current level of competence (i +1) and, lastly, that language learning must take place in an environment where anxiety is low in order for learners to acquire language. Krashen's theory suggests that the primary function of the language learning classroom is to provide input in low anxiety environments where students are not required to speak until they are ready to do so. Error correction should be minimal but input should be slightly above their comprehensible level (i+1).

In a similar vein, Vgotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development makes its contribution to my Connections to Practice (Brown, 2000). Vgotsky believed that a learner has an actual level representing what the learner can do. However the learner also has a potential development level representing what the learner is capable of doing in the near future. Between the two levels is the zone proximal development (ZPD). Vgotsky believed that interactions with others helps learners progress from their actual level to their potential one. His theory implies that classroom teachers should then scaffold students' learning by assigning them certain tasks or activities at just beyond their current level of competence in order to help them focus on elements within their range of ability while keeping them motivated and in pursuit of the goal of language learning.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis also affects the unit plan that I have created (Brown, 2000). Long suggests that input can be made "comprehensible" in three ways: by simplifying the input (using visuals, charts, etc), by using linguistic and extralinguistic features such as background knowledge and by modifying the interactional structure of the conversation. He believes that learners will interact to negotiate meaning with each other and by seeking

clarification, checking comprehension or requesting confirmation – resulting in learners acquiring language.

As a teacher and a university student who has majored in English and has a strong passion for children's literature, I tend to find myself using picture books in my teaching. There are so many fabulous picture books available nowadays and whenever I use them in my classroom, I find my ESL students simply *glued* to the page. I have had a parent come up to me though and subtly "question" my approach of teaching his child with picture books. And although I was able to say that research has shown that children learn from context and exposure to authentic and interesting materials etc... I wondered if there had been research conducted specifically on the effect of using picture books with English as Second Language students. Thus in this paper I explore what research has said about how picture books can be used in the classroom to support children's second language acquisition. I argue that picture books are not only highly engaging and motivating but will also provide exposure to different ideas, cultures, places and customs. In addition, the relationship between text and image in picture books assist ESL students in making connections with new vocabulary and also expose them naturally to authentic conversation, grammatical forms and dialogue. I then create a unit plan based on different versions of the *Three Little Pigs* to explore how these picture books can be used to develop the language acquisition of ESL students.

SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to better understand the context for this paper, this section is organized into three parts. Part one discusses the relationship between picture books and second language acquisition. Part two explores using picture books to support language acquisition and part three discusses the effectiveness of wordless picture books on language and literacy development.

Picture Books and Second Language Acquisition

A major goal in developing English language proficiency is to help ESL students acquire the ability to communicate in English and to become literate in English. To do so, research has indicated that "both first and second language learners need large amounts of contextualized, meaningful input in order to acquire language" (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). Over the past two decades much research has been done exploring the role of input in language acquisition. One of the more popular yet controversial theories for second language learning was put forth by Stephen Krashen in 1988. He developed what he referred to as a "Monitor Model" which included five hypotheses for understanding the process of learning a second language: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1988).

The acquisition-learning hypothesis differentiates between language acquisition and language learning. According to Krashen, language acquisition is a subconscious "picking up" of rules similar to the way children develop ability in their first language. Language learning is a conscious process where learners focus on knowing the grammatical rules of language and applying those rules to their discourse. Krashen suggests that acquisition, not learning, is the best way to promote second language proficiency (1988).

The monitor hypothesis follow the first hypothesis by stating that language learning, with its conscious knowledge of rules, prompts the learner to become an "editor" where he or she is monitoring the language output. But Krashen believes that it is difficult and time consuming for the learner to do so, and that in order for this "monitoring" to be successful, the following three conditions must be met. First, the monitor needs to have enough time to think about the word or phrase before and after use. Secondly, the language user must be focused on and concerned with correctness when they make an utterance in the target language. Lastly the performer needs to know the rules in order to apply it correctly.

In the natural order hypothesis, Krashen states that learners acquire the rules of a language in a particular sequence independent of any rules taught in a specific order (1988). He proposes then that the best way to learn a language is through natural acquisition rather than repetitive sequential and systematic grammatical exercises.

The input hypothesis states that the only way a learner can acquire a second language is when they receive input that is interesting, authentic, not grammatically sequenced, and a little bit beyond their level of competence. He refers to that level as i +1 where i represents the current language level and 1 is the next level. Krashen believes that it is necessary for the user to understand the meaning of the input not necessarily the form of the message. His hypothesis them implies that successful acquisition of language learning develops naturally from the "$i + 1$" messages that the user receives and can decode using background knowledge, use of context and other cues such as gestures and intonation (1988).

In his last hypothesis called the affective filter hypothesis, Krashen states that language learning is affected by factors such as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Learners have what is referred to as an "affective filter." The affective filter is an imaginary barrier which

determines how those factors listed above affect second language acquisition. For example, a high affective filter is caused by high anxiety, low self esteem and low motivation which would prevent input from reaching their language acquisition devices (1988). Those learners who have a low affective filter are more likely to take chances, be creative, and seek and obtain more input.

Much research has been conducted on testing the key assumptions of Krashen's Monitor Model. To name a few, Neuman and Koskinen (1992) analyzed the pre and post tests scores of participants to test their comprehensible input by exposing them to four different groups: 1) captioned television; 2) television; 3) reading aloud and listening to text; or 4) textbook only as the control group. They tested the participants' word knowledge and recall information and found that those in the closed captioning group outscored the others. They suggested then, like Krashen, that context providing explicit information would produce higher vocabulary gains and that comprehensible input maybe be integral in language learning. In 2003, Gunn conducted a study on her own students to explore the methods and results of developing communicative competence. Her findings corroborated Krashen's in that she found it extremely beneficial to provide students with an environment where they felt free to make mistakes, take risks and experiment in the language being acquired.

Krashen's Monitor Model has been widely used to explain the second language acquisition process however; it has also been criticized by researchers such as Nagle & Sanders (1986) for being too rigid in its distinction between language acquisition and language learning. Others, like McLaughlin (1987) have critiqued Krashen's model but have conceded on the importance of moving from a systematic grammar based teaching style to communicatively-based teaching instruction.

Other researchers have also explored ways to facilitate English language development. Donato (1994) believed that learning should take place within the academic context and content where students are learning information as they simultaneously learn a language. Wang (2000) discussed the importance of communicative language teaching where there is a heavy emphasis on the idea of developing language as a tool for communication. Communicative Language Teaching focuses on providing opportunities for interaction using authentic materials and situations, while integrating the four language skills of speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Liao, 1996). Watts-Taffe & Truscott (2000) found that scaffolding instruction is very useful in helping create successful task completion situations. Like Wood, Bruno & Ross (1976) and Vgotsky (1987), they all believe that scaffolding is a contextual, social, and temporary framework that builds on the students' strengths. This idea of placing learning within a scaffolded academic context is related to this current paper on the effectiveness of picture books.

There have also been many studies in the past exploring how picture books can be used to develop language acquisition in students. Molly Cullins conducted an experimental study to examine the effects of storybook reading on the vocabulary acquisition of 4 and 5 year old students learning English (2005). She sought to examine whether rich explanations while reading a picture book aloud would help ESL students acquire vocabulary. In her study she had 70 preschool age students who were learning English. Half of the group heard a pair of stories read 3 times per week without any explanation of new vocabulary in the story. The other group heard the same story but it was accompanied with rich explanations such as identifying the matching illustration, providing a definition, using synonyms, and using the word in another context. Cullins found that the group who had received the rich explanations showed significant gain on their vocabulary acquisition.

In a similar study conducted in Israel, Feitelson, Goldstein, Jihad and Share (1993) exposed Kindergarten students to picture books written in literary Arabic which the students were unfamiliar with. The researchers sought to examine what effect regular reading of stories in literary Arabic would have on the students' emerging literacy skills. One group received translated picture books and the other group continued on using the language development program designed by the Ministry of Education. After 5 months of treatment, they discovered that those who had been exposed to picture books significantly outperformed their counterparts in listening comprehension tests and use of vocabulary. They were also more familiar with conventional story endings and were better able to infer causal relationships from illustrations.

A well known study by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) was conducted in the Fiji Islands where they provided classrooms with 50 picture books every 4 to 5 weeks for a total of 250 books. They used 12 primary schools in Fiji with students ranging from 9 to 11 years-of-age. Schools were assigned to one of three groups. The control group continued with their traditional Tate Oral English syllabus, an audio-lingual program where new vocabulary was introduced through drills and graded readers. The silent reading group read picture books for 20 to 30 minutes each day. The shared book group had a teacher who introduced a picture book to the class and did follow up activities such as writing centers, role playing, art work etc. Elley and Mangubhai found that both the shared book group and silent reading group showed greater than normal gains in English language as compared the control group.

Buchom-Stoll (2002) conducted a similar study in South Africa with pre-primary children. Instead of only using picture books as the treatment, he sought to examine whether picture books accompanied with interactive reading would have an effect on language learning. Both his groups received a story, but the interactive reading group also received in depth

discussion of characters before and after reading, prediction, explanation of unfamiliar vocabulary, connections to the story and more. Upon completion of his study, he found that the interactive reading group had better story recall, better story structure and increased vocabulary.

Liu (2006) conducted a study investigating the influence of western picture books on a grade 3 classroom in China. Using 240 picture books in the classroom she analyzed data from vocabulary tests, story-retellings, journal writing entries, classroom observations and group interviews (2006). The results of her study found that a) picture books did appear to make a significant difference in students' vocabulary, retelling, and attitude; b) picture books were interesting and helpful and could be used to create an enjoyable learning environment; and c) appropriate levels of the picture books could serve as relevant and challenging comprehensible language input (2006, p v).

Warwick Elley summed up best how picture books have the potential to help develop language acquisition in 5 points (1991). Firstly, picture books allow the students to be immersed in meaningful text. Picture books, for the most part, are written for children and being immersed in these books allows for her second point, that of incidental language learning. Children can acquire new language and vocabulary from the context of a book as opposed to a carefully planned and structurally sequenced grammar or vocabulary textbook. Through interaction with meaningful and interesting stories, children will learn story elements, sentence structure and new vocabulary. Thirdly picture books integrate oral and written language. They not only see the text but they also hear it and if the classroom teacher accompanies story reading with rich explanations, prediction, definitions, etc... the experience will be all the more enriching. Fourthly, picture books allow for a focus on meaning rather than on form. By focusing discussion on the content of the picture book, students will acquire new forms and vocabulary in

situations that they are interested in as opposed to an analytic study. Lastly, picture books are highly motivating. Grammatical exercises require teachers to maintain the motivation but picture books with their adventure, humour, and characters can capture students' interests and allow for multiple retellings and follow up activities. Research has shown that picture books are indeed effective and instructional in improving the language acquisition of students learning English as a second language. The next section explores in more detail how picture books can facilitate the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Using picture books to support language acquisition

A picture book can be defined as a book where the illustrations are as important as the text or written story (Richardson & Miller, 1997). Picture books have always been a staple in school libraries, but in the past decade or so, teachers and researchers have seen the benefits of using picture books for developing language learning. According to Levine (1999), literature is seen as a very natural way to promote meaning centered interaction among peers in the classroom. Liu (2006) found that picture books not only enhanced students' affective responses to text but also increased their attention to important information. Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson nicely summed up the value of picture books in the classroom as: 1) hearing good picture books read aloud regularly can help children learn to read and value reading; 2) hearing picture books with children foster language development; 3) picture books can foster in children an appreciation of art; and 4) visual clues enable the non-reader and beginning reader to enjoy pictures by themselves (1993).

Picture books are not only useful classroom tools for developing literacy but are also becoming more widely used with English language learners to develop second language acquisition through the four skills (Jalongo, 2004). According to Vardell, Hadaway, & Young,

"literature can play a critical role in immersing children in their new language" (2006, p.374). Picture books tend to have an unambiguous plot, realistic but simple dialogue, clear and informative illustrations which allow for context clues, and have a limited use of metaphor or unfamiliar experiences (Smallwood, 1988). They are also contextually whole and inherently meaningful. According to Smallwood, "[picture] books lend themselves to being successful read-alouds...in that way, students are exposed to the stimulation of language beyond their reading level...it also focuses primary attention on the basic listening and speaking components of language development" (1988).

Hadaway, Vardell & Young (2002, 2006) found that ESL learners needed extensive practice with the new language and that they needed opportunities to hear and use English in a variety of purposeful and authentic contexts. Teachers thus were able to use picture books for read alouds, book talks, literature circles, story retelling etc... that facilitated much needed oral discussion in meaningful and interesting situations. In 1990, Roser, Hoffman & Farest conducted a study in Texas with over 2000 students in six elementary schools where they implemented a program called "Language to Literacy" which integrated literature and related instructional strategies into the language arts block. They found that there was a statistically significant growth in 5 of the 6 schools on a state-wide assessment test. These results indicated that a literature-based program could be successful in helping ESL students improve their language proficiency.

Other researchers such as Elley (1991) and Ehlers-Zavala & Bakken (1997) found that picture books appealed to language learners as it became a window into a second and new culture. It also provided authentic and meaningful texts which were not limited by strict boundaries around vocabulary and grammar. They found that children were able to acquire the

language incidentally in addition to developing positive attitudes towards reading. Many researchers have seen the benefit of using picture books in the ESL classroom and appreciate how picture books can be used to develop the writing skills of students learning English as a Second Language.

According to Kellie Paquette, "Children benefit in many ways from actively engaging in high quality children's literature, and picture books provide a natural avenue to motivate and encourage students' writing" (2007, p155). Paquette and many other educators are likewise finding that picture books can be used as models that facilitate the development and enhancement of "writerly" thinking and language in their students. Picture books, as we have already seen are highly motivating and interesting to students and can be a valuable resource for generating topics for writing.

Johnson and Giorgis list 5 ways that picture books can serve as inspiration for topics and ideas for writing (1999). Firstly picture books ignite ideas. The books, characters and events serve as inspiration for ideas for conversation and writing. Secondly picture books reveal self and discover surroundings. The literature invites the reader to different places and times and exposes them to ideas and experiences they might not have experienced that they can then use as starting points for their own stories. Thirdly picture books mix genres. Books might have a first person narrative interspersed with journal entries or fiction included with songs and diagrams. For example Joanna Cole's *Magic School Bus* series are accompanied by school reports, diagrams, comic book dialogue among other things. Fourthly picture books encourage us to fall in love with language. They write that "even writers limited to the 32 pages of a picture book delight in the challenge of using a repeated line, of crafting images so vivid they paint pictures in words, and of making the familiar new" (Johnson & Giorgis, 1999, p239). Developing this

awareness of how language works, sounds and flows will greatly benefit young writers. Lastly picture books attend to craft and convention. There are many picture books that focus on format, grammar, structure and the way different words are used. For example Ruth Heller's *Fantastic! Wow! and Unreal! A Book about Interjection and Conjunctions* uses imagery to explain the different forms and functions of parts of speech such as "Conjunctions connect. Conjunctions are glue/they join words together and groups of words too." There are many different types of good quality picture books that teachers can offer to their students as models, perspectives, inspirations, ideas and resources for how writer write and work.

Anderson and Dierking (2001) write "Teachers who consistently share and discuss effective writing techniques found in children's literature facilitate opportunities for their students to think, speak and write like writers" (p64). Students can also use picture books to recognize, replicate and continue different authors' styles. Laura Numeroff has written a series of books based on *If you give a Mouse a Cookie*. Students can imitate the style by writing their own "If you give a ____ a ____" book. Or instead of Doreen Cronin's *Diary of a Worm*, students can create their own *Diary of a Penguin* or *Tarantula*. Students can write their own *Don't let the Pigeon* drive the Bus version by Mo Williams such as *Don't let the Pigeon fly the plane* or *Don't Let the Pigeon teach the class*.

Picture books such as Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* (1901), Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon* (1947), Ezra Jack Keat's *The Snowy Day* (1963) and many others possess clear basic illustrations and text. The typical picture book in the 20th century had, according to Bette Goldstone (2002, p362), illustrations that were focused and imaginative, uncluttered page design, linear text with a beginning middle end, characters who would struggle with and then resolve a conflict and a general tone of naiveté. But within the past two and a half decades, a new breed of

picture books has evolved; postmodern picture books with its own set of commonalities. These picture books had texts that were non-linear, self-referential, sarcastic, ironic and antiauthoritarian. Goldstone points out that books like *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Stupid Tales* (Scieszka), *Black and White* (Macauley), *Snowflake Bentley* (Martin) and many others have expanded the boundaries of what it means to be a picture book. These picture books with postmodern characteristics change the way readers interpret text and expose them to new models and forms of writing (Goldstone, 2002, p362).

Lawrence Sipe (1993) conducted a project in a Grade 6 classroom connecting reading and writing on traditional stories and the transformations of these old tales. Using books such as *The Stinky Cheese Man, The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs, Jim and the Beanstalk*, and the *Principal's New Clothes* among many others he explored how these transformed and revisioned traditional tales help writers develop literary insights and writing techniques. He used modeling techniques and developed a chart of the different ways in which a writer can transform a story ranging from the style, language, plot, setting, time and place, point of view, etc... The students, after exploring countless transformation stories, then created their own transformation story. Sipe and the teachers found that working with these transformation tales engaged and motivated the students and helped them better understand the reading and writing connections. As one of the students said "All the things we did helped me to know how writers think about stories. I finally feel like a real writer" (1993, p24).

Research has shown that picture books can foster oral language development and knowledge of story grammar (Wang, 2000). Story grammar refers to the specific set of rules about what makes up a story. The aspects of story grammar can be broken down into 6 sections: setting, initiating event (statement of problem), internal response or plan, attempts to solve the

problem, consequences, and ending (Applebee, 1978, Norbury & Bishop, 2003). Students who are able to retell a story using aspects of story grammar show greater understanding of main ideas and the story narrative (Ellis, 1997).

Oral language can also be further developed through retelling tasks. Retelling can be defined as a post reading or post listening activity where the student tells what they read or heard either orally, in writing, or through illustrations (Liu, 2006). Developing retelling abilities is an essential skill in second language learning for as Murphy wrote, "the ability to speak coherently on a topic is generally recognized as a necessary goal for ESL students" (1991, p52). This idea of retelling is reflective of communicative language teaching. Likewise Enright and McCloskey (1985) believe that retelling maximizes the potential for the integration of the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The act of retelling a story also fosters communication and interaction between the listeners and the speakers, author and reader, etc...

Morrow conducted a study examining whether frequent story retelling with kindergartens could improve their use of structural elements such as story grammar. After the students listened to a story, he had one group draw a picture about it while the other group retold the story. He found that there was an increase in the number of story grammar items recalled with the retelling group and also found that the number increased the more times a student engaged in the retelling activity (1986). In a similar vein, Gambrell, Pfeiffer and Wilson (1985) conducted a study exploring which strategy was more conducive to learning – oral retelling or illustrating a response and found that retelling was a more successful strategy. Retelling can also serve as prompts for oral work and it provides a rich and authentic opportunity for interaction between the listener and the speaker.

Picture books have great potential in the ESL classroom. Many studies have shown that they facilitate oral language development, vocabulary recognition, writing skills and reading skills. In this next section I explore what research has said about the effectiveness of wordless picture books on language and literacy development.

Wordless Books

A wordless book can be defined as a book which has no text but instead tells its story through illustration alone. Wordless books have become more popular in the past few decades. Many talented illustrators and authors have created a collection of wordless books that range from simple and clear illustrations for toddlers to detailed, intricate and complex illustrations with a more mature and adult oriented theme. Many wordless books have won awards for literary excellence such as *Noah's Ark, Anno's Journey, Snowman*, and *Trucks*. As wordless books increased in popularity, researchers and educators alike began to explore the impact and effectiveness of those books in the classroom.

Both D'Angelo (1981) and Bisset (1972), see wordless picture books as useful aids for developing oral language. D'Angelo explored the use of wordless picture books with language-disabled children and found that those books were valuable sources of information and stories to those children who lacked the understanding, vocabulary and syntax necessary to read a picture book with text (1981). According to D'Angelo,

> For each picture in a wordless book a child can supply as little or as much oral language as ability allows. With these books a child is not hindered by or restricted to the print that normally occurs in books. (1981, p34)

This brings to mind Krashen's affective filter hypothesis which argues that English language learners are more easily able to acquire English when they are able to take risks and be

creative. By removing words from picture books, learners are not limited by the text or by their fear of being wrong. Margaret Early (1991) explored the use of wordless picture books in Vancouver with ESL students and found that they were a valuable tool for facilitating oral language development in building vocabulary skills and comprehension and developing sequence and prediction skills.

However some researchers such as Anderson and Groff (1972) have also criticized the use of wordless books in the classroom. They felt that if students became accustomed to reading stories only through illustrations, that the students would be less interested in decoding or understanding the printed word. Groff also felt that wordless books did not perform any function that a picture book could do just as easily. It is their opinion that "we must stop fooling ourselves then, that literature and graphic art are natural allies, and that graphic art will rush to the aid of literature at its beck and call, if the reverse is true. Rather, it appears more and more likely that visual experiences given by the wordless book consistently act to remove the child, or at the least keep him at an unfortunate distance, from both written literature and the values of the oral tradition of storytelling" (Anderson & Groff, 1972, p302).

Despite their criticism of wordless books, most researchers and educators feel that wordless books are an excellent tool for facilitating oral and written language. In fact many researchers such as Salminen (1998), Crawford & Hade (2000), and Lindauer (1988) strongly believe that wordless books play a major role in developing storytelling in language learners.

Early suggested that the teacher could introduce new relevant concepts and vocabulary items for discussion as the wordless book was being 'read' (1991); Burns & Roe (1976) also agreed that the conversation between the teacher and the student around inventing dialogue, describing and interpreting action and events, and identifying objects is a valuable method for

facilitating oral language. By removing text from a picture book, children are forced to rely closely on the illustrations for clues to the narrative, encouraging creativity in developing storylines.

Wordless books are also useful in developing sequencing and prediction skills. As classroom activities, students can arrange the pictures into the correct sequence or can predict what will happen next. Carter, Holland, Mladic, Sarbiewski, Gail, & Sebastian (1998) conducted an action research project with students from grades 2 to 5 in Chicago. They developed a program for improving writing skills using wordless books as their major intervention focusing on the writing skills of sequencing, dialogue, describing words, elaboration, and vocabulary development. They found that using the intervention resulted in an improved overall growth of writing skills specifically in the areas of sequencing, elaboration, and dialogue.

Wordless books are also effective tools for improving writing skills. Research supports the use of wordless books to foster writing development, higher order thinking, and enjoyment of the writing process (Lindauer, 1988, Preston & Ellis, 1983). According to D'Angelo,

Wordless books can be used to promote a variety of writing skills. These writing skills can be viewed as developing in stages from an ability to produce single words and phrases, to the production of one complete statement, followed by writing two or more complete statements in logical order about the same topic." (1979, p813)

Whalen (1974) and Lindauer (1988) both agree that wordless books provide a safe and secure environment where the child is free to explore and create stories without fear of being wrong. This freedom encourages creativity and expression in writing and storytelling.

Hu and Commeyras (2008) conducted a case study on investigating the emergent biliteracy of a 5 year old Chinese child using wordless picture books. Hu became a tutor for a

child who had just recently arrived from China. They used 10 wordless books over the course of 10 weeks and did many different literary activities for each book such as retelling, organizing sentences, finding a picture and the matching word, sentence making etc. At the end of the 10 weeks, Hu and Commeyras found that the child was able to use more vocabulary and longer sentences as the weeks went by. She had greater sentence complexity and had a decrease in her oral language errors. However, the child was also immersed in an English speaking Kindergarten class at that time so the results cannot be solely attributed to Hu and Commeyras' work with wordless books.

Another study was conducted by Pei-Lin Wang in 2000 where she explored the impact of wordless picture books as instructional aids for students in grade 1 and 2 learning English. Using storytelling tasks as her main assessment she had her participants tell her a story or tell her a story based on a wordless picture book. She found that students used richer vocabulary and had more complex oral sentences when they told a story based on the wordless picture book. She also found that they had a better sense of story when provided with the wordless books. Wordless books and picture books are indeed valuable tools for developing second language acquisition.

SECTION 3: CONNECTIONS TO PRACTICE

The present section is divided into three parts. The first part provides a brief description of the community in which I work as a teacher. The second part is a discussion of and rationale for the use of the traditional tale *The Three Little Pigs* as a focus for a teaching unit and, in particular its suitability for my particular students. Finally, the third part is a unit plan designed around the traditional tale of *The Three Little Pigs*.

I teach in an elementary school located in Western Canada with a highly diverse population. The school has about 220 students approximately made up of 50% Indo-Canadian students, 30% Caucasian, 10% Filipino and 10% Asian students. As an ESL/Resource/Learning Assistance teacher I work with about 50 different children. My school works in a blended model, meaning that I will provide support for students who are ESL and other students who need help academically. Many of my groups are mixed groups pulled from different classes and a combination of ESL and non-ESL students. The program that I teach differs every year based on the needs but on average I tend to have a group for grade 2 struggling readers, a group for ESL level 1 and 2 students, an early phonemic awareness group for kindergarten students, a gifted/enrichment group for grade 6 and 7 students, a math group for struggling grade 3 students and another 2 or so groups for students in ESL levels 3-5.

The main focus of this unit plan will be aimed at the language group for students with ESL levels 3-5. These students range from grades 4-6 and come to see me twice a week for a 45 minute block. I have collected many different versions of the *Three Little Pigs* over the years and decided to design a unit using these books to support the language acquisition of ESL students at this level.

There are many different versions of the *Three Little Pigs* ranging from the original folktale from 1890 to ones published within the last few years. What is interesting to note is how the books have evolved. The original story consisted of three little pigs that went out into the world and built their respective houses of straw, wood and bricks. Along came a hungry wolf that blew each of the houses of straw and wood down. The wolf then (depending on the iteration of the story) either ate the pig or the pig escaped to one of the brother's houses. The third pig who lived in the brick house outsmarted the wolf using various means. Finally, the wolf was either killed and gobbled up by the pigs or ran away never to be seen again. The story is very lively; has repetitive patterns of language and a satisfying resolution, that is, the evil villain is conquered by his intended third victim. Over the years many aspects of the *Three Little Pigs* have changed. The retellings range from traditional, revisionist, comic or didactic, simplified or elaborated, truncated, popularized, fractured and postmodern.

Newer versions of the *Thee Little Pigs* reflect the humor, intertextuality and irony of postmodern times. Eugene Tirvizas reverses the characters in *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*. In this retelling the pig is a violent and dynamite blowing villain to three fluffy and cuddly little wolves. Jon Scieszka adds a layer of humour by changing the point of view in his version *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs written by A. Wolf* – which tells the "true story" according to the Wolf of how and why he became such a misunderstood villain. Other versions range from the *Three Swingin' Pigs* – a jazzy singing trio (Rubin, 2007) to Steven Kellog's *Three Little Pigs* (1997) version set in modern times with the pigs working in a successful waffle making company. David Bouchard's version *My Little Pigs* (1991) changes the three pigs to two pigs and a bear and changes the wolf to a wily coyote. But perhaps the best known postmodern retelling of the *Three Little Pigs* would be David Wiesner's version (*The Three Pigs*, 2002) with

its boundary breaking, humorous and nonlinear text. It starts off like many of the other traditional versions but then the pigs are able to escape the wolf by literally flying out of their story, off of the page and into other stories. The pigs travel via paper airplane to different fairy tales and fables and return with a dragon who scares the wolf away. His version, along with a version by Nick Ward (*A Wolf at the Door*, 2001) aptly demonstrates intertextuality: Each of these retellings of the *Three Little Pigs* includes other fairy tale characters such as Goldilocks, Red Riding Hood, the cat from Hey Diddle Diddle and many more. There are many different retellings of the *Three Little Pigs* and I hope to use several of them as the basis for creating a unit plan that develops the language acquisition of my ESL students.

Unit Plan: *The Three Pigs*

Section 1 – Variations in retellings of the *Three Little Pigs* (Lessons 1-4) 45 minutes each session

Students: Grade 4-6 (ESL levels 3-5)

Overview:

In these lessons, students will identify similarities and differences between traditional and contemporary versions of the *Three Little Pigs*. The story of the *Three Little Pigs* is a classic folktale that has been retold many times. In this lesson students will interact with and respond to different versions of the *Three Little Pigs*. As a way to encourage language development in English language learners, students will engage with the text by critiquing story elements, writing personal responses to the stories and creating their own version of the *Three Little Pigs*.

From Theory to Practice:

The various retellings of the *Three Little Pigs* range from traditional, comic, didactic, simplified, popularized, fractured and postmodern. The introduction of new characters, role

reversals, language reversals, slang, irony and contemporary language all add humour to students' experiences with the books.

Lawrence Sipe (2002), in his article "Talking back and taking over: Young children's expressive engagement during storybook read-alouds" lists some important ways that teachers can develop interactive and engaged literary responses in students. According to Sipe, engagement in storybook read-alouds should not be limited to the traditional plot, setting, and characters but rather they should also include expressive and performative engagements. The five types of these engagements are: dramatizing, talking back, critiquing/controlling, inserting and taking over. The use of these literary responses draws the readers into the story and invites them to participate and interact in their responses to the picture book.

In a similar vein, Cambourne (1988) developed a model that describes how children become proficient users of language. His theory of language includes certain conditions that, when simulated and created effectively, will enhance success in literacy teaching and learning. The conditions are: immersion, responsibility, use of approximations, demonstrations, feedback, expectation and engagement (Barrentine, 1996, p37). Demonstration and engagement will play a significant role in these lessons. A demonstration is this case will be examples of how meaning is constructed, how language is used and how stories work. Barrentine points out: children do not passively absorb information from demonstrations; in contrast, that they must be engaged in the process and activities. Engaged students interact with other students, the teacher and the literature at key points in the demonstration.

Student Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Explore and discuss story conventions such as beginning, middle and end; character development; setting and plot

- Identify similarities and differences between various versions of the *Three Little Pigs*

- Develop reading comprehension skills, literary appreciation and enthusiasm for reading by engaging in expressive and performative reading responses which include dramatizing, critiquing, talking back, inserting and taking over

- Develop creative writing skills by creating their own version of the *Three Little Pigs* either using character and plot devices from various retellings or from their own – imagination – then develop a script and dramatize their original version

NB. From here on in, "3 Little Pigs" will be used to indicate the range of stories rather than the title *The Three Little Pigs.*

Resources:

Books (See Appendix A)

Internet resources:

- http://www.rickwalton.com/curricul/tellpigs.html   - story ideas

Classroom materials:

- Story elements graphic organizer

- Copies of various illustrations from different versions of 3 Little Pigs for students to "talk back to" and "insert"

- Large chart paper across one wall of the classroom – divided into a graph

Example:

Title and Author	Setting and time	characters	problem	Solution	Key Plot events	Similarities	Differences
Traditional version							
3 pigs by James Marshall							
3 pigs by Steven Kellog							

- Individual copies of above graph for students to write in

- Computer and projector

Lesson 1: Similarities and Differences

1) Gather students in a comfortable area and briefly introduce or re-introduce the traditional version of the 3 Little Pigs. Ask students to make predictions about the text and share experiences with the 3 Little Pigs. Read aloud the traditional version, pausing to let students make connections or share observations with the group.

2) Display the chart on large graph paper – discuss elements of setting, plot, characters, etc... working together, the teacher can ask the class what the setting was for this traditional version, then have students brainstorm the characters, and key plot events. Leave the area for similarities and differences blank but explain how each pair will describe how the new versions are similar or different to the traditional version.

3) Read aloud a contemporary version of the 3 Pigs and as you read – pause and encourage discussion about what differences or similarities.

4) Afterwards have students respond to the following questions and critique the text:

   a. Do you like this version of the story? Why or why not? Which version do you like better?

    b. Why do you think the author wrote the story this way?

    c. How would you have written it?

5) Then together brainstorm what the setting, characters, key plot events, similarities and differences for this version compared to the traditional story

6) Divide the students into pairs and hand out their individual copy of the large chart – each pair will receive a different version of the 3 Little Pigs and will read it together, then fill out the chart. After each pair is done, rotate stations until each pair has read at least 3 of the versions available

7) Come together as a group and have each pair match up with another pair and compare/share their chart – they need to discuss, negotiate, compromise and come to an agreement between the two groups as to what answers they would like to present to the class

8) Come together as a class and discuss the findings/observations. Each pair can share their thoughts/ideas for one version's setting, plot while the teacher writes it down on the large class graph – encourage other groups to agree/disagree until they come to an agreed upon resolution

9) As a group, take a look at the whole chart and have students share which version was their favorite and why. Encourage and facilitate discussion about students' observations, questions, preferences etc.

Lesson 2: Talking back and taking over

1) Review different versions of the 3 Pigs and have different students retell the story to the class

2) Project the illustrations from one version onto a white board in front of the class – teacher can model "talking back" to the character – for example – in the scene where the first pig is building his house of straw – the teacher might say "I don't think you should build your house out of straw. It's not very strong!" – Continue flipping through other illustrations and have students share how they would "talk back" to the characters – e.g. Encouraging them, providing advice, etc…

3) Teacher then models "inserting herself into the story" or "takes over" - using one of the pictures projected on to the white board she can draw herself and a speech bubble saying what she would tell the character for example " You Big Bad Wolf! You leave those piggies alone!"

4) Teacher lays out numerous illustrations from different versions of the 3 Pigs and has each student chose which illustration they would like to "insert" themselves into. Ask "What would you do if you were in this scene?" – then the students can draw themselves in the illustration doing something and saying something to the other characters

5) Early finishers can choose another picture to do

6) After everyone has finished – come together as a group and have each student share his/her illustration to the rest of the class. Keep the illustrations and bind into a class book or display on a bulletin board.

Lesson 3-4: Write your own version then dramatize it

1) Review the similarities/differences on the large chart with the class. Working together have students brainstorm what other settings, characters, plot events etc. They would add if they were to create their own version - see **Appendix A.1** – for story ideas

2) When students have volunteered ideas for each story element, have them fill out their own individual choice for characters, setting and plot events for their own story using a graphic organizer for creative story writing

3) After students have completed their individual story element graphic organizer, give them time to create their own version of the 3 Little Pigs but reiterate necessary components in their story – encourage them to be unique and creative but also to follow the basic form of the 3 Pigs while changing other aspects

    a. Characters

    b. Setting (place and time)

    c. Problem

    d. Solution

    e. How the story ends

4) If necessary send this home for homework – or can continue on to next session if needed

5) Have each student read their story to the group and ask for "2 Stars and a Wish" – 2 positive comments and one comment beginning with "I wish…" – then divide the class into groups of 4 and have each group decide on a story that they would like to dramatize

6) After each group has decided on whose story they would like to act out – they need to work together to create the script and find/create any necessary props

7) Give groups as much time as needed to practice their play and then come together to present to class and or assembly

Student Assessment/Reflections

- Observe and take anecdotal notes during class discussion. Look for student participation in how they interact with group mates, participate in "talking back" and "taking over", dramatizing, and how they evaluate different versions

- Evaluates students as they work in pairs while reading different versions of the 3 Pigs – Does the work show their understanding of story elements eg. Character, setting, problem – were they able to identify similarities and differences between different versions

- Evaluate students' individual version of the 3 Little Pigs – did they understand the story? Were they able to follow the main frame of the 3 Little Pigs and change it to make an original version? Was there a beginning, middle and end?

- Observe how students worked together in groups to create a dramatized version of an original story – were they able to negotiate meaning, compromise and work together to create a play that they could present to the rest of the class?

- Using BC Performance Standards: writing - see **Appendix A.2**

Section 2 – Point of View (Lessons 1-2)

Overview:

Many students tend to read literally. They believe almost everything they read or are told. This series of lessons will encourage students to question, critique and analyze what they are reading through specific retellings of the 3 Little Pigs from a different perspective. Students will identify with and question each perspective (pig and wolf) and will try to convince others which character is telling the truth.

From Theory to Practice:

In *How Picture books Work*, Nikolajeva and Scott point out how there are many examples of current literature that modifies and plays with the point of view. For example, Babette Cole retold *Prince Cinders* as a male version of Cinderella. But perhaps one of the more famous reversals of point of view is Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*. In it, the wolf tells his true story of how and why he was caught trying to break down and eat a little pig. Through the use of this book, along with Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury's *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, students will explore how stories reflect a character's particular view and thus its truthfulness and reliability should be questioned.

According to John Stephens (2005), "an understanding of how words can work on the page is fundamental to an understanding of how texts can be interpreted" (p73). He believes that by analyzing how language works, readers are better able to understand how culture is constructed. Language communicates ideas, things or concepts and being able to explore how a certain point of view is trying to convey a specific thought or idea is a useful tool. In this lesson students will be exploring how and what language the wolf uses to persuade the reader of his innocence.

Student Objectives:

- Describe key information of a text from a particular viewpoint
- Identify and take a position either for or against the Wolf
- Create a Wanted poster for the Wolf or a Free the Wolf poster

Resources:

Books (see Appendix A)

Internet resource:

- http://www.glassgiant.com/wanted/ - online tool for creating Wanted poster

- http://www.wildwestweb.net/reward.html - examples of old West Wanted posters

- http://www.tombstone1880.com/wildbill/wanted.htm - more examples

Classroom Resources:

- Computer and projector

- Copies of different types of Wanted posters

Lesson 1: The Big Bad Wolf vs. the Big Bad Pig

1) Gather the students in a comfortable area and discuss the concept of point of view – how it shows one character's ideas or opinions about what happened – brainstorm with the students about a time when maybe 2 students had become involved in a fight. Discuss the perspective of each of the combatant i.e., the differences of opinion that different people can have. Then link it back to the 3 Little Pigs and ask them what they think a story from the wolf's perspective would be – ask students to turn to a pair and brainstorm – what do you think the wolf say about why he was attacking the pigs – invite students to share and jot down ideas on the board – ask these questions

   a. How do you think the story of the 3 Little Pigs would be different if told by the wolf?

   b. What reason do you think the Wolf would give for trying to eat the 3 Little Pigs?

   c. What would the Wolf have to do or say to convince you that he is innocent or that he is a nice wolf?

2) Read *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka allowed – stopping at key moments to ask students to share questions, thoughts or ideas out loud

3) After reading – ask students the following questions for discussion

   a. What did you think of this story?

b. Do you think the Wolf is telling the truth?

c. Who do you believe? The Wolf or the Pig? Why?

d. What does the Wolf say that is believable? What is not believable?

e. Notice that the title of the newspaper on the front page is the "Daily Wolf" but the newspaper near the end of the story is "The Daily Pig" – who do you think wrote those articles? Do you think they are telling the truth? (discuss/define what it means to be "biased" if needed)

f. What does the wolf say – what language does he use to try to convince you that he is innocent?

4) Then read *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* and engage in the same discussion – do you think this version is true? What if we found out that Eugene Trivizas is actually a wolf? Which version of the 3 Little Pigs do you believe now?

Session 2: WANTED

1) Using a computer and projector display examples of Wanted posters e.g.

http://www.wildwestweb.net/reward.html or

http://www.tombstone1880.com/wildbill/wanted.htm - discuss the features on a Wanted poster – name, reward, crime etc… Display a "Wanted" poster and describe the task – students will be creating either a "Wanted: Wolf" or a "Free the Wolf" poster – students will illustrate and underneath describe the crime or plead for his freedom depending on the group they are in

2) Divide the students up into two groups – those who think the wolf is telling the truth – and those who think the pigs are telling the truth – within the groups – divide them into pairs – and have them brainstorm what they want to write on the wanted poster – hand out

examples for them to refer to – each pair will either create a "WANTED" or a "FREE THE

WOLF" poster – include details and reason why the wolf is either wanted or should be freed

3) Give students time to brainstorm and design Wanted poster with partner – then share with

class and display on bulletin board

Student Assessment/Reflections

- Teacher observations of dialogue between students and anecdotal notes

- Assessment of the Wanted poster or the Free Wolf poster – Was it carefully done?

  Does it include information about the crime? Is it convincing?

- Scrapbook – were students able to describe their character in detail

- How did students work with other classmates?

Section 3 - Intertextuality

Overview:

In this series of lessons, students will be exploring intertextuality using David Wiesner's

The Three Pigs, Nick Ward's *A Wolf at the Door* and Margie Palatini's *Piggie Pie.* We are

assuming that the students have prior knowledge of other common fairy tales and nursery rhymes

such as Cinderella, Goldilocks, Hey Diddle Diddle,3 Billy Goats Gruff, etc…Students will

"blow" the pigs from Wiesner's tale into another story of their choice using comic strips as

traditional storyboards. They will also continue or add characters from current society, movies,

books and toys into Nick Ward's story *A Wolf at the Door.*

Student Objectives:

- Students will explore the concept of intertextuality through *Piggie Pie, A Wolf at the*

  Door and *The Three Pigs.*

- Students will continue/modify stories using and adding characters from today's society, books, movies and/or toys

- Students will "blow" the 3 pigs from Wiesner's tale into a story/situation of their choice and depict it using comic strip panels for their storyboard

Resources:

Books (see Appendix A)

Classroom Resources

- Examples of comic book frames

- Copy of the character suggestions for each student

Lesson 1: Add your own character

1) Students will listen to the cd version of the story *Piggie Pie* by Margie Palatini – basic premise – the Witch wants to capture some pigs to bake for her Piggie Pie but the pigs disguise themselves as other farm animals. At the end of the story – a wolf suddenly appears and tells the witch to forget about the pigs as he has been chasing 3 pigs for days. Students will probably realize that this is the wolf from the *3 Little Pigs* – and stop and discuss the concept of intertextuality – how in some books – the authors take ideas or characters from other books. See if students can suggest or make connections with other books or movies that have done the same

2) Then read Nick Ward's *A Wolf at the Door*. Stop at key points where new characters introduce themselves (students should have prior knowledge of the characters) – allow students to make text-text connections.

3) Divide students into pairs and have them write down and draw a quick sketch of 5 current characters for each topic: from television (including cartoons), movies, books, and an

"other" group – See **Appendix B.** for example: Television = Bob the Builder, movies = Batman, books = Fly Guy, other = Pokemon character

4) Have them share their favorite characters as the teacher writes down names on the board

5) Discuss what each character was doing when they saw the wolf – for example Bob the builder could say "I was building a little house when I saw the Wolf through the door!" or Batman could say "I was in my bat cave when I heard the wolf howl" – brainstorm for each character and then hand out a 11 x 17 blank spread – each student can follow the template that Nick Ward uses – the picture is of the front door being opened by Little Bear and the new characters in the middle – on the right side of the page you see the silhouette of the scary wolf in that character's specific setting eg. Little bo peep and her sheep in the meadow or the 3 pigs outside their house

6) Present and share with the rest of the class when completed.

Lesson 2: Blow the Pigs into a new story

1) Read David Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* – stopping to encourage students to share thoughts, observations and questions

2) Discuss what other literature/stories/nursery rhymes Wiesner used in his book = ask students to brainstorm what other famous stories they would like to "blow" the 3 pigs into. Show examples of comic book form and demonstrate how to break the story into 8 panels – for example if a student wants to blow the 3 pigs into *the Little Mermaid* – then the first panel might be the pigs putting on scuba diving gear and flippers – second panel – diving into the water, third meeting and being chased by the shark, fourth being rescued by Ariel, Sebastian and Flounder, fifth meeting King Triton, sixth - being invited to an

"Under the sea" celebration, seventh – saying goodbye to their friends, and eighth – sitting on top of turtles being returned to land

3) Brainstorm with students – what types of stories, fables, nursery rhymes, movies, etc… that they would like to use – when each student has decided – have them jot down or draw key images and characters from that story and then begin making their comic book storyboard – include dialogue in storyboard – show them **Appendix B.1** – rubric for comic strip – need problem, solution, etc…

4) Continue drawing through the next lesson then share with class

Student Assessments/Reflections

- See **Appendix B.1** – Comic strip Rubric

- Students' interaction with group mates

- Teacher observations on students participation in group discussions

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS

Research has indeed shown that picture books can facilitate English language development (Donato 1994, Cullins 2005, Buchom-Stoll 2002). It also has been shown to develop vocabulary (Cullins, 2005), listening comprehension (Feitelson et al, 1993), story recall (Buchom-Stoll, 2002) and motivation (Liu, 2006) in students of all ages. Using the *Three Little Pigs* as the basis for my unit plan, I have demonstrated practical and effective ways of using picture books to further develop the language acquisition of students learning English as a Second Language.

Although I have focused on versions of the *Three Little Pigs* there are many other stories that have numerous re-tellings and which would be ideal for supporting language acquisiton. When working with ESL students four different aspects should guide the selection of books. Firstly, is the subject matter something appropriate, interesting and familiar for the students? Will it be provide information for students new to Canada about things like family life, school, animals, food etc? Secondly, does that content connect with the student's culture? Will the picture book show an authentic depiction of that student's culture or the new culture that he/she has moved to? Thirdly, are there visuals in the picture book and how are they used and designed? Oftentimes I look for clear images that relate to the text in order to assist students unfamiliar with the language. However I have also found that my students enjoy looking at illustrations that are detailed and funny. Lastly, is the language appropriate for that student? Will it be easy to understand, to follow and to learn from?

After exploring what research has to say about the effectiveness of picture books in developing the language acquisition of ESL students, I am much more confident and comfortable with using picture books in my day to day teaching. Research has shown that picture books can

increase vocabulary recognition, oral language, retelling, grammatical awareness etc and the sheer number of picture books available provides endless opportunities for discussion, writing, artwork, drama and much more. In the future I hope to be able to continue developing other unit plans centered on certain types of picture books. I could focus on the variations in different fairy tales or even focus on a specific author and illustrator like Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko. There are thousands of thought provoking, interesting and highly motivating picture books out there that I would love to expose my students to. Picture books will forever be a passion of mine and I look forward to sharing my passion with my future students.

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Appendix A: Bibliography of the *Three Little Pigs* Books

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Appendix A.1: Story Ideas – Tell your own Three Little Pigs story

- From http://www.rickwalton.com/curricul/tellpigs.htm

Instead of 3 Pigs how about

- 3 dogs or
- 3 horses or
- 3 martians or

Instead of houses made of straw, sticks and bricks how about

- Knives, forks and spoons or
- Bread, butter and jam or
- Grass, flowers and trees or
- Cement, iron and steel or
- Cookies, cake and candy or

Instead of a Big Bad Wolf how about

- A Big Bad Lawnmower or
- A Big Bad Tyrannosaurus Rex or
- A Little Good Wolf or

Instead of the Wolf Huffing and Puffing and Blowing the house in how about

- Just sitting down and waiting until the pig comes out or
- Eating the house or
- Bringing in a wrecking ball or

Instead of the Pigs saying "Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin" and then running away how about

- "why don't you wait for my brother to come along. He's bigger and tastier" or
- Calling the fairy tale police and having them come arrest the wolf or
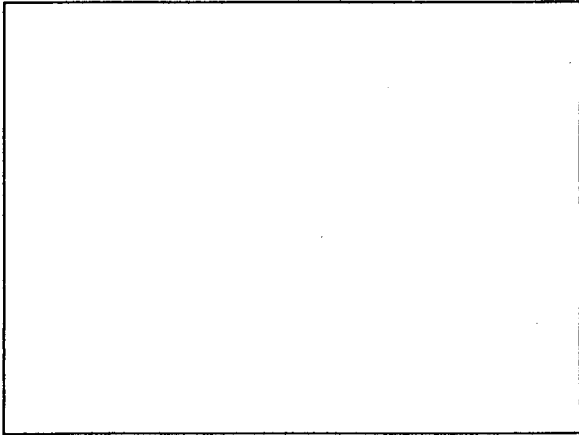- Casting a spell on the wolf and turning him into a carrot or

Appendix A.2: Quick Scale: Writing Stories (BC Performance Standards)

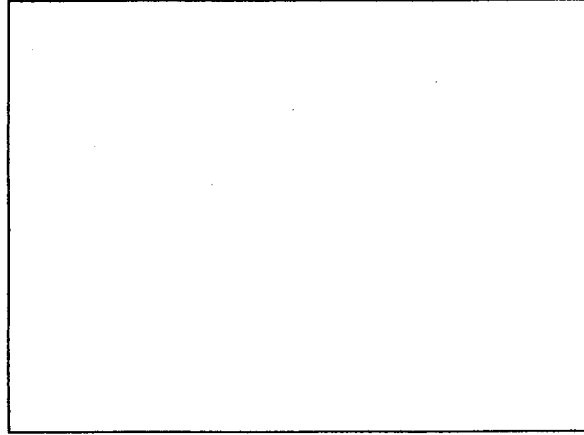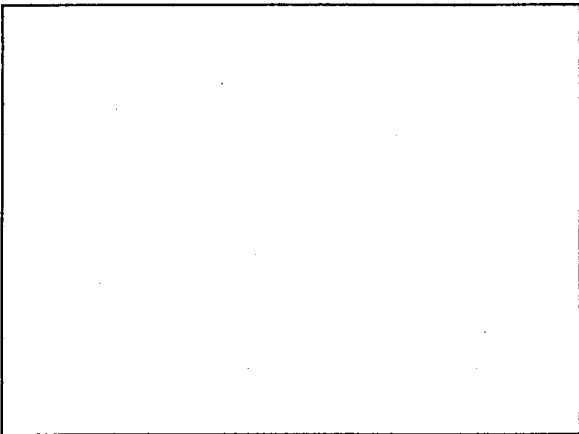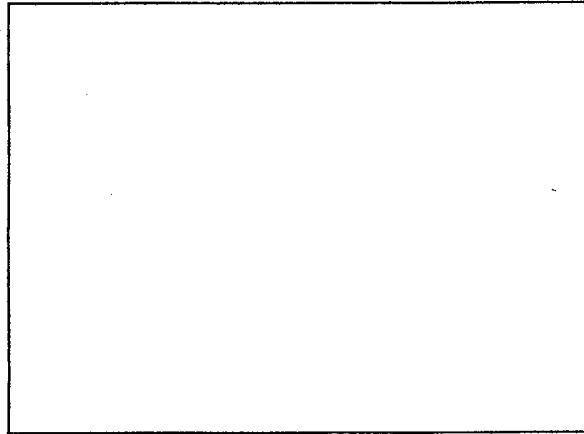| Aspect	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot	This story is often very brief, disjointed, or illogical and is flawed by repeated basic errors. The student needs ongoing support.	The story offers loosely connected events with little development; parts may be confusing or flawed by frequent errors.	This story is complete and easy to follow, with some interesting detail. Shows growing control of written language; few errors.	This story is engaging with some originality and development. Language is varied and effective/
Meaning • ideas • use of detail • awareness of audience	Point of story may be unclear. Reveals few details. Development may be illogical. Shows little awareness of audience	Relies on ideas discussed in class. Some detail, some may be irrelevant. Some awareness of audience.	Concrete, direct story; draws on ideas from other sources. Has some individuality. Some relevant supporting details.	Some sense of individuality or originality. Effective supporting details add color. Tries to engage the reader.
Style • clarity, variety and impact of language	Basic language, often errors in word choice, poorly constructed sentences, little variety	Generally simple language, little variety, simple and compound sentences	Clear, dreict language with some variety, some variety in sentences	Language is varied, often experiments, flows smoothly, varies sentences
Form • beginning • development • characters • dialogue (where appropriate) • paragraphing, transitions, ending	Beginning may be confusing, action and events illogical, if dialogue is included it is confusing, disjointed, ending omitted	Begins with a problem, some development, sequence may be hard to follow, names and identifies characters, some dialogue, abrupt ending	Beginning introduces situation, logically sequenced eventgs, describes appearance and feeling of characters, clear dialogue, conclusion	Beginning engages interest, characters show personality and feelings, clear, natural dialogue, smooth transitions, good ending
Conventions • complete sentences • spelling • grammar • punctuation • capitals	Frequent repeated errors make writing difficult to understand, many incomplete or run on sentences	Includes several errors, some incomplete or run on sentences	Some errors but these do not affect meaning, most sentences are complete, few run on sentences	Few errors, usually caused by taking risks, complete sentences, may include some errors in long sentences

Appendix B: Which Characters do you want to add to *A Wolf at the Door*?

Directions: List 5 of your favorite characters for each category below.

Television   **Movies**

Appendix B.1: Comic Strip Rubric

Category	Not yet meeting	Minimally Meeting	Fully meeting	Exceeding Expectations
Organization	Ideas and scenes seem to be randomly arranged	Story is a little hard to follow. Not clear transitions.	Story is pretty well organized. Clear transitions are being used.	Story is very well organized. Logical sequence and clear transitions
Problem/conflict	Not clear what problem the main characters face	Fairly easy to understand the problem but not clear why it is a problem	Easy to understand the problem and why it is a problem	Very easy to understand the problem the main characters face
Solution/resolution	No solution is attempted or impossible to understand	Solution is a little hard to understand	Solution is easy to understand and is somewhat logical	Solution is very easy to understand. No loose ends
Creativity	Little creativity, author does not use much imagination	Story contains few creative details but may distract from story	Story has creative details and contributes to reader's enjoyment	Story contains many enjoyable creative details and descriptions
Dialogue	Not clear which character is speaking	Not enough dialogue but clear which character is speaking	Too much dialogue but clear which character is speaking	Appropriate amount of dialogue that brings character to life
Spelling and punctuation	Final draft has more than 5 spelling and punctuation errors	2-3 spelling and punctuation errors in final dract	1-2 spelling or punctuation errors in final draft	No spelling or punctuation errors in final draft