

## Supporting Language and Literacy Development with Story Retells in the Classroom

WSRA Crossroads of Literacy  
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Marie Stadler, Ph.D., UWEC  
Gay Ward, Ph.D., UWRF

## Importance of storytelling

- Oral language
- Literacy
- Concepts
- Inclusion

## Oral language

- Storytelling is different from conversations.
- Storytelling requires more complex language.
  - Explicit vocabulary
  - Clear referents (e.g., pronouns)
  - Temporal connectives (e.g., when, so, while)

## Literacy

- Storytelling predicts school success.
- Storytelling engages in literate process.
- Storytelling uses “literate conventions”.
  - Vocabulary & syntax
  - Organization
  - Talk about the past
  - Teach “lessons”

## Concepts

- Temporal sequencing
- Cause-effect relationships
- Theory of the mind (understanding that others think/feel differently than you do)

## Growth of narrative skill commencing in preschool years

- First we **LABEL** things.
- Second, we **LIST** by topic.
- Third, we **CONNECT** characters/events.
- Fourth, we **SEQUENCE** correctly.
- Last, we **NARRATE** a planned, goal-directed set of events.

## Key Story Grammar Elements of Narratives

- Setting
- Complicating event
- Problem
- Character's Feelings and Thoughts
- Character Plans
- Attempts to resolve problem
- Consequences of each attempt
- Resolution

» Stein & Glenn, 1982

## Continuum of True Narrative

- Reactive Sequence – series of actions with no clear character planning
- Abbreviated episode – true narrative without explicit character plans; they are inferred
- Incomplete episode – true narrative with plans but missing one key element
- Complete episode – true narrative with all major story grammar elements

## Literate Language Features

- Elaborated Noun Phrase – noun with more than two modifiers (article, adjective, prepositional phrase)
- Mental/Linguistic Verbs – verbs that say how people think or talk (e.g., thought, wished, said, know, forgot, asked, decided)
- Adverbs and adverbial phrases
- Connectives (e.g., conjunctions)

## Cohesive Ties

- Pronoun references
  - Pronoun clearly connected to previous noun
- Demonstrative references
  - This, that, these, those
  - Adverbs – here, now, then

## Sequencing & Cause and Effect

- Sequencing – events in a logical order
- Cause and Effect – telling the listener why events happen or why characters did things or felt a certain way.

## Pros & Cons of Visual Supports

- Real objects
- Pictures
- Prompt cards
- Story maps
- Drawing

## Research

- Mondays: teachers started books
- Tuesdays: Univ. student visited classrooms
- Fridays: videotaping of half of the students
  
- Control group = 21 students (no objects)
  - Half kindergarten, half first grade
- Experimental group = 21 students (objects)
  - Half kindergarten, half first grade



## Research results

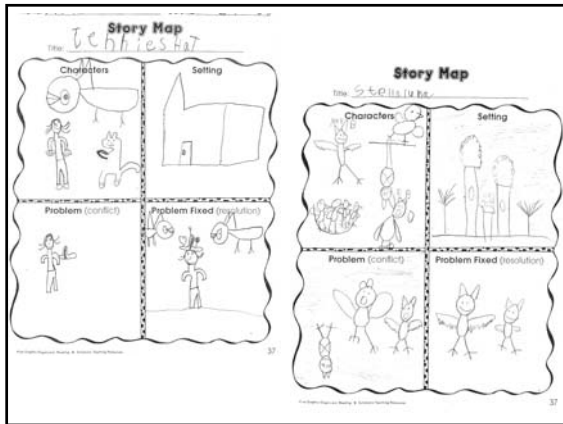
- Experimental group used more
- elaborated noun phrases
  - different elaborated noun phrases
  - different adverbs
- Experimental group used fewer
- conjunctions
  - different conjunctions

## Setting the Stage

- Choose stories with all of the literary elements.
- Arrange the environment.
  - Catalysts
  - Time and Place
  - Audience/listeners
- Use strategies to guide and scaffold inclusion of all the literacy elements.

Brainstorm with a partner strategies to support :

- Story grammar elements
- Literate language features
- Cohesive ties
- Sequencing
- Cause and Effect



## Strategies to Support Story Grammar Use

- Elements posted – write for each story on visual symbol
- Author Study
- Inside/Outside
- Plans – prediction in shared reading
- Picture cues for retells (show)
- Across school day invite to think about what will happen and focus on choices
- In planning for a field trip, include children in the planning stages of classroom activities
- In books discuss character's options
- Do a story grammar – show example of graphic organizer of parts of story
- Story starters
- Adaptations
- Charts for elements
- Asking who, what, where, when, why questions

## Strategies to Support Literate Language Feature Use

- Outlaw words, e.g. "and" Make a visual
- Introduce thesaurus. Hundred dollar words
- Use of conjunctions – First, But, So
- Longer adjectives, more adjectives- greater variety. Have add adjectives in shared reading.
- Comparing and contrasting items – describing.
- Character charts and maps
- Recast children's sentences to more complex structures
- Adverb – drama and matching cards.
- Find a magazine picture – come up with as many adjectives as could for it
- Mental, linguistic verbs -Ask multi level questions – asking to infer how characters think and feel and how
- Stories connect to own life. Asking to come up with synonyms.
- Reading, talking, modeling use of words.
- Using complex language with children – not just talking in simple sentences.
- Connectives – using sentence strips and joining two.
- Present two ideas – encourage to put in one sentence

## Strategies to Support Use of Cohesive Ties

- Clearly identify characters
- Asking children to replace repetitive words with pronouns.
- Pronoun games
- Modeling

## Strategies to Support Sequencing

- Sequencing Pictures
- Drawing and Painting a story
- A picture story map
- Circular tales
- Dramatic play – talk about sequence
- Asking specific questions – what first, what happened next
- Arrows to indicate which way story going
- Reflection on events of days – afternoon news

## Strategies to Support the Use of Cause and Effect

- Why questions
- Questions about actions and feelings
- Children posing questions to peers after sharing
- Opportunities for discovery learning.
- Involving children in understanding goals and purposes and reflecting on own learning.
- KWL charts
- Prediction on books


## Conclusions

- Storytelling is an important skill for communication and conceptual development, and literacy preparation.
- Adults can help children develop this important skill by telling stories and guiding and scaffolding children's stories to include literate language, story grammar, cohesion, sequencing and cause and effect.

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## Please contact us:

- Marie Stadler: [stadlema@uwec.edu](mailto:stadlema@uwec.edu) 
- Gay Ward: [gayle.ward@uwrf.edu](mailto:gayle.ward@uwrf.edu) 