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A Qualitative Case Study of Natural Storytelling Strategies Used at the Nantahala School

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Reading with a Concentration in Storytelling

by

Nancy J. Reeder

December 2009

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Keywords: storytelling, storytelling teacher, education, teacher, story

ABSTRACT

A Qualitative Case Study of Natural Storytelling Strategies Used at the Nantahala School

by

Nancy J. Reeder

This qualitative case study identifies what 8 teachers naturally do with storytelling at a K- 12 school in western North Carolina. Through observations, interviews, field notes, document reviews, and artifact reviews, I used the constant comparison analysis method to discover themes from their formal and informal storytelling strategies. From these themes, I created a framework of 7 suggestions to enhance storytelling awareness. They are: sharing personal stories, developing voice control and body expression, connecting story to school culture, modeling well-developed stories with beginnings, middles, and ends, introducing stories with a pause, expressing the word “imagine” often during instruction, and finally, making teachers aware that they naturally tell stories. The significance of this study is to highlight the importance of storytelling methods for education as well as to make teachers feel more comfortable using storytelling in the classroom.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Storytelling in the Classroom

Envision a classroom in which the curriculum is developed around storytelling and imagination, where storytelling is the primary teaching method and is used to convey concepts in all subjects. Picture an educational environment where students feel connected and involved, unafraid to share their ideas or views within the context of the lessons. Imagine students achieving at an accelerated rate and retaining knowledge effortlessly, enthusiastically anticipating their next subject. Visualize students attentive, interested, and engaged, where good behavior is the norm. This image of a classroom presents a model active with storytelling.

Today teachers employ storytelling in their classrooms by following guidelines brought forth by storytellers who conduct workshops for just this purpose. (Davis, 2000; Hamilton & Weis, 2005; Haven, 2000; Norfolk, Stenson, & Williams, 2006; Rubright, 1996) Many colleges and universities offer storytelling classes. A storytelling community has emerged including both performers and educators who collectively have encouraged the art of storytelling. Even so, there are still many teachers and schools that do not recognize the value of storytelling and its use within the classroom. There are five reasons for this. First, teachers do not have a conscious awareness that they already tell stories within their classroom. Second, there are teachers and administrators who do not have an awareness of the extent of storytelling and, thus, have no window into the applications of it as an effective teaching strategy. Third, storytelling is still suspect and considered as mere entertainment, incompatible with the educational process of transmitting knowledge. Fourth, teachers may

feel a lack of confidence in their abilities to tell a story. And last, there is an enormous amount of mandatory curriculum material to be covered, and telling stories is seen as taking too much instructional time. From all of these indicators, it seems that a gap has developed between the storytelling community, including storytelling teachers, and conventional educators. The focus for this qualitative study is to determine how teachers naturally use story within their classroom in order to diminish this perceived gap. As Rubright (1996) points out, “We all know that teachers often exercise the most natural form of storytelling, relaying anecdotes from their own lives...When children focus on such stories told by their teacher, I know that, consciously or not, that teacher is in ‘story mode’.” (p. 66)

In schools, there is often one teacher who becomes the storyteller for the group. But as indicated by Toelken (1996), even though one person may choose to learn and tell folklore, it is suggested all members of a group may have this inclination (p. 315). Before I can consider this issue further, I need to define the following terms.

Definition of Terms

Storytelling: Communicating story through oral language

Story: A detailed, character-based narration of a character’s struggles to overcome obstacles and reach an important goal

Narrative: An account of an event or series of events in a temporal sequence including a human (or human-like) agent that relates to the particulars of the event expressed in any linguistic or pictorial medium

Storyteller: A person who tells and possibly writes stories to be told orally

Storytelling Teacher: A teacher who tells stories to students as one of the primary methods of instruction

Story Reading: The act of reading from a text to listeners

Natural Storytelling: A spontaneous, or sometimes preplanned yet still informal, use of story that a person communicates with another

Storyteller Kendall Haven (2007) stated that storytelling is an effective method of instruction. He pointed out that it made a difference for students in learning. Haven, in his book *Story Proof, The Science Behind the Startling Power of Story*, cited Huttenlocher, a noted neurologist, whose research demonstrated that the human brain is hardwired to think in story terms. By age 12, a child's brain structures have been reinforced and strengthened through story-based neural nets. People become dependent on interpreting events and other human behavior through a specific story architecture (p. 26). Children hear a story and the details create mental images facilitating better understanding and lasting memory far more readily than a set of facts or abstract principles (Tannen, 1989). Haven (2007) adds, "Stories struggle to infiltrate into the normal flow of education" (p. 4). The gap between conventional teaching methods and the story approach in education needs to be closed in order that educators may discover the importance of storytelling as a teaching tool.

When I first learned of Nantahala School in Macon County, North Carolina, I was intrigued by its location tucked away in the mountains. I had to drive over switchback turns, then follow the shoreline of a mountain lake, and finally, wind down a curvy road to arrive at the school's doorstep. There was an alternative longer route that involved going around several mountains and traveling along the Nantahala River,

which involved another scenic mountainous area. Either way it meant traveling a narrow road along a cascading river stream. My first thoughts were, “This school is a long way from anywhere. Do I want to travel that far?” After my first visit, I considered that the oral tradition might be embedded within this school culture making it a rich environment for study. I also knew that Foxfire, the storytelling mountain magazine and collection of books, was started just to the south of Macon County in the neighboring community of Rabun County, Georgia.

Foxfire began in 1966 by high school students at the Rabun School. Today it is a place to view not only books and magazines but also artifacts donated by many of the mountain people who own the stories. From the beginning, the students used revenues from the sale of books for establishing and sustaining Foxfire. For 43 years students have been collecting stories to preserve the oral tradition and the mountain way of doing things.

Even though the Nantahala School has a similar culture, the principal acknowledges that Foxfire has not had an impact on the school, although he did tell me of events that were held where students would participate with local folks who demonstrated pioneer crafts.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to identify what teachers are doing naturally with storytelling to develop their lessons at the Nantahala School. It is to discover what kinds of stories they use, how they introduce the stories, and how they

fit them into the context of what they are teaching. I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the teachers at the Nantahala School naturally use stories and storytelling with their students?
2. What are the curriculum guidelines for the Nantahala School that include storytelling as a form of instruction?
3. How do the teachers incorporate the curriculum guidelines that involve storytelling into their classroom instruction?

From the research I created a framework of guidelines for storytelling as a teaching method. With this framework, teachers can include storytelling in their repertoire of instructional tools. In this way, the study addresses the gulf between storytelling teachers and those teachers who do not acknowledge the practice of telling stories within their classroom.

Statement of Significance

The significance of this study is to enhance storytelling techniques and further their development so that all children hear stories and teachers feel more comfortable using storytelling in the classroom. The theoretical framework created can aid teachers and administrators as they embrace storytelling as an important strategy for all classrooms.

Even though there are many storytelling teachers, there are still a large number of teachers who believe storytelling is the domain of the professional storyteller who visits the school and tells stories. Little research exists examining how teachers use storytelling naturally within their classrooms.

Statement of Researcher Perspective

When I began teaching in the 1970s, I was told that in my sixth grade classroom I needed to have a few students who would get As, a few more to get Bs, most to receive Cs, some get Ds, and a few who would fail. It was called the bell curve, and from the moment it was suggested, I knew that this paradigm would not work for me. I could not teach knowing some of my students were supposed to fail.

I studied all of my students to see what they knew and then tried to advance them to higher levels of thinking and development not based on something outside of them but by what they articulated and demonstrated. This became my paradigm and my reality as a teacher. I still hold this viewpoint today.

As an educator and a storyteller, I have a strong sense of the importance of the oral tradition. As I viewed the teachers' storytelling within their classroom, I maintained an open mind to their methods. I also curbed my own thoughts regarding storytelling during the interview process. With my background in education as well as storytelling, I was more aware of when and how teachers used story with their students.

Scope of Study

Through qualitative research, my intention is to look at each one of the teachers as individuals with their own paradigms of teaching, to explore their thinking, and then develop a synthesis of ideas created from all the data. Creswell (1994) cited four different designs of qualitative research. One of those is case study, which fits with my paradigm. I want to know what the teachers, who are also noted as participants,

understand about storytelling and how they implement their experiences with storytelling in the classroom. I want to know their perspective and how it works for them in the educational process. This is a qualitative case study describing and analyzing storytelling occurrences by teachers at one particular school. Merriam (1998) describes case study in this way:

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research (p. 19).

The focus of this study is the educational practice of storytelling within one school. It constitutes a bounded system, i.e. a single entity around which there are boundaries (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). All of the participants were teachers at this one school. Data were collected via teacher interviews, classroom observations, document reviews related to the observed lessons, and curriculum review. Field notes were recorded during the observation in regard to materials used by the teacher or present in the classroom during the observation.

Limitations

The results of this study pertain to only one school in the state of North Carolina. Any reference to what may apply at other schools is supposition. Each of the eight participants was observed for only one class period. Because the interviews for

some of the participants took place before the observation, there was no opportunity for follow-up questions based on the observation.

Review of Related Literature

History of Storytelling in the Classroom

In the early 1900s there were but a few storytelling books available to the storyteller or the educator about the practice of storytelling. Burrell (1926) states that “coaching for storytellers is at present almost unknown: but it is a very important desideratum for all who are concerned with the training of children” (p. vii). There were others who viewed storytelling as an important art to be interwoven within all the grades. Horne (1916) who was writing in the early 1900s, added that there were three main school arts, with storytelling being the first, questioning the second, and the third studying. He stated that storytelling belongs in all the grades from kindergarten through high school, but the focus has always been with the primary age students. He added, though, that all three of these are universal school arts and are a part of the craft of teaching (p. 9).

For the first 50 years of the 20th century public libraries and playground associations helped to revive the art of storytelling. Wyche (1994) indicated that public libraries had instituted storytelling as a means of interesting the children in the best books of the library. Playground associations also instituted storytelling as a wonderful addition to outdoor activities. Wyche conjectures, “It would be interesting if some of our educators would take a group of children, give them the best games and stories daily with a very brief period devoted to books, and after several years compare them

as to strength, knowledge, spirit and efficiency with a group of children who had only book education” (p. 69). This idea remains a fascinating concept to consider in the educational scene of today.

Storytellers Marie Shedlock and Ruth Sawyer inspired librarians to establish story hour programs and urged teachers to use storytelling with their students. Other storytellers instrumental in promoting storytelling in the first part of the 20th century included Anna Cogswell Tyler, Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen, Frances Clark Sayers, and Augusta Baker. Prominent educators, including Freidrich Froebel, Maria Montessori, John Dewey, and Johann Friedrich Herbart, gave enthusiastic support for storytelling in the classroom (Pellowski, 1977.). But Alvey (1974), found when he analyzed how storytelling was developed with children in the United States, educators were the least involved in the actual practice of storytelling (p. 736).

In the 1970s, a storytelling festival began in Jonesborough, Tennessee that catalyzed a nationwide revival of the art. Storytellers came together sharing ideas and stories. Annual festivals based on the Jonesborough model of the National Storytelling Festival developed throughout the country (Sobol, 1999). Through these connections, the art of storytelling gained energy. In the decades since the 1970s, a plethora of books on storytelling methods with connections to teaching had become available.

Storytelling educators were beginning to develop lessons around story. Wagler (1994), a storyteller and teacher, centered his entire curriculum on stories. Cunningham (1993) in her article for *Storytelling* magazine, describes the curriculum devised by Vivian Paley, a noted early childhood educator. Paley, who stresses the importance of storytelling with young children, claims that as teachers read to their students, and the

students retell and listen to stories, the more the teachers will reflect on their own stories. Cunningham goes on to quote Paley who speaks of the “habit” of storytelling for teachers.

Once you begin, nothing can stop you. But it has to be your own voice. It can't be someone else's. This is where a lot of teachers sell themselves and their classrooms short. The children appreciate the smallest kind of story, a memory of your own 6th-grade birthday party, a memory of some story someone told you. As you begin to develop your narrative voice, the response from the children is what will encourage you. It is not the same as standing up in front of a group of teachers and telling a story. The teacher will find a positive response and an absence of criticism from the children. They are so delighted to find a teacher in a narrative mode. That itself will bring forth the stories (p. 12).

Organizations, including the National Council of Teachers of English as well as the National Storytelling Network, created books and magazines based on storytellers' insights about education and storytelling. Another publication was *Storytelling for Teachers and Media Specialists* that included selections by various storytellers in the use of storytelling within schools.

Hamilton and Weiss (1990) have been forerunners in this field, advocating storytelling in the classroom not only for teachers but for students as well. They acknowledge that teachers provide important models to the students. MacDonald (1993), in her book *The Storyteller's Start Up Book*, assisted teachers by making storytelling accessible and easy to do. As MacDonald says, “Storytelling teaches listening. It models fine use of oral language. It models plot, sequencing, characterization, the many literary

devices you (meaning teachers) want to convey. There is no better educational tool to teach language-arts skills” (p. 43).

Impact of Brain Research on Storytelling

The findings in current brain research studies reveal positive implications for learning and storytelling. It has been deemed, “nurturing the brain” research (Ito, 2003). Neurologists, cognitive psychologists, and other “brain scientists” promote studies, “that link the study of the brain, the mind, as well as the emotions to create the optimal situations for children through older adults to facilitate the development and maintenance of healthy brains and keep the brain’s learning capabilities at full potential throughout life” (p. 439).

This research indicates there are sensitive periods for acquiring different types of knowledge and skills. Knowing these sensitive periods will enable educators to implement the appropriate skills at the most beneficial times (Ito, 2003). From the moment of birth, the brain accumulates information about the external world in order to build the internal world. When a child thinks through a concept that is being taught, the brain exerts its “executive function on the internal world to manipulate thought-models such as images, ideas, and concepts to simulate what could happen in the external world. As the child thinks through this again, these models are copied to internal models in the cerebellum, and then thinking comes to be conducted automatically and less consciously by referring to the internal models” (p. 431). In other words, whatever happens on the outside is processed internally, imprinting models for future cognitive functions. One might say there is more brain imagery created through the use of story. Or, stated differently, the brain learns through the internal structure of images based on the information coming from the external.

Kotulak (1997) described how stimuli from the external world affect the growth of the internal world. The senses create the connection. They are like “biological buttons that work to physically reshape the brain by engaging the genetic gears and hormonal levels” (p. 49). Kalin, as reported by Kotulak, had found that an enriched environment can change the chemistry of the brain for the better. Storytelling provides a wellspring of imagery that can bridge the external to the internal to create these enriched environments.

Gaylean, as cited in Foster-Deffenbaugh (1996), confirmed that there is a growing body of research on the power of imagery as an instructional tool. This relates to the findings that Ito (2003) described with his research that the creation of images helps to facilitate learning. Foster-Deffenbaugh described the brain as highly plastic and creative, and it searches for connections and patterns such as those described above by Ito (p. 204).

This idea of plasticity of the brain is key to education and educators. University of Chicago’s Peter Huttenlocher, as cited in Kotulak (1997), is the neurologist who discovered that the brain is a constantly changing mass of cell connections, which has become known as plasticity. These changes are deeply affected by experience. In terms of language acquisition and storytelling, without exposure to *spoken* words, cells that allow the brain to construct meaningful sentences do not develop properly. The more exposure the brain has to spoken words, the more cells will be generated.

Pediatric neurologist Harry Chugani of Wayne State University in Detroit was the first to view what is happening in the brain of a child between 4 and 12. As cited by Kotulak (1997), Chugani described that this is a period of time, “when the brain is deciding to keep or eliminate connections. And in the process of keeping connections, the brain eagerly seeks information from the senses” (p. 36). Chugani added that there is room for an unlimited

number of memories. But what is most significant for educators is that if there are no stimuli to create these memories, the connections are eliminated. Chugani pointed out that there is a need for a fundamental change in the nation's educational curriculum based on his conclusions. Ito (2003) concluded his work with saying that so far there have been difficulties in communicating and collaborating effectively with educational organizations and child care groups to have them make use of the findings of the brain research. He even said that without the success of these efforts, the future will not be bright (p. 432).

Two leading educators became involved with brain research studies and their impact on education. Renate and Geoffrey Caine (1994) have written extensively on how education can use brain research findings. "Brain research establishes and confirms that multiple complex and concrete experiences are essential for meaningful learning and teaching"(p. 5). They stated that, "Stories are powerful because they bind information and understanding over time. In fact, there is strong reason to believe that organization of information in story form is a natural brain process" (p. 122). This connects with the findings of Huttenlocher and Chugani. The research has proven that the use of story to create images aids learning. Haven (2007) concludes with three key truths from these neurological findings:

1. Evolution has rewired the human brain to be predisposed to think in story terms and to use story structure to create meaning and to make sense of events and other's actions.
2. Cells that fire together wire together. The more a child engages their story neural net to interpret incoming sensory input, the more likely they are to do it in the future.
3. This disposition is reinforced by the dominant use of story throughout

childhood. The dominance of story exposure through the key years of brain plasticity results in adults' hardwired to think in story terms (p. 27).

Greenwood (2006) studied the source and manner in which educators obtained the brain research and how they applied it to their classroom practice. He discovered that teachers believed the findings of the research were important and would change how they taught, but their knowledge base of how to use these findings was limited.

Three Participations of Storytelling

Kuyvenhoven (2005) completed an educational ethnography with a combined fourth and fifth grade class to focus on storytelling teaching practices. She dedicated this study to learning about storytelling as "a pedagogy spanning the classroom's day" (p. 119). The teacher of the class explained how she used storytelling as one of her many strategies for instruction. "It informed my practice, knowing about the power of story, or knowing how enjoyable it is, it's not necessarily conscious" (p. 49). For this teacher, storytelling created purposeful learning situations, quick lessons, and opportunities for anecdotes and retellings. She described herself as a "storytelling teacher," which meant, "someone who tells stories and someone who believes in that form for learning and thinks it helps kids make meaning" (p. 86).

Kuyvenhoven conducted observations and interviews of the teacher and her students over a 5-month period. After analyzing her extensive field notes and transcripts, Kuyvenhoven devised a theoretical framework to organize her description of storytelling as observed within this classroom. Through her study of these observations, experiences, participants' testimony, and her discussion, she formulated three circles of participation.

They were social awareness, mindful interaction, and deep imaginative engagement. She says of this framework, “that (these) three kinds of engagements are neither levels nor a kind of three-step advancement” (Kuyvenhoven, 2005, p. 14). Although Kuyvenhoven indicated that sometimes the two levels, social awareness and mindful interaction, overlapped, she acknowledged that these three participations do not progress from one to another. She did find that a single storytelling event could be experienced in several ways as listeners shifted from one kind of participation to another and then back again (p. 171). She describes the three participations as the following:

1. Social awareness: Listeners or tellers are responsive to the presence of others while they participate in the larger circumstance that includes a story being told.
2. Mindful Interaction: Participants respond to the story and the teller in a thoughtful interaction.
3. Deep imaginative engagement: The presence of the teller and even the listener’s own self-awareness are diminished (p. 8).

Kuyvenhoven expressed how storytellings within the context of a social awareness, even though they were small bits of anecdote and memory, still, were distinguishable from the rest of conversation (p. 110). For example, she pointed out that the students could recall a specific story from a classmate that distinguished it from the rest of the lesson. This is how Kuyvenhoven established the context of the “social awareness” story.

In “deep imaginative engagement,” the students’ participation was characterized by unusual stillness, sustained postures of listening, and intensity of attention (p. 118). This often occurred when the teacher told folktales, myths, or life stories. Kuyvenhoven described it as

experiencing a place of wonder, a story-world. She found three clues to this deep participation: the storyteller as she spoke the words, the children's postures that indicated their engagement, and children's memories of being there, afterward (p. 163). The students suggested such words as first making pictures" and then "going in" and they described their actions as being "imagnators" (p. 118).

In the third participation, "mindful interaction," students used story as a thinking place (p. i). Here students were involved with the storytelling in deliberate and thoughtful ways. Often this occurred during class discussion where the students asked questions and shared responses.

Kuyvenhoven (2005) described some of the story experiences of the students. One of her descriptions included "skinny stories." They were more like suggestions or fragments of stories, thin in detail with plots that were skeletal. The meaning of the story connected to the larger complex of events, understandings, and relationships (p. 91). Another aspect she described was the development of a common language with the students she called "laughing words." These included jokes, riddles and stories that everyone thought were funny. They solidified relationships and social positioning among the students (p. 117). Again, these were all examples of the "social awareness" participation of storytelling.

Kuyvenhoven also claimed that through storytelling, the children experienced the classroom as a place of belonging. This created the kind of atmosphere conducive to learning together (p. 166). At the same time she questioned if the school culture and physical context were advantageous for storytelling. In most classrooms, space forces social proximity (p. 80). Often there are interruptions with the use of intercom systems, bells, and students moving

through the hallways. Kuyvenhoven expressed that the “deep imaginative engagement” could not bear interruptions such as these.

Storytelling, Story Reading, and Story

“In order for a story to ‘be,’ there has to be a true dialogue between participants who listen to each other” (p. 76). Cooper (2007), in saying these words, adds the importance of being listened to and understood in storytelling. As the brain research indicated, the creation of images through the use of the spoken word is paramount for learning, but there is an importance in dialogue as well. Teachers have a captive audience before them whether they are telling a personal experience, explaining a concept through the use of a folk tale, or sharing a funny story. The listener is an integral part of the communication process of storytelling.

Roney (2009) stated that storytelling is in need of a definition as a unique art form and medium of communication if it is to be seen as a valuable pedagogical tool in education. He cited numerous storytellers who have made attempts at defining storytelling, such as Breneman and Breneman, Livo and Rietz, and Pellowski. His concern was that a definition is needed that does not infer a connection with other aspects of the performing arts such as recitation, singing, acting, or reading aloud. To view storytelling as pedagogy and as a unique art form, he suggested this definition:

In its most basic form, storytelling is a process whereby a person (the teller), using mental imagery, narrative structure, and vocalization or singing, communicates with other humans (the audience) who also use mental imagery and, in turn, communicate back to the teller primarily via body language and facial expressions, resulting in the co-creation of a story (p. 48).

This definition connected back with Cooper (2007), that storytelling is a co-creative process between the teller and the listener.

There is a strong theoretical base as well as an extensive research base in education that supports reading aloud to students (Roney, 2009). Numerous studies have viewed the positive effects of storytelling as compared to story reading or reading aloud with young children. In one study (Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance, 2004) the storytelling groups had more positive responses in their imaginative recollections of the story, although both groups were able to retell the story. In another study (Walker, 2001) children were tested for comprehension through three communication delivery methods: print, oral stories via a storyteller, and a CD-ROM version on a computer. The children who received oral stories via a storyteller scored highest on comprehension while those children who received the traditional print method scored the lowest in comprehension.

In order to view how teachers naturally tell stories in the classroom, it was important to determine what story looked like. Haven (2007) investigated what constituted a story by looking at what was not a story. This is an example of the use of “binary opposites” from Levi-Strauss as reported by Egan (1999). Through this process of understanding something by comparing it to its opposite, Haven identified eight specific elements that separate stories from other narrative forms: character, character traits, goal(s) of the character, motive, conflicts and problems, risk and danger, struggles, and details. He combined these into a definition:

Story is a detailed, character-based narration of a character’s struggles to overcome obstacles and reach an important goal (p. 79).

He added that the story was driven by details that make the story real, vivid, and memorable.

Tannen (1989) explored how details in conversation created images in the listener’s mind. The

images then created scenes, the scenes sparked emotions, making possible both understanding and involvement for the listener (p. 135). This connects back to the brain research. When our emotions become involved with our understanding, memory is established and learning takes place. When we view these ideas of story with what Roney has described as storytelling, we can see how the listener and the teller are connected in an image-rich language, which shapes meaning for both of them.

Haven (2007) also emphasized that stories need goals and motivation or they are not really stories. Once we have both of these, then memory is evoked, and the story is learned. Without goal and motivation, whatever may appear as a story is merely an anecdote or example. Kuyvenhoven (2005) found many different kinds of storytellings during her research. They contrasted in shape, arrangement, content, and application including such narratives as historical events, math problems, and home stories. Some were rehearsed, while others were spontaneous. Kuyvenhoven studied the patterns of these stories in order to organize and relate them to each other (p. 5).

Through numerous rigorous organizational patterns she achieved her goal. Her criteria for recognizing a storytelling had to do with the pause before the teller began. Kuyvenhoven (2005) indicated that in every case as the teller began to tell the story, there was a definite pause where everything stopped for a moment. She called it a “felt break in the stream of activity” (p. 6). Wilson (1979) described it as “the moment that counts” (p. 51). When Norris Spencer said to her sixth graders, “My grandfather...” (LedBetter, 1994, p. 10), the whole room fell quiet, and the students relaxed into knowing a story was coming. It appeared that these two words served as the pause and opened the possibility to create the “deep imaginative engagement” for Spencer’s students.

Tannen (1989) emphasized that along with details and images, stories come alive through animation. This is another aspect emphasized with storytelling. Storytellers know that the voice, expressions, gestures, and body language are important techniques that can be developed to enhance storytelling (de Vos, 2003; Hamilton & Weis, 2005; Lipman, 1999; Lockett & Jones, 2009; Moore, 1991).

Gillard (1996) claimed that we heal and teach each other and ourselves by telling stories. So it makes sense that any teacher tells stories as a natural part of communicating. Haven (2007) found that the general form and structure of story are so interwoven into our human psyche and into the way we understand, learn, and process language that it is not possible to converse for long without stories. Denman (1994) told of how Bill Martin, Jr., writer and storyteller, stressed that each of us has a “linguistic storehouse” in which we deposit stories, poems, sentences, and words (p. 5). From this storehouse, teachers’ stories come to life when they are creating images for students to understand concepts.

Storytelling and the Curriculum

Wyche (1994) used story as he taught in a small country school. By teaching with the poem, “Hiawatha,” he taught grammar, language, composition, geography, history, dramatics, spelling, drawing, and storytelling. Horne (1916) made a connection between storytelling and the curriculum. He said, “Many subjects in our curriculum as taught repress individuality and personality; the story cultivates both” (p. 28).

Applebee (1996) pointed out two ways to construe the school curriculum. One, is knowledge-in-action where the student is involved and learns through participation by doing, while the other is knowledge-out-of-context in which the student studies about something but

does not participate within the context of that which he is learning. Applebee wrote that the current school system emphasizes knowledge-out-of-context, but he has found that the emphasis needs to be on knowledge-in-action (p. 126). Students need to participate in ongoing conversations about things that matter within the curriculum (p. 3).

Ellis (1994) outlined how students have “often been bored or turned off by the rote-memory approach to history taken by most public-school systems” (p. 125). But he noted that in the 1970s and 1980s, with the revival of storytelling, more teachers were using stories to help reach students in history. Watts (2006) researched the impact stories had when teaching history to fourth grade students. She strived to find invigorating teaching methods so “that students walk away from their classes feeling like they have just stepped out of history rather than merely having heard about it” (p. 22). She discovered a significant difference in the attitudes the students had regarding the lessons, those in the storied classes indicating greater enthusiasm. She concluded her study recognizing the positive impact of teaching history using stories with students, adding, according to Cather (1926), “students become not only spectators, but also participants in history as well” (p. 37).

Students need to be able to connect everyday life with their schooling. This connection is created through storytelling when sharing events from home, school, and the community. As the teacher uses stories in the classroom, the students will feel more directed to do so as well. The way the teacher presents the material assists in creating meaning-making situations. Instead of curriculum based on an inventory of important skills and concepts, it becomes a domain for conversation. Applebee (1996) suggests curriculum develops with, “the conversations that matter—with traditions and the debates within them that enliven contemporary civilization” (p. 52).

Sylvester, a neurologist, as reported by Kovalik and Olsen (1998), described how emotion drives attention and attention drives learning and memory. The brain research indicated that we need to look at how we teach as well as what we teach. We need to nurture the imaginative as well as the analytical sides of the student's brain (Crosson & Stailey, 1994). Kovalik and Olsen (1998) suggested three areas to bring education in alignment with the brain research. These are relationships within the school that are characterized by the following: absence of threat, a supportive physical environment, and meaningful curriculum content.

The importance of relationship cannot be overstated. If students do not feel they have a relationship with their teacher and classmates, they have nothing to gain or lose by their behavior in the classroom. The classroom thus becomes just one more social context in which they feel disconnected, uninvolved, and unwilling to invest in the success of the group (p.30).

Through the art of storytelling, the teacher and the students build relationships that encourage connection, involvement, and a desire for success.

Stories provide an involvement that brings about emotions. Egan (2005) suggested that stories actually shape our emotions to the events and characters in a particular way. He stated that we have "no other form of language that can achieve the range and kinds of effects that stories can" (p. 10). He added that the power of stories performs two tasks. Stories communicate information so it moves into the imagery of the brain and our memory, and stories affect the listener's feelings about the information being shared. In this way any subject can be designed to the cognitive tools that the students have available through stories. "In the imaginative classroom, teachers will always have in the back of their minds an impulse to look for ways to tell the story about the content of a lesson or unit" (p. 12).

More and more educators are using stories to pique interest, illustrate hypotheses, or highlight points to engage their students in inquiry and experiment or to help them understand difficult concepts as well as sparking the students' interests. Storytelling seems to be the spark that is needed in subjects such as history, science, and even mathematics. Rowe, as cited by Nash (1993) stated, "Science is a special kind of story-making, with no right or wrong answers, just better and better stories. When you study a textbook, the amount of time that you can stick with it is relatively small. But the same kinds of information can be woven into a story. We educators haven't taken advantage of the fact that plot is a very important way of helping people tie ideas together and stay interested" (p. 10). MacDonald (1993) emphasized that, "Storytelling models plot, sequencing, and characterization" (p. 43), and added that storytelling fits into any area of the curriculum.

Storytellers have become involved in the science and mathematics fields to demonstrate how these subjects link with story. Nash (1993) indicated how plot is an important way to engage students in science and math. When factoring in imagination with creativity and putting it together with plot, you can find a story based on scientific or mathematical concepts. Rowe, as described by Nash, has her own story of meeting Einstein when she was 11 years old. He was staring at a fountain while at Princeton University as Rowe was walking by. She stopped to look and he showed her how to move her hands quickly to see the separate drops of water as they spurted upward. As they walked away from the fountain, Einstein said to her, "Never forget that science is just that kind of exploring and fun" (p. 9). Core curriculum goals can be written to coax the fun back into teaching and many educators say "fun" is what is missing in contemporary science and math education (p.10).

Bringing fun into the classroom curriculum can be achieved through story. This is connecting to more than simply telling jokes or humorous personal stories. Wyche (1910) stated that when we have given children stories to teach them, they also need stories to entertain and rest (p. 34). Csikszentmihalyi and McCormack as reported by Glasgow (2003) stated that only after a student has learned to love learning does education truly begin.

National Standards have been developed in the primary subject areas: language arts, science, math, and social studies by the federal government. Many of the skills described in these Standards can be attained through storytelling. Storytelling teachers are creating lessons and activities along with corresponding stories that correlate to these objectives. Connecting Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theories (Gardner, 1983) with stories based on the calendar year was a focus for Brand and Donato (2001) when they created the book, *Storytelling in Emergent Literacy: Fostering Multiple Intelligences*. Norfolk, Stenson, and Williams (2006) invited numerous educators to identify methods that used storytelling in their classrooms. From these methods, the book, *The Storytelling Classroom*, was created. In making sense of the physical world around the child, Stenson says, "the curriculum/story should expand the child's awareness of the world and broaden the child's capacity to understand other people" (p. 21).

The Nantahala School – The Study Site

Nantahala, which means "Land of the Noonday Sun" in Cherokee, is a K-12 self-contained school located within the Nantahala River gorge of western North Carolina. It has 14 teachers with 12 support staff people. During this study the school had 214 students with 63 students in the K-5 group, 44 students in the middle school, and 27 in the high school.

Teachers usually have combined classes such as K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. Nantahala School has one principal who has been there for the past 3 years, having taught in the school prior to becoming the principal.

The school is part of the Macon County School System although it is isolated from the rest of the county by mountains. The students come from mountain communities within the valleys of the river gorge. The nearest town is 15 miles away.

There is a mountain culture where students and faculty feel a connection through geography. When I first talked with the principal at the school, we spoke about the culture of the community and how it played a role in the school. He spoke about the Cherokee people having a gathering place near the school site, now called the Apple Tree Group Camp. "It has even been said that during the round up of the Cherokee people to take them to Oklahoma, they were kept at this place," he told me.

By the late 1800s and early 1900s, the logging industry was predominant. During this period there were six distinct communities including eight schools with approximately 700 students. As logging declined, families remained in the mountains carving out a life through farming with cash crops like tobacco, tomatoes, and cabbage. By the 1940s, Nantahala Lake, a power-generating reservoir, was built. Although this changed the landscape, it brought modern conveniences to the area. Today, descendants of the original families still live within these mountain communities.

"Because of our smallness and being a K-12 school, we can track the progress of a student all the way through," the principal said. When asked about the school culture, he added, "Good schools have a culture, and schools that are safe places to be are the best schools, and this connects to the culture." The principal stated that Nantahala is a safe place

for the students. Each time I drove to the school to meet with one of the teachers and I passed another car, the driver would wave to me, as if I were part of this mountain place. I felt this connection as I met with the teachers and became involved in their school community.

One teacher, who appreciates this culture, drives over an hour to teach at Nantahala. Four of the participants grew up in the area. Two of them attended the school. The principal replaced his own father who preceded him as head of the school. Everyone knows each other. A sense of community is built around family ties and roots. Some of the families trace their lineage back to the first settlers who arrived in the mountains, although in the past 20 years, there have been many newcomers to the area. Over the past 10 years, the area has experienced much seasonal residential growth.

When selecting a site for this study, I considered two school systems. Because I wanted my sampling to include most of the teaching population of the school, Nantahala School was the obvious choice. All the grades are contained within one building. The isolation of the school also played a part in my selection process. I felt that perhaps with the school located so deep in the Appalachian Mountains, the oral tradition could be a natural part of the classroom.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This chapter contains the methodology and procedures that were used to identify what teachers were naturally doing with storytelling at the Nantahala School. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to bring awareness to classroom teachers of the natural strategies they employ based in storytelling. The research questions for the study include:

1. How do the teachers at the Nantahala School use stories and storytelling with their students, both formally and informally?
2. What are the curriculum guidelines for the Nantahala School that include storytelling as a form of instruction?
3. How do the teachers incorporate the curriculum guidelines that involve storytelling into their classroom instruction?

As reported by Miles and Huberman, (1994) qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, nested in their context, and studied in-depth (p 27). The collection of data of this case study follows this guideline in that instrumentation is via interviews and observations of teachers, a review of documents used by the teachers during an observed lesson, and a review of the school curriculum. Field notes were also collected during the observation in regards to materials used by the teacher or present in the classroom. Each one of these data collection techniques is discussed, including the data collection analysis methods.

The interviews and observations took place over a 2-month period in the spring of 2008. I frequented the school at least once a week, meeting with the participants, visiting their classrooms, and writing summary notes in the school library following observations.

There were several contacts with each participant following the initial faculty meeting. The first contact was a visit to the classroom to determine a time and date for the observation and interview. The second and third occurred when the observation as well as the interview took place.

Interviews

Teachers from kindergarten through 12th grade were included in this study. After the principal gave permission to conduct the study (Appendix A), I invited the staff to participate during a presentation at a faculty meeting. After this initial invitation, I then visited the school and compiled a list of those participants who met the sampling criteria (Appendix B). This included teachers who taught a major subject as well as having at least 2-years experience. The school librarian was also included because library time is an extension of the language arts curriculum. I met the prospective participants during free periods to invite them to be part of the study. The study called for six to eight teachers, and because there were more available than needed who met the criteria, the decision was to invite all of them to participate (See Appendix C). Two people chose not to enter the study.

The participants included seven females and one male. They ranged in experience from 2 to 15 years. Two teachers had taught in other states, while the remaining six had taught only at Nantahala School. Two of the participants had grown up in the area and attended Nantahala School. Of the other six, one grew up in the same county (but in another school), one had

parents who attended the school, two were from nearby counties, and two participants grew up in other parts of western North Carolina.

The questions for the interview (Appendix D) were derived from my personal point of view as an educator and storyteller as well as following educational guidelines. As McCracken (1988) stated, “The investigator’s experience is merely a bundle of possibilities, pointers, and suggestions that can be used to plumb the remarks of a respondent” (p. 19). The responsive interviews were conducted in the teacher’s classroom at a time convenient to the teacher. I had a general direction for the questions, as established on the interview guide, but I also listened to the participants’ answers that led me to formulating other questions (Rubin, 2005). I situated myself at an angle with each of the participants, rather than across from them, in order to establish a sense of rapport.

A tape recorder was used to record each interview. I decided not to take written notes during the interview, as this could be distracting to the participant, although the question guide was situated on the table if needed. Each interview was 40 to 60 minutes long, depending on time availability of the participant and how the questioning process developed. The questions were expanded with each individual depending on the participant’s interest and knowledge base. As Rubin (2005) indicated regarding responsive interviewing, “The low-key and open-ended way in which (responsive) interviewing is conducted encourages the conversational partners to suggest topics, concerns, and meanings that are important to them” (pg. 33). I personally transcribed the taped interviews, finding very few sections that were inaudible.

McCracken (1988) suggested two techniques to understand what is being said while listening to participants’ comments. One technique connected what I heard with my own experiences, and, if that did not fit, then the second technique was to initiate a process of

imaginative reconstruction. This allowed me to build a new world from what the participant was saying (p. 20).

When I interviewed the high school teachers, three different times I needed this second technique. Because I had a lack of experience with older students, I did not have the same perspective for preparing students to be in the working world. Teaching one subject, as well as high school students, these teachers had a different focus, one in which it was necessary for me to listen and reconstruct previously-thought ideas. One particular item was their emphasis as teachers to promote empowerment and leadership with their students. As an educator, I knew this was important, but these participants stressed this in a new way for me.

I additionally compiled a list of my overall impressions from what each participant was saying. I was looking for the unique stories that were embedded within the whole interview (Straus, 1987, p. 27). In this way, I was able to understand the participants' underlying assumptions, which in turn, aided me as I looked at the data for coding and creating categories.

Observations

I observed each of the participants during a class period that extended from 25 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the level of the students. Prior to visiting the classroom, a letter was given to each teacher directed to the parents of the students informing them of the observation (Appendix E). Each of the observations was recorded via a tape recorder located in close proximity to the teacher. A video camera was also used during three of the observations, but only the audio was being recorded. During the observation, I sat in a location apart from the students, but within a distance to view the teacher and the class. I followed the observation guide (Appendix F) as a reference. Field notes were recorded of the classroom environment

including student work, school materials evident in the classroom, arrangement of furniture, and instructional supplies. In this way, observations included not only what the teacher was saying but also what was visible within the classroom. Although the students' responses were not emphasized in this study, their reactions, including comments and movements, were recorded within the field notes related to the activities and the stories used by the teacher during the lesson. A review of these notes became part of the analysis. They were written out in a narrative and then coded once the observations were completed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These field note codes became a separate category that was compared with the teacher observation codes and the interview codes.

I continued to study the research literature in order to understand and to be able to interpret these observations and relationships. In this way, the conceptual framework evolved and developed as I carried out the fieldwork and analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 21).

Document Review and Artifact Review

Only one teacher included a handout during the observed lesson. Four teachers used some form of artifact as they told a story. These were a collection of shells, a photograph of Amelia Earhart with the participant's grandmother, a train case owned by this same grandmother, now turned into a treasure box of items, and an inspirational poem within a picture frame. How teachers related their own personal experiences with the materials they brought to the classroom and their interactions with the students were also part of the analysis process. The protocol format used for reviewing these materials is included in Appendix G. It includes information about the material, how it was used in the classroom, and how it relates to storytelling (Creswell, 1994, p. 152).

The study also examined how storytelling was integrated in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, the school curriculum for all schools in the state. I conducted a review of this document to identify core goals that could be accomplished through storytelling strategies (Appendix H).

Even though the Standard Course of Study is divided into 13 different areas, I only reviewed ones that pertained to the major subjects represented by the observed lessons. They included English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. I decided to include Art Education to determine if storytelling, as an art, was included. Each area divided the core competency goals into kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade, then 3rd grade through 5th grade, 6th grade through 8th grade, and 9th grade through 12th grade.

There are three strands in the English Language Arts section: oral language, written language, and media and technology use. The other subject areas also stress these three as they elaborate on the goals of the particular areas. Specific competencies are explored within the varying grade levels throughout the curriculum. The development of oral language as a major form of communication was emphasized.

The science curriculum is designed to provide learning opportunities for all students to become scientifically literate. An aspect of this is to be able to share orally the findings of the science community. Although the word “storytelling” was never mentioned, there were references to oral narratives and other references to the oral tradition.

In the social studies curriculum there is still no reference to storytelling, but just as with the science curriculum, there is a competency goal for students to create presentations of social studies information with the oral tradition being one of the methods.

During the interview, the participants were asked if storytelling was included in the curriculum for their level. My results include how their interpretations, that became one of the core categories, fit with my findings of the Standard Course of Study.

Data Analysis

The Constant Comparison Analysis method by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was used to analyze the material. This method required an extensive review of the transcripts to find patterns in what the teachers were saying. Codes were given whenever an idea related to storytelling appeared in the instruction, interview, or my field notes from the observations. These codes were attached to words, phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs as labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information contained within the transcribed data (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). From these initial codes, categories were formed for each of the three methods of data collection: observations, interviews, and field notes. Then a codebook (a merging together of the variety of codes) was created combining the categories and codes of the teachers' perceptions and use of storytelling in the classroom. Throughout the coding process, I looked for the conditions that created the storytelling events and how the participants used the strategy within their classroom. I also studied how the event made a difference with the students.

Tesch, as cited by Creswell (1994), identified an eight-step process for coding. This process emphasized to look at not just the substance of the data but also its underlying meaning. As I moved through the steps, the observations or interviews were studied first in relation to themselves and then compared with each other. I looked for similarities as well as

how the sets of data differed or contradicted each other. I was then able to determine emerging patterns and themes from the categories that related to my research questions.

Because data collection is a selective process, coding was completed in three sections: the interviews, the observations, and the field notes. Any particular passages that stood out were recorded in the marginal notes. Different colors were used for each participant when copying the codes from the transcripts, and each participant's codes were kept separate from the others. According to Merriam, it was important to code the data "according to whatever scheme is relevant to your study" (p. 165). I wanted to view what they did during the observation as well as how they interpreted their use of storytelling within the classroom during the interview because my research question was to determine how teachers told stories naturally in their classrooms. This constituted a reason to not only compare the codes found from each of the three aspects but also to compare the collected data in regards to each of the participants. I created categories for each of the participants and then compiled them into one set for the observations and the interviews. As one set of data was categorized, that set was then compared to the previous set of data (Merriam, 1998).

Appendix I is a list of the codes from the interview transcripts. Several codes were combined into subcodes. As with the category, "students telling stories," there were examples of: "discuss their day," "discuss events in life," "discuss their week," and "discuss their evening." I combined these into one code, "discuss events in their lives." This enabled me to combine certain codes without losing any of the information. After compiling the list, these group categories emerged from the data:

1. Curriculum connections in storytelling – Teacher's connections of the curriculum objectives with storytelling

2. Students telling stories – Ways students use stories in the classroom, including what they share as well as strategies they employ in the telling
3. Prior experience with storytelling – Ways teachers have experienced and become aware of storytelling
4. School community within mountain culture – Ways community stories connect with the teachers and students of the school
5. Use of storytelling in the classroom – Methods teachers employ that constitute a form of storytelling
6. Teachers’ Concepts of Storytelling – How teachers interpret storytelling
7. Educational trends and developments related to storytelling – Teachers’ perceptions of education as it relates to storytelling

After developing this initial list of categories, I then returned to the transcripts. I wanted to compare the responses of each participant with these group categories in mind. This was still part of my open coding process. As Strauss (1987) suggested, I asked myself, “What category does this incident indicate? (p. 30)” It also helped to view my interactions with the participants for what may have been relevant for one may not have been for another. I was constantly comparing the codes between different transcripts and different participants.

The next step was to complete this same procedure for the observations. When I compiled the list of codes from all the observations (Appendix J), I chose not to condense the list by similarity or to use subcodes. I felt there was significance in the different ways participants’ use of words had formed into the codes. From this list, another set of group categories was compiled. They included the following:

1. Attributes and uses of storytelling – Observed methods of instruction that used storytelling
2. Connecting to community: past and present – Use of stories involving students, teachers, and the community folklore
3. Relating to students' experience – Teachers' use of storytelling techniques that connect with and involve the students
4. Types of stories observed – Forms that stories took as they were shared with the students

The third set of data was the field notes. After coding these notes, I did not separate the codes by individuals as I had done with the previous sets of data. I wanted the data to correspond to the entire school and I also wanted to look at the codes in a total group. These codes are located in Appendix K. I discovered certain patterns that formed the following categories:

1. Observable classroom features – Aspects of the classroom that involved an attribute of storytelling
2. Responses – Student reactions to the stories
3. Storytelling elements – Observable elements demonstrated by the teacher that supported some aspect of storytelling
4. Types of stories – Array of stories that were demonstrated during the observation

I now had three sets of categories that corresponded to three data collection methods. This next step involved examining each set of data again, noting the similarities. Moving from one transcript to the next, I looked at the codes already designated in that transcript and compared them to the new categories created from combining all three data collection

methods. In some instances with a particular participant the information came across in a different and more pronounced way. Through this process, I added codes into these collective group categories. I did this for each of the above categories and data collection methods. The codebook was now beginning to emerge. I noted the patterns and themes coming from each set of data. I recognized overlaps in ideas as well. For example, one pattern was that teachers told stories that were connected to the family and community. Another indicated that teachers had very little college instruction in storytelling.

The last step with this process involved combining all the data into one set of core categories. These core categories along with a brief descriptor and the emerged themes are:

1. Storytelling - Its traditions, and uses in the classroom: Ways storytelling is viewed and used in the classroom and its relationship and connection with family, school, and community.

Themes: Use of personal stories for instruction.
 Stories demonstrate concepts and provide examples.
 Atmosphere and presentation affect storytelling.
 Storytelling relates to family stories.
 Community stories help connect students and teacher.
 Storytelling is positive for education.

2. Curriculum connections with storytelling: How the teacher interprets the curriculum competency goals in terms of storytelling.

Themes: Inclusion of storytelling is questionable
 Some objectives may relate to storytelling
 Books and stories are included to be used

3. Student reactions with teacher's storytelling: Interpretations of how students view the different modes of teacher's use of storytelling within the classroom.

- Themes:
- Telling stories as prelude to writing.
 - Student responses to stories told by teacher.
 - Student enjoyment with sharing personal stories.
 - Student involvement with stories.

4. Educational trends and developments related to storytelling: Occurrences in education that have had an impact on the students and teachers at Nantahala that affect their view of storytelling in the classroom.

- Themes:
- Less emphasis on testing.
 - Need for students to have access to the world.
 - Small schools allow for more interaction between teachers and students.
 - Need for more access to technology.
 - Students need more hands-on experiences.
 - Little or no college preparation in storytelling.

From these categories and themes, I was able to address each of my research questions and create the framework. Dey, as reported by Merriam (1998), stressed, "qualitative analysis requires the analyst to create or adapt concepts relevant to the data rather than to apply a set of pre-established rules (p. 165)." The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and analyze a pattern of relationships. As I moved through the coding process, I kept in mind both of these ideas and looked at the relationships between each set of codes and categories that were found. Merriam also suggested keeping an account of any thoughts or speculations as coding took

place (p. 165). For this reason, I compiled memos of my ideas. These memos became helpful when I reviewed all the data. The analysis of the study moved from one source to another, comparing and contrasting the material in the quest for patterns or regularities. The synthesis of these patterns created a cumulative set of conceptualizations (Miles & Huberman, 1994),

This coding scheme took into account both the “etic” level, which is more general, and a more specific “emic” level, referring to the codes being generated “close to participants’ categories, but nested in the etic codes” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 61). In other words, the coding process began with each individual, then moved into a more general process, and then returned to the individuals. I found that as each of the participants’ transcripts were analyzed similar patterns emerged until a point of saturation was reached.

Quality and Verification

There are certain features of qualitative research that help maintain a level of integrity for the study. Merriam (1998) suggested because human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, interpretations of reality are accessed directly. She cited this as being “closer” to the phenomenon that I am studying (p. 203). Because this is a study of the ways the Nantahala School teachers used storytelling both formally and informally in their classrooms, the focus was on naturally occurring, ordinary events in the setting of the classroom. Data from observations as well as follow-up interviews were collected from the teachers, providing these natural occurrences.

Another feature of qualitative research is to ground the study locally. The data were collected in close proximity to a specific classroom situation. Instruction was viewed through

the prism of direct observation of classroom interactions. Transcripts of the interviews with the teachers provided deep and rich material to study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

As already mentioned, the case study was of a bounded system including teachers of one particular school, the K-12 Nantahala School. The study explored the incidence of storytelling across the public school setting. Implications for other systems may be possible, although this is an interpretive study of only this one bounded system.

As a qualitative researcher it is important to have some experience with the phenomenon being explored. My experience as an educator and storyteller aided in the interpretation of the fieldwork.

Numerous researchers (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994) suggest strategies to enhance internal quality and verification. One of those strategies is triangulation, the use of more than one source for information. In this study there was convergence through three methods of data collection: interviews, observations, and field notes. These three methods were completed with eight different participants, which also added to the quality of the study. Although there were some differences among the participants, similar patterns were found and themes emerged from the data that verify the results (Merriam, p. 204).

Reporting the Results

The results from this case study are presented in a descriptive narrative based on the open coding analysis. The themes that emerged from the data are intertwined with quotations from the participants supporting the findings. The results conclude with a framework that serves as a guide to help teachers develop storytelling strategies with their students.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Results

In this chapter, I visit with the teachers and their students as the emerged themes and results from the data analysis are shared. From these findings, I then created a framework that serves as a guide to help teachers develop storytelling strategies with their students. Through this account and the created framework, teachers can view how storytelling is a part of their classrooms. The chapter concludes with thoughts relating to further study.

I would like to begin with a comment from one of the participants. She was reacting to a realization about telling stories.

I think it's interesting I never thought I told stories, but I don't know if it was in your letter, or talking to you personally, that you said, that teachers probably do a lot of storytelling and do not even realize it. And the more I thought about it, the more I realized, when I think of storytelling I think of a more formal, planned out, written out, paragraph, that you're sharing with, or little story that you're sharing, with your students, and I guess it's much broader than that. It covers a lot more than that.

Another participant added, "In Civics you have to use stories to get them to understand what you're talking about, and I've been watching myself, and it, kind of, is storytelling and I didn't realize it."

Sometimes through the interview process, a participant added more information than originally thought. For example, one of the participants did not acknowledge that she told stories, but by the end of the interview, when asked a similar question, she said, "I tell stories all the time," even though earlier in the interview, she wasn't so sure.

Two other participants expressed this awareness as well. One, who teaches science, never thought that she told stories. But as she became more involved with the study, she stated, “You know, I never thought I was much of a storyteller, until I talked to you previously, and I started thinking about everything I do in class.” It was the same for another participant. She goes on to add that there were times she thought of a personal story that could enhance the discussion but thought to herself that her students would not be interested in knowing that, and now, she says, “I was thinking they might not be interested in that, so now I’ll include those examples that are like stories, rather than just skipping over them.” She has points out that not only are the stories helpful, but her students enjoy them as well. Having teachers being aware that they are telling stories is important for all educators.

Several participants talked about teachers they had who told stories. One said, “I guess it was more of the teachers that were open and just friendly and tell you things.” This seems to be associated with the natural use of story. With each of the participants this openness was expressed in relation to their recall of prominent teachers whom they thought of as storytelling teachers. These three qualities that emerged from the data were being open, friendly, and willing to share personal stories.

Going down the hallway, I saw high school students at one end and kindergarten and first grade students at the other. The two primary teachers involved in the study emphasized categories other teachers only touched upon such as the use of voice, gestures, and atmosphere in conveying story. “And by raising your voice, or changing it,” “or acting it out... to feel involved,” were expressions shared during the interviews. It appeared that these teachers who taught the younger students were more conscious of how they spoke and the manner in which a story was delivered. This connected with the literature, for according to Alvey, (1974),

“very young children especially enjoy exaggerated voice qualities, facial, and bodily activities (p. 724).” Storytellers have indicated that these techniques are still important even with the older students, although “telling the story in a sincere, straightforward manner, and in your natural voice” is emphasized (de Vos, 2003, p. 19). Being aware of storytelling components such as voice control and body expression is another way for teachers to strengthen their stories.

A theme that developed in all the data emphasized traits of a secluded school system and its culture. Responses varied according to level, but they all indicated a need for the students to see the world. There were comments like, “insulated school,” “school location creates lack of easily getting to programs,” “not much exposure to art and music,” “need for more field trips,” and “more access to technology.” One of the participants indicated a sentiment that emphasized the school culture. She grew up here, went to Nantahala School, and said that after graduation, “I couldn’t wait to get out of this area.” After leaving, going to college, and then teaching in another nearby state, she returned to her roots, teaching in the very school she could not wait to leave. This reveals a connection to the mountain culture.

There were terms to describe the stories about the communities, phrases like “call them folk tales, different stories just around these mountains.” These stories and the culture of the school and community were evident in five of the observed classrooms. The stories used by these participants revolved around the school culture. There were phrases like, “It’s tradition up here,” “It’s honored,” “It’s important to them,” “old-timey storytelling,” “down-home values and beliefs,” “traditional,” “this community is full of stories,” and “I could switch to Mountainese.” These reveal important links to the stories teachers tell in the classroom. Kuyvenhoven (2005) spoke about this culture, “Storytelling is a cultural, dynamic relationship

centered and stabilized by a story (p. 23).” At Nantahala, many of the stories revolved around the mountain culture in which the school is located. Walsh said, “Whoever tells the stories, defines the culture” (Mann, 2008, p. 23). Walsh, founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family, recognized the importance of how our stories shape our culture. His concern relates to how the storytelling function in our society has been turned over to mass media. For teachers it is important to connect and tell the stories of the culture that the school reflects.

Within the core category, “Storytelling in the Classroom,” another theme related to family stories. This pattern was described in a number of ways, such as, “tales from your life,” “listening to my dad tell stories,” and “A story is about, what so-and-so did at the corncrib thirty years ago.” There was a connection between how the participants interpreted storytelling and the mountain culture. Perhaps this is why some teachers did not have the realization they told stories. Storytelling happened around the kitchen table or out on the front porch.

Teachers strive to build rapport with their students. Any teacher who creates a nurturing and caring classroom environment by inviting the students to share their stories with them can identify with what I am referring. Paley (1990), a leading early childhood educator, embellishes her classrooms with story playing and storytelling. These two areas are the curriculum of any classroom in which she has taught. She stated that any classroom that has not created its own legends has not traveled to the level of where community takes place. She adds that the stories of any group form the basis of its culture (p. 21). This became evident in several of the classrooms. Even though a story was being read [instead of told] in one classroom, the student’s reactions and stories reflected the class connections to the school culture. There was a sense that the smallness and the remoteness of the school and its students

did create a culture all of its own. It created an identity, one that was so powerful, that three of the eight teachers in this study made a conscious choice to return to teach here.

When I reviewed the interview transcripts to see how they fit with the compiled list of categories, I discovered that many teachers explained storytelling through story. Because I was looking at all the details with my first run through, I saw the stories but did not realize the magnitude. Many of them were complete with a beginning, middle, and end. But with stories shared in the classroom, there was often one part missing. Stories varied, sometimes lacking a beginning, or a middle, and sometimes an ending. Teachers stress to their students the importance of including all three of these aspects within stories, whether in sharing them or writing them.

This theme of presentation continued in another classroom as a teacher told of an incident when she was a little girl that related to the concepts being taught. After she introduced the incident and drew the students in she did not develop the story for their imaginations to be engaged. They did not have an opportunity to grasp the full meaning of the story. Because the middle of the story was not developed and there was no ending, one of the students asked, “So what happened to your house? Did it sink?” The teacher had built the story up with lines like, “I used to see pictures like this in Florida in the news, and I remember that it scared me to death because I thought, ...being a little kiddo, ...it was going to come and swallow our house.” The student wanted to hear the whole story. But it had ended there. Developing stories is an important part of storytelling. Teachers are expected to model this as well. Middles and endings of the story are needed as well as good beginnings.

Kuyvenhoven (2005) said that in every case as the teller began to tell a story, there was a felt pause in the stream of talk and activity within the classroom. The pause occurred

whether it was before a story within a conversation or the storyteller telling a planned story in front of a listening audience. The result was the same. The pause is a natural moment prior to the story. It occurred before many of the stories that the teachers developed within their lessons. But instead of a break, they tended to use some kind of expressive word or sound to indicate the pause, such as, “Uh,” “Then,” “Okay,” and “Listen to me,” “All right,” “Back in the days,” “Okay, listen up,” and “Look up here.” Using some kind of consistent and conscious beginning to create the felt pause will alert students that a story is about to unfold.

When I compiled the list of codes from all the observations, the themes around storytelling were easily discerned. The words the participants spoke as they worked with their students indicated how they used stories within the classroom. The word, “example,” came up for many of these. I also found “sharing,” “comparing,” “local” [meaning community], “connecting,” “questioning,” but, what was surprising to me, though, was how each of the participants focused on story in a different way. See Appendix L for the stories that connect to each of these examples. They include:

1. Telling a personal story with the class that relates to a shared object that serves as an introduction to having the students share about similar experiences.
2. Telling case study stories from the environment and political situations both to illustrate objectives of the lesson and to inform the students of current topics in the news.
3. Sharing true personal stories related to an historical event being discussed that could influence the way in which students recalled the event.
4. Comparing a character from a class-read novel but using a story from the local community’s past to relate to such character.

5. Demonstrating a concept from a lesson through sharing a fictional experience that serves as an example of the concept.
6. Telling past experiences of events shows how the concept can be interpreted.
7. Explaining a definition through a story related to shared experiences between the teacher and the students.
8. Reading a picture book and then having students respond with personal stories related to the book.

The use of personal stories for instruction was a theme that developed through the analysis, yet the stories shared extended this to a greater scope. When I asked the participants during the interview how they told stories, the answers varied and did not always correspond to how they demonstrated it during the observation. For example, one participant said, “to provide examples of a topic,” yet she included a personal story about her own childhood fears. Another said, “to excite the kids, they love it,” but he used story to elaborate on a concept. It appeared that the teachers did not have a full realization of the breadth of their stories.

When the participants responded to how they use storytelling in the classroom, one theme related to all the participants feeling it was a positive aspect to have with your instruction, not only for the teacher to tell stories, but also, for students to share personal stories as well. Different phrases described their thoughts, “connect with your students on a more personal level that connects with their learning,” “sharing stories with the students and having them respond with stories of their own,” and “a way to reach all learners no matter what level they are on.”

Several of the participants viewed “telling” a story and “reading” a story in a similar way. When elaborating on their uses in the classroom, they interchanged these two words. For

example, I asked one of the participants if she had ever “told” a story to her students, and when she responded by saying yes that she often “read” stories. When we discussed this further as to how she viewed storytelling, she indicated that it could possibly be both telling a story in the oral tradition and reading the story. This occurred with three of the other participants as well. It is apparent that storytelling is not always considered the telling of a story in the oral tradition.

Another aspect of my data analysis recognized differences between high school education and elementary. One particular item that came from this process was the focus on promoting empowerment and leadership with their students through the use of storytelling. High school teachers were concerned with this, whereas for elementary teachers this was not an issue. In the core category, “Students’ experience with storytelling,” several codes related to student involvement. Two high school teachers stated that girls were less likely to speak in class even while these teachers encouraged more oral participation. One of them said, “I think it’s a cultural thing.” She viewed storytelling as a means to, “help kids become more comfortable speaking, a way to lead them toward formal speaking.”

Kuyvenhoven (2005) and Kovalik and Olsen (1998) elaborated on the importance of the classroom environment. It was evident in the field notes that two of the teachers had a special place conducive to storytelling. One had an open area for students to gather, and the other had a separate reading area with a rocking chair. One of the teachers of the older students expressed her desire to have a special area in which she could conduct class in a more informal arrangement; something she sees could be suitable for storytelling.

Three of the storytelling sessions prompted me to note the reactions of the students. These included when a young child shared her shells, when a high school teacher told a

mountain folk story, and when an upper elementary teacher gave an example. In the case of the young, animated storyteller sharing her experience at the beach, I observed that all the children became still, attentive to her. No one moved and mouths fell open. I felt that some of these children had moved into a state of deep imaginative engagement as described by Kuyvenhoven (2005).

When the high school teacher told a story about a man who lived in the Nantahala community in the early 1920s, once again students became still, nearly all of them watching the teacher. Heads nodded when the teacher made reference to something that the students were familiar with, and several had their mouths open as she was talking. This presentation was a formal telling with some references to the students during the telling.

(Click to listen to story.)



And this community is full of stories, I know people who have stood up for what they believe in, You know, my daddy was a great storyteller. I can't tell stories like he can. One of my brothers is a good storyteller, but I'm not. One of the people, do any of you guys know the Dills family, Julie Dills, that lived on Camp Branch? Well, her husband Arch, he got killed a long, a long, long, long time ago. And he got killed when they were building the bridge that goes across (inaudible) the bridge that goes through the gap to the Robbinsville Road. Well, Arch was quite a character and he... Yes, one of the trusses or whatever, it fell on him, and he died right there on the spot, and left behind a house full of kids. There wasn't one or two, I don't know, there was six, seven, eight. But anyway, he was kind of the one, there was a whole gang of men from Nantahala who um, worked on this project, they were building that bridge, and some other small bridges, um, going to Robbinsville, the little bridges you see going up

the hollers any stuff. Anyway, he was kind of a leader and I don't think he did it on purpose, but he was one of the people who would speak up. Arch didn't have a problem with that, so what he did, they had a boss, and they called him gang bosses, and this gang boss, he was just plain brutal and what I mean by brutal, he just was not fair. And he, um, and these people were working for nothing. \$5.00 a day, maybe, and um, it was hard work. They didn't have backhoes and all that stuff, just picks and shovels, and this man just kept being unfair, and um, kept just being ugly to the rest of the workers.

And finally, one day, Arch told him, he said, 'You know, we are just not going to take this anymore. And if we come here another day, and you start doing this,' Now, of course, I'm not talking like Arch, my daddy could do it, I could switch to Mountaineese, but Daddy could really tell a story.

And he said, 'We'll just sit on the water.' And he said, 'Not only aren't we going to work. You won't be able to find anybody to work.' So the next day, um, everybody showed up, and the first thing, this guy, starts ranting and raving and they oughta do it faster. Uh, everybody went up and set on the side of the bank. And set there. And um. Arch, my daddy said this guy had shiny brass buttons on his shirt, and then Arch went up to him and said, 'If we come here another day and you talk to us like this, I'm going to pull every button off of that coat. And if I pull every button off that coat, you know what's comin' next.'

And I guess, the guy thought, 'Well, I guess I could be a little bit nicer, or I can take a whuppin' off of Arch Stills.' And guess what he decided to do?

As the story ended, the students began to fidget once more. I sensed these students were in deep imaginative engagement as well.

The third example occurred when a teacher used a story to demonstrate a concept. The children smiled and giggled, and even those students who had been given another assignment looked up and became involved in the story.

Yesterday I went to the store. And on the way to the store, I got stuck in traffic. And I waited, and waited, and waited. Then finally I got through the red light, and I got to the store, and the store was closed, so I could not get any groceries. So I left, turned around and started to head back home, and my car broke down. So I got out and I started walking, and I walked.

These students were in a state of mindful interaction, which became a thinking place for them to connect to the concept finding the main idea of a passage. These examples demonstrate two of the three participations in storytelling. The third, that Kuyvenhoven (2005) describes, is the state of social awareness (p. 109). I observed this when stories were built around students' responses to the teacher as the story was told. This occurred in several of the classrooms.

As I moved through the coding process, I discovered one of the teachers used the word imagine during her lesson. She asked the students to imagine being in the particular place of a character in a book, "Using the imagination" became a code, but as I looked throughout the data, I saw it was only included two other times. In the second, a participant used the word imagine in terms of storytelling. And, the third was in the example below. This teacher used the school familiarity to help with the study of momentum,

And it was a hard concept for me to get across, putting an equation up on the board. That how much momentum something has depends on how much mass it has and how much velocity it has, and this being such a small school, everybody, if not being practically related to everybody, it's knowing everybody, and knowing everybody's relatives. I would just tell them to imagine, I have a niece that goes to school here, and I have a nephew that graduated from here, my niece is a little tiny, petite thing, and my nephew is like 6'5", 230 something pounds, so I used them for examples. I said if both of them are charging down the hallway at you, which one would you want to run into you? Which one would have the most momentum? And how could my tiny little niece end up having the same momentum as my linebacker-looking nephew? So to just provide examples, I think, because it gives them something they can imagine and they can picture, and I never really thought I told stories much but I thought those little examples I tell could count as stories.

When we are involved with storytelling, our imaginations are engaged. Asking students to imagine helps them to think in more creative ways.

Even though this school is couched in the center place of rich oral heritage, only two teachers knew of nationally known storytellers. One participant, although she had never heard Ray Hicks tell, indicated tellers such as Hicks, "have influenced her." Another teacher when asked if she had any storytelling classes during college, recalled one time when a storyteller came and talked to the education majors. She could not recall his name, but after hearing him, she indicated that, "I had never heard much about storytelling before, but I like this." She added that she would like to try storytelling stating, "He was interesting, and had kept my interest." I interjected and asked if he was Donald Davis, and at first she said, "Yeah, that was

probably him,” but as she discussed the storyteller further, I asked if he was David Holt, and then with a nod and grin, “Yes, that was him, David Holt. He was the one who came.” This experience she had in college as a secondary major was the only occurrence that suggested storytelling as a teaching method. The analysis revealed that only one teacher had to create and tell a story for a college class, and none of the participants had any storytelling classes.

One of the participants made an interesting observation, saying that in her college preparation classes, “We only did reading classes to teach kids to read, but they didn’t teach it [meaning storytelling], but in the classroom you always use storytelling.”

Curriculum Results

In the North Carolina Standard Course of Study English Language Arts section there are three language strands: written language, oral language, and media and technology use. The strands focus on themes and concepts rather than isolated facts. This allows freedom for the classroom teachers to navigate the curriculum using strategies that they feel work effectively. In the general guidelines for all grades, it is noted that, “Oral language is the foundation on which all communication is based.” (All quotes in this section are taken directly from the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.) Students in kindergarten through fifth grade make connections through the use of oral language.

One of the core competency goals is, “Speak and listen appropriately and effectively and for a variety of purposes and audiences” This has a direct relationship to storytelling, even though the word, “storytelling” is not written directly into any of the objectives. There are references to storytelling, though, such as, “Narratives can be oral as well as written; thus students should have opportunities to tell their stories orally as well as listen to others' stories.”

This is part of the grades six through eight curriculum. Young children who are actively engaged in hearing told stories as well as telling stories themselves could by the time of sixth grade be already established presenters.

There are 12 guiding principles that concern both process and content. These principles include such phrases as, “Language skills are interrelated processes used by the learner to comprehend and convey meaning: oral (listening and speaking). . . .” And “Learning to communicate through written and oral language.” It appears that oral language stresses the ability to listen and to speak. Storytelling certainly emerges as an instrumental instructional strategy that meets these principles.

“Students who experience positive feedback to their efforts to use language and have opportunities to hear language used in a variety of social contexts have a broader base for their reading and writing development.” This statement summarizes how important storytelling is for the language arts curriculum. Its very nature as communication between two or more people emphasizes how storytelling benefits students in their language development.

There are curriculum guides for the other major subject areas as well, including science and social studies. In the science curriculum, there is a reference to having students use oral and written language to communicate findings. In the social studies curriculum, one of the skill competency goals is to “acquire strategies to access a variety of sources, and use appropriate research skills to gather, synthesize, and report information using diverse modalities to demonstrate the knowledge acquired.” It goes on to include, “Create written, oral, musical, visual, and theatrical presentations of social studies information.” Although there are no references to the strategy of teaching through storytelling, students could benefit from having teachers who model storytelling as opposed to teachers who do not. The arts

education portion of the standard course of study includes four components: dance, music, theater arts, and visual arts. Storytelling is not included.

One of the core categories from the data analysis was “Curriculum connections with storytelling.” A theme that developed with the participants within this category suggested that the curriculum did not include storytelling as a strategy for teaching the objectives although several participants named books and stories that were included, and one participant stated that a couple of objectives related to storytelling.

One of the participants speaking about the science curriculum suggested that there is a big move to, “a shift in the curriculum to more inquiry-based and student-driven.” She added to this “ ...storytelling would be a very good, it would be very effective, in kind of leading them towards that shift, in how we approach the curriculum.”

The Framework

From these results, I created a framework that serves as a guide to help teachers develop storytelling strategies with their students. This study reflects that storytelling is an important link in the educating of all students. Each of these guides resulted from a qualitative study of kindergarten through high school teachers at the Nantahala School in western North Carolina. A description follows each item in order to clarify its meaning.

1. Be open, friendly, and share personal stories. Teachers engage their students with sharing personal experiences to enhance the concepts being taught.
2. Be aware of the quality of voice, gestures, and expression when telling a story. Tell stories with a quality that helps the story come to life for the students.

3. Be aware and realize that teachers tell stories. The conscious awareness that teachers tell stories no matter what subject is taught is important to acknowledge and build upon.
4. Connect to the stories of the culture that the school reflects. Each school reflects some kind of culture, whether it is related to the environment or the people and the community in which it is located. Find what those stories are and share them with the students.
5. Model well developed stories that include: a beginning, middle, and end. A strong beginning that hooks them, a well-developed middle, and a meaningful ending will capture students. When all three parts are present, the teacher is modeling what is expected of students whether they are writing or telling a story.
6. Develop some kind of consistent beginning to create a pause that alerts students that a story is about to unfold. The pause signals to students that a story is forthcoming. When this is demonstrated consistently, students will be ready knowing that a story is about to begin.
7. Use the words “imagine” and “imagination” often. Imagination helps students visualize and create images. Storytelling is the activity of imagination.

Implications for Further Study

The framework created in this study is a beginning point. It now needs to be implemented with teachers in other schools to study its effectiveness. Because there is little research on how teachers naturally tell stories, further studies on the natural practice of

storytelling are needed. Also, this study was conducted in one small rural school. Future research can explore formal and informal storytelling in other types of settings.

The research indicates the importance of using storytelling in the classroom. As Lockett and Jones (2009) state, “Storytelling should serve as a major component in an elementary curriculum” (p. 177). I suggest it needs to be included in all classrooms at all levels. It is important that teacher preparation programs include storytelling in their curriculum. As one of the participants said, “You kind of teach the way you’ve been taught a lot of times.” This indicates the need for storytelling to be an integral part of teacher preparedness.

An aspect of storytelling within schools that needs further investigation is the phenomenon of a person in the school community known as the unofficial “storytelling teacher.” Schools that I am familiar with each seem to have one. When I first entered the Nantahala School, several members of the support staff were gathered in the copy room. I introduced myself and told them of my study. They all agreed that I should visit one particular teacher for she was the storyteller. This same experience occurred when I was concluding the interview with another of the teachers. She suddenly recalled in third grade there was a teacher who taught another class, who visited her classroom to tell stories at the request of this participant’s teacher. This “storytelling teacher” frequented many of the school’s classrooms and told stories. As a classroom teacher I experienced this, only I was the one being invited to tell stories in other classrooms. The concept of someone within a school being known as the storyteller needs more exploration. Studies are needed within urban environments as well as suburban ones. Through these kinds of studies, it can be determined as to whether the Nantahala story is an exceptional one, or is it an example that can be replicated within other

settings. It is my belief that the archetype of storyteller, if that is what this implicates, is within every teacher, no matter what the environment; ...and is just waiting to be found.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter to Principal

March 3, 2008

Nancy Reeder
391 Mountain Laurel Dr.
Franklin, NC 28734
828 -369 -1927
twhconnect@yahoo.com

Chris Baldwin
Nantahala School
213 Winding Stairs Rd.
Topton, NC 28781

Dear Mr. Baldwin,

Hello. My name is Nancy Reeder. I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University where I am enrolled in the storytelling program. I am researching the impact that storytelling has in the classroom. It is my belief that teachers use ‘story’ during their lessons much more than they realize. By observing several teachers, I hope to find if this is the case.

Neural research has shown that our brain develops more neural pathways when the brain is actively engaged in hearing ‘story.’ If this is the case, then the significance of the study for the development of knowledge with our students has a great impact.

I would like to observe and interview six to eight teachers at one particular school. The findings of my observations will be included in a thesis as part of the requirements for my master’s degree in storytelling. Because this is a qualitative research study, the findings will be based on all the data collected. Specific names or particular classes will not be identified. I would greatly appreciate it if you would consider your staff to be part of this study.

You can contact me either by phone or email. I look forward to hearing from you and the opportunity to work with your staff.

Sincerely,

Nancy Reeder

APPENDIX B

Sampling Criteria

Participant Sampling Criteria:

Participants will be chosen from the staff of the Nantahala School on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Teachers who have taught at least 1 year at Nantahala School

(It is important to have teachers who know the school and the curriculum. By teaching at least 1 year will have given them opportunities to work with students and the school curriculum.

Teachers in all grade levels, kindergarten through 12th grade are included.)

2. Teachers who teach a major subject

For this study, only teachers who teach a major subject will be included. These include: language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics.

APPENDIX C

Letter to Participant

Dear Participant:

Hello. My name is Nancy Reeder, and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my master's degree in Storytelling. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The name of my research study is Informal and Formal Storytelling Strategies Used at the Nantahala School.

The purpose of this study is to discover the storytelling strategies being used by the teachers at the Nantahala School. By observing teachers engaged with their students, I will be focusing on when a story is used to describe, illustrate or point out concepts, etc. It is my belief that teachers do this quite often, and may not realize it.

I would like to observe you as you teach a lesson to your students. The observation time would be for one class period, 45 minutes to one hour. You would determine when the observation takes place. I will be sitting in the back of the room with a tape recorder, audio recording the lesson. If you are willing, I will have a lapel microphone for you to wear. Because the study reflects formal storytelling as well as informal, observations of teaching a planned telling of a story would also be an aspect of the study.

I would like to interview you as well to explore your views of storytelling and how you see its impact in the classroom and the curriculum. The interview will last for one hour at a time convenient to you. The findings of my observations and interviews will be included in a thesis as part of the requirements for my degree. Because this is a qualitative research study, the findings will be based on all the data collected. Specific names or particular classes will not be identified in any of the transcripts or the final paper. I would greatly appreciate it if you would consider being a part of this study.

This method is completely anonymous and confidential. In other words, there will be no way to connect your name with this study. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the ETSU Institution Review Board have access to the study findings. Participation in this research study is voluntary. You can choose to not participate at any time.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me at (828) 369-1927. We are working on this project together under the supervision of Dr. Joseph Sobol. You may reach him at (423) 439-7863. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University is available at (423) 439-6055 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

Sincerely,
Nancy Reeder

By signing below, you confirm that you have read this document. You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator. You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

Who is being interviewed? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

Statement of Intent: The intent of this study is to identify what teachers are doing naturally with storytelling to develop their lessons with the students.

Research Question: How do the teachers at the Nantahala School naturally use stories and storytelling with their students?

Interview Questions:

1. How do you feel you use storytelling in your classroom?
2. If storytelling or a form of it is included in your course of study, how do you implement it?
3. How do you tell stories to your students?
4. How do you view storytelling as an instructional strategy?
5. What does storytelling mean to you?

APPENDIX E

Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

Hello. My name is Nancy Reeder, and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my master's degree in Storytelling. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The name of my research study is Informal and Formal Storytelling Strategies Used at the Nantahala School.

The purpose of this study is to discover the storytelling strategies being used by the teachers at the Nantahala School. By observing teachers engaged with their students, I will be focusing on when a story is used to describe, illustrate or point out concepts, etc. It is my belief that teachers do this quite often, and may not realize it.

Neural research has shown that our brain develops more neural pathways when the brain is actively engaged in hearing 'story.' If this is the case, then the significance of this study for the development of knowledge with our students has a great impact.

I will be observing and recording six to eight teachers at the Nantahala School. The findings of my observations will be included in a thesis as part of my requirements for my master's degree in Storytelling. Because this is a qualitative research study, the findings will be based on all the data collected. Specific names or particular classes will not be identified. This method is completely anonymous and confidential. In other words, there will be no way to connect your child's name with this study.

Your child's classroom teacher has agreed to be observed. This means that for one class period I will be sitting in the back of the classroom, audio recording the lesson. If your child's voice is heard on the tape, it will not be used in the analysis of the research. If you would prefer your child to be excused during the observed and recorded lesson, please return the bottom portion of this letter to your child's classroom teacher. I appreciate your willingness to allow your child to be part of this important study. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Nancy Reeder

Please excuse my child _____ from being present
during the class observation of _____.

Signed _____

APPENDIX F

Observation Guide

Who was observed? _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

Statement of Intent: The intent of this study is to discover what the teachers are doing at the Nantahala School with storytelling both formally and informally as they develop their lessons with the students.

Research Question: How do the teachers at the Nantahala School use stories and storytelling with their students, both formally and informally?

Observation Questions:

1. How does the teacher use story elements to illustrate the points of her lesson?
2. How does the teacher create the shift for students from the use of story elements, whether formal or informal, to the context of the lesson being taught?
3. If the teacher engages the students to share their ideas, does the teacher develop their ideas into story elements that help define the concepts being taught?
4. Does the teacher use actual stories to introduce, highlight, or summarize the skills being taught?
5. Is time allotted for students to tell stories, whether personal or traditional?

APPENDIX G

Protocol Format for Artifacts

Name of Participant: _____

Date of Observation: _____

Statement of Intent: The intent of this qualitative research study is to identify what teachers are doing naturally with storytelling to develop their lessons at the Nantahala School. It is to discover what kinds of stories they use, how they introduce the stories, and how they fit them into the context of what they are teaching.

Descriptive Notes:

What the object is:

Description of the object:

Physical setting in which it is used:

How students observe the item:

Interactions between the participant and the students regarding the item:

Reflective Notes:

Speculations regarding the use of this item:

Impressions of how effective it was:

APPENDIX H

Document Review Guide

Document Title _____

Date of Document: _____

Date Retrieved: _____

Location of Document: _____

Intent of this Study:

The intent of this study is to discover what the teachers are doing at the Nantahala School with storytelling both formally and informally as they develop their lessons with the students.

Document Review Questions:

1. How does this document illustrate storytelling?
2. What are the goals, guidelines, or objectives that pertain to storytelling?
3. How do the objectives that relate to storytelling connect with teaching practices?

APPENDIX I

Interview Codes

Students discuss events in their lives	A way to focus on a topic
Students love for talking	A way to break the ice
Students discuss stories prior to writing	Brings cohesion to a group
Students draw images prior to writing	Is talking
Nantahala – an Appalachian community	Is an exchange of ideas
Have down home values	Helps us to make sense of the present
Nothing to aspire to	Creates connections
Traditional people	Can be ordinary dialogue
Insulated school	Creates a hook
Many parents – not HS graduates	Is memorizing stories
Is a positive thing	Need for accountability
Is fun	Unfair when we try to quantify everything
Is more interesting	Testing had become institutionalized
Students learn manners through storytelling	Have a testing industry
Through stories, connections to learning	Has become a psychosis with testing
You can change your voice	Not speaking out is cultural
Creates a friendly environment	Increases kids' comfort level
Is involvement	Grandmother told stories from memories
Is both telling and reading a story	Influence of storytellers
Creates a comfortable environment	Father told stories
Creates a receptive to learning atmosphere	Helps students with how to present
Is animation	Helps students with timing
Makes things come to life	Difficulty in students talking up in class
Grabs kids attention	Creates more comfort for students
Teachers use of personal stories	Stories of ancestors keep you grounded
Enjoyment in talking and listening	Stories connect you to the past
Kids feel closer to teacher	Family shaped creativity
Need more parent involvement	Family shapes the way you think
Collect information; relate it to kids	Family shapes how you look at the world
Present stories to class	Stories were all around while growing up
Relate stories to material	Use of dialect speaking
Encouraging students to tell stories	Can recall high school teacher's stories
Create book of personal stories	Having stories makes it more interesting
Stories to demonstrate mastery of a topic	Students love sharing personal information
Interview family members to create stories	Gives students opportunities to share
Way to mesh with students	Student involvement
Shared experiences of different places	Case studies in science are taught in story form
Telling stories about student's culture	Provides examples related to topic
Is a strategy	Use of stories to form opinions
Activates prior knowledge	Use of stories to convey concepts
A way to lead into new topic	Stories can be used as study hints

Stories as introductions to topics
 Storytelling is planned out
 Is a creative approach
 Is written out in paragraphs
 Is easier for students to connect to the topic
 Is more formal
 Makes a subject more relevant
 Expands lessons to other subjects
 Can be more student driven
 Makes more sense than just formulas
 Stories are more interesting
 Storytelling to lead shift in science curriculum
 Keeps students' interest
 Immediate sharing
 Builds up class moral
 Can imagine and picture
 Use of familiar to tell story
 Stories can fuel interest
 You teach the way you were taught
 Grandfather and Great-grandfather told stories
 Past time – Sitting around and telling stories
 Heard old folk mountain tales as child
 Tell stories to excite students
 Tell stories to introduce a lesson
 Can recall teachers who told stories
 Students telling stories prior to writing
 Students telling stories about what they did
 Student sharing mountain tales
 Stories are humorous
 Stories of events from life
 Stories are education
 Stories have importance to students
 Students tell stories from objects
 Acting out stories
 Students learn from students
 Can raise your voice
 Can turn off the lights to set a mood
 Can change your voice for exclamations
 Feel involved with the story
 Storytelling can come out of what is read
 Sharing personal experiences
 Use of stories to find what students know
 Explanation through a story
 Student involvement through a story
 Stories from what's going on in the news
 Stories from the world in which they live

Students can create their own Jack Tales
 Personal stories are more interesting
 Students' use of personal story to show concept
 Is a teacher decision to include more stories
 Use of music with storytelling
 Need storytelling staff development
 Is a universal way to reach all learning levels
 Is cool
 Is a successful strategy
 More learning may take place through stories
 Create interest
 Demonstrate involvement
 Used more than realized
 Connecting stories to show relevance of studies
 Leads to higher level thinking
 Leads into good discussions
 Never heard much about storytelling
 Is not planned – just occurs
 Change voices to animate story
 Change in voice lets you know things
 Background music can convey what's happening
 Incorporate music into use of stories
 Compare versions of a story
 Can tell stories around a theme
 Use of storytelling to remember concepts
 Discuss similarities and differences of stories
 Stories to teach safety
 Relating new learning to what you already know
 Music can create mood
 Evolves emotion
 Is fun
 Helps us have a better understanding of a person
 Create a special place for telling stories
 Students share stories from home
 Students tell personal stories of actions
 Relate class work to family life
 Heard stories from a grandmother
 Storytelling relates to family
 Old-timey storytelling just kinds of tell
 Father told stories of growing up
 Can recall teacher stories
 Small school- know everyone
 Use of stories to explain
 Use of question words to generate stories
 Acting out stories
 Students relate things to the text through stories

Enjoyment of telling personal stories
Prior telling experiences – being told to, has big impact on present teaching
School location creates lack of getting easily to programs
Conveyed enthusiasm through teaching with stories
Stories told conveyed what kind of person you are
Through stories something clicks in students' heads
Use of storytelling for progression through a story
Need for instruction for storytelling as teaching method
Link to storytelling and being raised in the mountains
Can recall teacher designated as storytelling teacher
Use of stories to make connections from Nantahala to the larger world
Importance to express ideas in current code of language
Storytellers help kids be more comfortable speaking
Use of story for beginning, middle, and ending of a story
Mountains storytellers strengthened connection to mountain
Grandmother told stories from how it used to be
Telling stories creates interaction

APPENDIX J

Observation Codes

Using student as example to create story	Story reading
Use of example that has meaning	Question for reflection
Building up of examples to make a point	Predicting outcomes
Story as an example	Experience of emotions
Story as example	Comparing things for interpretation
Using student for example	Interpretation
Creating an example with a student	Comparing things
Description of an example	Defining terms
Comparing story to example	Interpreting story
Using student as example	Evaluation of story
Use of example as story	Relating to the news
Comparing – Use of herself as example	Relating to real places
Bringing students into example	Putting student into example
Example	Relating to the local area
Example that is formed by opinion	Examples in real life situations
Using herself as example	Story from local event
All right... introduction	Revealing memory from childhood
Intro, “All right...”	Connecting to local community
Use of pause before starting story	Relating example to current reality
Intro to example, “Let’s just say,”	Pause phrase, “Okay, listen up.”
Um...audible pause	Concluding statement
Use of students to create story images	Student wanting to hear rest of story
Common activity	Pause phrase, “Okay”
Relating to students’ experience	Connecting students to current event
Use of conversation in story	Connecting idea to current event
Using herself to tie concepts together	Setting up situation for story
Use of exaggeration	Use of quotes to create story
Added details to create more story	Use of conversation –quotation
Story to demonstrate point of lesson	Expressing opinion
Conclusion ideas to make a point	Use of “story” language
Use of conversation in story	Creating messages
Comparing example to local needs	Use of artifact for story
Relating to local situation	Finding your own personal story
Relating to local events	Story of grandmother
Example from local references	“Back in the days”
Comparing local place to distant one	Taking from old to create story of new
Relating to local community as example	Universal aspect of characters, events
Comparing people’s lifestyles	Admirable characters
Relating to local references	Identifying with characters
Relating to child’s experiences	Comparing students’ backgrounds
Using stories to connect to text	Characters
Defining terms with story	Use of conversation to create story
Question to connect to story	Use of conversation

Relating story back to listeners'	Question word, "What were some..."
Events as stories	Students sharing experience
Introducing story	Student sharing experience
Recall stories	Student involvement
Conclusion to the story	Sharing personal belongings
Predict next event	Sharing personal items
Vocabulary-building	Story of personal item
Moves through telling a story	Students share object – talk about it
Telling complete story	Student sharing experience
Things that happen	Having students share
People in your community	Sharing
People in your family	Stories to persuade someone
Father figures	Stories to inform
Compare to your own family	Stories of family
Your culture and place in society	Stories as examples
Giving people	Using stories to entertain
Matriarchs	Discussing differences
Patriarchs	Sharing opinions
Community full of stories	Build Vocabulary – aggravated
Comparing ancestors	A grumpy tone
Comparing generations	Mood of teller
Responsible people	Expressing a sad or mad tone
Interests	Changing voice to show anger
Avoiding conflict	Irritated, angry tone
Reluctant to share	Asking a question
Seeking advice	Comparing
Direct questions to imagine	Getting someone to agree with you
Imagine what something is like	Author's tone
Relating to child's experience	Frustrated mood
Referring to students' experience	Changing voice to show surprise
Connecting to child's experience	Changing your voice
Relating to child's experience	Changing voice to show happiness
Relating to children's experience	Giving examples
Relating to experience	
Connecting to child's experience	
Connecting to student's experience	
Using questions to recall memory	
Inviting experience, question words	
Question to generate meaning	
Probing question words	
Probing question words	
Question word, "What if ..."	
Question for student involvement	
Developing a real life example of concept	
Use of actual place for example of content	
Comparing your life with someone from story	

Use of question words, “What do you notice after...”
Use of question word, “Have you ever had...”
Use of question word, “What if we had...”
Use of question words, “Does anybody know...”
Question to elicit student responses—“Do you know...”
Inviting experience through question, “Have you ever been...”
Ready to tell something, “Look up here...”
Sharing story of personal experience and objects
Use of story to create meaning for concept
Connecting images to students’ experiences
Putting herself into situation being explained
Use of example of current events for understanding concept

APPENDIX K

Field Notes Codes

Use of grandmother's diary
Students maintain eye contact
Characters from stories – on wall
Encouraged discussion
Other students stopped to listen
Change in voice
Writing materials center set up
Read a story
Laptops available
Students had more eye contact
Resource book area available
Attentive listeners
Told story
Has reading corner
Varied loudness for different characters
Students maintained eye contact
Classroom is lab oriented
Used stories from diary
Used recent class trip for story
Student inquiry – “I Wonder” board
Related two definitions through story
Two students to a laptop computer
Use of question related to definition
Children giggling- reaction to story
Use of illustration to tell story
Use of song with story
Had contrast in tone
Collection of story tapes visible
Summarized some pages of book
Interjected reading with personal stories
General silence during story
Jokes about peeing
No movement by students
Story to describe definition
Read story
Use of illustration to tell story
Shared materials with students
Story of Neuse River Basin
Children smiled-reaction to story
Nod of head – reaction to story
Story of case study
Student reaction – limited

Rocking chair in room
Effects of poetry
Students express emotion – came alive
Pillows at reading corner
Story of local environmental issue
Use of local community for story
Storyboarding cards on wall
End of story – students fidgeted
Story defined term
Mouths open during story
All students watching during story
Story to demonstrate concept
Natural flow right into story
Carpet for gathering space

APPENDIX L

Stories

1. Telling a personal story with the class that relates to a shared object that serves as an introduction to having the students share about similar experiences.

“Who can remember from the Clark show of one of the beaches that was made out of coral? Do you remember what (named student) inaudible. It was made out of what?

What was the name of the place where we saw it on the video? (Child responds Australia) I brought three different pieces of coral in to show you. (Children passing around coral – discussing what they were holding)

This is carnation coral. What kind is this? Brain coral (Students discussing coral.) What were some of the things you saw at the ocean? (Children continued to pass around coral pieces. Individuals discussed these with their neighbors.)

Look up here. With this coral right here, has circles, oval shape, and this is has a different type shape, and they call this the brain type coral because it looks like what your brain looks like. (Children discuss coral.) And this is what your brain would look like. So this is brain coral, the way it’s shaped. (Children feel coral.)

Does anybody know what this is? It’s an egg pouch, and it’s left by a fish, Do you know what the name is? There are only certain times of the year that you can find these on the beach. Does anyone know what it’s called? It’s called the mermaid purse. I found this one in March, February-March. This right here is a horseshoe skeleton. It’s a crab.

And this is a different kind of clam or oyster that I found on the beach one time. Whenever it breathes or eats, it opens up. It works like a hinge, and opens up. You get these from the beach. This is a completely different kind of coral from what you saw. This is the top of a

conch shell. And here's another part of it. And another part, and that's all that I brought."

(Then the class moved into having students share their beach stories.)

2. Telling case study stories from the environment and political situations both to illustrate objectives of the lesson and to inform the students of current topics in the news.

"How many of you guys been to Peachtree? Have you gone down um, it's Peachtree Road, that takes you to the hospital, um, it takes you to the racetrack, have you guys seen all those people standing around with picket signs?

Why are they protesting? What's up on the street from where they are protesting? Do you guys remember driving down that road, the plant, inaudible, but the Moot Corporation has been in the news a lot lately. The reason that all those families are standing there, is a perfect example of point source pollution. It's (pause), Moot is a company that makes components, but in any case they use a lot of chemicals that are carcinogens. Do you remember we talked about along with microbes, do you remember what a carcinogen is? It's a chemical that causes (pause).

Carcinogens cause cancer. (Students talking – student trying to say cerebral palsy. Inaudible.) Okay, so what happened, that the reason all those people are protesting out there that this company that was using all of these carcinogens as part of their...buried them there on the property. Now why would those chemicals, do you think they are going to stay trapped in what are they going to do? Soak into the ground. What happens when they hit a layer of ground water, the aquifer? All the wells of those families have been contaminated."

3. Sharing true personal stories related to an historical event being discussed that could influence the way in which students recalled the event.

“This was the last place that she took off from. She only had this much further to go. She was heading out when she crashed. It was like finding a needle in the middle of a haystack. (reference to the tiny island she would land on.) She never made it to Holland Island. (Teacher narrating as students finish watching a film on Amelia Earhart.)

This was my grandmother’s train case, that Grandmother you saw in the picture with Amelia, and here are her initials. (Teacher had shown photo taken with Amelia and her grandmother just prior to Amelia beginning her flight – they were good friends.) See, well back in the days, the old days, um, you took trains to places, you just didn’t hop on a plane and fly, you took trains, and um, this is the one that she carried on with her, with all her cosmetics, her toothpaste and stuff like that in it. Well, I turned it into a little treasure chest. I put (inaudible) And here’s the mirror, (inaudible) and her make up and, I have a whole bunch of treasures in my box, and um, all kinds of things, pictures, and okay, there’s, and here’s me in fifth grade, me in 8th grade, trying bangs, you can laugh, I don’t care, you won’t hurt my feelings. Anyway, you know how I have morning messages on the board everyday, trying to inspire you and motivate you, well, back when I was your age, I used to keep some, fine this is a paper clip, I used to write them down, um, messages that I liked a lot, quotes, okay, and if you noticed, how did this end? Did it end with a quote, a quotation? And so, let’s see, one of them was, um, don’t let the sun set on your anger. I thought that was really important, not to go to bed mad, and here’s another one, To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides. Do you like that? To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides. In other words, what do are you doing? To feel the sun, And when I was

reading a book about Amelia Earhart when, this, um, came out with her flight ten years ago, I thought I'd read up (inaudible) and when I was reading, in the book something just hit me like a bolt of lightning, and I liked it so much, that I copied it down, and went to the printer's shop and I said, please turn it into an 8 x10 uh, piece of paper, nice and font, and then I wanted to frame it, And this is what Amelia said in her book, and I haven't seen it anywhere else, 'If you go high or far enough, someplace the sun is always shining.'

4. Comparing a character from a class-read novel, but using a story from the local community's past to relate to such character.

“And this community is full of stories, I know people who have stood up for what they believe in, you know, my daddy was a great storyteller. I can't tell stories like he can. One of my brothers is a good storyteller, but I'm not. One of the people, do any of you guys know the Dills family, Julie Dills, that lived on Camp Branch? Well, her husband Arch, he got killed a long, a long, long, long time ago. And he got killed when they were building the bridge that goes across (inaudible) the bridge that goes through the gap to the Robbinsville Road. Well Arch was quite a character and he... Yes, one of the trusses or whatever, it fell on him, and he died right there on the spot, and left behind a house full of kids. There wasn't one or two, I don't know, there was six, seven, eight. But anyway, he was kind of the one, there was a whole gang of men from Nantahala who um, worked on this project, they were building that bridge, and some other small bridges, um, going to Robbinsville, the little bridges you see going up the hollers any stuff. Anyway, he was kind of a leader and I don't think he did it on purpose, but he was one of the people who would speak up. Arch didn't have a problem with that, so what he did, they had a boss, and they called him gang bosses,

and this gang boss, he was just plain brutal and what I mean by brutal, he just was not fair. And he, um, and these people were working for nothing. \$5.00 a day, maybe, and um, it was hard work. They didn't have backhoes and all that stuff, just picks and shovels, and this man just kept being unfair, and um, kept just being ugly to the rest of the workers.

And finally, one day, Arch told him, he said, 'You know, we are just not going to take this anymore. And if we come here another day, and you start doing this,' Now, of course, I'm not talking like Arch, my daddy could do it, I could switch to Mountaineese, but Daddy could really tell a story.

And he said, 'We'll just sit on the water.' And he said, 'Not only aren't we going to work. You won't be able to find anybody to work.' So the next day, um, everybody showed up, and the first thing, this guy, starts ranting and raving and they oughta do it faster. Uh, everybody went up and set on the side of the bank. And set there. And um. Arch, my daddy said this guy had shiny brass buttons on his shirt, and then Arch went up to him and said, 'If we come here another day and you talk to us like this, I'm going to pull every button off of that coat. And if I pull every button off that coat, you know what's comin' next.'

And I guess, the guy thought, 'Well, I guess I could be a little bit nicer, or I can take a whuppin' off of Arch Stills.' And guess what he decided to do?"

5. Demonstrating a concept from a lesson through sharing a fictional experience that serves as an example of the concept.

Yesterday I went to the store. And on the way to the store, I got stuck in traffic. And I waited, and waited, and waited. Then finally I got through the red light, and I got to the store, and the store was closed, so I could not get any groceries, So I left, turned around and

started to head back home, and my car broke down. So I got out and I started walking, and I walked, okay, so tell me, what is the main idea of my story?

6. Telling past experiences of events shows how the concept can be interpreted.

I think public transportation is going to have to pick up. Now it's going to constantly cost you a little bit more to ride the bus, but I think that we'll need more public transportation as an option.

If it was my personal opinion, I would tell you what I feel is the next step in public schools. Pause, Well, up in Indiana they have already made a 4-day school, cause they had already exceeded their budget, and they couldn't afford to put diesel in their buses, so they looked at how can I make my money count, and they said, "If we cut out one day of putting their buses on the road, they could save millions in the school." So, they have cut down to a four-day school, like Monday through Thursday, and they go to 4:00 every day, either 4 or 5. They stay the extra hour, so they can get in the time they are suppose to be in school. And Friday, they don't come to school. (Student suggests, 'I would go with that.')

The last I heard that Indiana is still doing that. And that was when diesel prices were still in the lower \$2.00 range. And this was like, Well, honestly, what I see happening next in the schools, is cutting down a day, or when we were in Washington DC, there was buses going around advertising they were running on natural gas.

7. Explaining a definition through a story related to shared experiences between the teacher and the students.

“Let’s say Student A is on his motorcycle, and he goes down here and runs over the stop sign. Okay, we’ve got to fix our stop sign. Who’s going to pay for the stop sign? Okay, Well I say, he has to pay \$500.00 because this is the first time this has happened in Nantahala, so the court, the judge rules that he has to pay \$500.00 to fix my sign. Now, if you don’t want to pay it, they’re going to take you to jail, if you aren’t going to pay it. \$500.00, the rule. Now two weeks later, Student B goes riding down the road, and he runs over the same stop sign, And maybe I like Student B more than I like Student A, maybe, but I’m the judge, so what is lawfully correct for me to do as the judge? (Student responds, Same fine)

Give him the same punishment that I gave Student A. Why? Because that’s my job, as the judge, interpreting the law. I have to go back to all my decisions, to see what I have done in the past, So I go back and I see, Well, I charged him \$500.00 for a stop sign before, so, well, to be fair, Student B, you’ve got to pay \$500.00 too.”

8. Reading a picture book and then having students respond with personal stories related to the book.

Teacher: *Dear Mom....* (varied voice), *pleeeese. Dear Alex, Look on your dresser.* (Teacher reading from text, I Wanna Iguana.)

Student: He got it (Children view picture see he got the iguana)

Teacher: Student K, have you ever been excited?

Student: Once

Teacher: Student K has only been excited once. When did you get excited?

Student: inaudible

Teacher: By excited I mean when you're saying thank you, thank you, thank you. You never got excited, when you got your cut. when you lost a tooth, the black one, excited, when oh thank you, thank you,

Teacher: He was being respectful for you, What about your baby goat?

Student: But now I'm mad, because Daddy sold them all. It's a daddy goat,

Student: When your mom came home with...inaudible

Teacher: Student K, when did you get excited?

Student: I got excited when I came back to school

Teacher: We got excited too when you came back from inaudible Student H, What about when you got that pink too-too?

Student: I just knew that was coming, That came from my heart.

Teacher: Let's listen to what Student B is excited about. Who told that story on your daddy?

Teacher: Student P you said, in that journal entry the other day you said you've never been excited, and you've never been inaudible

(Conversations ensued. As children reminded others about what they might be excited about.)

Teacher: What about when your mama brought home that baby brother?

You just didn't want (inaudible) What did you name him?

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