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Preschool Oral Narrative Retell Intervention: A Contextualized Approach

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Preschool Oral Narrative Retell Intervention: A Contextualized Approach

(TITLE)

BY

Megan E. Miller

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Running head: PRESCHOOL NARRATIVE INTERVENTION

Preschool Oral Narrative Retell Intervention: A Contextualized Approach

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention on oral narrative retell skills in typically developing preschoolers as a means for fostering the development of narrative structure, story comprehension, and narrative retell skills. Participants were recruited from the Childhood Development Laboratory preschool classrooms located in Buzzard Hall at Eastern Illinois University. Prior to intervention, participants' core receptive and expressive language abilities were assessed using the *Comprehensive Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Preschool-2nd Edition* (CELF-P-2), and oral narrative retells were analyzed for narrative complexity using the *Test of Narrative Retell- Preschool Edition* (TNR-P). The six weeks of narrative intervention consisted of explicit story grammar instruction and narrative retell practice. Participants' oral narrative retells were reassessed using the TNR-P at week three, week six, and five weeks post intervention. The results of the study indicated that participants who received the experimental instruction demonstrated significant gains on narrative retell scores concluding the six-week intervention while their control group counterparts demonstrated no gains in narrative retell abilities. Likewise, experimental group participants demonstrated significantly higher skill maintenance five weeks post intervention compared to control group counterparts. Interestingly, participants' core language abilities were inversely related to their TNR-P scores at baseline, while baseline sentence recall skills demonstrated a positive, linear relationship with narrative performance at the conclusion of intervention.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Preschoolers' oral narrative abilities are important indicators of future academic success (Aram & Nation, 1980; Froiland et al., 2013; Kamhi & Catts, 2012; McCabe & Rollins, 1994; Nancollis et al., 2005; Shankweiler, Crane, & Macaruso, 1992). Specifically, narrative discourse skills are associated with language and literacy competence (Feagans, & Short, 1984; Green, & Klecan-Aker, 2012; Kaderavek, & Sulzby, 2000; Roth, Speece, Cooper, & De La Paz, 1996). Oral narratives serve as the foundation for the development of literate language, which is the matured, decontextualized, formal style of speaking and writing (Dawkins & O'Neill, 2011). Decontextualized, literate language requires the speaker to use specific vocabulary, complex syntax, and sequential organization of events to orient listeners to non-shared experiences removed from referents of time and environmental context (Snow, 1983). When children are young, they rely on referents to compensate for their undeveloped vocabulary and syntax, but with exposure to and practice with narrative discourse, children acquire rich vocabularies and complex syntactical structures, such that their reliance on contextual referents dissipates and more specific, decontextualized language features emerge. Myhill (2009) explains that for children to become competent readers and writers, they must become "adept in transforming oral structure into written structures" using mastered literate language features (p.41). Therefore, oral narrative development in the preschool years greatly influences later developing reading and writing skills. Furthermore, the majority of classroom instruction, participation, and assessment from preschool years and beyond occurs within the context of narrative discourse, so children with advanced narrative comprehension and composition skills are

more likely to participate and succeed within the academic environment (McCabe & Rollins, 1994).

According to Common Core State Standard Initiative [CCSS], kindergarteners are expected to demonstrate competency on several early literacy and oral language skills (CCSS, 2015). Oral language targets are implemented across several goal categories and represented in a variety of expected tasks and activities (CCSS, 2015). Narrative discourse is specifically targeted in the kindergarten standards as students must orally dictate a narration of one or more related events in sequential order and provide a personal reaction (CCSS, 2015).

A previous study by Miller (2015) examined the relationship between phonemic awareness skills and oral narrative retell abilities in preschool children. Additionally, relationships were analyzed between socioeconomic status (SES), narrative retell, and phonemic awareness skills as a means for early identification for children at risk for reading and writing difficulties. Oral narrative complexity was obtained from scores on the *Test of Narrative Retell- Preschool* (TNR-P), and phonemic awareness skill was identified through the teacher-reported *Pre-Literacy Rating Scale* of the *Comprehensive Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Preschool-2* (CELF-P-2). Additionally, socioeconomic status for participants was coded as either low-income or not low-income based upon reported maternal education and students' eligibility for free or reduced lunch programs.

Students from the low SES group scored significantly lower on measures of phonemic awareness skills when compared to scores of students from the non-low SES group. This was an anticipated relationship based upon previous research (Hooper et al.,

2010; Gajus & Barnett, 2010; Spencer et al., 2012). Miser and Hupp (2012) stated families with higher SES have more books in the home, more shared-reading experiences, and higher parental education levels, which fosters a more stimulating environment for language development. Additionally, families with lower education provide fewer shared-reading opportunities to reinforce literacy concepts in the home (Gajus, & Barnett, 2010). Since previous research on school-aged children identified significant correlation between phonemic awareness and low socioeconomic status, similar results were expected for the preschool population.

Conversely, no significant correlation existed between preschoolers' SES and their oral narrative retell ability. Significance between SES and narrative ability was anticipated based upon previous research findings. Nittrouer (1996) suggested that the types of linguistic input directed towards children may vary between different SES groups. Parents from low SES groups use more child-directed language with less variability in communicative interactions, whereas parents from non-low SES groups facilitate a wider range of interactive language exchanges (Nittrouer, 1996). In addition, children from low SES backgrounds have more fluctuation in childcare providers than children from non-low SES backgrounds (Miser & Hupp, 2012). The lack of consistency prevents young children from having routine expressive interactions with adult language models. Discourse routines established during the early years are vital for expressive language development, particularly for the acquisition of narrative structures (Spencer et al., 2012). Therefore, it would have been expected for there to be a significant correlation between oral language ability and SES; however, SES was not indicative of performance on the oral language measure.

Overall, scores from TNR-P were below the age-based criterion limits. In fact, only six of the 62 participants (i.e., approximately 9.7% of participant pool) actually met age-based criteria for narrative retell. This was very surprising because all students scored within the average range on an expressive language standardized measure prior to this study's baseline assessment (i.e., *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Preschool- Second Edition*). Additionally, no relationships or patterns of performance were noted across gender, SES, or early literacy skill levels. The English language arts category under CCSS expects students to be able to produce oral narratives upon entry to kindergarten (CCSS, 2015). If kindergarteners are expected to have oral narrative skills perfected, then signs of narrative development should be apparent in preschools. Due to the overall inability of students to produce narrative retells such that they met age-based criteria, Miller (2015) suggested that narrative retell presents as a relatively novel concept for preschoolers regardless of age (i.e., 3;0-5;11), gender, or socioeconomic status. This suggests preschool students are not receiving high-quality, foundational instruction for oral language targets under CCSS. Therefore, results of Miller (2015) support a greater argument for high-quality, foundational, narrative instruction at the preschool level.

Statement of the Problem

While previous studies have identified the relevance of narrative-based language interventions for individuals with language impairments, few studies have examined the implications of providing an explicit, contextualized narrative intervention to typically developing students as a means of building their oral language skills.

Purpose and Possible Significance of the Study

Previous research by Miller (2015) revealed a general lack in the ability of preschoolers to produce narrative retells. The current study could demonstrate instructional approaches preschool teachers could easily adapt for their classrooms to teach foundational narrative skills. Providing explicit instruction on narrative concepts at the preschool level would better prepare preschool children for kindergarten entry.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention on oral narrative retell skills in typically developing preschoolers as a means for fostering the development of narrative structure, story comprehension, and narrative retell skills.

1. Research Question 1 (RQ1): Will a contextualized narrative intervention increase typically developing preschoolers' oral narrative retell abilities?
2. Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between core language ability and narrative retell ability in typically developing preschoolers?

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Storytelling is an art form that has been passed down from generations since primitive times. We use stories every day as a means of communicating with others and regulating our own internal thoughts. Storytelling is constantly used in schools, as children must be able to read books, write their own stories, organize and convey their personal opinions and thoughts, and comprehend the instructions and lectures of teachers. In fact, children are constantly bombarded with understanding and using narrative discourse throughout their school day. Due to the societal, cultural, and academic relevance of storytelling, children must acquire the linguistic, cognitive, and social skills necessary for production and comprehension of narrative discourse (Gillam, Gillam, & Reece, 2012; Roth et al., 1996, Shankweiler, Crane, & Macaruso, 1992; Young-Suk Grace, 2016).

Narratives are the earliest monologic discourse form to develop and are used to report, analyze, and regulate daily activities (Ukrainetz, 2007). Children use narratives to socialize with peers, script pretend play, regulate thought processes with self-talk, and interact with adults. As children age, narratives become increasingly embedded in academic, social, and mental activities. Hughes, McGillivray and Schmidek (1997) stated, "Narration requires recall and organization of content, adaptation to listeners' background knowledge, formulation of new utterances and relating them to prior utterances, and introduction of referents followed by clear subsequent reference to them" (p. 8).

Common Core State Standards

Since development of narrative discourse serves an integral role in the future academic and social success of students, it is no surprise the new Common Core State

Standards [CCSS] have adjusted nation-wide curricular goals to incorporate and promote narrative development (CCSS, 2015). As a result of the growing research identifying the influential relationship existing between a child's early oral language development and their later reading and writing success (Ball & Trammell, 2011; Beauchat et al., 2009; Froiland et al., 2013; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012; Koutsoftas, Harmon, & Gray, 2009; Nancollis et al., 2005), greater demands exist for preschool and kindergarten teachers to provide exposure and instruction for preliteracy skills, including oral language development.

Although goals under CCSS (2015) do not include specific programming for preschools, increased language arts achievement expectations in kindergarten urge preschool programs to incorporate curricula exposing children to early reading and writing skills prior to kindergarten entry. Variations in pre-academic experiences (e.g., SES, home environment, preschool attendance) create a wide range in early literacy skills upon entry to kindergarten (Carson, Klee, Perry, Muskina, & Donaghy, 1998; Froiland, Powell, Diamond, & Son, 2013; Hupp, Munala, Kaffenberger, & Wessell, 2011; Massetti, 2009; Miser, & Hupp, 2012; Spencer, Clegg, & Stackhouse, 2012). Shifting between adherence to curricular goals and expectation schedules, while attending to individual needs of students, places a great deal of pressure upon teachers to provide for children's specific needs (Gajus & Barnett, 2010). If a child does not receive intensive exposure to literacy concepts during preschool, the risk of later academic difficulties increases (Aram & Nation, 1980; Hooper et al., 2010); therefore, early exposure to pre-reading and writing skills will help prevent later academic difficulties, as well as help unify the academic skill sets of students entering kindergarten.

Given the new focus of academic achievement under CCSS (2015), children need to be exposed to quality narrative-based language instruction prior to kindergarten entry. Specifically, preschool children need exposure to the literary language and general story structure used in the comprehension and composition of narratives. Under “Kindergarten Reading Standards for Literature”, children are expected to include key narrative elements in their story retells, such as characters, settings, and sequential order of events (CCSS, 2015). Additionally, under “Kindergarten Writing Standards”, children are expected to “use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened” (CCSS, 2015, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.1). While these early skills focus on primitive reading and writing concepts, they are the foundational literacy skills used to develop and solidify students’ fluent reading comprehension and written response formulation in later grades (Ezell & Justice, 2000; Hooper et al., 2010; Kamhi & Catts, 2012; Petersen, 2011).

Narrative Development

A child’s ability to produce clear, coherent narratives relies on the complexity of their oral language development. Hughes, McGillivray, and Schmidek (1997) stated, “Narration requires recall and organization of context, adaptation to listeners’ background knowledge, formulation of new utterances and relating them to prior utterances, and introduction of referents followed by clear subsequent reference to them” (p.8). In other words, children must be able to sequence all events of the narrative in a manner that will ease comprehension of the storyline for the listener and demonstrate adequate form, content, and use of language.

Narratives are composed of two elements: the macrostructure and the microstructure. The macrostructure of a narrative refers to the key components associated with genre and story composition. Components typically assessed under the macrostructure include characters, setting, initiating event, internal response, attempts, consequence, and resolution (Gillam, Gillam, & Reece, 2012; Petersen, 2011). Alternatively, the microstructure examines the linguistic complexity at the sentence level. Linguistic devices typically assessed in the microstructure of a narrative include clauses, noun phrases, conjunctions, temporal cohesive ties (e.g., first, then, next, finally), causal cohesive ties (e.g., because, when, so), adversative cohesive ties (e.g., but, instead, actually), mental state verbs (e.g., know, think, remember), linguistic verbs (e.g., yelled, cried, whispered), and adverbs (Gillam, Gillam, & Reece, 2012; Petersen, 2011). Children must be able to thoughtfully organize the “big-idea” concepts of their narratives to achieve well-developed macrostructures, in addition to using very specific, detailed vocabulary to deliver the emotion, entertainment, and spirit of the story. While it takes years for children to produce true, classic narratives, narrative skills can be decomposed into identifiable developmental milestones during the toddler, preschool, and early elementary years to assess a child’s narrative development.

A child’s narrative discourse development and a sense of story is emerging when a child responds to questions about a story, attempts a narrative retell, or produces story-like sequences independently (ASHA, 2001). A child’s first narrative typically will not emerge until the age of 2 (ASHA, 2001). At this level, children embed narratives during adult-child interactions. These most basic forms consist of two events (e.g., introduction, orientation, complication, evaluation, or resolution) with no identifiable high point.

Around the age of 3 years, a child's narratives consist of temporally organized descriptive and action sequences; however, they still omit the high point of the story. These primitive narratives are often retells of frequently reoccurring events. The typical four-year-old produces a narrative known as the "leapfrog". Children during this stage of narrative development frequently omit events of the story that are vital to the listener's comprehension of the story (McCabe & Rollins, 1994). The omission of key events, as well as randomly sequencing events, can make it difficult for a listener to understand a four-year-old's narrative. At five years of age, a typically developing child sequences events within their story; however, it is common for five-year-olds to either end the narrative prematurely, or dwell on a climactic end (McCabe & Rollins, 1994). Finally, the classic narrative style, which resembles the adult story structure, develops around six years of age. The classic narrative style orients a listener to the setting and introductory events through the use of story grammar components, then sequences events of the story to build to the climax, and finally closes the story with a resolution (McCabe & Rollins, 1994).

Narrative Assessment

Insights regarding a preschooler's linguistic development and listening comprehension can be made through an analysis of their oral language complexity. One means of sampling a preschooler's oral language is to analyze their narrative. Analysis of a child's narrative reveals proficiency in their expressive use of form, content, and use of language.

Narratives can be elicited and analyzed in two different manners: retell and self-generation. Narrative retells consist of an examiner presenting a story and then asking the

child to recall as much of the story as possible. While narrative retells are useful, in that the examiner is provided a context, and scoring traditionally consists of checklists indicating whether or not narrative features were present, retells can be unnatural interactions. In the classroom, preschool teachers typically engage children in shared-reading by asking them to predict events, relate to the characters' emotions or situations, and to describe what they observe in the pictures (Strickland, 2000). Preschool teachers rarely ask students to reproduce the storyline when interacting with written narratives. Therefore, directly asking children to reproduce a story word for word without visual support is contradictive to typical classroom interactions. Self-generation consists of open-ended prompts asking children to tell their own made-up stories. This style of elicitation can be challenging for an examiner to score, as it requires very precise documentation of the narrative sample. Additionally, analysis of features present in the child's self-generated narrative sample can be more time consuming compared to analysis of features present in narrative retells due to the familiarity of context and pre-established narrative features already devised on scoring forms (Spencer & Petersen, 2012).

While numerous assessment protocols have been well researched and developed for evaluating children's articulation, phonology, semantics, and syntax, very few norm-referenced assessments exist to evaluate children's narrative abilities (i.e., story grammar components, microstructural elements, cohesive ties, linguistic diversity, and overall productivity; Petersen, Gillam, & Gillam, 2008). Even fewer assessments exist for the preschool population (i.e., ages 3;0-5;11). After a thorough investigation of the narrative protocols currently available on the market for preschoolers (i.e., [LinguiSystems website](#),

Pearson website, and evidence-based maps located on ASHA website), less than a half dozen assessments have been developed and researched since 1969.

The *Bus Story Test* (Renfrew, 1969) is the only standardized, norm-referenced narrative assessment for children ages 3;6-6;11. Since its creation, revised protocols have been developed with normative data for both the British edition (*Renfrew Bus Story-Revised*; Renfrew & Hancox, 1997), and the North American edition (*Renfrew Bus Story-North American edition*; Cowley & Glasgow, 1997). This assessment evaluates the oral narrative retell skills of preschool children with a supplemental protocol available to assess story generation. Narratives are assessed for inclusion of information (i.e., story details), mean length utterance, overall linguistic complexity (i.e., use of subordinate and relative clauses), and narrative level of independence.

Bishop and Edmundson (1987) analyzed the predictive validity of *The Renfrew Bus Story-Revised* for the purposes of identifying preschoolers at risk for language impairments. The longitudinal analysis compared four-year-old preschoolers' oral narrative retells with their later language scores (i.e., receptive and expressive use and understanding of phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics) at ages 5 years, 6 months and 15 years. Participant's retell scores at age 4 were significantly related to their language scores obtained eighteen months later and ten years later (Bishop & Edmundson, 1987). Pankratz, Plante, Vance, and Insalaco (2007) simulated a similar study to analyze the predictive and diagnostic validity of the *Renfrew Bus Story- North American edition*. While narrative retell scores resulted in moderate to high correlations with scores from language assessments three years later, scores were non-predictive beyond age seven. Furthermore, the sensitivity of the *Renfrew Bus Story- North American*

edition over identified typically developing children as having poor narrative skills in preschool. These results support the need for further research and development of standardized, norm-referenced narrative assessments for the preschool population.

In 2010, Spencer and Peterson developed a standardized curriculum-based measure, the *Narrative Language Measures* (NLM). The NLM protocol is sensitive enough to allow teachers and professionals to frequently document and monitor subtle progress of narrative skills. It is composed of the *Test of Narrative Retell* (TNR), *Test of Story Comprehension* (TSC), and *Test of Personal Generation* (TPG); however, only the TNR portion of the NLM includes normative data for the preschool population (i.e., ages 3-5). Narrative retells are assessed for story grammar components (e.g., character, setting, problem), cohesion (e.g., because, then, next), and episodes (e.g., problem+attempt, problem+consequence+ending). One limitation of the TNR is that children may not detail their narrative retell productions as thoroughly as they might for self-generated narratives due to the influence of theory of mind as a “familiar-listener effect” is emulated (Liles, 1985). Children naturally create assumptions regarding information the listeners are already aware of, such as story details, contexts, and events, and therefore, they modify their narratives accordingly (Peterson, 1993). While this is a typical strategy used for interacting in social-contexts, it can be counterproductive for the assessment process. When the examiner reads the story to the child, the child is already forming the perception that the examiner is fully knowledgeable and aware of the story, and may omit components of their narrative retell since the examiner already knows the story (Liles, 1985). Therefore, creating the simulation that the examiner is an unfamiliar listener (e.g., removing the examiner from the room during story presentation, having participant listen

to the story presentation with headphones, etc.) is important during narrative assessment (Hayward, & Schneider, 2000).

The only other criterion-referenced tool available for preschool narrative assessment is to compare Narrative Structure Scores (NSS) from a narrative language sample analysis with normative data found on the Wisconsin database (ages 3-13) using the *Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts* (SALT; Miller & Chapman, 2004).

Narratives can be assessed at both the macrostructure and microstructure levels.

Examiners elicit narrative retells using wordless picture books. One limitation for this style of assessment is that analyzing and scoring the SALT analysis is incredibly time consuming. Additionally, the previously discussed familiar-unfamiliar listener effect applies to the quality of children's narrative retells elicited for SALT analysis (Liles, 1985; Peterson, 1993). Furthermore, Petersen, Gillam, and Gillam (2008) expressed concerns for the reliability of the NSS scoring system, as it utilizes a 5-point Likert scale which can foster ambiguity in scoring.

While ASHA (2001) supports the early assessment and identification of students considered at risk for oral language difficulties, reliable assessment tools for evaluating oral language skills, such as narratives, in the preschool population are scarce. The purpose of early assessment is to identify and remediate children at risk before failure is experienced. Therefore, implications stress the need for research and development of additional narrative assessments for the preschool population.

Classroom Expectations for Narrative Instruction

While research supports early exposure to preliteracy concepts, and CCSS (2015) demand strict adherence to curricular goals with expectations of higher academic

achievement in earlier grades, several challenges exist for preschool teachers wanting to integrate narrative instruction in their classrooms. Preschool is typically the first setting in which children experience academic and behavioral expectations. Teachers must spend a great deal of time teaching classroom rules and expectations, daily routines, and functional adaptive skills in addition to the pre-academic skills already included in preschool curricula (Williams, 2001). Preschool programs typically operate two classes (i.e., one class in the morning and one in the afternoon) a few days each week.

Logistically, finding time to incorporate additional academic material will require preschool teachers to eliminate time spent on other necessary teaching objectives or integrate new concepts into current practices (Williams, 2001). Therefore, development of instructional narrative programs that supply the quantity and quality of instruction needed to sufficiently support early exposure remains a need.

Addressing Narratives in the Classroom with Shared Reading

One way for teachers to embed narrative development and promote oral language within their current curriculum is to incorporate instruction through shared reading and dramatic play. Shared reading alone provides preschool children with a positive adult model, as well as exposure to a variety of books they cannot yet independently read (Hoggan & Strong, 1994). Additionally, shared reading naturally provides opportunities for teachers to target various critical thinking targets, early literacy skills, print awareness features, and language targets (Hoggan & Strong, 1994). Prior to reading a story, the teacher should orient students to the topic of the story by integrating information they already know or previous life experiences. Students can practice oral narration by responding to inference questions about a story during the pre-story presentation. Hoggan

and Strong (1994) reported teachers' use of summarizing, questioning, and predicting events with the class during the pre-story presentation enhances students' overall story comprehension.

After reading the book, teachers can supervise various story mapping activities, which require student participation and discussion as they recall the important events and details of the story. Students could complete discussion webs, flow charts, or story retell activities to enhance story comprehension, organizational sequence skills, and oral expression (Hoggan & Strong, 1994). These activities, as suggested by Hoggan and Strong (1994), help preschoolers produce and understand more complex structured language within narrative discourse. Story mapping not only reinforces the concepts presented within the story, but also extends students' knowledge beyond the story as they relate the literary events with other world events and experiences (Hoggan & Strong, 1994).

Dramatic play is another age-appropriate literary activity for targeting narrative skills within a context for preschoolers. Dramatic play requires students to reenact the story's sequence of events through the use of related narrative dialogue and structure. Hoggan and Strong (1994) report dramatic play provides teachers with an instructional opportunity in an age-appropriate manner to enhance story comprehension and organizational sequencing skills. Acting the story out requires the internalization of the story's events in sequence, comprehension of story components, and the oral discussion and presentation of the plot (Hoggan & Strong, 1994).

Empirical Evidence of Narrative Instruction

Contextualized Narrative Interventions

Contextualized interventions originate from Vygotsky's social-interaction theory, in which children acquire new skills through socially mediated interactions between themselves and a more skilled partner (Vygotsky, 1978). Contextualized interventions explicitly teach concepts and strategies within a context or with familiar themes, thus drawing the student's attention to the target itself (Ukrainetz, 2007). Adults then provide models and supportive instruction to foster acquisition, use, and monitoring of that specific skill (Gillam, Gillam, & Reece, 2012). As students progress in ability levels, they internalize the problem solving strategies necessary for independent task completion.

Alternatively, decontextualized interventions focus on teaching isolated skills within adult-directed activities. Decontextualized interventions originate from the theoretical work of John Dewey, who suggested mixing instructional topics, such as math, literacy, and science, into every learning opportunity for young students (Simpson, Jackson, & Aycock, 2005). This type of intervention is provided with the intention of increasing students' specific skill knowledge so that the specific skill may be later applied to a variety of contexts. Conflicting results exist for the efficacy of both contextualized and decontextualized intervention models.

A systematic review by Petersen (2011) investigated the efficacy of nine contextualized, narrative-based language interventions for children with language impairments or learning disabilities. All studies included in the systematic review reported moderate to large effect sizes for gains in oral narrative microstructure and macrostructure. Picture cards or wordless picture books were used to elicit story retells or

novel story generations during explicit, contextualized instruction. Petersen (2011) concluded that for children to internalize the structure and sequence of narration, they must be provided with direct, explicit, focused instruction that fosters numerous opportunities for storytelling practice. Furthermore, Petersen (2011) suggested that for students to achieve success with independent narrative retell tasks, they must be provided with scaffolding supports that fade as independence is gained.

Gillam, Gillam, and Reece (2012) examined the efficacy of two language interventions, contextualized and decontextualized, on the improvement of oral language skills of 24 children with language impairment. The contextualized language intervention (CLI) used children's storybooks to target oral and written language. The decontextualized language intervention (DLI) used the No-Glamour grammar games, language cards, and situational drill cards by LinguSystems to target vocabulary, sentence complexity, pragmatics, and narrative discourse. At the conclusion of intervention, CLI and DLI groups were compared on sentence-level language measures, and narrative discourse language measures. While both groups demonstrated gains on all language measures, Gillam, Gillam, and Reece (2012) note that the CLI group consistently produced narratives with more episodes and embedded episodes than the DLI group, thus concluding that contextualized narrative language interventions best support teaching and enhance learning of narrative concepts.

Narrative Skills Interventions

Previous research has combined contextualized and decontextualized interventions to target narrative skills in students with language impairments (Brown, Garzarek, & Donegan, 2014; Davies, Shanks, & Davies, 2004; Green & Klecan-Aker, 2012; Hayward,

& Schneider, 2000; Peterson, 2011; Stetter, & Hughes, 2010; Swanson, Fey, Mills, & Hood, 2005). These mixed interventions focus on explicitly teaching story grammar components (e.g., character, setting, problem, attempt, solution, etc.) to foster increased identification and comprehension of narrative macrostructure. Explicit instruction of story grammar elements can occur within contextualized, shared-reading experiences, or during decontextualized, drill-based activities. After specific story grammar instruction is provided, students are typically given contextualized opportunities to practice identifying macrostructure elements within pictures and storybooks. As students gain proficiency, they may then participate in activities involving narrative retelling or generating their own novel stories.

Gillam, Olszewski, Fargo, and Gillam (2014) investigated the efficacy of a first grade, class-wide, mixed narrative intervention. Participants were divided into high-risk and low-risk groups based on their language ability scores. Pre- and post-intervention narrative assessments consisted of the *Monitoring Indicators of Scholarly Language* (MISL; Gillam, & Gillam, 2013). The MISL yields two narrative complexity subscale scores: *Microstructure* and *Macrostructure*. The *Microstructure* subscale assesses inclusion of coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, metacognitive verbs, adverbs, and elaborated noun phrases. The *Macrostructure* subscale assesses inclusion of the following story grammar components: character, setting, initiating event, internal response, plan, attempt, and consequence.

A six week intervention was completed in three phases, with each session lasting approximately 30 minutes. Phase I consisted of learning basic story grammar (e.g., character, setting, initiating event, attempt, consequence, etc.), listening to stories with

simple episodes, and practicing telling stories with simple episodes. Phase II consisted of elaborating simple episodic narratives by including complicating actions, dialogue, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, metacognitive verbs, adverbs, and adjectives (Gillam, Olszewski, Fargo, & Gillam, 2014). Phase III consisted of teaching the students to independently generate complex and elaborated narratives.

While gains in narrative complexity (i.e., *Microstructure* and *Macrostructure* subscales from the MISL) increased across all participants, scores for the high-risk experimental group reached clinical significance; however, gains in narrative complexity for the low-risk experimental groups did not, which suggests the frequency and intensity of this intervention program was inadequate to meet the needs of struggling students. Gillam, Olszewski, Fargo, and Gillam (2014) concluded that increased narrative complexity was achieved as a result of an intervention focused on story grammar, character motivation, casual links between events, and story complexity.

Hayward and Schneider (2000) investigated the efficacy of a contextualized, story grammar narrative intervention for 13 preschoolers with language impairments. All students received LINKS narrative intervention program, which included repeated exposure to narratives, vocabulary building, comprehension monitoring, narrative retelling, and role-playing narratives (Hayward, & Schneider, 2000). Additionally, students received explicit, contextualized story grammar intervention. The story grammar intervention consisted of teaching story grammar components, sorting and sequencing events of stories, identifying missing story components, and reformulating out-of-sequence stories (Hayward, & Schneider, 2000). Students practiced narrative retell and narrative generation using picture cards. Temporal and causal relationships between

events of narratives remained a focus throughout the intervention. At the conclusion of the intervention, single-subject data revealed significant increases in the number of story grammar units and number of episodes in participants' narratives.

Davies, Shanks, and Davies (2004) explored another narrative intervention approach for children with language delays. Thirty-four kindergarten-aged children identified with language delays participated in a narrative-based language intervention targeting story grammar and sequence of macrostructure elements of oral narratives. Intervention was provided in a large-group setting for 40 minutes, once a week for eight weeks. Students were taught story grammar components by identifying, describing, and answering the following questions: who, where, when, what happened, and why. Teachers used picture cue cards, puppets, and role-playing to elicit familiar story and nursery rhyme retells. Once students gained proficiency with narrative retell, intervention shifted to novel narrative generation using picture cards and big books. Results indicated significant gains on macrostructure inclusion and story comprehension. Davie, Shanks, and Davies (2004) suggest, "Results indicate that intervention targeted on the oral narrative of younger children can produce significant improvements in the quality of [their] narratives and suggest improved participation in mainstream classroom activities" (283). Providing a class-wide explicit narrative intervention could elevate the oral language abilities of the bottom performers, thus closing the gap between the bottom and top performers.

Green and Klecan-Aker (2012) developed a narrative intervention targeting story grammar components and narrative organization for 24 children with learning disabilities. Intervention was provided in a small-group setting for 30 minutes, twice a week for 13 weeks. The first three weeks of the intervention targeted initiating event,

attempt, and consequence. These story grammar components were targeted first to establish rule-bound temporal and casual relationships between the events of a story. Since internal response story grammar components are often omitted from the narratives of children with learning disabilities, it was introduced next in the intervention sequence to explore how internal responses impact the actions and consequences in a story (Green & Klecan-Aker, 2012). Internal response instruction included explicit instruction of character's emotions and feelings, which further implied the casual relationships between events of a story. Participants practiced identifying and sequencing four events of a story using academic activities. During the final weeks of instruction, character and setting were finally introduced. Participants were instructed to explain as much detail as possible to answer the following questions: who, where, and when. Participants were then given two weeks to practice identifying, sequencing, and using all five story grammar components. At the conclusion of the intervention, participants significantly increased the average number of T-units and developmental story level. Effect sizes for both measures were large. Green and Klecan-Aker (2012) demonstrated the potential for students with learning disabilities to improve their oral narrative structure using explicit story grammar instruction.

Khan, Nelson, and Whyte (2013) examined the influence of choice on the efficacy of a story grammar intervention for 29 typically developing preschoolers. Intervention was provided for 15 minutes, twice a week for four weeks. Participants were placed in one of two experimental groups: choice or no-choice. The choice group was given choices of story grammar components to complete their narrative during intervention. For example, the instructor would teach the component 'setting' and ask the participant to select a

setting picture card from a field of two options to build their narrative (Khan, Nelson, & Whyte, 2013). This process continued for all six of the targeted story grammar components (i.e., setting, character, initiating event, problem, solution, and resolution) until the narrative was complete. The instructor then read the completed story script to the child. In the no-choice group, the instructor explained the story grammar component then selected a picture card to build the narrative. Once the narrative contained all six story cards, the instructor read the story script to the child. Results indicated significant improvement on story grammar inclusion for participants in the choice group. The choice group consistently included more problems and attempts than the no-choice group. Additionally, the choice group demonstrated significant increases in their story comprehension scores whereas the no-choice group did not. Participants in the choice group also achieved significantly higher oral narrative retell scores on the *Bus Story* (Renfrew, 1969) compared to the no-choice group. It should be noted that while the no-choice group did not significantly increase their scores across the three tasks, improvement was observed in scores for all three tasks. Khan, Nelson, and Whyte (2013) demonstrated the importance of choice on the narrative development potential for typically developing preschoolers.

Strong and Shaver (1991) investigated how children can simply improve their oral narrative retell through isolated practice opportunities. This study investigated the stability of cohesion of three oral narrative retells for school-age children with and without language impairments across six weeks. Students completed one oral narrative retell every two weeks for three weeks. The greatest stability for both groups of students occurred across Trial 2 and Trial 3, with significant differences in narrative ability

between Trial 1 and Trial 3. Cohesive adequacy (i.e., percentage of complete and incomplete ties) and verbal productivity (i.e., total T-units, total words, and total ties) were most consistent across Trial 2 and Trial 3 for both groups. Again, significant differences between Trial 1 and Trial 3 existed for cohesive adequacy and verbal productivity scores for both groups. Moderate to large effect sizes existed between group membership, thus demonstrating large variations in scores between the group performances with the typically developing group performing above the language impaired group on all narrative measures. Strong and Shaver (1991) demonstrated the importance of providing opportunities for young children to practice oral narrative retell. Without receiving instruction, both typically developing children and children with language impairment achieved significant growth in their narrative retell ability. This study also suggests the importance of baselining narrative skills across an extended period of time, since children can potentially gain narrative skills simply with exposure and opportunities for practice.

The *Black Sheep Press* narrative program developed by Rippon, Carey, Broughton, and Shanks (2007) also combines story grammar instruction with narrative retell practice. Instruction of basic story grammar elements to help students answer the following questions: who, where, when, what happened. As children gain proficiency in identifying and labeling the basic story grammar elements, they are challenged to begin sequencing the events of stories in two-sequence, three-sequence, and then four-sequence stories (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007). Additional story grammar components, casual factors, and temporal elements are then targeted to promote comprehension of the story sequences while increasing narrative complexity.

Results from the initial pilot study of the *Black Sheep Press* program indicated significant gains in overall narrative performance, including reduction of non-specific words (e.g., thing, that, it, etc.), increased adjective and verb use, increased verbal comprehension and listening skills, and increased attention (Suttie, 2007). Children with language impairments reportedly increased their expressive language scores on narrative assessments as much as 1-3 years within a 6-month intervention period (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007).

Conclusion

A review of the literature identifies the need to develop instructional tools to encourage oral language development in students during preschool years, as oral narrative skills are a widely accepted predictor of children's later reading and writing success (Ball & Trammell, 2011; Beauchat et al., 2009; Froiland et al., 2013; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012; Kamhi & Catts, 2012; Nancollis et al., 2005). More research is required to determine possible instructional methods for incorporating oral language targets into foundation-level preschool classroom instruction. Given the high academic relevancy of narratives, and since previous evidence suggests preschool programs are not providing the high-quality, foundational instruction necessary for young children to develop narrative language skills (Ball & Trammell, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2013; Gajus & Barnett, 2010; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012; Miller, 2015); therefore, this study aims to contribute to the current literature by providing support for implementation of explicit narrative instruction to enhance preschoolers' narrative skill development which will provide foundational skills necessary for later reading and writing skill development.

Chapter III Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention on oral narrative retell skills in typically developing preschoolers as a means for fostering the development of narrative structure, story comprehension, and narrative retell skills.

Research Questions

This exploratory experimental study investigates the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention on the oral narrative retell skills of typically developing preschoolers.

1. Research Question 1 (RQ1): Will a contextualized narrative intervention increase typically developing preschoolers' oral narrative retell abilities?
2. Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between core language ability and narrative retell ability in typically developing preschoolers?

Hypothesis

After a review of the available literature to date, it is hypothesized:

1. Students receiving the contextualized narrative intervention will perform better on oral narrative retell tasks compared to matched peers not receiving intervention.
2. Students with higher core language abilities will achieve greater scores on their oral narrative retells.

Design of the Study

This exploratory experimental study examined the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention on oral narrative retell skills of preschool children, ages 3;0 to 5;11. Intervention utilized direct, explicit story grammar vocabulary instruction,

embedded exposure to narrative concepts through storybook readings, and reinforced opportunities to practice narratives through interactive games and activities. Accessory activities and multi-sequence picture cards were included from the *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition* and the *Black Sheep Press: Narrative Sequences- 3rd edition* instructional packs (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007). A detailed description of this study's explicit, contextualized narrative intervention program is provided in Appendix B. Core language ability and oral narrative skill level were measured through direct participation utilizing the *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals- Preschool- Second Edition* (CELF-P-2; Wiig, Secord, & Semel, 2004), as well as the *Test of Narrative Retell –Preschool* (TNR-P; Spencer & Petersen, 2012).

Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study was the explicit, contextualized story grammar and narrative retell intervention. Each session was designed integrating instruction and activities into the pre-reading, shared-reading, and post-reading model developed by Hoggan and Strong (1994). Intervention created for this study incorporated explicit story grammar vocabulary instruction, embedded, discussion-based, contextualized narrative instruction through shared-storybook reading, and multiple opportunities to practice narrative skills through supplemental activities from the *Black Sheep Press* narrative packets (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007).

The *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition* and the *Black Sheep Press: Narrative Sequences- 3rd edition* offer a low-cost, highly structured, narrative intervention approach by providing several of age-appropriate stories and literacy-based activities, outlining explicit story grammar instruction, and offering numerous

opportunities for narrative retell and story generation practice (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007). The *Black Sheep Press* program developers are certified speech-language pathologists in the United Kingdom who specialize in child language therapy in preschools and primary schools. Potential activities for each session are outlined and scripted in the program handbook and are flexible enough to adapt to either individual sessions or small-group sessions. The *Black Sheep Press* program is currently used in numerous preschools and primary schools across the UK. Since its publication in 2007, participating schools have documented the increases in performance of “children’s attention and listening skills, confidence, improved language scores, and staff’s awareness and focus on language within the curriculum” (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007, p. 6). While this program offers numerous activities and scripts for intervention implementation, only a few supplemental activities were selected from this protocol, as the purpose of the current study was to integrate instruction within the large-group, contextualized, shared-storybook reading intervention model (Hoggan & Strong, 1994). A detailed description of this study’s explicit, contextualized narrative intervention program is provided in Appendix B.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study was the story retell scores of the preschool participants obtained from benchmark assessments on the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012).

Participants

Approval of the Institutional Review Board and Animal Care and Use Committee was obtained prior to the implementation of this study. The Childhood Development

Laboratory obtains IRB consent upon admittance to the preschool program, and thus, no additional IRB approval was necessary. Therefore, only parental consent was necessary for the current study. Participants were recruited from the Childhood Development Laboratory classrooms in Buzzard Hall at Eastern Illinois University. Participants included 14 preschool students; 8 females and 6 males. Students' ages ranged from 3 years, 2 months to 5 years and 3 months. The average age of participants in the control group was 4;2, and the average age of participants in the experimental group was 4;7. Students identified with a language disorder or diagnosed developmental delay were removed from the participant pool, as language disabilities correlate highly with difficulties in oral language skills (ASHA, 2001). Letters of consent containing procedural details of the study, as well as outlining the benefits and risks associated with participation during the research investigation, were distributed to parents of students at the participating preschool (see Parent Letter in Appendix A). Additionally, children were provided with an age-appropriate explanation of the assessment process. Verbal assent was obtained from each participant prior to testing. At any point during the assessment process, a child had the ability to refuse participation. All data from these subjects were removed from the study.

Procedures

Assessment. All participants were assessed on basic language concepts using the *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals- Preschool- Second Edition (CELF-P-2;* Wiig, Secord, & Semel, 2004). The CELF-P-2 evaluates skills within specific language categories, which include sentence structure, word structure, expressive vocabulary, concepts and following directions, recalling sentences, and basic concepts to identify,

diagnose, and monitor language deficits in children ages 3;0 to 6;0. The CELF-P-2 is a formal, standardized, criterion-referenced assessment used to analyze receptive and expressive language skills. Empirical evidence describes the validity and reliability of the CELF-P-2: test-retest average stability coefficients ranged from adequate (.78) to excellent (.90), internal consistency reliability coefficients ranged from good (.88) to excellent (.92), 97% interrater reliability, and a .73 criterion-related evidence of validity with the *Preschool Language Scale-4*.

Administration of the CELF-P-2 consists of an examiner reading scripted prompts aloud to elicit a response from the participant. Administration time takes approximately fifteen minutes. The following subtests were administered to calculate each participant's core language ability: *Sentence Structure*, *Word Structure*, and *Expressive Vocabulary*.

The *Sentence Structure* subtest was administered to assess each participant's ability to respond to oral directions. This subtest consisted of pictures depicting various syntactical structures including prepositional phrases, verb conditions, modifications, copulas, infinitives, negations, passive verbs, relative clauses, compound sentences, indirect objects, indirect requests, and subordinate clauses. The examiner read a verbal prompt describing a picture, and the participant was required to point to the appropriate picture from a field of four pictures. For example, when prompted, "Look at these four pictures. Point to *The boy is sleepy*", the participant was required to point to the sleeping boy in a field of four pictures.

The *Word Structure* subtest was administered to assess each participant's ability to complete a sentence (i.e., cloze procedure) with the targeted structure(s). This subtest consisted of pictures depicting various word structures including prepositions, regular

plural, possessive nouns, verb tenses, copulas, pronouns, noun derivational forms, and comparative and superlative derivational forms. The examiner read a verbal prompt describing the picture. The prompt consisted of two sentences. The first sentence was a direct model of the targeted word structure. The second sentence was a prompted closed task that required the participant to complete the sentence. For example, when prompted, “Look at the picture. Here is a baby. The baby is crawling. Here is a girl. The girl is _____”, the participant was required to say “walking” to complete the sentence.

The *Expressive Vocabulary* subtest was administered to assess each participant’s ability to verbally identify an object, person, or activity. This subtest consisted of a series of pictures of common objects, people, and activities. The examiner prompted the participant to identify each picture. For example, when shown a picture of a carrot and asked, “What is this?”, the participant was required to verbalize “carrot”.

The *Recalling Sentences* supplemental subtests was administered to gather additional insights into each participant’s expressive and receptive language abilities. This subtest was administered to assess the participant’s ability to imitate sentences by using oral models of various sentence structures including active declarative, active declarative with coordination, active declarative with noun modification, active declarative with negative, active declarative with subordinate clause, active declarative with relative clause, active interrogative with negative, passive declarative with negative, passive declarative with coordination, and passive interrogative. The examiner read a sentence aloud and asked the participant to repeat the sentence. For example, when the examiner read, “I’m going to say something to you. I want you to listen carefully and say exactly what I say. Let’s try one. Say, ‘The dog is eating his food’”, the participant was required to say, “The dog

is eating his food”. Scaled scores from this subtest were then combined with scores from the *Sentence Structure*, *Word Structure*, and *Expressive Vocabulary* subtests to form the following composite standard scores: *Core Language*, *Receptive Language*, and *Expressive Language*.

Additional benchmark testing included the *Test of Narrative Retell –Preschool* (TNR-P; Spencer & Petersen, 2012). The TNR-P evaluates a child’s ability to retell a story previously heard. The results are based upon developmental normative data of children’s oral narrative structures. The TNR-P is a piloted, standardized, criterion-referenced assessment used for benchmark measures and progress monitoring. Preliminary empirical evidence describes the validity and reliability of the TNR-P: alternate form reliability includes a bivariate Pearson correlation of .77, 91% fidelity of administration, 96% interrater reliability, a .88 criterion-related evidence of validity with *The Renfrew Bus Story* (Renfrew, 1969).

Administration of the TNR-P consists of an examiner reading the scripted narrative passage aloud to the participant. The examiner then reads a prompt asking the participant to repeat the narrative to the best of their ability. Administration time takes approximately six minutes to complete three stories. While picture support can be provided for young children or individuals with language or developmental deficits, the TNR-P was not administered with accompanying picture support in an effort to maintain consistency of administration. The TNR-P was used to assess participants’ narrative comprehension through inclusion of story grammar components (i.e., character, setting, emotion, problem, attempt, consequence, and ending). Administration of the TNR-P occurred at baseline, week three of intervention, week six of intervention, and five weeks post

intervention. Frequent assessment of narrative skills assisted in the determination of intervention efficacy.

Intervention. Participants were divided into two groups using convenience sampling: intervention group and control group. Participants in the control group received standard, non-enriched literacy exposure, which consisted of day-to-day, teacher-led, shared-reading activities in their preschool program. Participants in the experimental group completed a six-week, explicit, contextualized narrative intervention. Intervention was provided once a week for 60 minutes. Story grammar intervention topics included character, emotion, setting, problem, attempt, consequence, and resolution. Additional instruction on oral narrative retell was also provided. Topics were addressed in a large-group setting (see Appendix B for a complete description of intervention activities and participation). Each week, participants were lead through a variety of pre-reading activities, storybook previews, and post-reading activities that focused on specific story grammar components with embedded opportunities for narrative retell practice. Intervention was provided by the primary investigator of this study.

The first three weeks of the intervention focused on teaching story grammar vocabulary and concepts. Week one focused on answering and describing the question “who?” to target story grammar components character and emotion. *Three Little Pigs* (Du Bois, 1962) was used as the central storyline for teaching characters and emotions. Supplemental activities included “Jump in the Hoop” and “Three Little Pigs Storyboard” from the *Nursery Narratives- 2nd edition* pack (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007).

Week two targeted the story grammar component setting. This week focused on answering and describing the questions “when” and “where”. Participants were asked to describe the various settings in picture cards, as well as match character and setting picture cards. *Little Red Riding Hood* (Pinkney, 2007) was used as the central storyline for instruction. Supplemental activities included “Animal Homes” and “Little Red Riding Hood Storyboard” from the *Nursery Narratives- 2nd edition* pack (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007).

Week three primarily consisted of answering the question “what happened?”. Students were required to identify problems and consequences using picture card sequences and *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* (Hennessy, 2006). The “Two-Part Sequences” portion of the *Narrative Sequences* packet was used to teach problem and consequence (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007). Additionally, the TNR-P was administered at the conclusion of week three to measure the efficacy of a contextualized story grammar narrative intervention.

Weeks four through six consisted of a continuation of story grammar instruction, as well as instruction and practice with narrative retell. In week four, instruction focused on identifying and sequencing problem, attempt, and consequence. Activities consisted of reading *Harry the Dirty Dog* (Zion, 1956) and the “Three-Part Sequences” portion of the *Narrative Sequences* packet (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007).

In week five, instruction focused on identifying and describing the solution of stories. During interactive activities, students were expected to identify characters, emotions, settings, problems, attempts, consequences, and solutions. The “Four-Part Sequences” portion of the *Narrative Sequences* packet gave students opportunities to practice

identifying and describing the various story grammar components (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007). Additionally, students engaged in shared-reading and retell activities using *Clifford: The Firehouse Dog* (Bridwell, 1994).

In week six, instruction focused on identifying and describing the resolution of a story. *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* (Trivizas & Oxenbury, 1993) storyline was used to facilitate story grammar identification and narrative retells. The TNR-P was administered at the conclusion of week six to measure the efficacy of a contextualized story grammar narrative intervention in combination with oral narrative retell instruction. Five weeks after the conclusion of intervention, the TNR-P was administered to measure potential longitudinal effects of intervention.

Data Analysis

Preliminary statistical analysis of data was conducted using a non-equivalent group design to assess the similarities of the already intact experimental and control groups. To determine equivalency of the control and experimental groups, data was utilized to assess whether differences exist in the mean standard scores for the CELF-P-2 (Wiig, et al., 2004).

To determine the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention, participants of the current study were assessed using the CELF-2 and the TNR-P. Language abilities from the CELF-P-2 were analyzed for correlation with narrative retell scores from the TNR-P baseline, week three, week six, and five weeks post intervention to determine the impact of initial language ability on each participant's narrative retell growth. Efficacy of the narrative intervention was evaluated by analyzing multiple data sets using repeated measures t-test. The experimental group's narrative retell scores were

compared to the control group's narrative retell scores from the TNR-P at baseline, week three of intervention (story grammar instruction), week six of intervention (story grammar instruction with retell practice), and five weeks post intervention (longitudinal efficacy). Efficacy of story grammar instruction was determined by comparing baseline and week three TNR-P scores of the experimental group and control group. Efficacy of story grammar instruction plus narrative retell practice was determined by comparing week three and week six TNR-P scores of the experimental group and control group. Efficacy of overall narrative intervention was determined by comparing baseline and week six, as well as baseline and five weeks post intervention TNR-P scores of the experimental group and control group.

Summary

As the educational standards increase for preschool teachers preparing students for kindergarten entry, there is an increased need for children to receive explicit language instruction in preschool. Use of contextualized, explicit narrative interventions could help insure children are receiving the quality and quantity of oral language instruction needed for their success in kindergarten. Modified *Black Sheep Press* narrative instruction (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007), and modified shared-reading intervention model by Hoggan and Strong (1994) could easily be adapted into scripted instruction packets for preschool teachers to use during large or small group instruction times with their students. Incorporating oral language instruction at the preschool level would increase the potential for students to achieve academic success in future years. This study considered narrative instruction effectiveness relative to receptive and expressive language skills.

Chapter IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention on the oral narrative retell skills of typically developing preschoolers. Specific instruction of story grammar narrative vocabulary was addressed within the context of large-group, shared, storybook reading with related, isolated activities to address and enforce narrative vocabulary. Additionally, explicit practice with narrative retells were provided through large group activities. This study aimed to contribute to the current literature regarding narrative instruction for preschoolers to aid in their acquisition of necessary prerequisite skills required for achievement of kindergarten-level standards for story comprehension and story formulation. Two research questions were analyzed:

1. Research Question 1 (RQ1): Will a contextualized narrative intervention increase typically developing preschoolers' oral narrative retell abilities?
2. Research Question 2 (RQ2): What is the relationship between core language ability and narrative retell ability in typically developing preschoolers?

Baseline Assessment Data

For the experimental group, a total of 8 preschoolers were evaluated using the CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006). Standard scores on the Core Language (CL) composite ranged from 88 to 129 ($M = 106.25$, $SD = 14.59$). The distribution was somewhat positively skewed (.57) and negatively kurtotic (-.84). Approximately 88% of the students scored above 90, which explains the skew, and most scores only varied moderately from the mean, which accounts for the negative kurtosis. Standard scores on the Expressive Language (EL) composite ranged from 92 to 130 ($M = 108.38$, $SD = 13.32$). The

distribution was somewhat positively skewed (.74) and negatively kurtotic (-.42). All of the students scored above 90, which explains the skew, and most scores only varied moderately from the mean, which accounts for the negative kurtosis. Standard scores on the Language Structure (LS) composite ranged from 86 to 127 ($M = 107.50$, $SD = 14.14$). The distribution was somewhat positively skewed (.04) and negatively kurtotic (-.72). Only one of the students scored below 90, which explains the skew, and most scores only varied moderately from the mean, which accounts for the negative kurtosis.

For the control group, a total of 6 preschoolers were evaluated using the CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006). Standard scores on the CL composite ranged from 106 to 121 ($M = 111.50$, $SD = 5.79$). The distribution was positively skewed (1.10) and negatively kurtotic (-.15). All of the students scored above 105, which explains the skew, and most scores only varied moderately from the mean, which accounts for the negative kurtosis. Standard scores on the EL composite ranged from 94 to 130 ($M = 107.17$, $SD = 12.09$). The distribution was positively skewed (1.60) and positively kurtotic (3.67). One of the students scored below 100, which explains the skew, and four students scored between 102 and 107, with two receiving scores of 105, which accounts for the positive kurtosis. Standard scores on the LS composite ranged from 90 to 125 ($M = 105.83$, $SD = 11.60$). The distribution was positively skewed (1.60) and positively kurtotic (3.67). One of the students scored below 100, which explains the skew, and four students scored similarly, which accounts for the positive kurtosis.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if experimental-group students scored higher on the CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006) CL, EL, and LS composite scores, as well as on sentence structure (SS), word structure (WS), expressive vocabulary

(EV), and recalling sentences (RS) subtests compared to the control-group students.

Table 1 displays the mean comparisons. Kurtosis and skew fell within accepted limits of normality and all Levene's tests, excluding WS subtest, for CELF-P:2 composites and subtests $\geq .05$. Therefore, it was concluded that the variances were equal. For the WS subtest, initial Levene's test reached significance ($p < 0.05$) indicating a significance difference between the experimental and control group scores. Therefore, *equal variances not assumed* data for this subtest was reported.

Table 1
Comparison of Baseline CELF-P:2 Composite and Subtest Scores

Assessment	Experimental	Control
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
CELF-P:2 Sentence Structure Subtest	10.88 (2.70)	11.33 (1.21)
CELF-P:2 Word Structure Subtest	10.75 (2.76)	12.17 (.98)
CELF-P:2 Expressive Vocabulary Subtest	11.63 (2.92)	12.33 (1.86)
CELF-P:2 Recalling Sentences Subtest	12.25 (2.76)	9.50 (5.21)
CELF-P:2 Core Language Composite	106.25 (14.59)	111.50 (5.79)
CELF-P:2 Expressive Language Composite	108.37 (13.31)	107.17 (12.09)
CELF-P:2 Language Structure Composite	107.50 (14.14)	105.83 (11.60)

Experimental group SS subtest scores ($M = 10.88$, $SD = 2.70$) were not significantly different from control group subtest SS scores ($M = 11.33$, $SD = 1.21$), $t(14) = 0.39$, $p = 0.71$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the WS subtest scores for the experimental group ($M = 10.75$, $SD = 2.76$) and the control group ($M = 12.17$, $SD = .98$), $t(14) = 1.34$, $p = 0.21$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between EV subtest scores for the experimental group ($M = 11.63$, $SD = 2.92$) and the control group

($M = 12.33$, $SD = 1.86$), $t(14) = 0.52$, $p = 0.62$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between RS subtest scores for the experimental group ($M = 12.25$, $SD = 2.76$) and the control group ($M = 9.50$, $SD = 5.20$), $t(14) = -1.29$, $p = 0.22$, two-tailed.

Experimental group CL composite scores ($M = 106.25$, $SD = 14.59$) were not significantly different from control group CL composite scores ($M = 111.50$, $SD = 5.79$), $t(14) = 0.08$, $p = 0.42$, two-tailed. Experimental group EL composite scores ($M = 108.38$, $SD = 13.31$) were not significantly different from control group EL composite scores ($M = 107.17$, $SD = 12.09$), $t(14) = 0.61$, $p = 0.86$, two-tailed. Experimental group LS composite scores ($M = 107.50$, $SD = 14.14$) were not significantly different from control group LS composite scores ($M = 105.83$, $SD = 11.60$), $t(14) = 0.49$, $p = 0.82$, two-tailed. In sum, no significant differences existed between experimental and control group composite or subtest scores for the standardized, norm-referenced CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006).

An independent t test was conducted to determine differences in average scores for the baseline narrative performance of the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012). Table 2 shows the mean comparisons. Skew and kurtosis fell within normal limits for baseline, and Levene's test for TNR-P baseline revealed equal variance.

Table 2
Comparison of Baseline TNR-P Scores

Assessment	Experimental	Control
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Baseline TNR-P Total Score	6.25 (5.06)	6.17 (7.44)
Baseline TNR-P Story Grammar	4.63 (3.50)	3.83 (4.45)
Baseline TNR-P Language Complexity	.75 (.71)	1.33 (1.97)

Baseline TNR-P Episodes	.88 (1.25)	1.00 (1.67)
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At baseline, there was no significant difference between the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) TS scores for the experimental group ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 5.06$) and the control group counterparts ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 7.44$), $t(14) = -0.03$, $p = .98$, two-tailed. Likewise, experimental group SG scores ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 3.50$) were not significantly different from control group SG scores ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 4.45$), $t(14) = -0.38$, $p = .71$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between experimental group LC scores ($M = .75$, $SD = .71$) and the control group LC scores ($M = 1.33$, $SD = 1.97$), $t(14) = 0.07$, $p = 0.45$, two-tailed. Additionally, experimental group E scores ($M = .88$, $SD = 1.25$) were not significantly different from control group E scores ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 1.67$), $t(14) = 0.49$, $p = .88$, two-tailed. In sum, no significant differences existed between experimental and control group baseline TNR-P scores (Spencer & Petersen, 2012).

Overall, initial comparison of the experimental and control groups revealed no significant differences for performance on the standardized language measures (CELF-P:2) or the criterion-referenced story retell measure (TNR-P), indicating similar skills at the beginning of the study prior to the introduction of narrative instruction.

Experimental Group Repeated Measures *t* Tests for Weeks 1-3

The efficacy of the story grammar instruction alone was evaluated using a repeated measures *t* test design to compare baseline TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) scores to Week 3 TNR-P scores (post 180 minutes of intervention). The independent samples *t* test was used to assess whether students in the experimental group increased their overall narrative retell complexity following specific story grammar instruction. TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) TS were significantly higher in Week 3 ($M = 9.88$, $SD = 4.82$)

compared to performance at baseline ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 5.06$), $t(8) = -2.80$, $p = .03$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a medium effect ($d=0.73$).

To summarize, the experimental group showed significant gains in complexity of narrative retells following three weeks of explicit, contextualized story grammar instruction.

Experimental Group Repeated Measures *t* Tests for Weeks 4-6

The efficacy of combined story grammar instruction with explicit narrative retell practice was evaluated using a repeated measures *t* test design to compare Week 3 TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) scores to Week 6 TNR-P scores (360 minutes of intervention). The independent samples *t* test was used to assess whether students in the experimental group increased their overall narrative retell complexity following contextualized story grammar instruction in conjunction with explicit narrative retell practice. TNR-P TS for Week 6 ($M = 12.50$, $SD = 5.86$) were not significantly higher from Week 3 TNR-P TS ($M = 9.88$, $SD = 4.82$), $t(8) = -1.72$, $p = .13$, two-tailed.

To summarize, the experimental group showed no significant gains from Week 3 to Week 6 in complexity of narrative retells following three additional weeks of contextualized story grammar instruction and explicit narrative retell practice.

Experimental Group Longitudinal Analysis

Efficacy of overall narrative intervention was evaluated using a repeated measures *t* test design to compare narrative retell skill gains made from baseline TS to TNR-P Week 6 TS on the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012). Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M = 12.50$, $SD = 5.86$) were found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 5.06$), $t(8) = -2.43$, $p = .05$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a

large effect ($d = 1.14$). Similarly, TNR-P TS for Post ($M = 14.13$, $SD = 6.31$) were found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 5.06$), $t(8) = -3.21$, $p = .02$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d = 1.38$).

Additionally, retention of learned skill during maintenance periods were evaluated using a repeated measures t test design to compare longitudinal gains sustained from Week 6 to Post Intervention. The independent samples t test was used to assess whether students in the experimental group increased their overall narrative retell complexity following participation in the intervention, as well as their ability to retain skill development after instruction was removed for a period of five weeks. TNR-P TS for Post ($M = 14.13$, $SD = 6.31$) were not significantly higher from Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M = 12.50$, $SD = 5.86$), $t(8) = -1.84$, $p = .11$, two-tailed.

To summarize, the experimental group showed no significant gains from Week 6 to Post Intervention in complexity of narrative retells following instruction withdrawal for five weeks. However, skill maintenance was observed with no decreases in overall narrative retell performance. Figure 1 illustrates a graphical representation of experimental group total score patterns throughout the duration of the study.

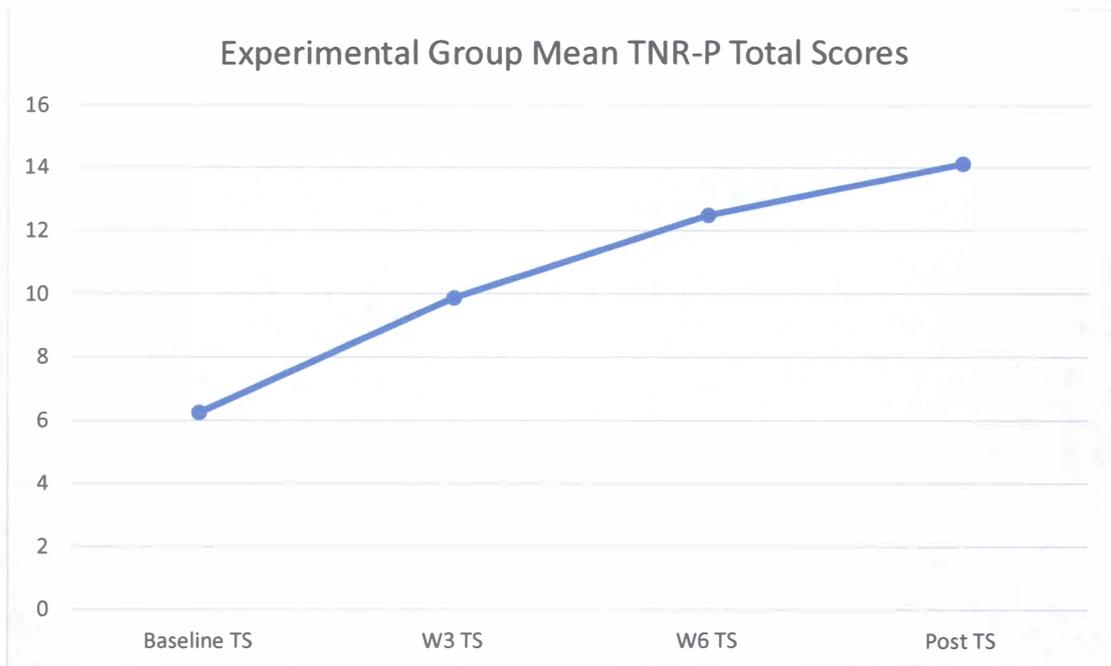


Figure 1. Experimental group mean TNR-P total scores.

Control Group Repeated Measures *t* Tests

Students in the control group were also assessed at Baseline, Week 3, Week 6, and Post Intervention. A repeated measures *t* test was utilized to compare gains on total scores for the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) for the control group. TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) TS were not significantly higher in Week 3 ($M = 8.33$, $SD = 8.04$) compared to performance at baseline ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 7.44$), $t(6) = -1.32$, $p = .24$, two-tailed. TNR-P TS for Week 6 ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 7.69$) were not significantly higher from Week 3 TNR-P TS ($M = 8.33$, $SD = 8.04$), $t(6) = 1.02$, $p = .35$, two-tailed. TNR-P TS for Post ($M = 7.33$, $SD = 8.09$) were not significantly higher from Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 7.69$), $t(6) = -0.77$, $p = .47$, two-tailed. Additionally, Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 7.69$), were not found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 7.44$), $t(6) = -0.25$, $p = .81$, two-tailed. Similarly, TNR-P TS for Post ($M =$

7.33, $SD = 8.09$) were not found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 7.44$), $t(6) = -0.77$, $p = .47$, two-tailed.

To summarize, students in the control group did not demonstrate any significant gains in narrative retell performance from initial baseline measures to the conclusion of the study. Narrative retell performance obtained in Week 6 remained consistent with scores obtained five weeks post intervention. Figure 2 demonstrates a graphical representation of the average TNR-P total scores throughout the duration of the study.

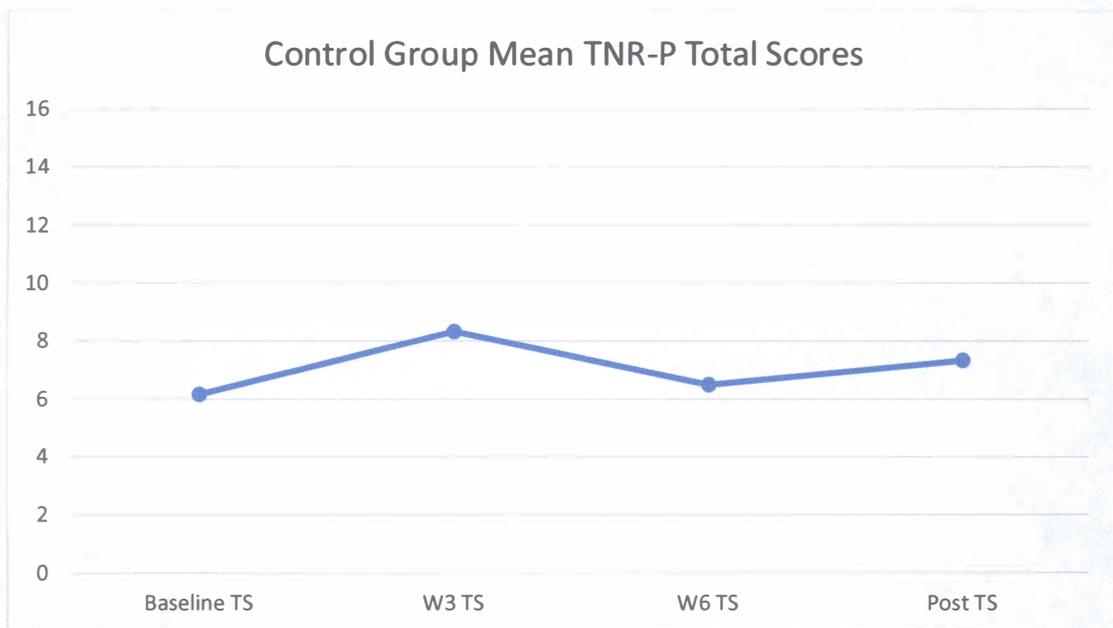


Figure 2. Control group mean TNR-P total scores.

Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups

Although the experimental group was the only group to demonstrate narrative retell gains, whether those gains were significantly different from the control group was determined using independent samples t tests for each week of assessment. Comparisons were made to determine if, on average, the experimental group included more story grammar components, cohesive ties, and episodes on the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen,

2012) compared to their control group counterparts. Comparisons were also made to determine if more students from the experimental group met age-based criteria for “passing” the weekly TNR-P total score measures. Skew and kurtosis fell within normal limits for Baseline, Week 3, Week 6, and Post Intervention. Levene’s test for TNR-P averages revealed equal variance, except for Week 3 TS; therefore, equality of variance could not be assumed for Week 3 TS. Table 3 shows the mean comparisons.

Table 3

Mean Weekly Scores on the TNR-P for Experimental and Control Groups

Assessment	Experimental	Control
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
TNR-P Week 3 SG	7.25 (3.45)	6.17 (5.60)
TNR-P Week 3 LC	0.50 (0.53)	0.67 (0.82)
TNR-P Week 3 E	2.13 (1.64)	1.50 (1.76)
TNR-P Week 3 TS	9.88 (4.82)	8.33 (8.04)
TNR-P Week 3 Pass/ Fail	0.38	0.50
TNR-P Week 6 SG	8.25 (3.45)	5.17 (5.08)
TNR-P Week 6 LC	1.50 (1.07)	0.50 (0.84)
TNR-P Week 6 E	2.75 (1.90)	0.83 (2.04)
TNR-P Week 6 TS	12.50 (5.86)	5.17 (5.08)
TNR-P Week 6 Pass/ Fail	0.75	0.33
TNR-P Post Intervention SG	9.88 (3.72)	5.00 (5.40)
TNR-P Post Intervention LC	1.75 (1.04)	0.83 (0.98)
TNR-P Post Intervention E	2.50 (1.93)	1.50 (1.97)

TNR-P Post Intervention TS	14.13 (6.31)	7.33 (8.09)
TNR-P Post Intervention Pass/ Fail	0.75	0.33

There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 SG scores for the experimental group ($M = 7.25$, $SD = 3.45$) and the control group ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 5.60$), $t(14) = -0.45$, $p = .66$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 LC scores for the experimental group ($M = 0.50$, $SD = 0.53$) and the control group ($M = 0.67$, $SD = 0.82$), $t(14) = -0.22$, $p = .65$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 E scores for the experimental group ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.64$) and the control group ($M = 1.50$, $SD = 1.76$), $t(14) = 0.50$, $p = .51$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 TS scores for the experimental group ($M = 9.88$, $SD = 4.82$) and the control group ($M = 8.33$, $SD = 8.04$), $t(14) = -0.42$, $p = .69$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 Pass/ Fail average for the experimental group ($M = 38\%$) and the control group ($M = 50\%$), $t(14) = 0.57$, $p = .67$, two-tailed.

There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 6 SG scores for the experimental group ($M = 8.25$, $SD = 3.45$) and the control group ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 5.08$), $t(14) = -1.66$, $p = .12$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 6 LC scores for the experimental group ($M = 1.50$, $SD = 1.07$) and the control group ($M = 0.50$, $SD = 0.84$), $t(14) = -1.89$, $p = .08$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 6 E scores for the experimental group ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.91$) and the control group ($M = 0.83$, $SD = 2.04$), $t(14) = -1.81$, $p = .10$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 6 TS scores for the experimental group ($M = 12.50$, $SD = 5.86$) and the control group ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 7.69$),

$t(14) = -1.66, p = .12$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 6 Pass/ Fail average for the experimental group ($M = 75\%$) and the control group ($M = 33\%$), $t(14) = -1.59, p = .14$, two-tailed.

There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Post Intervention SG scores for the experimental group ($M = 9.88, SD = 3.72$) and the control group ($M = 5.00, SD = 5.29$), $t(14) = 0.21, p = .07$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Post Intervention LC scores for the experimental group ($M = 1.75, SD = 1.04$) and the control group ($M = 0.83, SD = 0.98$), $t(14) = 0.94, p = .12$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Post Intervention E scores for the experimental group ($M = 2.50, SD = 1.93$) and the control group ($M = 1.50, SD = 1.97$), $t(14) = 1.00, p = .36$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week Post Intervention TS scores for the experimental group ($M = 14.13, SD = 6.31$) and the control group ($M = 7.33, SD = 8.09$), $t(14) = 0.41, p = .10$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Post Intervention Pass/ Fail average for the experimental group ($M = 75\%$) and the control group ($M = 33\%$), $t(14) = -1.59, p = .14$, two-tailed. Figure 3 demonstrates a graphical representation of the average percentage of students achieving age-based criteria for TS on the TNR-P throughout the duration of the study. Figure 4 compares weekly total score averages on the TNR-P for the experimental group and control group counterparts.

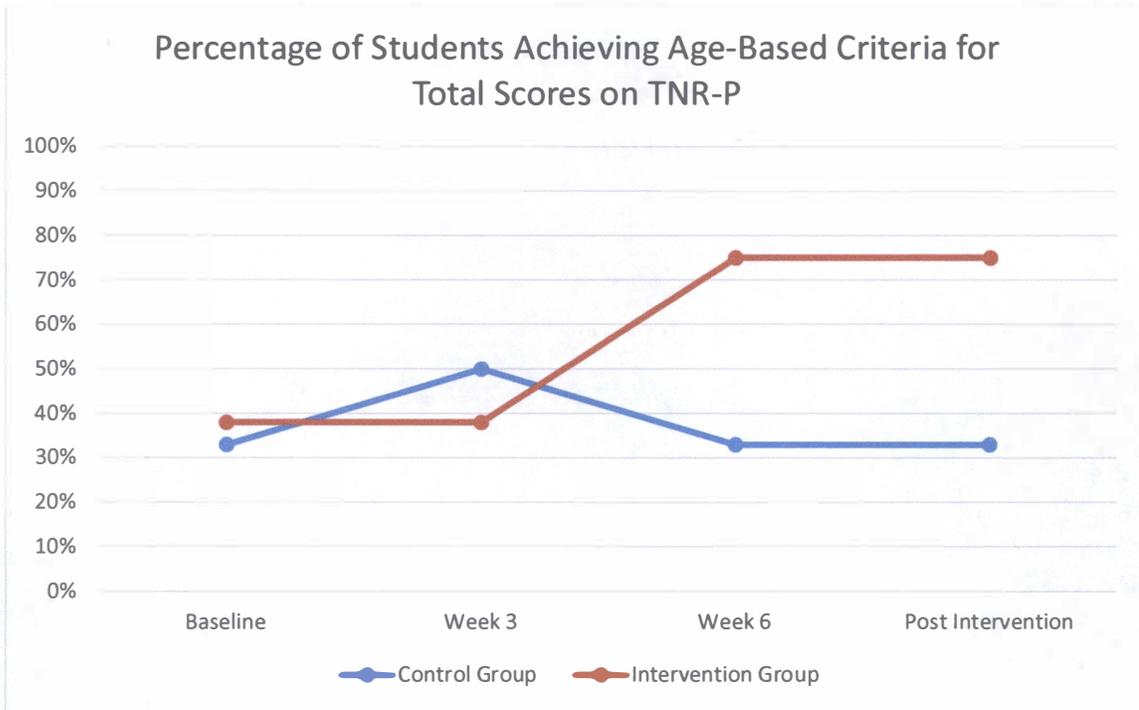


Figure 3. Percentage of students achieving age-based criteria for total scores on TNR-P.

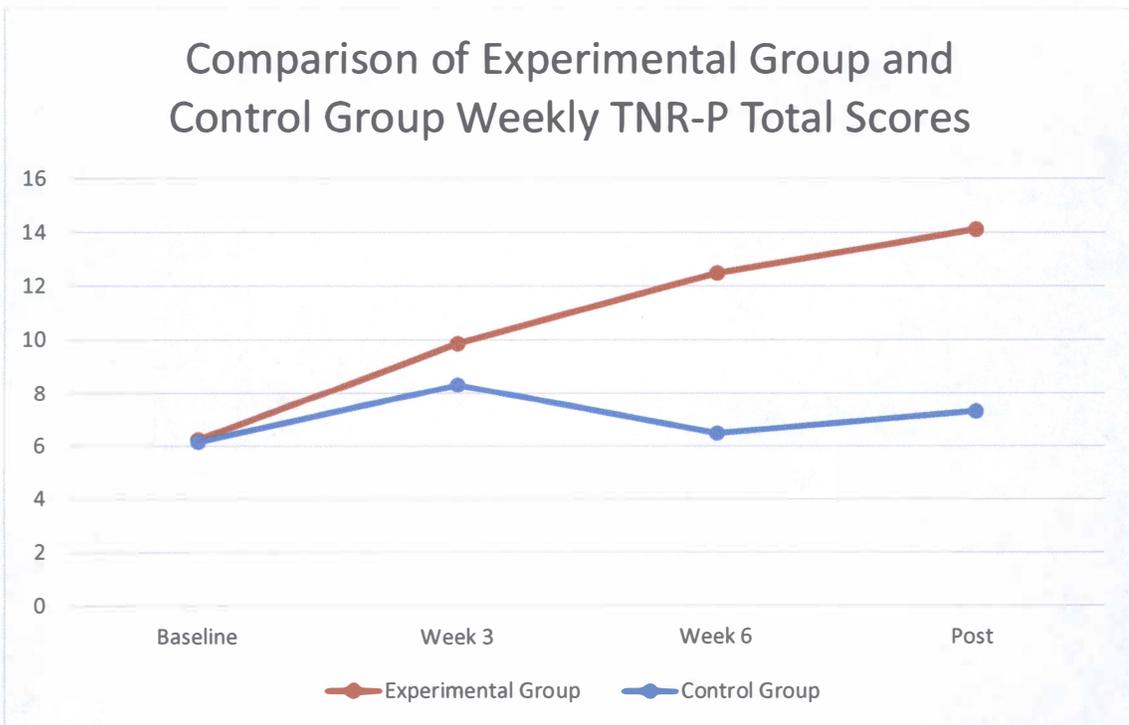


Figure 4. Comparison of experimental and control group weekly TNR-P total scores.

Discussion for and Removal of Outlier Data

Upon review of the original data scripts, it was surprising that anticipated data trends and results were not appearing despite the distinct perceived group performances during instruction and assessment. Therefore, data were reviewed for outlier trends in performance. Criteria for establishing outlier performance was defined as performing 1.5 SD above or below mean group performance for CELF-P:2 Expressive Language (EL) or Core Language (CL) composite scores and consistently performing 1.5 SD above or below mean group averages for weekly TNR-P TS, including lack of participation in testing. Individuals characterized by such performance were then removed from the data sets on the basis that inclusion of their data resulted in an influential impact on the results and implications of this study. One control group participant qualified as an outlier by consistently scoring 1.5 SD above mean group performance on weekly TNR-P TS, as well as scoring 1.5 SD above mean group performance on EL and CL composites on the CELF-P:2. One experimental group participant qualified as an outlier by consistently scoring 1.5 SD below mean group performance on weekly TNR-P TS. Upon removal of outlier data, statistical measures were repeated to answer original research questions. All data statistics repeated without inclusion of outlier performers will henceforth be referred to as “adjusted” data.

Adjusted Baseline Assessment Data

For the experimental group, a total of 7 preschoolers were evaluated using the CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006). Standard scores on the Core Language (CL) composite ranged from 88 to 125 ($M = 103$, $SD = 12.23$). The distribution was somewhat positively skewed (.84) and positively kurtotic (.77). Approximately 86% of the students scored above 90,

which explains the skew, and the median score was slightly greater than the mean score, which accounts for the positive kurtosis. Standard scores on the Expressive Language (EL) composite ranged from 92 to 130 ($M = 105.86$, $SD = 12.16$). The distribution was positively skewed (1.36) and positively kurtotic (2.85). All of the students scored above 90, which explains the skew, and the median score was slightly greater than the mean score, which accounts for the positive kurtosis. Standard scores on the Language Structure (LS) composite ranged from 86 to 125 ($M = 104.71$, $SD = 12.68$). The distribution was somewhat positively skewed (.16) and positively kurtotic (.23). Only one of the students scored below 90, which explains the skew, and most scores only varied moderately from the mean, which accounts for the positive kurtosis.

For the control group, a total of 5 preschoolers were evaluated using the CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006). Standard scores on the CL composite ranged from 106 to 116 ($M = 109.60$, $SD = 3.85$). The distribution was positively skewed (1.52) and positively kurtotic (2.61). All of the students scored above 105, which explains the skew, and the median score was slightly greater than the mean score, which accounts for the positive kurtosis. Standard scores on the EL composite ranged from 94 to 107 ($M = 102.60$, $SD = 5.13$). The distribution was negatively skewed (-1.62) and positively kurtotic (2.68). One of the students scored below 100, which explains the skew, and the median score was slightly greater than the mean score, which accounts for the positive kurtosis. Standard scores on the LS composite ranged from 90 to 110 ($M = 102.00$, $SD = 7.62$). The distribution was negatively skewed (-1.10) and positively kurtotic (1.33). One of the students scored below 100, which explains the skew, and remaining students scored similarly above the mean, which accounts for the positive kurtosis.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to determine if experimental-group students scored higher on the CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006) CL, EL, and LS composite scores, as well as on sentence structure (SS), word structure (WS), expressive vocabulary (EV), and recalling sentences (RS) subtests compared to the control-group students.

Table 4 displays the mean comparisons. Kurtosis and skew fell within accepted limits of normality and all Levene's tests. Therefore, *equal variances assumed* data were reported.

Table 4

Comparison of Adjusted Baseline CELF-P:2 Composite and Subtest Scores

Assessment	Experimental	Control
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
CELF-P:2 Sentence Structure Subtest	10.29 (2.29)	11.20 (1.30)
CELF-P:2 Word Structure Subtest	10.14 (2.34)	11.80 (.45)
CELF-P:2 Expressive Vocabulary Subtest	11.14 (2.79)	11.80 (1.48)
CELF-P:2 Recalling Sentences Subtest	12.00 (2.89)	8.00 (4.12)
CELF-P:2 Core Language Composite	103.00 (12.23)	109.60 (3.85)
CELF-P:2 Expressive Language Composite	105.86 (12.16)	102.60 (5.13)
CELF-P:2 Language Structure Composite	104.71 (12.68)	102.00 (12.68)

Experimental group SS subtest scores ($M = 10.26$, $SD = 2.29$) were not significantly different from control group subtest SS scores ($M = 11.20$, $SD = 1.30$), $t(12) = 0.80$, $p = 0.44$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the WS subtest scores for the experimental group ($M = 10.14$, $SD = 2.34$) and the control group ($M = 11.80$, $SD = .45$), $t(12) = 1.54$, $p = 0.15$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between EV subtest scores for the experimental group ($M = 11.14$, $SD = 2.79$) and the control group ($M = 11.80$, $SD = 1.48$), $t(12) = 0.48$, $p = 0.65$, two-tailed. There was no significant

difference between RS subtest scores for the experimental group ($M = 12.00$, $SD = 2.89$) and the control group ($M = 8.00$, $SD = 4.12$), $t(12) = -2.00$, $p = 0.08$, two-tailed.

Experimental group CL composite scores ($M = 103.00$, $SD = 12.24$) were not significantly different from control group CL composite scores ($M = 109.60$, $SD = 3.85$), $t(12) = 1.15$, $p = 0.28$, two-tailed. Experimental group EL composite scores ($M = 105.86$, $SD = 12.16$) were not significantly different from control group EL composite scores ($M = 102.60$, $SD = 5.13$), $t(12) = -0.56$, $p = 0.59$, two-tailed. Experimental group LS composite scores ($M = 104.71$, $SD = 12.68$) were not significantly different from control group LS composite scores ($M = 102.00$, $SD = 7.62$), $t(12) = -0.42$, $p = 0.68$, two-tailed. In sum, no significant differences existed between experimental and control group composite or subtest scores for the standardized, norm-referenced CELF-P:2 (Wiig et al., 2006).

An independent t test was conducted to determine differences in average scores for the adjusted baseline narrative performance of the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012). Table 5 shows the mean comparisons. Skew and kurtosis fell within normal limits for baseline, and Levene's test for TNR-P baseline revealed equal variance.

Table 5
Comparison of Adjusted Baseline TNR-P Scores

Assessment	Experimental	Control
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Baseline TNR-P Total Score	6.86 (5.15)	3.80 (5.22)
Baseline TNR-P Story Grammar	5.00 (3.61)	2.40 (3.05)
Baseline TNR-P Language Complexity	.86 (.69)	.60 (.89)
Baseline TNR-P Episodes	1.00 (1.29)	.80 (1.79)

At baseline, there was no significant difference between the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) TS scores for the experimental group ($M = 6.86$, $SD = 5.15$) and the control group counterparts ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 5.22$), $t(12) = -1.00$, $p = .33$, two-tailed. Likewise, experimental group SG scores ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 3.61$) were not significantly different from control group SG scores ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 3.05$), $t(12) = -1.31$, $p = .22$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between experimental group LC scores ($M = .86$, $SD = .69$) and the control group LC scores ($M = .60$, $SD = .89$), $t(12) = -0.56$, $p = 0.59$, two-tailed. Additionally, experimental group E scores ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 1.29$) were not significantly different from control group E scores ($M = .80$, $SD = 1.79$), $t(12) = -0.23$, $p = .83$, two-tailed. In sum, no significant differences existed between experimental and control group baseline TNR-P scores (Spencer & Petersen, 2012).

Overall, initial comparison of the experimental and control groups revealed no significant differences for performance on the standardized language measures (CELF-P:2) or the criterion-referenced story retell measure (TNR-P), indicating similar skills at the beginning of the study prior to the introduction of narrative instruction.

Adjusted Experimental Group Repeated Measures *t* Tests for Weeks 1-3

The efficacy of the story grammar instruction alone was evaluated using a repeated measures *t* test design to compare baseline TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) scores to Week 3 TNR-P scores (post 180 minutes of intervention). The independent samples *t* test was used to assess whether students in the experimental group increased their overall narrative retell complexity following specific story grammar instruction. TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) TS were significantly higher in Week 3 ($M = 11.00$, $SD = 3.92$) compared to performance at baseline ($M = 6.86$, $SD = 5.15$), $t(7) = -3.02$, $p = .02$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d = 0.90$).

To summarize, the experimental group showed significant gains in complexity of narrative retells following three weeks of explicit, contextualized story grammar instruction.

Adjusted Experimental Group Repeated Measures *t* Tests for Weeks 4-6

The efficacy of combined story grammar instruction with explicit narrative retell practice was evaluated using a repeated measures *t* test design to compare Week 3 TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) scores to Week 6 TNR-P scores (360 minutes of intervention). The independent samples *t* test was used to assess whether students in the experimental group increased their overall narrative retell complexity following contextualized story grammar instruction in conjunction with explicit narrative retell practice. TNR-P TS for Week 6 ($M = 13.86$, $SD = 4.78$) were not significantly higher from Week 3 TNR-P TS ($M = 11.00$, $SD = 3.92$), $t(7) = -1.64$, $p = .15$, two-tailed.

To summarize, the experimental group showed no significant gains from Week 3 to Week 6 in complexity of narrative retells following three additional weeks of contextualized story grammar instruction and explicit narrative retell practice.

Adjusted Experimental Group Longitudinal Analysis

Efficacy of overall narrative intervention was evaluated using a repeated measures *t* test design to compare narrative retell skill gains made from baseline TS to TNR-P Week 6 TS on the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012). Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M = 13.86$, $SD = 4.78$) were found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 6.86$, $SD = 5.15$), $t(7) = -2.47$, $p = .05$ two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d = 1.41$). Similarly, TNR-P TS for Post ($M = 15.86$, $SD = 4.30$) were found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 6.86$, $SD = 5.15$), $t(7) = -3.58$, $p = .01$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d = 1.90$).

Additionally, retention of learned skill during maintenance periods were evaluated using a repeated measures *t* test design to compare longitudinal gains sustained from Week 6 to Post Intervention. The independent samples *t* test was used to assess whether students in the experimental group increased their overall narrative retell complexity following participation in the intervention, as well as their ability to retain skill development after instruction was removed for a period of five weeks. TNR-P TS for Post ($M = 15.86$, $SD = 4.30$) were not significantly higher from Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M = 13.86$, $SD = 4.78$), $t(7) = -2.16$, $p = .07$, two-tailed.

To summarize, the experimental group showed no significant gains from Week 6 to Post Intervention in complexity of narrative retells following instruction withdrawal for

five weeks. However, skill maintenance was observed with no decreases in overall narrative retell performance. Figure 5 illustrates a graphical representation of experimental group total score patterns throughout the duration of the study.

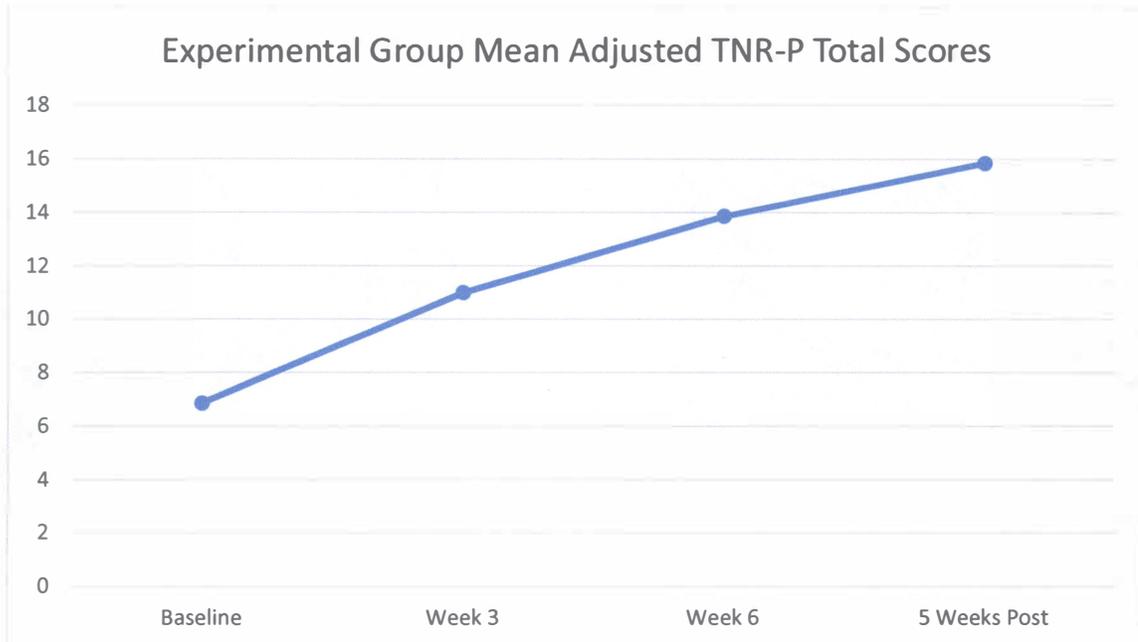


Figure 5. Experimental group mean adjusted TNR-P total scores.

Adjusted Control Group Repeated Measures *t* Tests

Students in the control group were also assessed at Baseline, Week 3, Week 6, and Post Intervention. A repeated measures *t* test was utilized to compare gains on total scores for the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) for the control group. TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) TS were not significantly higher in Week 3 ($M = 6.40$, $SD = 7.27$) compared to performance at baseline ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 5.22$), $t(5) = -1.34$, $p = .25$, two-tailed. TNR-P TS for Week 6 ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 3.29$) were not significantly higher from Week 3 TNR-P TS ($M = 6.40$, $SD = 7.27$), $t(5) = 1.51$, $p = .21$, two-tailed. TNR-P TS for Post ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 5.81$) were not significantly higher from Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 3.29$), $t(5) = -.97$, $p = .39$, two-tailed. Additionally, Week 6 TNR-P TS ($M =$

3.60, $SD = 3.29$), were not found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 5.22$), $t(5) = .13$, $p = .90$, two-tailed. Similarly, TNR-P TS for Post ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 5.81$) were not found to be significantly higher from baseline TNR-P TS ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 5.22$), $t(5) = -.48$, $p = .66$, two-tailed.

To summarize, students in the control group did not demonstrate any significant gains in narrative retell performance from initial baseline measures to the conclusion of the study. Narrative retell performance obtained in Week 6 remained consisted with scores obtained five weeks post intervention. Figure 6 demonstrates a graphical representation of the average TNR-P total scores throughout the duration of the study.

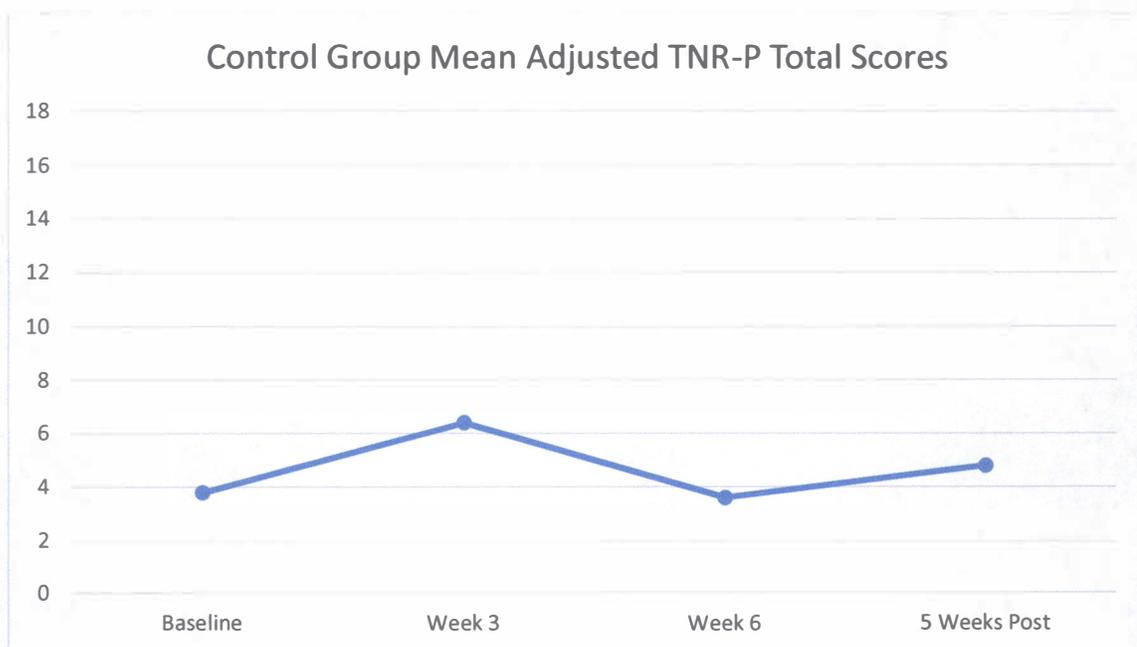


Figure 6. Control group mean adjusted TNR-P total scores.

Adjusted Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups

Although the experimental group was the only group to demonstrate narrative retell gains, whether those gains were significantly different from the control group was determined using independent samples t tests for each week of assessment. Comparisons

were made to determine if, on average, the experimental group included more story grammar components, cohesive ties, and episodes on the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012) compared to their control group counterparts. Comparisons were also made to determine if more students from the experimental group met age-based criteria for “passing” the weekly TNR-P total score measures. Skew and kurtosis fell within normal limits for Baseline, Week 3 Week 6, and Post Intervention. Levene’s test for TNR-P averages revealed equal variance, except for Week 3 TS, Week 6 LC, and Week 6 E; therefore, equality of variance could not be assumed for Week 3 TS, Week 6 LC, and Week 6 E. Table 6 shows the mean comparisons.

Table 6

Adjusted Mean Weekly Scores on the TNR-P for Experimental and Control Groups

Assessment	Experimental	Control
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
TNR-P Week 3 SG	8.00 (2.94)	5.00 (5.39)
TNR-P Week 3 LC	0.57 (0.53)	0.40 (0.55)
TNR-P Week 3 E	2.43 (1.51)	1.00 (1.41)
TNR-P Week 3 TS	11.00 (3.92)	6.40 (7.27)
TNR-P Week 3 Pass/ Fail	0.43	0.40
TNR-P Week 6 SG	9.14 (2.54)	3.40 (2.97)
TNR-P Week 6 LC	1.57 (1.13)	0.20 (0.45)
TNR-P Week 6 E	3.14 (1.68)	0.00 (0.00)
TNR-P Week 6 TS	13.86 (4.78)	3.60 (3.29)
TNR-P Week 6 Pass/ Fail	0.86	0.20

TNR-P Post Intervention SG	11.00 (2.08)	3.40 (3.97)
TNR-P Post Intervention LC	2.00 (0.82)	0.60 (0.89)
TNR-P Post Intervention E	2.86 (1.77)	0.80 (1.09)
TNR-P Post Intervention TS	15.86 (4.30)	4.80 (5.01)
TNR-P Post Intervention Pass/ Fail	0.86	0.20

There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 SG scores for the experimental group ($M = 8.00$, $SD = 2.94$) and the control group ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 5.39$), $t(12) = -1.25$, $p = .24$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 LC scores for the experimental group ($M = 0.57$, $SD = 0.53$) and the control group ($M = 0.40$, $SD = 0.55$), $t(12) = -0.54$, $p = .60$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 E scores for the experimental group ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.51$) and the control group ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 1.41$), $t(12) = -1.66$, $p = .13$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 TS scores for the experimental group ($M = 11.00$, $SD = 3.92$) and the control group ($M = 6.40$, $SD = 7.27$), $t(12) = -1.23$, $p = .25$, two-tailed. There was no significant difference between the TNR-P Week 3 Pass/ Fail average for the experimental group ($M = 43\%$) and the control group ($M = 40\%$), $t(12) = -0.09$, $p = .93$, two-tailed.

The TNR-P Week 6 SG scores for the experimental group ($M = 9.14$, $SD = 2.54$) were significantly higher compared to the control group's scores ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 2.97$), $t(12) = -3.60$, $p = .005$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d = 2.08$). The experimental group's TNR-P Week 6 LC scores ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 1.13$) were significantly higher compared to control group performance ($M = 0.20$, $SD = 0.45$), $t(12) = -2.90$, $p = .02$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines,

this is a large effect ($d= 1.59$). Significant difference was detected between the TNR-P Week 6 E scores for the experimental group ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.68$) and the control group ($M = 0.00$, $SD = 0.00$), $t(12) = -4.96$, $p = .003$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d= 2.64$). Significant difference existed between the TNR-P Week 6 TS scores for the experimental group ($M = 13.86$, $SD = 4.78$) and the control group ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 3.29$), $t(12) = -4.13$, $p = .002$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d= 2.50$). There was also significant difference between the TNR-P Week 6 Pass/ Fail average for the experimental group ($M = 86\%$) and the control group ($M = 20\%$), $t(12) = -2.76$, $p = .02$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d= 1.58$).

The experimental group's TNR-P Post Intervention SG scores ($M = 11.00$, $SD = 2.08$) were significantly higher compared to the control group's scores ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 3.97$), $t(12) = -4.35$, $p = .001$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d= 2.40$). There was a significant difference between the TNR-P Post Intervention LC scores for the experimental group ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.82$) and the control group ($M = 0.60$, $SD = 0.89$), $t(12) = -2.82$, $p = .02$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d= 1.64$). Significant difference was detected between the TNR-P Post Intervention E scores for the experimental group ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.77$) and the control group ($M = 0.80$, $SD = 1.10$), $t(12) = -2.28$, $p = .05$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d= 1.40$). The experimental group's TNR-P Week Post Intervention TS scores ($M = 15.86$, $SD = 4.30$) were significantly higher compared to the control group's scores ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 5.81$), $t(12) = -3.81$, $p = .003$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a

large effect ($d=2.16$). There was a significant difference between the TNR-P Post Intervention Pass/ Fail average for the experimental group ($M = 86\%$) and the control group ($M = 20\%$), $t(12) = -2.76$, $p = .02$, two-tailed. Working from Cohen's (1998) guidelines, this is a large effect ($d=1.58$). Figure 7 demonstrates a graphical representation of the average percentage of students achieving age-based criteria for adjusted TS on the TNR-P throughout the duration of the study. Figure 8 compares weekly total score averages on the TNR-P for the experimental group and control group counterparts.

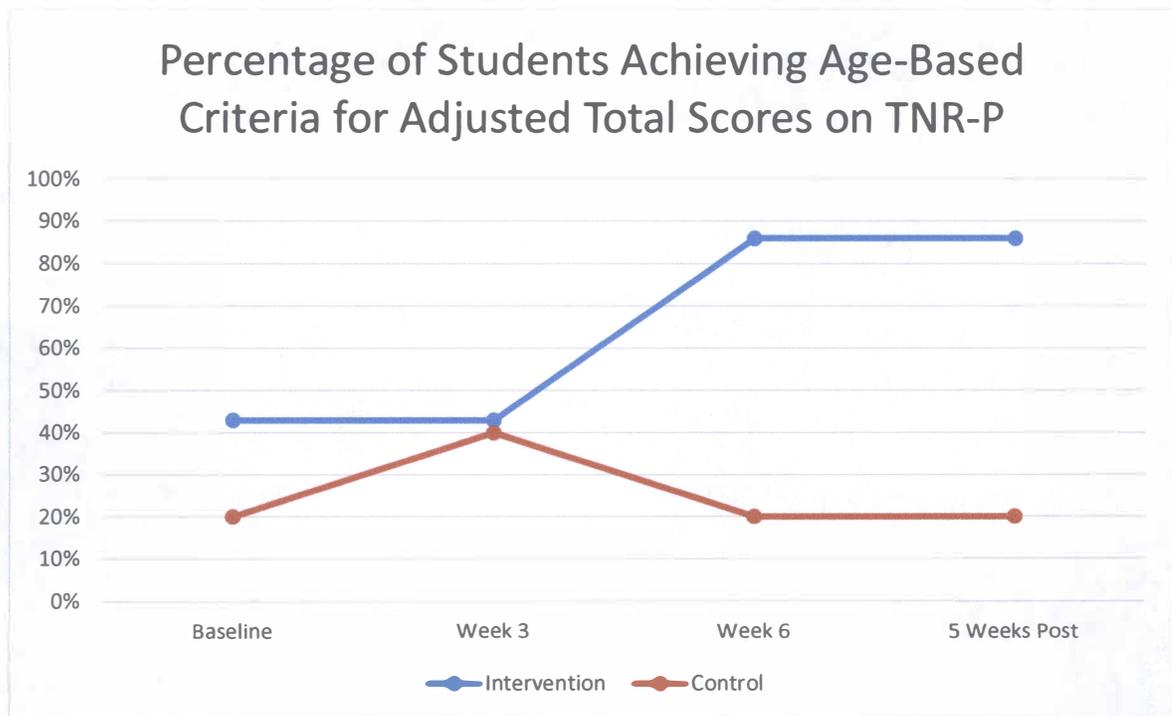


Figure 7. Percentage of students achieving age-based criteria for adjusted total scores on TNR-P.

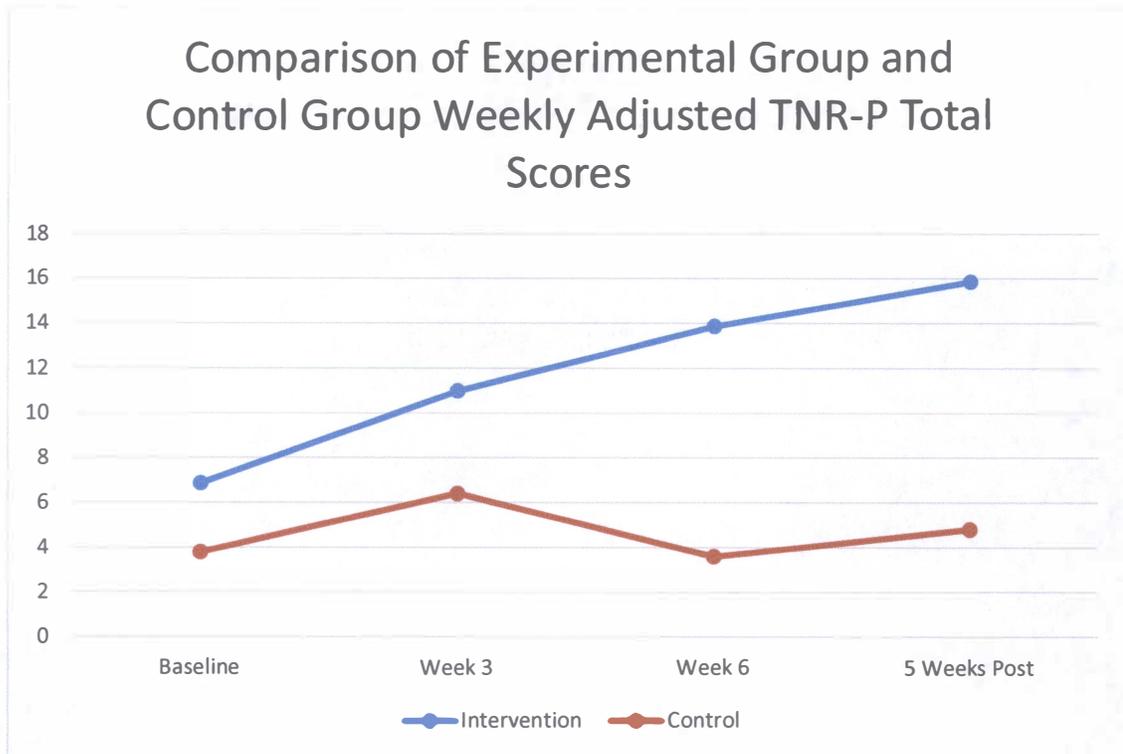


Figure 8. Comparison of experimental and control group weekly adjusted TNR-P total scores.

When outlier data was removed, the experimental group showed significant gains in story grammar inclusion, narrative complexity, number of episodes, total scores, and overall pass rate. Gains in all areas of narrative retell measurement for the experimental group provides preliminary support for the explicit, contextualized narrative instruction.

Predictive Variables for TNR-P Performance Across Intervention

Multiple-regression analyses for independent samples (ANOVA) were analyzed to identify performance prediction of CELF-P:2 subtest scores for all student performances on the TNR-P throughout intervention. Data excluded in the following statistics (e.g., all TNR-P Week 3 scores with all CELF-P:2 subtest scores) should be interpreted as “not significant”.

The regression model predicting TNR-P baseline TS from CELF-P:2 WS was significant ($t = -2.82, p = .02$). Specifically, 44% of the variance in TNR-P baseline TS was explained by CELF-P:2 WS; when adjusted for sample size and number of predictors, the amount of variance explained dropped to 39%. For every point increase on the CELF-P:2 WS scale, TNR-P baseline TS was expected to decrease by 1.77 points.

The regression model predicting TNR-P baseline SG from CELF-P:2 EV was significant ($t = -2.52, p = .03$). Specifically, 38% of the variance in TNR-P baseline SG was explained by CELF-P:2 EV; when adjusted for sample size and number of predictors, the amount of variance explained dropped to 33%. For every point increase on the CELF-P:2 EV scale, TNR-P baseline SG was expected to decrease by .96 points.

The regression model predicting TNR-P baseline SG from CELF-P:2 WS was significant ($t = -3.06, p = .01$). Specifically, 48% of the variance in TNR-P baseline SG was explained by CELF-P:2 WS; when adjusted for sample size and number of predictors, the amount of variance explained dropped to 43%. For every point increase on the CELF-P:2 WS scale, TNR-P baseline SG was expected to decrease by 1.25 points.

The regression model predicting TNR-P Week 6 TS from CELF-P:2 RS was significant ($t = 2.91, p = .01$). Specifically, 46% of the variance in TNR-P Week 6 TS was explained by CELF-P:2 RS; when adjusted for sample size and number of predictors, the amount of variance explained dropped to 40%. For every point increase on the CELF-P:2 RC scale, TNR-P Week 6 TS was expected to increase by 1.16 points.

The regression model predicting TNR-P Week 6 SG from CELF-P:2 RS was significant ($t = 3.36, p = .01$). Specifically, 53% of the variance in TNR-P Week 6 SG was explained by CELF-P:2 RS; when adjusted for sample size and number of predictors, the

amount of variance explained dropped to 48%. For every point increase on the CELF-P:2 RS scale, TNR-P Week 6 SG was expected to increase by .74 points.

The regression model predicting TNR-P Post LC from CELF-P:2 RS was significant ($t = 2.33, p = .04$). Specifically, 35% of the variance in TNR-P Post LC was explained by CELF-P:2 RS; when adjusted for sample size and number of predictors, the amount of variance explained dropped to 29%. For every point increase on the CELF-P:2 RS scale, TNR-P Post LC was expected to increase by .17 points. Table 7 details the significant trends in variance detected by regression analysis.

Table 7

Significant trends in variance from regression analysis

Model	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared	t	Significance	Unstandardized Coefficient
<i>Word Structure x Baseline TS</i>	.44	.39	-2.82	.02	-1.77
<i>Expressive Vocabulary x Baseline SG</i>	.38	.33	-2.52	.03	-.96
<i>Word Structure x Baseline SG</i>	.48	.43	-3.06	.01	-1.25
<i>Recalling Sentences x W6 TS</i>	.46	.40	2.91	.01	1.16
<i>Recalling Sentences x W6 SG</i>	.53	.48	3.36	.01	.74
<i>Recalling Sentences x Post LC</i>	.35	.29	2.23	.04	.17

Summary of Findings

Based on the data presented, results of this study support the hypothesis that preschoolers participating in a six-week, contextualized narrative intervention would perform better on oral narrative retell tasks as measured by the TNR-P compared to matched peers not receiving intervention. Mean differences demonstrate significantly higher scores on the TNR-P for the experimental group following 360 minutes of instruction (Week 6), as well as during the maintenance period five weeks post intervention.

However, results of this study refuted the hypothesis that preschoolers obtaining higher core language abilities as identified by baseline performance on the CELF-P:2 would also demonstrate greater performance on their TNR-P scores. Mean differences suggest an inverse relationship between baseline morphology and narrative retell performance, as well as with expressive vocabulary and narrative performance, while higher baseline abilities in sentence recall tasks indicate higher narrative retell performance at the conclusion of instruction.

Chapter V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of a contextualized, explicit narrative intervention on oral narrative retell skills in typically developing preschoolers as a means for fostering the development of narrative structure, story comprehension, and narrative retell skills. This study also explored the implications of a child's core language abilities on their narrative performance throughout the study.

Summary of Results

While previous studies have identified the relevance of narrative-based language interventions for individuals with language impairments (Ball & Trammell, 2011; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012; Gillam, Gillam, & Reece, 2012; Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta, 2007; Kamhi & Catts, 2012; Lonigan, Anthony, Bloomfield, Dyer & Samwel, 1999; Petersen, 2011; Pollard-Durodola et al., 2011; Ukrainetz, 2007), few studies have examined the implications of providing explicit narrative instruction to typically developing students as a means of enhancing the development of their oral language skills. Given the focus of the Common Core State Standards (2015) on expressive language targets for kindergarten (e.g., ask and answer questions about stories, include key details in story retells in proper sequential order, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story, use appropriate conventions of standard English grammar, participate in discussions about stories with peers and adults; CCSS, 2015), development and assessment of these skills during the early years of a child's education is imperative. Since previous research has demonstrated the ability to develop these skills for individuals with specific language impairments through narrative-based language instruction (Gillam, Gillam, & Reece, 2012; Green & Klecan-Aker, 2012; Lonigan,

Anthony, Bloomfield, Dyer & Samwel, 1999; Pollard-Durodola et al., 2011; Ukraintez, 2007), this study aimed to contribute to the current literature by applying similar skills and techniques to typically developing populations as a means of enhancing the preschool curricula to further prepare students for kindergarten entry and academic success.

Research Question 1

Will a contextualized narrative intervention increase typically developing preschoolers' oral narrative retell abilities? No significant differences existed between mean narrative retell abilities of the control group and experimental group at baseline, which supports the internal validity of the study. Recognizing that all students began the study with relatively similar narrative retell performances and core language abilities dismisses the argument for unequal amounts of previous instruction or exposure to narratives despite their different class memberships (i.e., morning or afternoon preschool class, teachers, years in preschool, etc.).

At Week 3 of intervention, no significant between-group differences existed for narrative retell performance; however, significance was determined for within group mean comparisons for the experimental group, but not the control group. While significance was anticipated for between-group comparisons, yet only surfaced for within group statistics for the experimental group, lack of findings can be explained by several factors. First, since the initial three weeks of instruction only focused on exposing students to story grammar concepts through explicit instruction of vocabulary, embedded exposure through storybook readings, and reinforced target skills through interactive games and activities, it is possible just teaching the story grammar vocabulary through those mediums was simply not enough to directly enhance overall narrative retell

abilities. Also, it should be noted that the third, regularly scheduled session was cancelled due to the school's observance of a holiday. This equated to the loss of 60 minutes of planned instruction time. It is possible, therefore, that the loss of 60 minutes of instruction time influenced the results. Perhaps students require more than two weeks (120 minutes) of exposure to story grammar concepts for significant increases in narrative performance to be revealed. Furthermore, it is possible the students were still acclimating to the nature of participating in formal assessment, although, due to the high frequency of research conducted at the school, it is more likely that these individuals have experienced more instances of formal testing compared to typical preschool programs.

Lack of significant findings between groups could also be due to the nature of the TNR-P assessment. While the TNR-P offers insights into a child's narrative abilities, it also has several limitations. First, the concept of narrative retell is a novel concept for preschoolers (Miller, 2015). Typically, teachers and parents select books with large picture spreads illustrating the storyline when reading to young children, since their language and literacy skills are still developing (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad, & Zhang, 2002; Pollard-Durodola et al., 2011). These pictures serve to facilitate students' auditory comprehension while the adult reads aloud (Strickland, 2000). Therefore, elimination of visual support during the narrative assessment places a greater emphasis on participants' auditory comprehension skills compared to the typical shared-reading experience facilitated with picture supports in preschool classrooms (Jalongo, et al., 2002).

Furthermore, adults engage children in shared-reading by asking preschoolers to predict events, relate to the characters' emotions or situations, and to describe what they

observe in the pictures (Strickland, 2000). Preschool teachers rarely ask students to reproduce the storyline when interacting with written narratives. Therefore, it could be reasoned that directly asking children to reproduce a story without visual support is very unnatural and contradictive to typical storybook interactions. For these reasons, the TNR-P could be thought of as a relatively novel task for preschool children, and may not represent the most accurate analysis of a child's narrative abilities. Therefore, the data may not be accurately reflecting the child's narrative retell potential.

Regardless, the within experimental group data reflected significant gains in narrative performance for Week 3 benchmark assessments. This suggests that even just receiving two weeks (120 minutes) of contextualized, narrative-based, story grammar instruction was enough to cause significant change in each participants' narrative performance when compared to their initial abilities, which is contrary to the suggested minimum 320 minutes of instruction (Petersen, 2011). Most of the skills required for narrative retell revolve around the student's ability to hold sustained attention to the speaker, process large amounts of auditory input, and store the synthesized language of the story in their working memory. Since none of the participants exhibited language concerns according to their CELF-P:2 scores, perhaps just building students' awareness of simple story components was enough to help them internally discover ways to self-regulate their attention, focus, and memory to complete narrative retell tasks. In fact, previous research suggests significant, predictive relationships between a child's listening comprehension skills and their working memory, cognitive inferencing, grammar, and theory of mind skills (Young-Suk Grace, 2016). No other linguistic skills appeared to directly influence a child's listening comprehension, such that significant, causation relationships could be

established (Young-Suk Grace, 2016). Therefore, a minimum of 120 minutes of explicit, contextualized instruction may be enough to foster the natural development of language, cognitive, and social skills required for preschoolers to achieve enhanced narrative retell performance.

Another possible explanation could be due to the slight age difference between the two groups. The average age of participants in the control group was 4;2, and the average age of participants in the experimental group was 4;7. This gives the experimental group approximately a 5-month, age advantage developmentally; however, it should be noted no significant differences existed between core language abilities of the two groups. It could also be reasoned that children in the experimental group spent more time with the primary investigator, and therefore, may have felt more comfortable speaking and participating during the TNR-P assessments. However, several volunteer graduate students and faculty members blind to the study's methods participated as examiners during the assessment process to help diminish experimenter bias.

In Week 6, the experimental group's TNR-P data was significantly higher compared to the control group's data on all measures (i.e., total score, story grammar, language complexity, episodes, and "pass" rate). However, none of the within group comparisons from Week 3 to Week 6 were significant for either groups. This can be explained mostly by attendance issues. Again, the regularly scheduled "Week 3" session was cancelled due to a holiday, and the following session ("Week 4") suffered poor attendance due to inclement weather. Only half of the experimental group participants attended Week 4. This means that for the data reflecting progress between Week 3 and Week 6, half of the experimental group students participated in two out of three sessions, and the other half

of participants attended only one of the three sessions. At best, students received 120 minutes of the story grammar with narrative retell practice instruction, and at worst, students only received 60 minutes of instruction during this time frame.

While limited instruction during weeks 4 through 6, this definitely impacted anticipated results and influenced the internal validity of this study, students in the experimental group still performed significantly higher on all measures obtained from the TNR-P based on between-group mean comparisons when compared to their control group counterparts. Furthermore, when within group comparisons were made to establish amount of progress made from baseline to Week 6, the experimental group showed statistically significant increases from their baseline scores, while the control group failed to demonstrate any improvement from initial narrative abilities. Furthermore, approximately 86% of the experimental group participants were meeting age-based criteria for narrative retell performance at the conclusion of Week 6, while only 20% of the control group counterparts were achieving age-based criteria.

These results have promising implications for the development and implementation of explicit, contextualized narrative instruction for preschool classrooms, as participants in the experimental group at best received 300 combined minutes of story grammar and narrative retell instruction between Week 1 and Week 6 and still made significant progress even though they were originally scheduled to received 360 minutes of instruction. This is contrary to a previous systematic review by Petersen (2011), which suggested a minimum of 320 minutes of direct instruction to increase participants' narrative abilities. Furthermore, mean comparisons support the skill maintenance of the experimental group five weeks post intervention. Previous studies have failed to

demonstrate significance for skill maintenance after a period of intervention withdrawal (Petersen, Gillam, Spencer, & Gillam, 2010; Swanson et al., 2005). This is partially explained by small sample sizes and the presence of language delays; however, poor generalization and skill maintenance was mostly attributed to the lack of incorporating explicit macrostructure instruction into the intervention (Petersen, 2011). Therefore, a greater argument exists for incorporating explicit story grammar instruction to enhance a child's receptive knowledge of macrostructure narrative components in addition to targeting their expressive narrative structures.

Overall, the results of this study support the hypothesis that preschoolers receiving the contextualized, explicit narrative intervention would perform better on oral narrative retell tasks compared to matched peers not receiving intervention. While results supported implementation of an explicit, contextualized story grammar intervention (i.e., weeks one through three of intervention), greater growth in narrative abilities was identified for instruction that incorporated both explicit, contextualized story grammar instruction with engaging opportunities for narrative retell practice (i.e., weeks three through six of intervention). Nevertheless, skills gained from a combination of both approaches (i.e., weeks one through six) resulted in statistically significant gains at the conclusion of instruction, in addition to the maintenance of gained skills five weeks post intervention.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between core language ability and narrative retell ability in typically developing preschoolers? To determine the predictability of participants' core language abilities on their narrative performance, multiple-regression analyses for

independent samples were analyzed to identify performance prediction of CELF-P:2 SS, WS, RS, and EV subtest scores for TNR-P TS, SG, LC, and E scores at baseline, week 3, week 6, and five-weeks post intervention.

At baseline, significant, inverse relationships were indicated between participants' CELF-P:2 *Word Structure* (WS) score and their TNR-P total score. Additionally, significant, inverse relationships existed between participants' TNR-P story grammar score and their CELF-P:2 WS and *Expressive Vocabulary* (EV) scores. These results were rather shocking, as clinical experience suggests children with higher, more complex language capacities would be better able to handle the demands of linguistically complex tasks, such as narrative retells. However, the data presented in this study rejects that hypothesis. At baseline, individuals with higher expressive vocabulary and morphological skills actually performed worse on overall narrative retell tasks compared to individuals that scored within the low-average range on WS and EV subtests of the CELF-P:2.

While these results are unexpected, a few possible explanations exist. First, as previously mentioned, the TNR-P may present as a relatively novel task for preschool children, as they typically are not asked to listen to stories lacking visual support, which stresses their still developing auditory processing and comprehension skills, in addition to being directly asked to repeat a story they just heard, since adults typically ask engaging prediction or "wh- "comprehension questions during shared-reading. Therefore, the novelty of the task could lead to a misrepresentation of narrative retell skills at baseline, thus influencing the data. Additionally, the small sample size could have greatly influenced the results of these statistics.

Next, the possibility exists that young children with more advanced language skills may exhibit more keen awareness of testing demands or have more intrinsic motivation to please adults on academic tasks. While no concrete data explored the individual metalinguistic profiles of participants within this study, clinical experience may suggest that children who are more aware of task demands and intrinsically motivated to please adults may be more likely to disengage during an activity if they feel their responses will be inadequate. Therefore, rather than attempting a response, these children may be more likely to state, “I don’t remember” to avoid having to provide an inadequate response to the adult examiner.

Maternal education and the support of the child’s home environment was another unexplored variable that could account for the surprising data trends in this study (Burchinal, Roberts, Zeisel, Hennon, & Hooper, 2006; Coker, 2006; Liddell & Rae, 2001; Teale, 1987). Evidence suggests maternal education is a critical, determining factor in a child’s early linguistic development, as well as a stagnant predictor for their later narrative writing skills in elementary school due to the influential role of modeling, shared-reading, early literacy exposure, expectations and attitudes towards literacy, and parent-child discourse routine establishment through early social interactions during a child’s first years of life (Britto, Fuligini, & Brooks-Gun, 2006; Ensminger & Fothergill, 2003; Hooper et al., 2010). Since no information was obtained regarding maternal education or homelife of participants, the impact of these factors on the current study remains undetermined.

Another possible explanation for this surprising finding could simply be that story recall has significantly less to do with core language skills than perhaps skills like

adequate sustained attention and memory. Although cognitive skills were not profiled for participants in the current study, as earlier stated, previous literature suggests that metacognitive and psychosocial skills are necessary prerequisite skills for narrative comprehension and generation (Young-Suk Grace, 2016).

Furthermore, since visual supports were not included during administration of the TNR-P, the only factor offering advantage to one student over another would be their ability to individually relate to the benchmark story presented. Story developers incorporated common themes, events, and activities a typical preschooler would encounter on a day-to-day basis (e.g., eating dinner with family, watching television at home, painting pictures at preschool, swinging on the playground; Spencer & Petersen, 2012). However, some stories center on experiences that children simply may not have experienced yet (e.g., losing a tooth, breaking a bone, going to the dentist). Therefore, children who can personally identify with a particular story may be better able to integrate their episodic memory of these personal experiences with the benchmark story to aid their recall of that story, thus highlighting the relevance of declarative memory in the process of integrating and recalling learned experiences with novel, related information (Kurczek, Vanderveen, & Duff, 2014; Roth et al., 1996).

The only significant, linear relationships at Week 6 existed between the CELF-P:2 *Recalling Sentences* (RS) subtest and TNR-P story grammar and total scores. This relationship was anticipated due to the similarity of task demands between the CELF-P:2 RS subtest and the TNR-P. Both tasks require participants to attend to complex auditory information, process and store the linguistic information in their working memory, and then verbally regurgitate the message back to the examiner. While overall narrative retell

performance for Week 6 could be related back to the participant's original CELF-P:2 RS, no other core language skills were identified as positive predictors for narrative performance throughout the study. Again, this could be due to the unfamiliarity of the narrative retell task since it is contradictory to the typical narrative, shared-reading, storybook interactions children experience with parents and teachers. Additionally, the small sample size of the study could have influenced statistical results. It could also be suggestive of the influence of an underlying, unidentified metacognitive skill that pertains more to a child's ability to recall sentences and stories than their observed, developing, linguistic capacities. Further research analyzing metacognitive, linguistic, and narrative skills is necessary to explore the interplay of these relationships.

Interestingly, the TNR-P language complexity (LC) scores five-weeks post intervention were significantly related to baseline CELF-P:2 RS scores. This was the only other significantly linear relationship identified between core language abilities on the CELF-P:2 and the TNR-P. This was surprising, because one would postulate that linguistic complexity on one task (e.g., LC on TNR-P) should correlate to some degree to other measures of linguistic complexity on a similar task (e.g., WS and SS on CELF-P:2). However, the only relationship identified for a participant's language complexity on TNR-P existed with their ability to recall statements on the CELF-P:2.

This relationship can be partially explained by the criteria involved in scoring high language complexity on the TNR-P versus scoring high on similar measures of language complexity (e.g., morphology and syntax) on the CELF-P:2. On the TNR-P, a child's LC score is basically only reflective of their ability to appropriately recall and embed coordinating conjunctions in their narratives. The microstructure of their narrative is

otherwise not assessed for inclusion of morphological units or syntactical features.

Therefore, the LC score can be deceiving, as it only reflects the ability to memorize and use an appropriate coordinating conjunction within the story. It makes sense, then, that the child's ability to memorize which coordinating conjunction was used when was highly related to their overall ability to regurgitate complex sentences, as assessed on the CELF-P:2.

However, if that is the case, then it is still surprising that no other TNR-P scores (e.g., story grammar inclusion) corresponded to CELF-P:2 RS scores five-weeks post intervention, when in the previous Week 6 benchmarks, TNR-P total scores and story grammar scores were also significantly related to initial CELF-P:2 RS scores. Possible explanations for this phenomenon could be due to the variability in post intervention TNR-P scores. While the experimental group consistently scored high on the TNR-P in Week 6 and post intervention, the control group had generally, lower, inconsistent scores. The variability in TNR-P scores in conglomeration with the small sample size could have impacted the results of the statistics. Therefore, further investigation of core language abilities and narrative performance with larger sample sizes is necessary to explore the relationship between linguistic predictor variables for narrative retell performance.

Overall, the results of this study refute the hypothesis that preschoolers with higher core language abilities will achieve greater scores on their oral narrative retells. Due to the inconsistencies in statistical trends and the limited sample size, results remain inconclusive at this time.

Comparison to Previous Research

Oral language is a precursor to written language (Aram & Nation, 1980; Hughes et al., 1997; Roth et al., 1996; Shankweiler et al., 1992); therefore, preschoolers need exposure to and practice with narrative structure, language, and vocabulary during their early academic years to be able to successfully compose complex written narratives in grade school. The inability for typically-developing preschoolers to meet age-based criteria for narrative retell achievement was alarming, since, at baseline, only 30% of the participants were able to meet narrative retell expectations. This suggests preschool students are not receiving high-quality, foundational instruction for oral language targets under CCSS (2015). Given the focus of the CCSS (2015) on narrative-based language targets for kindergarten (e.g., ask and answer questions about stories, include key details in story retells in proper sequential order, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story, use appropriate conventions of standard English grammar, participate in discussions about stories with peers and adults), development and assessment of these skills during the early years of a child's education is imperative (Miniscaloco, Hagberg, Kadesjo, Westerlund, & Gillberg, 2007). Therefore, results of this study support a greater argument for increased professional development, incorporation of narrative skills into preschool curricula, and developing response to intervention (RtI) at the preschool level.

While an abundant number of studies have assessed the efficacy of response to intervention (RtI) from first grade through high school, a gap in the research remains at the preschool level. RtI is a multi-tiered instructional model built upon well-established, high-quality instruction environment grounded in principles of evidence-based practice (Koutsoftas, Harmon, & Gray, 2009). Instructional intensity increases as students move

through the tiers of RtI. The need for a focused and evidence-based curriculum supports the Tier 1 establishment in the classroom. For the typical classroom, researchers argue 80% of students will progress through curricular objectives with a well-established Tier 1 support frame; however, the remaining 20% will require additional services (Ball & Trammell, 2011). Students struggling to develop skills targeted in the Tier 1 setting are progressed to the Tier 2 group-setting for a high-quality, intense, short-term intervention with an experienced teacher, reading specialist, or speech-language pathologist (Ball & Trammell, 2011). Koutsoftas, Harmon, and Gray (2009) state about 15% of the students requiring Tier 2 intervention will benefit from the explicit instruction provided such that they return to the Tier 1 setting. Students not benefitting from the Tier 2 intervention are progressed to Tier 3, an individualized intervention setting or recommended for special education assessment (Koutsoftas, Harmon, & Gray, 2009).

Greenwood et al. (2013) explored the need for RtI support in preschool classrooms. At the beginning of the school year, several language measures were used to separate participants into Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III performance levels. Although the participating preschool programs were not differentiating instruction, the data from this study demonstrates the need for establishing RtI at the preschool level as a means of closing the gap between wide-ranging preschoolers' performance on language and early literacy measures. Other measurements taken throughout the school year included measurements of the quality of instruction, curriculum quality, teacher-literacy focus, and students' literacy engagement. Participants were reassessed at the end of the school year using the same language measures. Results from classroom, curricula, and teacher surveys indicated an overall low quality of instruction with no additional or differentiated

instruction for the lowest performing students (Greenwood et al., 2013). Even with overall gains in standard scores on early literacy and language measures, significant gaps remained between performances of tier groups and preschool program type. Parent surveys and child performance on language measures identified a strong relationship between socioeconomic status, early literacy, and language performance (Greenwood et al., 2013). Children enrolled in low-income programs (i.e., state-funded Pre-K, Title I, and Head Start) consistently performed lower on language and literacy measures compared to children enrolled in high-income programs (i.e., tuition-based). Greenwood et al. (2013) concluded that foundational classroom instruction quality remained low across preschool program types, such that participation in preschool did not result in sizable gains for a child's early literacy and language development, thus claiming that differentiated instruction cannot be assumed as a regular practice within preschool classrooms.

Gajus and Barnett (2010) developed a Tier I RtI intervention targeting early literacy skills for two Head Start classrooms. Students were assessed three times during the academic year on *Individual Growth and Development Indicators* of picture naming, letter naming, rhyming, and alliteration. Additionally, students' letter-naming fluency was assessed once a month. Intervention consisted of scripted letter of the week activities during circle time. Although the study presented a weak design (i.e., no control mechanism, IGDI scores were not reported, vague description of intervention, and the only early literacy skill targeted was letter-naming fluency), results lend preliminary support for RtI. While the classroom letter-naming fluency scores increased from baseline to post-intervention, half of the students did not reach the Head Start end-of-year

goal (i.e., able to recognize 10 letters, including the letters in a child's name, in one minute).

Results of this study demonstrate the need for at-risk preschool classrooms to incorporate a multi-tiered, differentiated approach to instruction. Gajus and Barnett (2010) only implemented a single, albeit weak, instructional level that was nonresponsive to student progress. Although the one skill targeted in Tier I instruction resulted in some gains, instruction lacked the quantity and quality necessary to benefit all children. Teachers need to be aware of each student's level of performance on curriculum-based goals, especially in the at-risk setting. The goal of preschool programs is to close the wide and varying gap in performance between students. The lower-performing group, or at-risk group, needs specialized instruction to gain the skills necessary to equal their high-performing peers and eliminate risk of future academic difficulties. To promote high-quality instruction, preschools need to use curriculum-based goals with progress-monitoring tools to establish a multi-tiered, flexible approach to instructional planning.

A limited number of studies have investigated the impact of a full, multi-tiered, differentiated instructional approach to preschool literacy and language instruction. One reason for the lack of experimentation at this level is due to the lack of well-trained personnel capable of supporting a data-driven, evidence-based model within high-risk preschools (Ball & Trammell, 2011). Teachers at high-risk preschools tend to have less education, higher turnover, and lower levels of competency than teachers in all other environments (Ball & Trammell, 2011). Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, and Pianta (2007) investigated the relationship between procedural fidelity and instructional quality of implementing Tier I literacy and language intervention for teachers serving at-risk

preschoolers. Tier I instructional targets included phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness, vocabulary and linguistic concepts, narrative, and social language. Teachers were provided with sample weekly lesson plans, scripts for each activity, and a comprehensive set of materials. Instructional quality was measured in regard to the quality of language modeling, quality of literacy focus, and treatment fidelity. Results revealed an overall low instructional quality. Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, and Pianta (2007) concluded that even though teachers were provided with materials, scripts, and mock lesson plans, their instructional quality suffered from a lack of evidence-based strategies.

When professional development, evidence-based practice, progress-monitoring, and multi-tiered instruction are considered during the creation of an RtI model for at-risk preschools, the potential for delivering high-quality instruction increases. Gettinger and Stoiber (2012) investigated the effectiveness of installing an early literacy, curriculum-based, multi-tiered instructional approach using progress-monitoring data in 15 Head Start classrooms serving at-risk preschoolers. EMERGE teachers received monthly professional development training focused on integrating evidence-based, early literacy practices into regular class activities. Additionally, EMERGE teachers received weekly coaching on progress-monitoring practices where they were taught how to implement and use progress-monitoring as a tool for instructional planning (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012). Eight of the 15 classrooms were randomly selected to participate in the RtI intervention program, EMERGE, and the remaining classrooms served as a control group. All preschoolers were assessed in the fall and spring using several early literacy and language measures. All children were divided into low-, middle-, and high-performance groups

based on the fall pre-test scores. In addition, preschoolers in the EMERGE program were assessed monthly on curriculum-based progress-monitoring measures of alphabet knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, book recognition, and book comprehension (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012).

Classroom instruction was divided into Tier I and Tier II instruction. Tier I focused on core literacy instruction through three instructional elements: shared book reading, explicit vocabulary instruction, and embedded-explicit alphabet knowledge instruction (i.e., letters and sounds; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012). EMERGE teachers incorporated two types of evidence-based practice into their shared book reading instruction: dialogic reading strategies (e.g., asking open-ended questions and classroom discussion of the text) and print-referencing strategies (i.e., drawing attention to and discussing the printed text; Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012). Each of the 96 books provided to EMERGE classrooms was accompanied by a book-reading guide that scripted interactions to help standardize and maximize teacher performance during shared-reading. Each book-reading guide also embedded strategies for alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and print awareness.

EMERGE teachers used 16 pre-selected vocabulary words from each book during explicit vocabulary instruction. Teachers were provided with vocabulary cards containing the printed vocabulary word and a picture of the word on one side and scripted, evidence-based strategies on the other side. Strategies included explaining definitions in developmentally appropriate language, contextualizing words within the stories, providing verbal and visual examples and contexts of the word, and providing opportunities for students to create their own examples of using the vocabulary word

(Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012). Tier II instruction was provided in small groups through teacher-directed activities targeting vocabulary words, books, and alphabet letters. Each activity was guided by a scripted manual of evidence-based practices promoting sound awareness, oral language, alphabet knowledge, and print awareness.

Results lend preliminary support for the implementation of an RtI approach to early literacy and language instruction in at-risk preschool classrooms (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012). Participants in the EMERGE experimental program made greater gains between fall and spring measures compared to students in the control group. Better literacy and language performance suggests EMERGE teachers provided better and more consistent foundational instruction across all eight classrooms as a result of the differentiated, evidenced- and curriculum-based instruction and implementation of progress-monitoring tools (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012). Children in the EMERGE program made steady, consistent gains on letter naming, vocabulary, book recognition, and book comprehension skills; however, gaps remained between high, middle, and low performance groups. The average performance of the low-performing group remained lower than the averages of the other two groups, and the average performance of the high-performing group remained higher than the averages of the other two groups (Gettinger & Stoiber, 2012). While overall gains were made across all three performance groups, modifications to instruction are necessary to elevate the bottom performers in an effort to minimize the group differences.

While a limited number of studies have investigated the potential for RtI implementation in classrooms, preliminary results of RtI programs remain conflicted. The development of more multi-tiered, instructional curricula for preschool classrooms is

necessary to determine best practices for enhancing early literacy and oral language development, as these skills are crucial for academic success.

Implications

The prevalence of underdeveloped narrative skills in typically developing preschool children participating in this study was alarming. Information collected from this body of research poses the following question: Are students receiving adequate instruction necessary for the development of prerequisite language skills needed for school success, or are the education standards currently in place for children developmentally inappropriate based upon the natural process of neurological maturation and language acquisition for young children? To deliberate the appropriateness of current instructional quality, research-based instruction should be implemented at the preschool level to nurture narrative development in accordance with expectations of educational standards.

One potential way to increase a preschool program's responsibility for providing high-quality instruction would be to trial a systematic, responsive, performance-based system. Implementation of RtI, particularly high-quality, foundational Tier 1 classroom instruction, in the preschool setting could aid in early remediation of potential academic difficulties before struggling students fall significantly behind their peers. Preschools could adopt similar narrative instructional protocols to what was designed and implemented in this current study. Low-cost, evidence-based, scripted programs and activities, such as the *Black Sheep Press* narrative packets (Rippon, Carey, Broughton, & Shanks, 2007), could serve as a potentially successful medium for teachers to implement narrative instruction within the classroom while still meeting individual needs of students. Reading resource teachers and speech-language pathologists could then

demonstrate proper implementation and demonstration of activities through professional development meetings or in-services. A multi-disciplinary approach to RtI could then be implemented using the following model format.

Teachers could provide Tier 1 instruction by developing a shared-reading instructional model that specifically addresses the macrostructure components of narratives before embedding narrative-language concepts in shared-reading. They could lead explicit instruction of story grammar components, such as characters, setting, emotions, and introduce narrative structure and organization through basic story maps that include the initiating event, climax, and resolution (Brown, Garzarek, & Donegan, 2014; Davies, Shanks, & Davies, 2004; Green & Klecan-Aker, 2012). After discussing these components of stories, the teacher could engage students in contextualized, narrative instruction through shared-reading. Teachers can use shared-reading techniques like story previews, pre-reading discussions, and picture walks to orient students to the book to enhance their auditory and language processing, which will increase their attention to the task and, therefore, enhance story comprehension (Hoggan & Strong, 1994). To maintain attention to task as well as help students develop early critical thinking skills, teachers can frequently ask comprehension and prediction questions throughout the reading. In fact, evidence suggests students with language delays, attention deficits, and mild autism spectrum disorders are better able to process shared-reading experiences when teachers frequently prompt story-related questions to support their developing listening comprehension skills (Miniscaloco, et al., 2007). Students could also practice retelling events of the story periodically during the reading to reinforce their story comprehension and practice narrative retell skills, since just offering

isolated practice opportunities for narrative retell can lead to increased performance (Strong & Shaver, 1991). Post-reading activities could include completing a story map, where students could help the teacher label the characters, describe the setting, and talk about the events of the story, or allowing the students to draw pictures and talk about their own personal connections to the text (Hoggan & Strong, 1994). Students could also engage in dramatic play as a developmentally appropriate medium to practice retelling the story (Hoggan & Strong, 1994). Teachers would then be responsible for frequently tracking students' narrative skills through progress monitoring benchmark assessments, like the TNR-P (Spencer & Petersen, 2012). Overall, Tier 1 would help expose the whole class to the linguistic features and structure of narratives using explicit, contextualized, high-quality instruction.

To provide Tier 2 instruction, the teacher could separate the class into small groups based on ability level determined by progress monitoring benchmarks. While the whole class may have participated in the same initial book reading with teacher, groups may disperse afterwards to complete post-reading tasks according to their skill level. An advanced group could work together to independently identify and complete a story map to retell the story using appropriate narrative structure and associated terminology. Students struggling with narrative concepts and vocabulary could be in a group with the teacher or other professional (i.e., reading specialist or speech-language pathologist). Professionals could provide additional explicit instruction on story grammar vocabulary and narrative structure and help the struggling group complete a story map. Each group would then share their narrative retell with the class to provide students with a chance to practice narrative retell. Students still struggling in Tier 2 would then progress to Tier 3,

where they would receive intervention services for language or reading difficulties. At this time, progress monitoring tools and instructional materials to address explicit narrative instruction have been introduced (e.g., *Story Champs*; *Language Dynamics Group*), thus embarking on advances in RtI for young learners.

Given the high relevancy of attention and memory for narrative retells (Kurczek, Vanderveen, & Duff, 2014; Young-Suk Grace, 2016), additional accessory work, like memory games, could also be completed in small groups during center time or independently to develop metacognitive skills. Other games, like dramatic play, “dress-up”, and role-playing, could be incorporated into center time to help students develop appropriate social interaction skills, discourse routines, and social inferencing skills, as evidence suggests an underlying cognitive-social piece for narrative language development (Vygotsky, 1978; Young-Suk Grace, 2016). Additionally, teachers could incorporate more opportunities for children to practice narrative retells, such as opening circle time in the morning by having students share something that happened over the weekend, asking students to tell the class about their favorite bedtime story, or even just reciting nursery rhymes. Fostering discussions around literature will help expose preschoolers to narrative structures and language to increase their familiarity with the basic forms of literary composition and narration (Strickland, 2000).

Limitations

While the results of this study contribute positive implications for contextualized narrative instruction for preschool children, results should be interpreted with caution as several limitations could have influenced these results. Due to the limited geographical area and very small sample size, concerns for external validity exist. Schools in southeastern Illinois have limited diversity in regards to race or ethnicity. To improve

generalization of findings, data from more diverse populations and other geographical areas should be considered. Other limitations include the inability to control for external learning opportunities such as additional instruction in the classroom or home environment. The experimental group did receive approximately 60 minutes of additional instruction time per week compared to the control group. Therefore, it is possible simply having an additional 60 minutes per week of instructional time benefitted the children in the experimental group. Also, the actual instruction time for each session slightly varied with a minimum duration of 25 minutes (due to delayed arrival of students) and maximum duration of 60 minutes. There was also a session cancelled due to the university's observance of a holiday, and several students missed the session the following week due to inclement weather. A threat to internal validity of this study was the lack of instruction reliability. While a script was utilized, spontaneous comments and questions from the participants could have guided discussions away from the prewritten script. Additionally, inequality of group membership could have influenced results. There were two additional participants in the experimental group than the control group. Furthermore, removal of two outlier participants was a limitation given the small sample size. Another limitation of this study could be having several different clinicians and professors participating as examiners. Frequent altering of examiners could impact the unfamiliar listener effect for children during narrative retell testing. The testing environment was also slightly chaotic with multiple distractions present, as multiple children were tested at one time within the same general vicinity.

Future Research**Recommendation 1.**

The first recommendation for future research would be to increase the validity of the study by repeating this study with its intended service delivery design. Since one session was cancelled and only half of the participants attended the following week's session, approximately half of the students did not participate in two of the six sessions of intervention. Furthermore, not all sessions ran the full 60-minutes due to testing and tardiness. While the intervention group participants still achieved statistically significant higher scores on their narrative retells concluding treatment compared to their control group counterparts, these factors were major limitations to the construction validity of this study. Therefore, it is suggested for this study to be repeated with implementation of six, one-hour treatment sessions.

Recommendation 2.

Since results of the current study suggest positive implications for development and implementation of explicit, contextualized narrative intervention, another recommendation for future research would be to design a similar study analyzing the efficacy of a differentiated, explicit, contextualized, narrative-based language instruction using an RtI approach. Rather than having six, hour-long treatment sessions, the instruction could be delivered multiple times a week for 20 minutes each day during regularly scheduled instruction. By incorporating instruction into the regular day, difficulties associated with poor attendance should be remediated. Since the intervention group in the current study received 60 minutes of additional instruction each week compared to their control group counterparts, additional research is necessary to conclude that the quality of instruction, not just the quantity of instruction, was the reason the

experimental group scored higher than the control group. To further investigate the quality of instruction, three groups of participants would be required: a control group receiving typical instruction, an intervention group receiving the contextualized, narrative instruction in a large-group service delivery model, and an intervention group receiving differentiated, contextualized, narrative instruction in small groups particular to their level of narrative performance. Intervention would be provided as a multi-disciplinary approach and require professional development for teachers and associated personnel. Instruction should target specific tiered vocabulary, story grammar concepts, linguistic complexity, concept knowledge, listening comprehension, early reading concepts, narrative retell, and independent story generation. Data should be compared at the conclusion of intervention to determine which service-delivery model most enhanced the narrative performance of students, as well as which model best enhanced the performance of the bottom performers, such that the gap between bottom and top performers was minimized.

Recommendation 3.

To further investigate narrative retell performance in preschool children, this study could be repeated using benchmark, progress-monitoring, story-generation analysis in addition to the TNR-P. While the TNR-P offers insights into a child's narrative abilities, it also has several limitations. The concept of narrative retell is a novel concept for preschoolers. Elimination of visual support during the narrative assessment places a greater emphasis on participants' auditory comprehension skills compared to the typical shared-reading experience facilitated with picture supports in preschool classrooms (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad, & Zhang, 2002). Furthermore, preschool teachers rarely ask

students to reproduce the storyline when interacting with written narratives. Therefore, since the TNR-P is a relatively novel task for preschool children, it may not represent the most accurate analysis of a child's narrative abilities. Also, the implications of a young child's linguistic complexity on their ability to retell stories remains unknown. To supplement narrative retells, participants should also be asked to tell the examiner a story of their choice. Story generations can then be transcribed through a language sample analysis and analyzed for morphological and syntactic complexity. Core language abilities at baseline can then be compared to participants' narrative progress and linguistic complexity development throughout intervention.

Recommendation 4.

Interdisciplinary research could also be conducted to study the personalities and behaviors of participants to determine if the unique profile of the student has an impact on their core language abilities during preschool, as well as if their profile can determine the trajectory of their performance on the TNR-P throughout intervention. In the current study, children with the highest *Expressive Vocabulary* and *Word Structure* scores identified on the CLEF-P:2 at baseline consistently scored lower on the TNR-P baseline compared to peers with more average expressive and receptive abilities. This is counterintuitive, as children with higher capacities for expressive and receptive language should be able to meet higher demands of complex linguistic tasks, such as narrative retells. However, regression data from the current study suggests a statistically significant inverse relationship between a child's CELF-P:2 scores and their TNR-P scores at baseline. To successfully retell narratives, children must demonstrate adequate skills in the following areas: attention, memory, vocabulary, syntax, listening comprehension, and

story structure knowledge (e.g., sequencing events, cause-effect, problem-solution, etc.). However, students also needed to feel comfortable interacting with an unfamiliar adult in a testing environment. Since students with higher language abilities were least likely to score higher on the TNR-P, further investigation is warranted to explore the relationships between students' individual profiles to identify underlying metacognitive skills, personality traits, social skills, and core language skills that significantly influence narrative retell development.

Conclusion

This study aimed to contribute to the current narrative retell literature by evaluating the potential efficacy of an explicit, contextualized preschool intervention program. Results indicated that preschoolers were highly receptive to narrative retell instruction, as evidenced through their weekly gains in narrative retell performance. Further research is necessary to continue developing best practice principles for addressing story retell within the classroom since story retell continues to be imperative for academic success, but lacks direct instruction at the preschool level.

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Appendix A
Parent Letter of Consent to Participate

Dear families and caregivers,

My name is Meg Miller, and I am a graduate student in the Communication Disorders and Sciences Department at Eastern Illinois University. I will be conducting a study for the Spring 2016 semester in the Child Development Lab. I am interested in studying how children develop storytelling skills. I will be providing storytelling instruction to all children who will commit to coming to the lab on Fridays. Additionally, children will be frequently assessed on their storytelling progress throughout the semester. Instruction and assessment will take place during the scheduled instruction times. Children are invited to participate in either the 9:00-10:00am or the 1:00-2:00pm class. Regular attendance is required. This particular instruction will be provided on the days listed below:

Friday, January 29, 2016

Friday, February 5, 2016

Friday, February 12, 2016

Friday, February 19, 2016

Friday, February 26, 2016

Friday, March 4, 2016

Friday, April 1, 2016

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either me (memiller7@eiu.edu), my advisor, Dr. Nichole Mulvey (namulvey@eiu.edu), or the Child Development Lab, coordinator Ms. Karen Hart (khart2@eiu.edu). Thank you so much for considering participation, and I look forward to working with your children next semester! Ms. Hart/Dr. Murphy will have a sign-up sheet you will be able to sign if you are interested in bringing your child these EXTRA times to the lab during the above dates.

Sincerely,

Meg Miller, B.S.

Graduate Clinician, Eastern Illinois University

Appendix B
Intervention Activities by Session

Learning Objectives: Character, Setting, Problem, Consequence, Attempt, Solution, Resolution

1. To identify the characters in a story.
2. To identify the settings in a story.
3. To identify the problems in a story.
4. To identify the consequences in a story.
5. To identify the attempts in a story.
6. To identify the solutions in a story.
7. To identify the resolution in a story.

Day 1 Instruction

Pre-Reading Presentation and Activity (15 Minutes)

Script: (Using story component cards from page 11 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) “I have brought one of my favorite stories for us to read together today, but first, we are going to learn a new word. Our new word for today is ‘character’ (point to Velcro board and icon). Who can tell me what a character is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). That’s right! The character is who (point to icon) the story is about. A character is a person or animal in a story. Can you think of any characters? (Allow all children a chance to respond to the question). That’s right! All of those are great examples of the ‘who’ in stories; they are the characters.”

(Using “Jump in the Hoop” activity from page 23 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) “Now let’s play a game to practice answering the question who. Characters in our books have a lot of characteristics, or way we can describe and talk about them. We can talk about what a character is wearing, how they are feeling, or what they look like. We are all going to pretend that we are characters in a book. I am going to be the author of our story and introduce all of my characters! When I introduce you, or begin describing you, I want you to jump into the hoop! Let’s practice. This character is wearing a blue shirt. Hm. Who is wearing a blue shirt? That’s right, who is our character? John is our character! Let’s try some more!” Continue describing all participants until each has had a turn as the character. Then ask all participants to sit on the reading rug.

“Today we are going to read one of my favorite stories. Raise your hand if you have heard of the *Three Little Pigs*. Who thinks they can name a character from the story? (Allow 3-4 children to respond to each prompt). Who do you see pictured on the cover of the book? What does that character look like? Can anyone else think of characters in this

story? Does anyone remember what happens in this story? How do you think the pigs felt when they were being chased? How would you feel if someone blew down your house? All of those are great predictions of what might happen in our story. Let's see what happens in the story of *Three Little Pigs*."

Story Preview (5 minutes)

The instructor will introduce the major points of the story through a picture walk.

Script: "This story is about three little pigs who need to build a house of their own. Their house must be strong enough to keep out the big bad wolf. The three little pigs and the big bad wolf are our main characters! The three little pigs first try to build a house of straw, but the big bad wolf blew the house of straw down. That made the little pigs feel really scared. Then, they build a house of sticks, but the big bad wolf blew down that house, too. Finally, the pigs build a house of bricks, and that house is strong enough to keep the big bad wolf out! That made the pigs very happy."

Shared-Reading of Book (15 minutes)

The instructor will read the book aloud to the group, frequently engaging the group in discussions. Facilitated discussions will be lead using the following prompts:

1. Can you predict who this story will be about?
2. How might the pigs feel when they must move out on their own?
3. Why might it be a bad idea to build a house of straw?
4. What do you think will happen to the house of sticks?
5. How do you think the little pigs are feeling when the wolf blew their houses down?
6. What would you build a house out of?
7. Do you think it is a good idea to build a house of bricks?
8. What do you think our wolf will do next?
9. How might the pigs feel when the wolf runs away?
10. Who can think of a different way for the book to end?
11. Who remembers who all the characters in our story were?
12. Who can think of some of the emotions our characters may have felt during the story?

Post-Reading Activity (15 minutes)

(Using "Three Little Pigs Storyboard" from page 34 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) Children will draw a picture of one of the story's events from a basket. Script: "You will all pick a picture of a special moment from the story. One of the characters will be in your picture. I need all of your help to retell the story!"

Each sentence I read will be about one of your pictures. When I read your picture's sentence, I want you to come up here and place your picture on our story map. Let's begin!" As children place their pictures on the story map board, they will be asked to describe the character in their picture. Scaffolding will be provided as necessary for children to describe their character to the class. Once all pictures are placed correctly on the story map, the instructor will place "THE END" icon on the board.

Day 2 Instruction

Pre-Reading Presentation and Activity (15 Minutes)

Script: (Using story component cards from page 11 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) "Let's remember what we talked about last time. Who can remember what we did? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). Good thinking, everyone! Our special word from last week was character. Who can tell me what a character is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). That's right, a character is a person in the story. Who remembers some of the characters from our story, *Three Little Pigs*? (Allow 3-4 children to respond). That's right, we had a lot of characters in our book last week.

(Using story component cards from page 11 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) "Who is ready to learn a new word today? Our new word for today is 'setting' (point to Velcro board and icon). Who can tell me what a setting is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). That's right! The setting is where (point to icon) and when (point to icon) the story happens. A setting is a place or time where the story occurs. Can you think of any settings? (Allow all children a chance to respond to the question). That's right! All of those are great examples of the 'where' and 'when' in stories; they are settings."

(Using "Where do I Live" activity from page 70 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) "Now let's play a game to practice answering the question where. I have brought some animal friends of mine today. I want all of you to draw an animal out of the bag. Pick one card without peeking. Great! Now I want us to go around the circle and everyone tell us which animal you picked. (Allow students to share which animal they chose). Good job, everyone! Now I want us to think about where our animals live. Some of our animals live on a farm, or in the ocean, or at the zoo, or in a forest. (Present scenes on Velcro board as each setting is introduced). When it is your turn, I want you to come place your animal where it lives on the board. If you need help, just ask the class where they think your animal lives. Let's begin!" Let all students place their animal on the appropriate habitat board until each has had a turn.

"Now let's practice answering the question when. There are a lot of ways we can talk about when something happens. We can say it happens during the day, or at night. Who can think of something they do during the day? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). Yes, those things happen when?-during the day. Who can think of something they do at night?"

(Allow 1-2 children to respond). Great, those things happen when?-at night. When do we go to sleep? When do we eat breakfast? When do we take a bath? When do we go to school? When do we eat dinner? That's right! We do a lot of things during the day and at night. We can also talk about when things happen during the year, like spring, winter, fall, or summer. For example, who knows what time of the year we wear shorts? What about what time of the year do we wear coats and boots? When do flowers grow? When do you go swimming? When do we go to school? We can also talk about the months in each season. Let's practice saying all of the months together! January February March April May June July August September October November December. Very good! Who can tell me when their birthday is? Who can tell me when Halloween occurs? What about Christmas? Good job thinking about when things happen!"

"Today we are going to read another one of my favorite stories. Raise your hand if you have heard of *Little Red Riding Hood*? Who thinks they can name a character from the story? (Allow 3-4 children to respond to each prompt). Who thinks they can think of a setting we might see in the book? Who do you see pictured on the cover of the book? What does that character look like? Does anyone remember what happens in this story? Where do you think she might be? What time of year does it look like it might be? How do you know? All of those are great ideas of where our story might happen. Let's see what happens in the story of *Red Riding Hood*."

Story Preview (5 minutes)

The instructor will introduce the major points of the story through a picture walk.

Script: "This story is about a little girl named Little Red Riding Hood. Little Red Riding Hood wanted to surprise her grandmother by baking her some cookies. Little Red Riding Hood had a long journey through the forest to get to her grandmother's house. The main settings are the forest and grandmother's house. Little Red meets the scary wolf in the forest. Little Red Riding Hood, the wolf, and grandmother are our main characters! The scary wolf is very hungry and needs a snack. Let's read to see what happens to Little Red Riding Hood!"

Shared-Reading of Book (15 minutes)

The instructor will read the book aloud to the group, frequently engaging the group in discussions. Facilitated discussions will be lead using the following prompts:

1. Can you predict who this story will be about?
2. How might Little Red Riding Hood feel about making the long trip by herself?
3. Why might it be a bad idea to travel in the forest alone?
4. What do you think the wolf will do?

5. How do you think grandmother felt when she saw the wolf?
6. What settings have we seen so far?
7. What time of year do you think our story takes place?
8. How do you know it is winter time?
9. How might Little Red feel when she found out she was talking to the wolf?
10. What could Little Red do?
11. Who can think of a different way for the book to end?
12. Who remembers who all the characters in our story were?
13. Who can think of some of the emotions our characters may have felt during the story?
14. Who can remember some of the settings we saw?

Post-Reading Activity (15 minutes)

(Using “Little Red Riding Hood Story Board” from page 31 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) Children will draw a picture of one of the story’s events from a basket. Script: “You will all pick a picture of a special moment from the story. I need all of your help to retell the story! Each sentence I read will be about one of your pictures. When I read your picture’s sentence, I want you to come up here and place your picture on our story map. Let’s begin!” As children place their pictures on the story map board, they will be asked to describe the setting in their picture. Scaffolding will be provided as necessary for children to describe their setting to the class. Once all pictures are placed correctly on the story map, the instructor will place “THE END” icon on the board.

Day 3 Instruction

Pre-Reading Presentation and Activity (15 Minutes)

Script: (Using story component cards from page 11 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) “Let’s remember what we talked about last time. Who can remember what we did? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). Good thinking, everyone! Our special word from last week was setting. Who can tell me what a setting is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). That’s right, a setting is where the story takes place. It answers the questions when and where. Who remembers some of the settings from our story, *Little Red Riding Hood*? (Allow 3-4 children to respond). That’s right, we had a lot of settings in our book last week.”

“Who is ready to learn two new words today? Our first new word for today is ‘problem’ (point to Velcro board and icon). Who can tell me what a problem is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). That’s right! The problem is something bad that happens (point to icon). A problem is something our characters must fix. Can you think of any problems?”

(Allow all children a chance to respond to the question). That's right! All of those are great examples of the bad things that might happen in stories; they are problems."

"Our second new word for today is 'consequence' (point to Velcro board and icon). Who can tell me what a consequence is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). That's right! The consequence is what happens when something good or bad happens (point to icon). For example, when you are really good, you get a treat. Getting treat is a good consequence that happens when you are good. An example of a bad consequence could be if you hit someone you might have to go to time out. Can you think of any consequences? (Allow all children a chance to respond to the question). That's right! All of those are great examples of consequences that might happen."

(Using "Story Building" from page 112 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack-2nd edition*) "Now we are going to play a game to practice thinking of problems and consequences. I want everyone to draw one picture out of the bag. We are going to go around the circle and talk about the problem and consequence in our pictures! I will go first. My picture has one character (point to Velcro board and icon). It is a girl. She is outside on the playground (point to Velcro board and icon). But, oh no, she fell down! The problem in my picture is that the girl fell down (point to icon on Velcro board). The consequence of her falling down is that her now knee hurts (point to icon on Velcro board)! Who can tell me what the problem in my picture was (point to icon on Velcro board)? (Allow 1-2 students to respond). Great job, the problem in my picture was that the girl fell down! Who can tell me what the consequence in my picture was (point to icon on Velcro board)? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That's right, the consequence in my picture was that her knee hurts! Now let's go around the circle. When it's your turn, tell us what the problem and consequence are in your picture. If you need help, just ask the class to help you find the problem and consequence". Allow all students an opportunity to practice telling the problem and consequence. Have all students return to the reading circle when the activity is completed.

"Today we are going to read another one of my favorite stories. Raise your hand if you have heard of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*? Who thinks they can name a character from the story? (Allow 3-4 children to respond to each prompt). Who thinks they can think of a setting we might see in the book? Who do you see pictured on the cover of the book? What does that character look like? Where do you think he might be? What time of year does it look like it might be? How do you know? Where do you think he is? How do you know? Based on this picture, what do you think might be happening? So what might be a problem in our story? Can you think of some consequences that might happen as a result of something chasing him? All of those are great ideas of where our story might happen. Let's see what happens in the story of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*."

Story Preview (5 minutes)

The instructor will introduce the major points of the story through a picture walk.

Script: “This story is about a little boy. He is a shepherd. That means he has to watch over the sheep in the field. Most of the time, there were no problems, so the shepherd would get bored and cause trouble. He would try to scare the villagers by running into town yelling “wolf”. Everyone from the village would come out to the field to help protect the sheep from the wolf. They were mad when they found out the boy lied about seeing a wolf. Let’s read to see what happens to the boy!”

Shared-Reading of Book (15 minutes)

The instructor will read the book aloud to the group, frequently engaging the group in discussions. Facilitated discussions will be lead using the following prompts:

1. Can you predict who this story will be about?
2. How might the shepherd feel when he is all by himself in the fields?
3. Who wants to talk about what our setting looks like?
4. What do you think the wolf will do?
5. Do you think it is a good idea for the boy to teach the sheep tricks?
6. What might be a problem with that?
7. How do you think the sheep feel?
8. How do you know?
9. What is our problem?
10. What do you think might happen?
11. What was a consequence of the boy yelling “wolf”?
12. How did the boy feel having a friend in the field with him?
13. What might the boy try doing tomorrow?
14. What would you do if you were in the field alone?
15. If the problem here was that the shepherd was bored, what was the consequence here?
16. What do you think might happen?
17. What might the boy be hearing?
18. Why did no one come?
19. So what was the consequence for the boy lying about seeing wolves?
20. Who were all the characters we met?
21. Who can remember some of the settings we saw?
22. What were some of the problems?
23. What were the consequences to those problems?

Post-Reading Activity (15 minutes)

Children will draw a picture of one of the story’s events from a basket. Script: “You will all pick two pictures of special moments from the story. They are all of the problems and

consequences we saw in the story. The problems and their consequences have been separated and mixed up! I need your help putting the problems with the right consequences. When I read the part about your picture, I want you to come up here and show the class your picture! We will then put all the pictures in order so we can tell our story. Let's start! Is the shepherd being bored a problem? Yes, bored is our problem. What was the consequence to being bored? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). Let's turn the page to remember what the consequence was for the boy being bored! He taught the sheep tricks! Who has the picture of the boy teaching the sheep tricks? So what was the problem in these pictures? And what was the consequence? Very good, let's put these pictures on our story board! Let's turn the page to remember what our next problem in the story was." As children place their pictures on the story map board, they will be asked to describe the problems and consequences in their pictures. Scaffolding will be provided as necessary for children to describe their pictures to the class. Once all pictures are placed correctly on the story map, the instructor will place "THE END" icon on the board.

Day 4 Instruction

Pre-Reading Presentation and Activity (15 Minutes)

Script: (Using story component cards from page 11 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) "Let's remember what we talked about last time. Who can remember what we did? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). Good thinking, everyone! Our special words from last week were problem and consequence. Who can tell me what a problem is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). The problem is something bad that happens (point to icon). A problem is something our characters must fix. Can you think of any problems? (Allow all children a chance to respond to the question). That's right! All of those are great examples of the bad things that might happen in stories; they are problems. Who can tell me what a consequence is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). That's right! The consequence is what happens when something good or bad happens (point to icon). For example, when you are really good, you get a treat. Getting treat is a good consequence that happens when you are good. An example of a bad consequence could be if you hit someone you might have to go to time out. Can you think of any consequences? (Allow all children a chance to respond to the question). That's right! All of those are great examples of consequences that might happen."

"Who is ready to learn a new word today? Our new word is attempt (point to icon on Velcro board). Who wants to guess what an attempt is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). An attempt is something the character does to try to fix the problem. For example, if the problem is you accidentally kicked over your friend's block tower, you might attempt to fix the problem by saying "sorry" or trying to help your friend rebuild their block tower. Can anyone think of some problems they have attempted to fix themselves? (Allow 2-3

children to respond). Great job thinking of times when you have had to attempt to fix problems!”

(Using “Three-Part Sequences” pictures and scripts from *Black Sheep Press: Narrative Sequences- 3rd edition*)“Now we are going to play a game to practice thinking of attempts. I want everyone to draw one picture out of the bag. We are going to go around the circle and make stories about the problem, attempt, and consequence in our pictures! I will go first. My picture has one character (point to Velcro board and icon). It is a frog. The frog is on a lily pad on the lake (point to Velcro board and icon). He is hungry. The problem in my picture is that the frog is hungry (point to icon on Velcro board). He tried to eat a fly. That is the attempt (point to icon on Velcro board). He wants to fix problem of being hungry, so he attempts to eat a fly. But- oh no- silly frog! He fell in the lake! The consequence of him trying to eat the fly is that he falls into the lake (point to icon on Velcro board)! Who can tell me what the problem in my picture was (point to icon on Velcro board)? (Allow 1-2 students to respond). Great job, the problem in my picture was that the frog was hungry! Who can tell me what the attempt in my story was (point to icon on Velcro board)? Great job, the attempt in my picture was the frog trying to eat a fly. Who can tell me what the consequence in my picture was (point to icon on Velcro board)? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That’s right, the consequence in my picture was that the frog fell into the lake! Now let’s go around the circle. When it’s your turn, tell us the problem, attempt, and consequence in your picture. If you need help, just ask the class to help you find the problem, attempt, and consequence”. Allow all students an opportunity to practice telling their stories. Have the class retell the stories once the student is finished. Return to the reading circle when all students have practice telling their story.

“Today we are going to read another one of my favorite stories. Raise your hand if you have heard of *Harry the Dirty Dog*? Who thinks they can name a character from the story? (Allow 1-2 children to respond to each prompt). Who thinks they can think of a setting we might see in the book? Who do you see pictured on the cover of the book? What does that character look like? Where do you think he is? Based on this picture, what do you think might be happening? So what might be a problem in our story? What could he attempt to do to fix that problem? What might happen as a consequence? All of those are great ideas of where our story might happen. Let’s see what happens in the story of *Harry the Dirty Dog*.”

Story Preview (5 minutes)

The instructor will introduce the major points of the story through a picture walk.

Script: “This story is about a little dog. His name is Harry. Harry hates having to take a bath. He runs away from his home to avoid taking a bath. He explores many different places and ends up getting very, very dirty. Let’s read to see what happens to Harry!”

Shared-Reading of Book (15 minutes)

The instructor will read the book aloud to the group, frequently engaging the group in discussions. Facilitated discussions will be lead using the following prompts:

1. Can you predict who this story will be about?
2. How might the family feel about their dog getting dirty?
3. What is the setting in this picture?
4. What did Harry do to attempt to fix the problem of having to take a bath?
5. Do you think it is a good idea for Harry to run away?
6. What might be a problem with that?
7. How do you think his family will feel when they find out Harry has run away?
8. Now what is our setting in this picture?
9. What might happen to Harry here?
10. So what was the consequence for Harry playing in the street, at the railroad, and in the park?
11. What could be a problem with Harry playing in the coal?
12. What do you think the consequence would be for Harry changing from a white dog to a black dog?
13. Where is Harry now?
14. Where do you think Harry should go next?
15. So how is Harry feeling now?
16. What is something he could attempt to do to fix feeling tired and hungry?
17. So what is the problem here?
18. What should Harry attempt to do to fix not being recognized by his family?
19. What was the consequence of Harry being so dirty?
20. What should Harry attempt to do now to fix his family not recognizing him?
21. What is the attempt here?
22. Do you think it will work to fix the problem?
23. What was the consequence of Harry taking a bath?
24. Who were all the characters we met?
25. Who can remember some of the settings we saw?
26. What were some of the problems Harry ran into?
27. What were some of the things Harry attempted to do to fix the problems?
28. What were the consequences to those attempts?

Post-Reading Activity (15 minutes)

Children will draw a picture of one of the story's events from a basket. Script: "You will all pick three pictures of special moments from the story. They are all of the problems, attempts, and consequences we saw in the story. When I read the part about your picture, I want you to come up here and show the class your picture! We will then put all the pictures in order so we can tell our story. Let's start! Is Harry not wanting to take a bath the problem? Yes, Harry avoiding his bath is a problem. What did Harry attempt to do to fix the problem of having to take a bath? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). Let's turn the page to remember what Harry attempted to do! Oh, that silly Harry, he hid the brush in the backyard. Who has the picture of Harry hiding his brush in the yard? So what was the consequence of Harry avoiding his bath by hiding the brush? He was dirty! Who has the picture of dirty Harry? Let's put these pictures on our story board! So what was the problem in these pictures? And what was the attempt? What was the consequence? Very good! Let's turn the page to remember what our next problem in the story was." As children place their pictures on the story map board, they will be asked to describe the problems, attempts, and consequences in their pictures. Scaffolding will be provided as necessary for children to describe their pictures to the class. Once all pictures are placed correctly on the story map, the instructor will place "THE END" icon on the board.

Day 5 Instruction**Pre-Reading Presentation and Activity (15 Minutes)**

Script: (Using story component cards from page 11 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) "Let's remember what we talked about last time. Who can remember what we did? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). Good thinking, everyone! Our special word from last week was attempt. Who can tell me what an attempt is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). An attempt is something the character does to try to fix the problem. Who can remember some of the attempts Harry did in our book last week to fix his problem of not wanting to take a bath? (Allow 4-5 children to respond). That's right! All of those are great examples of attempts our character did to try to fix his problems."

"Who is ready to learn a new word today? Our new word is solution (point to icon on Velcro board). Who wants to guess what a solution is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). A solution is the best way the character permanently fixes their problem forever. Sometimes our characters have to make many, many attempts to fix a problem before they figure out the best possible solution to fix their problem. Can anyone think of some solutions they have done to fix problems? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). Great job thinking of solutions for problems!"

(Using "Four-Part Sequences" from *Black Sheep Press: Narrative Sequences- 3rd edition*)
 "Now we are going to play a game to practice thinking of solutions for stories. I want

everyone to draw one picture out of the bag. We are going to go around the circle and make stories about the problem, attempt, consequence, and solutions in our pictures! I will go first. My picture has two characters (point to Velcro board and icon). There are two boys. The boys are outside in the snow. The setting must be winter time (point to Velcro board and icon). They want to play outside, but it is cold and snowy. The problem in my picture is that the boys want to play outside but it is cold and snowy (point to icon on Velcro board). They try to have fun by building a snowman. That is the attempt (point to icon on Velcro board). They attempt to have fun by making a snowman! Once the snowman is finished, they decide to make snowballs. This boy attempts to have fun by throwing a snowball at the snowman. The consequence of him throwing a snowball at the snowman is that the snowman throws a snowball back at the boy (point to icon on Velcro board)! The solution is that the boy probably should not throw snowballs. Who can tell me what the problem in my picture was (point to icon on Velcro board)? (Allow 1-2 students to respond). Great job, the problem in my picture was that the boys wanted to have fun playing outside but it was cold and snowy! Who can tell me what the attempt in my story was (point to icon on Velcro board)? Great job, the attempt in my picture was the boys building a snowman and making snowballs. Who can tell me what the consequence in my picture was (point to icon on Velcro board)? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That's right, the consequence in my picture was that the snowman threw a snowball back at the boy! Who can tell me what the solution in my picture was (point to Velcro board)? Yes, the solution is that the boy should not throw snowballs. Now let's go around the circle. When it's your turn, tell us the problem, attempt, consequence, and solution in your picture. If you need help, just ask the class to help you talk about your pictures". Allow all students an opportunity to practice telling their stories. Have the class retell the stories once the student is finished. Have all students return to the reading circle when the activity is completed.

"Today we are going to read another one of my favorite stories. Raise your hand if you have heard of *Clifford: The Firehouse Dog*? Who thinks they can name a character from the story? (Allow 1-2 children to respond to each prompt). Who thinks they can think of a setting we might see in the book? Who do you see pictured on the cover of the book? What does that character look like? Where do you think he is? Based on this picture, what do you think might be happening? So what might be a problem in our story? What could he attempt to do to fix that problem? What might happen as a consequence? Can you think of a solution that could permanently fix that problem? All of those are great ideas of where our story might happen. Let's see what happens in the story of *Clifford: The Firehouse Dog*."

Story Preview (5 minutes)

The instructor will introduce the major points of the story through a picture walk.

Script: “This story is about a really big dog. His name is Clifford. Clifford loves helping people. He decides to visit the firehouse to learn about fire safety. He learns all about what to do in the event of a fire. Let’s read to see what happens to Harry!”

Shared-Reading of Book (15 minutes)

The instructor will read the book aloud to the group, frequently engaging the group in discussions. Facilitated discussions will be lead using the following prompts:

1. Can you predict who this story will be about?
2. What characters have we met so far?
3. What is the setting in this picture?
4. What might be a problem if Clifford doesn’t know about fire safety?
5. How is he attempting to fix the problem of not knowing fire safety?
6. What would be a consequence of not stopping, dropping, and rolling?
7. What might be a consequence of Clifford stopping, dropping, and rolling?
8. How did Clifford attempt to fix the problem of squishing the man’s fruit cart?
9. What is our new problem?
10. What can Clifford attempt to do when he hears to fire alarm?
11. How did Clifford help the problem that smoke was coming from the building?
12. What is something he can attempt to do to help the people in trouble?
13. What was his solution for helping the people?
14. So how did Clifford fix the problem that the hose was hard to pull for the firefighters?
15. What could Clifford attempt to do to fix the fire hydrant problem?
16. Why did Clifford have to make a hole in the roof?
17. How did Clifford attempt to stop the smoke?
18. How do you think those people felt when Clifford was helping them?
19. What was the solution the fire chief made to help the town stay safe from fires?
20. Who were all the characters we met?
21. Who can remember some of the settings we saw?
22. What were some of the problems Clifford had to solve?
23. What attempts did Clifford make to stop the fire?
24. What were some of the consequences we saw in the story?
25. What were some of the solutions Clifford come up with to help fight the fire?

Post-Reading Activity (15 minutes)

Children will draw a picture of one of the story's events from a basket. Script: "You will all pick three pictures of special moments from the story. I need your help putting the parts of the story together. There were many problems, attempts, consequences, and solutions from our story! When I read the part about your picture, I want you to come up here and show the class your picture! We will then put all the pictures in order so we can tell our story. Let's start! Is Clifford not knowing fire safety rules a problem? Yes, it is a problem that Clifford doesn't know how to help people in the event of a fire. What did Clifford do to attempt to fix the problem of not knowing fire safety? That's right, Clifford went to the firehouse to learn about fire safety! Who has the picture of Clifford at the fire safety class? Clifford was attempting to practice his fire safety skills, but what was the consequence? Yes, Clifford accidentally squished the fruit cart! That is a consequence! Then the fire bell rang, and the town needed help! The problem here is that there were too many cars in the way! How did Clifford attempt to fix that problem? That's right! He cleared the street for the fire trucks! What is the problem in this picture? Yes, there is a lot of smoke coming out of the building! What were some of the things Clifford attempted to do to keep the people safe from the smoke? Those are great ideas! Clifford attempted to help the people by keeping them away from the building and taking them out of the building to safety. What is a problem in this picture? Yes, the firemen couldn't move the heavy hose! How did Clifford attempt to help the firefighters with this problem? Great! He pulled it out for them! What was the problem here? That's right, the fire hydrant was stuck! What did Clifford attempt to do to help? Yes, he helped open the fire hydrant! What do you think the problem is here? Yes, there is a lot of smoke in that building. What were things Clifford did to help stop the fire? Great job, he made a hole in the roof, he poured water on the building, and he blew the smoke away! What was the problem in this picture? That's right, some of the firefighters were still stuck in the building. How did Clifford help? He took them out of the building! What was the good consequence of Clifford learning about fire safety? What might be a good solution for keeping the town safe? Yes, I think it would be a good solution for everyone to take fire safety lessons." As children place their pictures on the story map board, they will be asked to describe the pictures. Scaffolding will be provided as necessary for children to describe their pictures to the class. Once all pictures are placed correctly on the story map, the instructor will place "THE END" icon on the board.

Day 6 Instruction

Pre-Reading Presentation and Activity (15 Minutes)

Script: (Using story component cards from page 11 in *Black Sheep Press: Nursery Narrative Pack- 2nd edition*) "Let's remember what we talked about last time. Who can remember what we did? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). Good thinking, everyone! Our special word from last week was solution. Who wants to guess what a solution is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). A solution is the best way the character permanently fixes their

problem forever. Sometimes our characters have to make many, many attempts to fix a problem before they figure out the best possible solution to fix their problem. Who can think of an example of a solution to a problem? (Allow 2-3 children to respond).”

“Who is ready to learn a new word today? Our new word is resolution (point to icon on Velcro board). Who wants to guess what a resolution is? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). A resolution is how the story ends. A resolution is the last thing that happens in a story. For example, sometimes our stories tell us the characters then lived happily-ever-after. Can anyone think of some resolutions from movies or stories? (Allow 2-3 children to respond). Great job thinking of the ending, or the resolutions, of stories and movies!”

“We are going to look back at the stories we have read so far to find resolutions! Let’s go back to the *Three Little Pigs*. Who can help remind the class what this story was about? (Allow 3-4 students opportunities to retell the story). After the pigs scared the wolf away for good, how did the story end, or what was the resolution? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That’s right, it says, “and the three little pigs lived happily together in the house made of bricks”. That is our resolution! Who wants to tell the class again what the resolution of *Three Little Pigs* was? (Allow 1-2 children to respond).”

“What about the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*? Who can help remind the class what this story was about? (Allow 3-4 children to respond). After the woodcutter rescued Little Red and her grandmother, what was the resolution? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That’s right, it says, ‘as Little Red Riding Hood readied herself to leave, grandmother said, ‘Now, little miss, you be certain to go straight home.’ And she did’. That is our resolution! Who wants to tell the class again what the resolution of *Little Red Riding Hood* was? (Allow 1-2 children to respond).”

“What about the story of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*? Who can help remind the class what this story was about? (Allow 3-4 children to respond). After no one came to help the shepherd, what was the resolution? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That’s right, it says, ‘and the shepherd boy spent the rest of the day looking for his sheep, all by himself’. That is our resolution! Who wants to tell the class again what the resolution of *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* was? (Allow 1-2 children to respond).”

“Who can help remind the class what *Harry the Dirty Dog* was about? (Allow 3-4 children to respond). After Harry got a bath, what was the resolution? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That’s right, it says, ‘After dinner, Harry fell asleep in his favorite place, happily dreaming of how much fun it had been getting dirty. He slept so soundly, he didn’t even feel the scrubbing brush he’d hidden under his pillow’. That is our resolution! Who wants to tell the class again what the resolution of *Harry the Dirty Dog* was? (Allow 1-2 children to respond).”

“Who can help remind the class what *Clifford: The Firehouse Dog* was about? (Allow 3-4 children to respond). After Clifford saved the people and stopped the fire, what was the resolution? (Allow 1-2 children to respond). That’s right, it says, ‘Clifford was a hero! The fire chief made him an honorary fire rescue dog, just like his brother, Nero’. That is our resolution! Who wants to tell the class again what the resolution of *Clifford: The Firehouse Dog* was? (Allow 1-2 children to respond).”

“Today we are going to read another one of my favorite stories. Raise your hand if you have heard of *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*? Who thinks they can name a character from the story? (Allow 1-2 children to respond to each prompt). Who thinks they can think of a setting we might see in the book? Who do you see pictured on the cover of the book? What does that character look like? Where do you think he is? Based on this picture, what do you think might be happening? So what might be a problem in our story? What could he attempt to do to fix that problem? What might happen as a consequence? Can you think of a solution that could permanently fix that problem? How do you think the story will end, or what the resolution will be? All of those are great ideas of where our story might happen. Let’s see what happens in the story of *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.”

Story Preview (5 minutes)

The instructor will introduce the major points of the story through a picture walk.

Script: “This story is about three little wolves. Their mom decided it was time for them to make their own homes. Each little wolf made his own home out of something strong to keep the big bad pig out. They made houses of bricks, concrete, and metal. Let’s read to see what happens in *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig!*”

Shared-Reading of Book (15 minutes)

The instructor will read the book aloud to the group, frequently engaging the group in discussions. Facilitated discussions will be lead using the following prompts:

1. Can you predict who this story will be about?
2. What characters have we met so far?
3. What is the setting in this picture?
4. What is the problem in our story?
5. What is the first attempt the little wolves do?
6. Do you think it will be strong enough to keep the big bad pig out?
7. Who wants to describe the setting in this picture?
8. How do you think these wolves are feeling?
9. So the big bad pig couldn’t blow the house down at first, could that be a problem?

10. What could the big bad pig do next to attempt to blow the house down?
11. So when the first attempt to build a house wasn't strong enough, what did the wolves attempt to build their next house of?
12. Do you think the concrete house will be strong enough to keep the pig out for good?
13. What is a consequence of the pig not being about to blow the house down?
14. How might he feel?
15. What might happen next?
16. What was the consequence of putting dynamite by the house?
17. Do you think it is a good idea to make a house of flowers?
18. Who wants to describe the setting in this picture?
19. What could be a consequence of the pig blowing as hard as he can against a house of flowers?
20. What ended up being the solution, or best kind of house for the wolves to build?
21. What was a consequence of building a house of flowers?
22. What was the resolution?
23. Who were all the characters we met?
24. Who can remember some of the settings we saw?
25. What were some of the problems the wolves had to solve?
26. What attempts did the wolves make to keep the pig out?
27. What attempts did the pig make to get in the houses?

Post-Reading Activity (15 minutes)

“Now we are going to re-read the story, but I want your help! We will start at the beginning. I need all of your help finding the special story parts we have been learning about: characters, settings, problems, attempts, consequences, solutions, and resolution. Who wants to tell what happened on this first page here? (Allow 1-2 students to respond). Great job! What are some of the characters in this picture? What was the problem? Very good! Now who wants to talk about what happened next? (Allow 1-2 students to respond).” Continue working through the book using picture walk. Have students identify all story grammar components within the story. Scaffold retellings as needed.

Appendix C

Narrative Complexity Assessment Criteria from TNR-P

1. Story Grammar (SG) Subtest

Story Grammar	2 Points	1 Point	0 Point
Character	Specific name	A boy/girl	Omission/other
Setting	Detailed description	General description	Omission/other
Problem (P)	Detailed description	General description	Omission/other
Emotion	Specific emotion	General feeling	Omission/other
Attempt (A)	Detailed description	General description	Omission/other
Consequence (C)	Detailed description	General description	Omission/other
Ending (E)	Detailed description	General description	Omission/other
			SG Subtotal

*To earn 2 points, the utterance must be able to stand-alone and no inference is necessary

*To earn 1 point, the utterance must include some key words but inference is necessary

2. Language Complexity (LC) Subtest

Conjunctions	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
Then	Includes once	Includes twice	Includes three times
Because	Includes once	Includes twice	Includes three times
When	Includes once	Includes twice	Includes three times
After	Includes once	Includes twice	Includes three times
			LC Subtotal

*1 point awarded for each use of conjunctions in a subordinate clause

3. Episode (E) Subtest

Includes P+A	Includes P+C	Includes A+C	2 Points
	Includes P+C+E	Includes P+A+E	3 Points
		Includes P+A+C	4 Points
		Includes P+A+C+E	5 Points
			E Subtotal

*Points earned are based on the combination of episodes included in the child's retell

**Total Score on Narrative Complexity Assessment compiles scores from the Story Grammar Subtest, Language Complexity Subtest, and Episode Subtest