WE AREN'T LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER: EMBODYING CHARACTERS IN READERS THEATER TO PROMOTE COMPREHENSION

by

Cassandra Angley

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Cassandra Angley

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The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Cassandra Angley, and they evaluated her presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

Katherine Wright, Ph.D.	Chair, Supervisory Committee
Margaret E. Chase, Ph.D.	Member, Supervisory Committee
A.J. Zenkert, Ed.D.	Member, Supervisory Committee

The final reading approval of the thesis was granted by Katherine Wright, Ph.D., Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The thesis was approved by the Graduate College.

DEDICATION

For Jennifer, my nine-year old South Bronx student who asked me. “Miss C. will you please teach me how to read?” Sending me on a 16-year long journey so I could finally answer her… “Yes, Jennifer, yes I can.”

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A very special thanks to my professor and mentor Katherine Landau Wright, without whom this thesis would not exist.

ABSTRACT

Readers Theater is an old genre of Theater integrating oral interpretation and presentational Theater. The high interest of the scripts chosen for a Readers Theater production and the repetition of rehearsing text promotes fluency, expressiveness, and motivation. Readers Theater is one method that may support comprehension by developing students' understanding of character. Very few Readers Theater studies measure comprehension. I set-up a study where nine fifth and sixth-grade students from a summer literacy program each embodied a character. I wanted to know if Readers Theater could help teach character comprehension. I created a comprehension assessment tool, called a Character Map, where students identified a character's traits, objectives, passions, problem, evolution, a direct text reference, and an internal thought reference. In this four-week study, students increased their understanding of traits, problem, and metamorphous of the characters they portrayed. Not only did Readers Theater help increase character comprehension, it also led also to deeper comprehension of the story.

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INTRODUCTION

"We aren't living happily ever after!" Ann[1] correctly identifies the crux of the prince and princess's problem in the fractured fairy tale, *Frog Prince Continued* (Scieszka, 2016). I feared an unhappy ending for my Readers Theater workshop when, on the last week, only one out of nine of my students could correctly identify the traits of the character they would be performing in a mere four days. What happened in those four days between the pre and the post-test (and over the course of the four-week workshop) that allowed their emotional vocabulary scores to go from 0 to 11, is the happy-ending described in this thesis.

Readers Theater is an old genre of Theater integrating oral interpretation and presentational Theater (Tanner, 1993). The high interest of the scripts chosen for a Readers Theater production and the repetition of rehearsing text promotes fluency, expressiveness, and motivation. Readers Theater may also support comprehension by developing students' understanding of character; however, very few Readers Theater studies measure comprehension. I wanted to know if Readers Theater could help teach character comprehension. Comprehension is an internal cognitive process (Texas Education Agency, 2002) and is precarious to assess. It's even more difficult to capture a reader's emotional understanding of a character. In an attempt to address this problem, I

[1] All student names are pseudonyms

created a Character Map, a graphic organizer to collect evidence of my students' character comprehension.

Using Readers Theater as the vehicle, in this four-week study I lead my students on a journey towards a better understanding of characters portrayed in narrative text. On this journey I used theater games to embody character; Character Maps to chart character traits, problems, and desires; and discussion to develop and test my students' hypotheses. Not only did Readers Theater help increase my students' character comprehension, it also led to a deeper comprehension of the story.

Figure 1. Detail from Ann's Frog Prince Continued Character Map

LITERATURE REVIEW

Readers Theater Definition

Readers Theater is an old genre of Theater dating back to the Greeks (Coger & White, 1973). It integrates oral interpretation and presentational Theater (Tanner, 1993). Readers Theater scripts are read and held by student actors and not memorized. They can be adapted from any form of writing including plays, novels, short stories, poems, letters, songs, and newspapers. The students read with prosody and appropriate character voices. A Readers Theater "production" can be produced in one to two weeks with 20 to 50 minutes of class time a day (Cocoran, 2005; Young & Rasinski, 2009). Scripts are readily available in libraries and on the internet, and most are not copyrighted, and therefore their usage is free. These productions use minimal or no costumes, scenery, or props, which allows the audience to focus on the text, and to imagine the scenery, costumes, and action.

Established Impact of Readers Theater: Fluency and Motivation

Research has established that Readers Theater benefits struggling readers' fluency and motivation. The most detrimental thing a struggling reader can do is stop reading out of frustration, thereby falling even further behind in their reading skills (Guthrie and Van Meter, 1996). The high interest of the content in a Readers Theater production and the repetition of rehearsing text promote fluency, expression, and motivation (Corcoran, 2005; Palumbo & Sancore, 2009; Rinehart, 1999, Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Fluency

Readers Theater increases three aspects of fluency: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. Traditional approaches to fluency instruction focus on the first two, but rarely are programs implemented to effectively increase a student's prosody (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Prosody is the use of appropriate expression while reading aloud, and can serve as a proxy for how a student may hear text in their head during silent reading (McKenna and Dougherty Stahl, 2015). One of the most effective ways of improving a student's fluency is by repeated readings (Keehn et al., 2008; Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Corcoran (2005) studied twelve second and third grade struggling readers engaged in Readers Theater. The students rehearsed and performed in three different Readers Theater plays. In eight-weeks not only did all of Corcoran's students' fluency scores increase, but also their confidence and attitudes toward reading improved. This boosting of confidence is one of the reasons why Readers Theater, where students rehearse the same short script every day for at least a week, is so successful with improving students' fluency (Corcoran, 2005).

Motivation. Readers Theater has been shown to enliven and engage students in reading and increase motivation to read. In Rinehart's (1999) case study, he explored the benefits of integrating Readers Theater into a one-on-one summer reading tutorial program for 22 low achieving students in the first and second grade. Through reviewing tutors' journals, lesson plans, and observing Readers Theater rehearsals and performances, Rinehart's struggling readers began associating reading with fun, and were eager to participate in read alouds as well as completing reading homework. Motivated

by Readers Theater, Rinehart's students read consistently and their reading scores improved.

While the aforementioned studies have shown Readers Theater improves fluency and motivation, there is also an assumption that fluency naturally leads to comprehension (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Applegate and colleagues (2009) questioned this assumption. They studied 171 students from grade two through 10 who were considered by teachers as "strong readers" based on their fluency skills and scores (2009). 97% of the study group pre-tested as strong in accuracy, rate, and prosody. Yet when they were tested with implicit and explicit comprehension questions, only one third of the identified "strong readers" were found to be strong comprehenders. One third of the participants were proficient, and the last third's comprehension skills were so low they were actually re-classified as struggling readers. The study concluded that, "…fluency does not necessarily or automatically flow towards comprehension" (2009, p.519). Applegate and colleagues said that the ultimate goal of reading is to have a "thoughtful response to text" (2009, Applegate et al., p.519). The Texas Education Agency concluded that, "Reading is a complex, active process of constructing meaning – not skill application" (2002, p.5) Applegate and colleagues would support this conclusion.

Areas of Unknown Impact: Comprehension

By engaging students with texts, Readers Theater can help not only their fluency, but also their comprehension (Corcoran, 2005). More specifically, by asking a student to interpret and perform as a character, Readers Theater immerses them in that character. Readers Theater is one method that may support comprehension by developing students' understanding of character.

The Research. Research has shown that developing character comprehension can improve overall comprehension. McTigue, Douglass, Wright, Hodges and Franks (2015) studied the use of character perspective to teach students comprehension through "…the lenses of opposing characters" (2015, p. 92). To help students understand opposing characters' perspectives they created a graphic organizer they called CHAMP, *CHArt for Multiple Perspectives*. CHAMP helped students infer meaning from text, and delve deeper into characters' actions and motivations. McTigue and colleagues explained that stories go beyond helping readers to merely understand narrative characters, but also to learn empathy that may help them navigate "peer friendships and classroom conflicts" (2015, p. 92). They offer the idea of exploring opposing perspectives as a lens to understand plot, and an alternative to teaching the often overused story map. McTigue and colleagues found that this investment in characters leads to "lively and productive discussions" (2015, p. 100). Furthermore, students' improved empathy with characters heightens the narrative drive of the story and motivated them to read more (McTigue et al., 2015).

Through Readers Theater, readers connect to the text, make the inferences necessary to portray the character, and ask questions. By portraying a character, students bring their own interpretation to the text. Emery goes on to explain that when readers form a "special relationships with the characters they meet in stories…their love for literature grows" (1996, p. 534). Just like McTigue and colleagues, Emery touts the importance of the link between understanding character perspective and comprehension (1996) to help readers understand the "story as a whole" (1996 p.534).

Readers Theater and Comprehension

While many studies report that Readers Theater supports comprehension (Corcoran, 2005; Palumbo & Sancore, 2009; Rinehart, 1999; Young & Rasinski, 2009), very few measured comprehension. In one instance, Keehn and colleagues (2008) conducted a Readers Theater study with 36 eighth grade Title I students, most of whom were classified as struggling readers. They also had a control group of 20 students taught by the same teachers. The same six short stories were used, but the study group incorporated Readers Theater scripts based on the short stories and worked towards a weekly performance. The control group used more traditional curriculum. In the six-week study, the Readers Theater group made significant gains over the control group in fluency, vocabulary, and overall reading comprehension.

Readers Theater Best Practices

Young and Rasinski (2009) conducted a Readers Theater intervention, and later incorporated additional skills and strategies into their Readers Theater curriculum (Young, Rasinski, & Faida, 2017). These studies model best practices for integrating Readers Theater into a balanced literacy curriculum.

Young and Rasinski's 2009 Readers Theater Study.

Young and Rasinski (2009) worked with 29 of Young's second grade students on a year-long intensive reading curriculum consisting primarily of Readers Theater materials and techniques. His curriculum allowed all of his students to choose, rehearse, and perform a Readers Theater script once a week, every week of the school year. The scripts were chosen on Monday, roles were allocated on Tuesday, rehearsed and researched on Wednesday and Thursday with a focus on fluency, and performed for

select audiences on Fridays. Students were tested at the beginning of the Readers Theater program and at the end of the year. Overall Young's students went from reading in the 50th to 75th percentiles to 75th to 90th percentiles. Young's Readers Theater curriculum was so highly engaging that students at all reading levels were not only willing, but also excited, to read (Young & Rasinski, 2009).

Young and Rasinski's Revised Readers Theater Study.

Young and Rasinski (2009) focused on using Readers Theater to teach fluency. They established that fluency is often only measured by the reading rate of a student, which completely ignores prosody. Prosody, they asserted, is one important way to teach reading comprehension. In their most recent 2017 study they added some important comprehension skills and strategies to their Readers Theater curriculum.

In 2009 Young and Rasinski gave students scripts, allowed them to negotiate roles, and rehearse independently at the beginning of the week. For their 2017 study, they decided that "…the release of responsibility could be more gradual" (p.2). In keeping with this decision, they scaffolded the read alouds. They also added in the teaching of comprehension strategies in addition to rehearsing prosody and automaticity. The following changes were made in their weekly schedule. On Mondays the teacher modeled fluent reading by reading the whole script aloud while students read along. Then students generated questions and discussed the script. On Tuesdays students participated in a choral reading, then summarized the script. Wednesdays were now when character roles were assigned. Depending on the number of roles and classroom size the scripts were double, or even triple, casted. Students split up into individual rehearsal groups and the teachers rotated from group to group, "…giving encouragement and talking about the

meaning of the script" (Young et al., 2017, p.2). Once again Thursdays were used for dress rehearsals, but now the teachers also engaged students in discussion, vocabulary analysis, and retelling of the script in their own words. Fridays were still performance day for "…an authentic and supportive audience" (p.4), but now after each performance students engaged in discussion about the text, and how they could have improved their performances.

Young and Rasinski's Best Practices**.**

From 2009 to 2017 Young and colleagues developed the following best practices for implementing a literacy rich Readers Theater curriculum.

- Performing one script a week
- Creating a structured 5-day lesson plans that repeats weekly
- Scaffolding the reading of the script, first read aloud by teacher, then choral reading, then independently
- Highlighting and teaching content vocabulary
- Exploring and monitoring student comprehension through discussion.

I integrated most of these practices into my Readers Theater study.

Fun and Games

Theater games today are an integral part of any actor's training and can be strategically used in a Readers Theater workshop. Viola Spolin, the mother of improvisational theater, invented theater games in the 1920's (Spolin 1986 p.xi). She brought her theater games to inner city schools to help "troubled children" (Robinson, Roberts, Barranger, 1989). Papert (1998) said "What is best about the best games is that they draw kids into some very hard learning. Did you ever hear of a game advertised as

being easy?" Furthermore this is supported by Papademetri-Kachrimani who said that, "Learning from Piaget's constructivism and Papert's constructionism is always highly connected with play." (2015) Constructionism is a pedagogical theory - usually applied to teaching students numeracy and technology - that puts Piaget's constructivist theories into action in the classroom. (Noss and Clayson, 2015).

"Hard Fun"

One of Papert's "big ideas" of constructionism is "hard fun". Many people associate fun with something being easy, but Papert said, "We learn best and we work best if we enjoy what we are doing. But fun and enjoying doesn't mean "easy." The best fun is hard fun" (Papert 1999, p.1). Young and Rasinski illustrate their students engaging in "hard fun" with Readers Theater, "It seemed the struggling readers always chose the longest and most difficult parts: nevertheless, they loved the task of rehearsal and the performance." Rinehart (1999) recognized the connection and value of fun in his Readers Theater curriculum when he noted that his struggling readers had fun with Readers Theater, and those fun experiences motivated them to read. The integration of theater games into the already highly engaging Readers Theater creates a fun environment where students are motivated to learn.

Purpose

Research has established that Readers Theater is an effective tool to teach a variety of fluency skills, and most studies of Readers Theater focus on fluency. Many mention that students' comprehension also increased; however, there have not been enough Readers Theater studies actually measuring this instructional strategy's effect on student comprehension. From Henderson and Buskist (2011), the core problem with

literacy is not fluency, but that it "…has to do with poor reading comprehension, rather than basic reading skills" (p.232). Specifically, they found that most older struggling readers "…can read words accurately, but they do not comprehend what they read" and "lack the strategies to help them comprehend what they read" (Henderson & Buskist, 2011, p. 232).

There is a shift in reading pedagogy in 4th to 5th grade as students prepare to transition to middle school. At that stage students are no longer learning how to read, but rather reading to learn (Banks Zakariya, 2015). The Texas Education Agency (2002) and Applegate (2009) report that the ultimate goal of reading is meaningful comprehension of the text. We know from McTigue and colleagues (2015) that exploring character perspective is an innovative way to teach reading comprehension. But can Readers Theater can teach comprehension through the lens of a character? I designed a study which allowed my students to completely embody a character from a Readers Theater script, and I created an assessment tool to measure their understanding of that character.

Methods

Summer School Context

The Summer Literacy Academy (SLA) is an educational program offered by a State University's Literacy Center, in a small northwestern city. It's a four-week intensive literacy session that meets June 26th through July 21st every weekday morning for four hours. The program serviced approximately 150 students from rising first graders to rising seventh graders. Students were grouped by grade, not by reading level, in medium sized classrooms of fewer than 20 students with a certified teacher and a

teaching assistant. Though the academy did offer bi-weekly visual art and drama classes, the focus of this summer program was to improve and reinforce reading and writing skills. Students came from different schools and neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area. All students were assessed using the Scholastic Reading Inventory, and assigned a Lexile reading level. Teachers were supplied with the assessment data compressed into an Instructional Planning Report. Although the Summer Literacy Academy was initially created to help struggling readers, the program evolved to allow parents to self-select enrollment, allowing them to enter all levels of readers, from those who are struggling to exceptional readers. Some parents enrolled their children in the program to avoid summer slide, rather than as a specific literacy intervention based on an established need.

Script Selection

The scripts used in the Readers Theater workshop needed the following criteria: have a fun and engaging theme; have ten to twelve characters; contain characters that display a variety of traits and perspectives; and run five to ten minutes in length. I found Dr. Chase Young's collection of over two hundred Reader's Theater scripts on his website (Young, 2016). While reading Chase's scripts, I found many based on fairy tales. I liked the idea that many of my students would have background knowledge on these tales, but feared that the traditional tales they have been told since their early development might not be engaging. Then I discovered many scripts based on fractured fairy tales. These scripts were not only humorous and engaging, but also required background knowledge in fairy tales that would be typical of ten-year old students. Each script was populated by a different species of animal, namely: groundhogs, pigs,

chickens, and frogs. This additional animal theme provided opportunities to create diverse voices, vocalizations, and prosody exercises, as well as unique bodies for the movement exercises.

Next, I focused in on the characters. Like Young and Rasinski (2009) I decided to double cast my scripts, to allow for multiple interpretation of a single character. I readily found scripts of the right length and with the fractured fairy tale theme, but finding four scripts that met all my criteria proved to be impossible. Many of the scripts were designed for large classrooms and divided into ten to twenty roles. Also, many of the scripts' characters were not differentiated. For instance, in *The Fourth Little Pig* three of the characters weren't even given names -- they were just numbered Pig One, Pig Two, and Pig Three. This resulted in characters without clear perspectives or traits to differentiate between the "straw-house-pig", the "stick-house-pig", and the "brick-house-pig."

Script Revisions

I realized that to obtain scripts that met all the criteria for my research I would have to rewrite three of the scripts. As a produced and published playwright and actress who trained and wrote in New York City for over 15 years, I was up to the challenge. I have a Bachelor's' degree in theater from San Francisco State University, and a Graduate Certificate in Secondary Education, Theater, from Boise State University. While In New York City I wrote, and often performed in, more than 12 original plays and musicals. In 2012 I performed my play *Finding the Michaels* Off-Broadway in two New York City Theater Festivals. Beginning with four scripts from Dr. Young's collection, I revised the texts to meet my research criteria.

Script Summaries

I found four scripts three of which I revised. Following are brief summaries of each script.

Gretchen Groundhog It's Your Day! (Levine, 2016) It's the night before Groundhog Day and shy Gretchen Groundhog is scared to take on old Uncle Gus's role of predicting winter in the town's annual winter festival.

The Fourth Little Pig (Celsi, 2016) In *Fourth Little Pig,* time has passed since the three little pigs, Goldy, Howie and Butch, have conquered the big bad wolf, but they're still afraid to leave the brick house. This all changes when Petunia, their sister, shows up inviting them to open the door and explore the world.

Chicken Big (Graves, 2016) In this story Peepers, Cluck, and Bock just can't accept that Goliath, the elephant sized chicken in *Chicken Big,* is indeed a chicken, and they don't want him in their coup.

The Frog Prince Continued (Scieszka, 2016) This fractured fairy tale tells the story after the "Happily ever after…" The frog prince and princess, now married for several months, are getting on each other's nerves and are quite unhappy. The prince goes on a journey to find a witch or wizard to turn him back into a frog, his happier self.

Table 1.1 List of Students

NAME	AGE	GRADE	LEXILE
Ann	10	5	847
Kurt	11	5	559
Miriam	11	5	582
Mike	10	5	646
Steven	10	5	630
Tyler	10	5	975
Jerome	11	6	682
Jessica	11	6	489
Soo mi	11	6	760

Participants

My participants included six 5th grade students, and three 6th grade students. Of the nine participants, four were girls and five were boys. Ethnically the class consisted of one African American student, one Korean American student, who was also an English Language Learner, and seven Caucasian students. At the beginning of the study, the students' reading levels were from mid-year second grade to early eighth grade. Out of the nine students, seven were reading below grade level and two were reading at grade level (See Table 1.1). All parents signed the consent form, and all participants signed the student assent form. Students were selected based on grade, and were pulled out as a group from of their regular literacy from 9:00AM to 10:00AM each day.

Classroom Structure

The Readers Theater workshop met from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM every weekday from Thursday June 29th through Friday July 21st. The SLA was closed for two days for the 4th of July holiday, so I had students for an hour and a half on the remaining days that week. Because of the need to use the final Friday for post testing, Thursday was our performance day and I had an extended hour and a half class time for two days. In total, there were 17 hours of instruction.

The class took place in a large multi-purpose room. I divided the room into four centers, carefully placing 11 chairs in a circle to create the heart of our classroom. To the right of the circle were two long tables where students could work on their character maps and other written work. To the right and left of the circle was our "rehearsal space" where the two groups could separately practice the reading and blocking of their scripts without disturbing each other.

Class started with students seated in our circle where we played an interactive theater game focused on the learning objective of the day. Then we read through the script and moved on to a mini lesson on the comprehension skill we were working on that week. The last 20 minutes of class were usually reserved for a reading/blocking rehearsal. During this time I would give students instruction and feedback not only on their stage movements and vocal quality, but also on their individual characters' objectives and emotional actions. Every class ended with students seated back in the circle for a two-minute "whip around," where students would give a one to three-word answer to a concise question about the lesson of the day. For example, one question was: "Please say your character's name and one unique character trait they have"

Theater Games

Theater games were an integral part of the Readers Theater workshop. Because Walk/Stop was one of my students' favorite theater games, and very useful in embodiment of character, I created three versions of it. Walk/Stop is based on Spolin's (1986) Space Walk games, which encourage exploration of space and the awareness of one's body in movement. Walk/Stop is a seemingly simple game. When the teacher says, "Walk," the students walk around the room. When the teacher says "Stop," students stop immediately and await instructions. The teacher says, "This time when I say walk I want you to walk _____." The teacher fills in the blank with gradually more and more difficult tasks; slow as you can, fast as you can without running, on your toes, on your heels, like a cat, like you're going to Disneyland, like you're going to your Uncle's funeral etc. As my students became more comfortable and proficient with the game, I instructed them to "Walk in your character's feet", "Walk in your character's hips" "Lead

with your character's nose". During the game's "stop" time I implemented *side coaching*. Spolin (1986) defines *side coaching* as "guiding players towards focus, creating interaction, movement and transformation" (p.5) She goes on to identify *side coaching* as one of three essentials of a theater game, the other two being *focus* and *evaluation.*

After I implemented a theatrical vocal workshop where my students explored the pitch, tempo and placement of their character's voices, I found my students needed a structured way to rehearse and explore these voices. So, I evolved Walk/Stop to Walk/Talk. In this version of the game when I said "Talk" students talked like whichever character they were portraying that week.

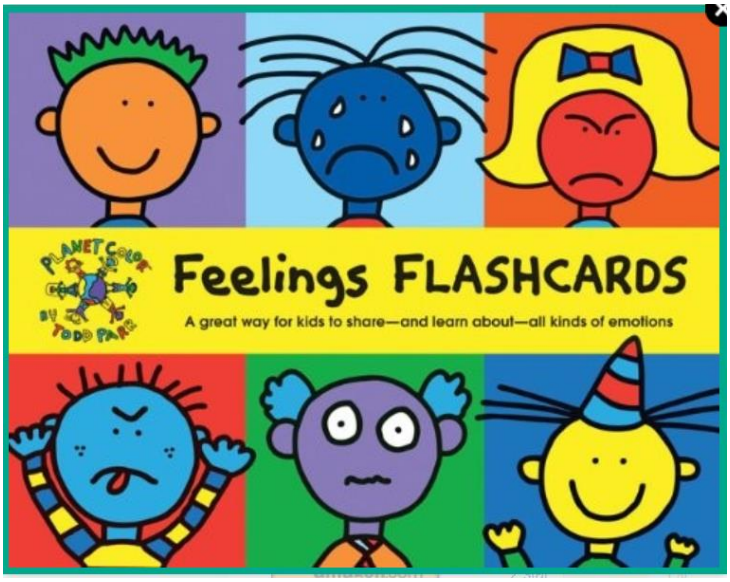

Figure 2 Todd Parr's (2010) Feelings Flashcards

I discovered Parr's (2010) *Feeling Flashcards* (See figure 2) from McTigue and colleagues (2015). Following their example, I used the flashcard to review and teach emotional vocabulary. By the last week I also integrated the feeling cards into a third game I called Walk/Talk/Feel. In this game, I would call out an emotion previously

reviewed from Parr's flashcards, and my students would express each feeling in their bodies and voices as they played the game.

Weekly Procedure

Since the first three days of the SLA were used to assess all students, my Readers Theater workshop did not start until Thursday the first week. On the first day I administered the Gretchen Groundhog intervention pre-test (For details see measurement section) As two days is not enough time to learn and perform a new script, I used those days to build a strong classroom community by implementing a series of collaborative theater games that built engagement.

We began preparing scripts for performance in week two. The following sections detail an example of a typical week's structure, from approaching a new script on day one to performance on day five. Each week followed a similar pattern.

Mondays

Day one the new script was introduced and the focus was on reading the script for meaning (Corcoran, 2015, p.108). Students would also chart their character on a new character map (further described in measurement section). Each of the five characters were assigned to two students. Highlighters were passed out and students highlighted their lines. Then the script was read aloud in an echo reading, where first I read the script aloud, and students echoed in response. To ensure students understood the narrative structure, immediately following the echo reading students participated in an activity I developed called a Summary Circle. In a Summary Circle, I passed a twelve-inch-long piece of yarn around. Students received the yarn one at a time and wound it around two fingers while they began summarizing the story aloud. When they finished winding the

yarn, they immediately stopped talking and passed it to the next student. This student would then pick up the summary where the last student left off.

After the summary circle, students moved to the long tables where they were supplied with character maps and answered as many questions about their assigned character as they could. Working independently on their character maps, I gave very little instruction and encouraged students to not discuss their responses. Then I introduced a mini lesson on the comprehension strategy of the week. Modeling after Young and Rasinski's work (2009) "The scripts served as texts for think-alouds aimed to model a particular reading comprehension strategy such as inferring word meaning, main idea, text structure or making connections" (p.8). Class ended each day with what I call "whip around" where students sit in the circle, I asks a specific question about the day's lesson, and students verbally respond with a one word to one sentence answer.

Tuesdays

Tuesdays began with a brief game during our opening circle. Next, students would move into a pair-and-share activity. Sometimes I paired students with the student playing their same character. In these pairings they would share their character maps to guide a discussion on how their interpretation of the same characters were the same or different. Other times I paired students with a conflicting or opposite character. In these pairings students compared and contrasted the character traits, problems, and motivations of opposing characters. Then I presented another mini lesson on the comprehension skill of the week. The last ten minutes of class were reserved to begin blocking rehearsals.

Wednesdays

For day three, I took Young and Rasinski's (2009) suggestion to use it as a problem-solving day. I helped the students work out all the challenges in the process (e.g.. individual difficulties through teacher feedback, discussion, and advice from other students). We continued blocking and rehearsing the week's script. The focus of the rehearsal was to integrate the comprehension and theatrical skill of the week into their performance.

Thursdays

Day four was all about rehearsing, focusing not only on blocking and vocalization but also on playing their character's perspective while understanding the perspective of the other characters in the script. Student groups took turns rehearsing with me working through the script once with feedback and again from the beginning, without stopping, in preparation for performance.

Fridays

Day five was performance day. The first 20 minutes was dedicated to a brief warm-up and to give each group a chance to rehearse their entire script one more time. Then we all walked down the hall to the classrooms where one group performed for the first grade class and the other group performed for the second grade class. After both performances, we returned to our multi-purpose classroom to celebrate. We celebrated for 15 to 20 minutes by playing theatrical games that focused on high energy, entertainment, and collaboration. Then we returned to our long tables where students revisited their character maps adding, in a different color, any additions or changes they

wanted now that they had worked with the script for a week. Class ended with our usual "whip around" where students said one thing they did best in that day's performance.

Measurement

To measure students' character comprehension for this study, I needed a tool where students could identify a character's traits, objectives, passions, problems, and evolution. I also wanted students to incorporate a direct text reference, as well as an internal thought reference, also known in theater as an internal monologue. I first reviewed some of my own work. For over five years I have worked with young playwriting students on a worksheet I created called "Create your own Character." The worksheet consists of seventeen questions about the character they are creating, from basic background information (e.g., "Where were you born?"), to deeper internal questions (e.g., "What's your biggest dream?"). I reviewed samples of my past students' work, and identified the questions that brought the most understanding of character. Second, I looked closely at McTigue and colleagues (2015) graphic organizer called CHAMP (*CHArt for Multiple Perspectives*). McTigue and colleagues created this measurement tool "…which promotes inferential comprehension through consideration of stories via the lens of opposing characters" (p. 92). Then I collected examples of graphic organizers made for exploring story structure and character. None of these graphic organizers fit all of my needs. It became clear that I needed to create my own tool specific to my research.

Developing a Graphic Organizer

From reading McTigue and colleagues (2015) I decided I wanted my students to explore story structure through character exploration and perspective. I also agreed with Duke and colleagues' (2011) assessment that,

> The most important thing about text structure is not so much which structures are taught when, but (a) that students learn that text is structured and (b) that they develop the ability to take advantage of any particular text's structure in learning and remembering its key information. (p. 71).

Duke and colleague suggests teaching six elements of Structure in a Narrative Text (Duke et al., 2011, p.69): setting, goal, problem, plot/action, resolution, and theme/lesson. I integrated three of these in my character map: goal, "What do you want?"; problem, "What's your problem?; and resolution "How have you changed?

I collaborated with a graphic designer to create a nine-section graphic organizer in the shape of a person, with nine corresponding questions from the characters' point of view (see figure 3). I borrowed the thought bubble for "internal thoughts" from Hodges and colleagues (2016). I added the dialogue circle to use as a text reference. I printed the map on legal-sized paper to give students room to draw pictures, use symbols or write large letters. I included the "Draw yourself" section as an engaging low-risk starter to the map.

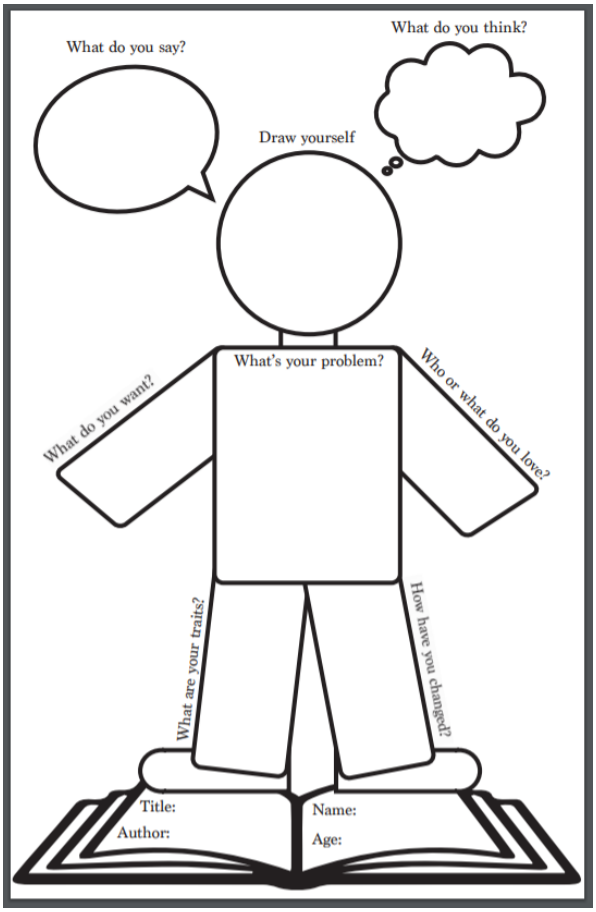

Figure 3 Character Map

Assessment Procedure

I designed the assessment so that each student filled out one map for each of the characters they played in each of the three scripts. Each script had one narrator role. As the narrators were not active characters in the scripts, the student playing the narrator chose an active character to fill out their character map. On Monday, after our first echo reading of a script and our summary circle (see Monday's section for details), students filled out their scripts as a pre-test. I administered the pre-test at the long tables, outside our collaborative circle. I encouraged students to work on their own and discouraged talking and sharing ideas. Each student was only allowed to use one colored pen on the pre-test. At the end of the week, after our performance, I administered the post-test.

Handing back students maps from Monday and giving them a contrasting colored pen, I instructed them to make any additions or changes they wanted to the map, while encouraging them not to cross out anything they wrote on Monday. In both the pre- and post-tests, I encouraged students to take out their scripts and look back at the text to find answers.

To obtain a baseline for my students' character comprehension skills I chose a fourth script, Gretchen Groundhog. We did not rehearse or perform this script. Students participated in an echo read of the script on the first day of class. Immediately following the echo read, I assigned all my students the role of Gretchen and had them fill out the character map. On the last day of class students read Gretchen Groundhog aloud in parts. I gave them back their character maps from the first day of class and asked them to make any additions or changes in a different color pen. This served as the workshop's post-test.

Analysis

My primary sources of data were my daily class journal and my students' filled out character maps. After class each day I took anecdotal notes in my journal, specifically describing my students' progress, their weaknesses, what was working in my curriculum, and what needed to be adjusted.

I used Discourse Analysis (Gee, 2014), to analyze the data collected from my student's character maps. Gee (2014) suggests looking "...for themes, motifs or images that co-locate (correlate) with each other…" First, I examined all 34 character maps one at a time, notating themes within each student's work and themes across the whole class. Based on my findings I chose to focus on three areas of the character map: problems, changes, and traits, because these were the areas students' most growth.

I analyzed my students' emotional language using a coding system adapted from O'Kearney and Dadds (2004). The first step they recommended was identifying and collect all of the students' "clear instances of emotional words." (O'Kearney & Dadds, 2004 p. 919). After the indepth works with the Feeling Flashcards my students showed the biggest growth with their emotional vocabulary. So I decided to focus in on the emotional vocabulary my students used to identify their characters' traits. Then I inventoried a total of 45 different emotional words used by my students. I collected the words on index cards, and arranged them by emotional intensity. Then using a Likert scale, I added quantitative values to this qualitative data by assigning each word group a degree of intensity. There were 13 first degree words, 15 second degree words and 21 third degree words. First degree words were "basic emotion terms" (O'Kearney & Dadds, 2004, p. 920) -- these are the least complex emotions that a young child would know, such as *happy*, *nice*, and *scared*. Second degree words included *annoying*, *hateful*, *shy.* While these demonstrated more differentiation than first degree words, they did not convey as complex an emotion as third degree. Third degree words were the most complex and specific reference to emotion, such as *creative*, *caring*, and *stubborn* (See Table 2). I calculated a total score for each character map by adding the degrees of the included emotional vocabulary words.

Results

My primary goal was to determine if Readers Theater could increase character comprehension. First, I will first describe the overall growth of the students' ability to identify character traits as measured through their use of emotional vocabulary. Through this understanding of character traits, they were better able to identify a character's

problem and how it changed, or didn't change, at the end of a story. Then, I will present a case study of one of my students who exemplified this comprehension growth. This student started as my biggest challenge, and ended the four-week workshop making the most gains.

Overall Growth

Character Traits through Emotional Vocabulary Use

Students' emotional vocabulary became more sophisticated as the weeks progressed (See Table 2). In the *Gretchen Groundhog* pre-test, on the first day, five students could not identify any character traits. The four students who did identify character traits scored a total of 0 to 5 on the emotional vocabulary scale. In the second week, after their first lesson on character traits, students made marked improvements. On *The Fourth Little Pig* pre-test students' emotional scores were from 0 to 20. Overall *Chicken Big* scores went down in week three. That may have been because the characters in *Chicken Big* were the least complex that we studied. Therefore, there was less emotional vocabulary to explore, and overall emotional vocabulary scores dropped. Nevertheless, all students were able to identify at least one character trait in the *Chicken Big* pre-test.

Of the four scripts we studied, *The Frog Prince Continued* had the most complex characters and storyline. As a result, after their first reading five students could not produce any character traits. Their pre-test scores ranged from 0 to 6. After four days of rehearsals, discussion, and embodying the story's characters in theater games, my students combined scores ranged from 3 to 19 (See Table 2).

Eight out of nine students showed growth in emotional vocabulary on the *Gretchen Groundhog* post-test. The one student who did not add character traits, Steven, expressed that he was not interested in the activity that day. However, the day before Steven showed growth on his *Frog Prince Continued* post-test. He added four character traits to his character map, earning an emotional vocabulary score of 9 (See Table 2). Using deeper emotional vocabulary each week, all of my students showed overall growth on their identification of character traits.

Story Comprehension

Being able to identify and assign traits and emotions to characters led to a deeper understanding of character, and allowed my students to more readily identify their character's problem and evolution. The workshops' pre-test script, *Gretchen Groundhog* (which we never performed or rehearsed) had a simple story. On the first day most students understood Gretchen's problem and how she changed at the end of the script (See table 3). Steven was the only one who could not identify a problem or a change, and Miriam confused Gretchen's "change" for her "problem".

Theater Games and Comprehension

In our first week I played a theater game where groups of students physically created three tableaus to tell the story of *The Three Little Pigs*. The three tableaus represented the beginning, middle, and end of the story, and students performed them for each other sequentially. It was clear from these embodied storyboards that all students had background knowledge of the story the fractured *Fourth Little pig* was based on. With the aide of their background knowledge, all of my students were able to correctly identify their characters' problem and change in the pre-test.

Week three we rehearsed *Chicken Big*, my students' favorite script. Through a theater game I developed called Collaboration Juggle, I introduced the concept of strategies and how characters use them to solve their problems. My students identified multiple problems in *Chicken Big*: the chickens thought the sky was falling, the chickens thought the world was a refrigerator, and a fox was stealing their eggs. However, it was not clear if they could identify the main problem of the script (i.e., Goliath is an enormous chicken who, figuratively, doesn't fit in with the group, and, literally, doesn't fit in the coop).

Discussion and Comprehension

The last week when we explored the most emotionally complex story, *The Frog Prince Continued*, the students were making connections between character traits and character problem. On Tuesday of that week I wrote in my journal:

> Had a great conversation today. Students paired as their characters and discussed their character's traits, and their character's problem. We explored how character traits can help a character solve their problem. Jerome and Tyler said that the prince's stubbornness would help him solve his problem of becoming a frog again. Miriam said that the princess's loving trait would help solve her problem of wanting her happy-ending.

From this discussion I learned that students were able to make direct correlations between character traits and character problems.

Understanding Character Problem Leads to Greater Comprehension

Ann's interpretation of the princess showed deeper understanding from pre- to post-test. She identified the princess's problem as "I'm not happy" in the pre-test. In the post-test she evolved it to "We aren't living happily ever after!". In his pre-test Steven was not able to identify a problem or a change for the Prince. After interacting with the script through Readers Theater, Steven came up with a problem that could be attributed

many fictional characters in the post-test: “I’m trying to get more than what I have”. In the pre-test both Soo Mi and Jessica could not identify any traits for their character, Fairy Godmother. I rehearsed with them privately, facilitating them to embody this sprite old fairy who accidentally turns the prince into a carriage instead of a frog and abandons him to go meet Cinderella. By the post-test both Jessica and Soo Mi were able to identify multiple character traits using first, second, and third degree emotional vocabulary words. As a result, they were able to correctly identify that the Fairy Godmother went through “No change.”

Case Study: Mike

“I have one boy, a fifth grader, who talks out of turn.” This is what I wrote about Mike in my journal on the first day of the workshop. Mike proved to be my biggest behavior challenge. He also showed the most growth in his overall comprehension.

Motivation

In the first two weeks of the workshop I repeatedly noted in my journal “Focus, they need focus, especially Mike.” Mike read *Gretchen Groundhog* fluently on our first day, so I assigned him the role of narrator in *Fourth Little Pig*. He struggled with the focused attention this large role required and he was difficult to keep on task. “I didn’t like it when we had to wait and watch,” Mike told me at the end of the workshop. He was indeed challenging when it was time to sit, watch his classmates perform, and give feedback. He was also resistant to the repeated readings, saying he found it boring, and often was not paying attention and missed reading aloud his line in the script.

I was hopeful, but not certain, that the performance would give Mike an authentic reason to fully engage. At the end of week two it was finally our first performance day.

"All things considered the kids did well today," I wrote, "especially Mike, who was finally focused and read with more accuracy than at the beginning of the week." Mike's little sister was in one of the first-grade classes we performed for each Friday, and he was very motivated on performance days to focus, read, and perform well in front of her.

Very quickly I found another way to motivate Mike. As Mike shared at the end of the workshop, he "liked that we had so many fun and awesome games, and this was awesome". The theater games motivated Mike to focus. Eventually he was not only doing a better job controlling his own talking, he was also helping to motivate his classmate by telling them to "Stop talking and wasting time so we can get to the games!"

One of Mike's favorite games was Walk/Stop. Just as important as motivating Mike, this game allowed he and his classmates to physically embody their characters. During Walk/Stop Mike could get up on his feet, and run around in a controlled environment, allowing him to integrate what he was learning in his head, in his body.

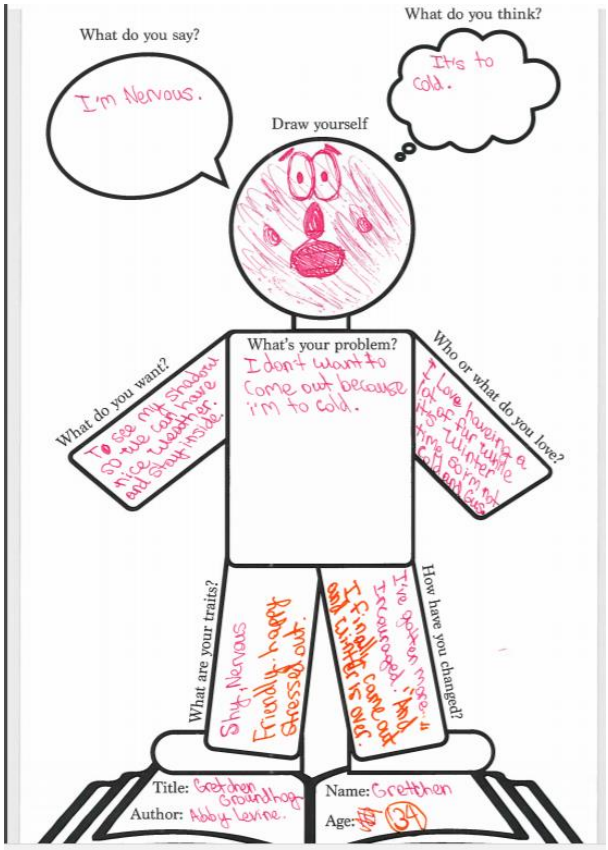

Figure 4 Mike's Gretchen Groundhog Character Map

Character Comprehension

On the first day, Mike seemed to have an understanding of character traits when he wrote on his character map that Gretchen was "Shy" and "Nervous". I was therefore surprised when, a few days later on his *Fourth Little Pig* pre-test, he misidentified Butch's character traits as "not going outside" and "staying inside". I compared his *Gretchen Groundhog* pre-test results with Jerome, his friend who he sat next to, and I suspected Jerome had helped Mike on the first day. For his *Fourth Little Pig* character map Mike chose to focus on Butch, the brick house building pig. Mike was the only

student to receive 0 on character traits on this pre-test But the very next day (see table 2.1), while working with Kurt on a character perspective worksheet (see figure 6), character traits clicked for Mike. Through their collaboration, Mike successfully identified Butch's character traits using a combination of text and inference.

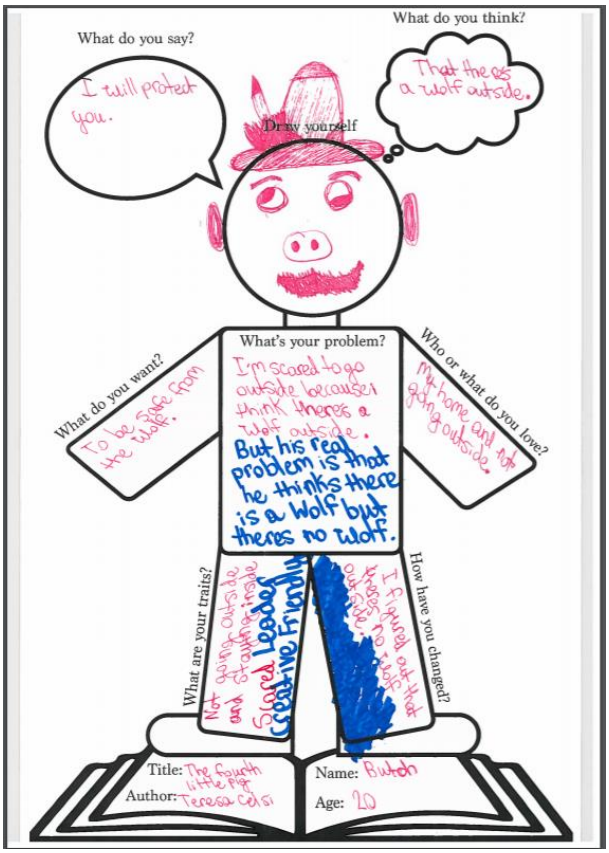

Figure 5 Mike's *Fourth Little Pig* Character Map

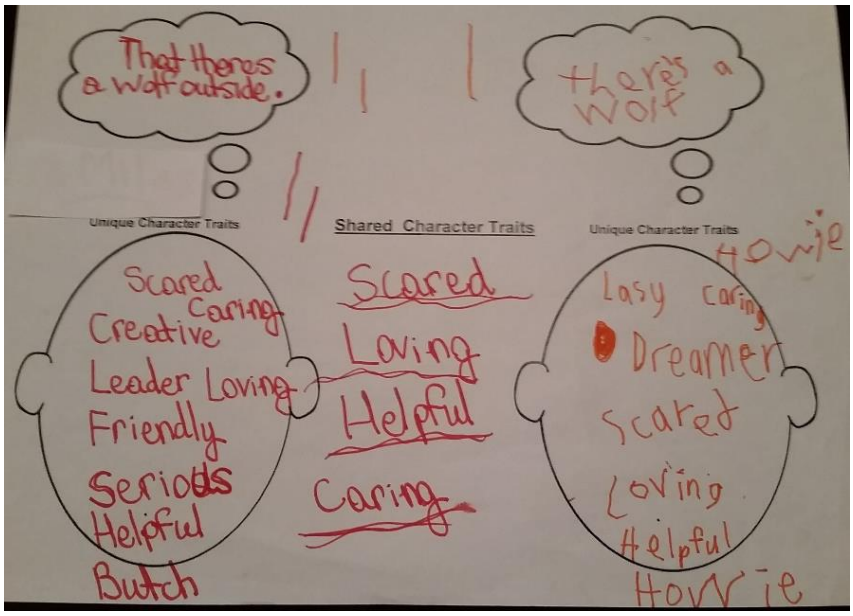

Figure 6 Mike and Kurt's shared character traits worksheet

Then he and Kurt, who played another pig, identified the brothers intersecting character traits (See Figure 6). With the written work Mike was consistently on task; I rarely had to redirect his behavior when he was working with pen and paper. By the *Fourth Little Pig* post-test, Mike had a firm grasp on character traits. He used a higher level of emotional vocabulary to describe Butch (see table 2). By week three's *Chicken Big* pre-test, he found depth in his seemingly simplistic character, Cluck.

Figure 7 Mike's *Chicken Big* Character Map

In one-week Mike went from not understanding character traits to using third degree emotional vocabulary to describe his characters.

Mike Understands Character Traits

Mike struggled once again with character traits in the pre-test of our most complex script *The Frog Prince Continued*. He identified "talking" as a character trait of his character, Mallory. He also chose "calm" as a character trait of the high-strung wizard. I worked privately with Mike and Kurt, who was also cast as Mallory, questioning them about the character traits they had chosen. Kurt identified Mallory as "nice". I asked them to refer to the text to find evidence of Mallory being "Nice" or "Calm". Then we all discussed Mallory's motives. By the end of the week four Mike saw Mallory as the text dictated the character. He now identifying Mallory's character traits

as loud, mean, mature, and wise. Overall Mike's combined character trait score going from 0 at the beginning of the workshop to 11 at the end of the workshop, reflected his deeper understanding of character traits.

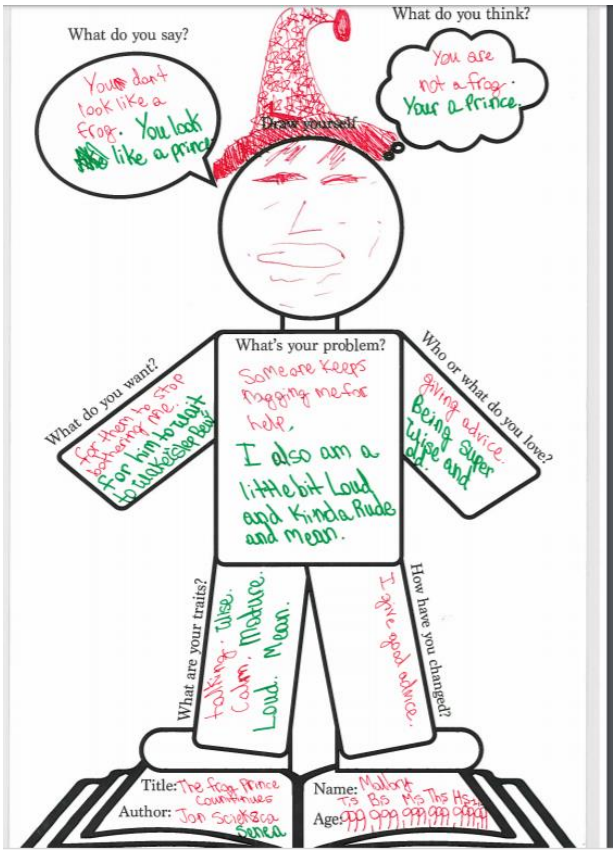

Figure 8 Mike's *Frog Prince Continued* Character Map

Story Comprehension

Once Mike grasped character traits, he better understood his characters' problems, how they changed, and thereby had a deeper understanding of each story. Mike was the most focused when working on his character maps. On his *Gretchen Groundhog* pre-test character map Mike misidentified Gretchen's problem, writing "I don't want to go outside because I'm cold". In the *Fourth Little Pig* pre-test Mike wrote that Butch's problem was "I'm scared to go outside because I think there's a wolf outside." In the post-

test he amended the problem: “But his real problem is that he thinks there is a wolf, but there's no wolf.” Mike is illustrating what Butch is afraid of versus the reality of the situation. This questioning of the character’s version of reality versus the story’s reality was a theme Mike visited in each of his character maps. In his *Chicken Big* pre-test he inferred from the text that Cluck’s change was; “I stopped being scared”. But then in the post-test the resolution is “I was notified that none of this is real”. Once again Mike identified the character’s reality versus the reality of the narrative.

Mike understands Character Problem

In his *Frog Prince Continued* pre-test, Mike identified Mallory’s problem as external: “The prince keeps nagging me for help”. After he correctly identified Mallory’s characters traits in the post test he identified Mallory’s internal problem: “I am also a little bit loud and kinda rude and mean.” Once again Mike had good insight identifying his character’s *real* problem in the story versus what the character *thinks* is his problem

Mike grew overall from pre- to post-test. In his *Gretchen Groundhog* pre-test, he showed that he did not understand Gretchen’s problem when he wrote, “I don’t want to come out because I’m cold.” He was halfway to understanding Gretchen’s change when he wrote, “I’ve gotten more encouraged”, but by the post-test Mike identified her change as “And I finally came out.” Mike’s overall positive results both qualitatively and quantitatively are reflective of the overall class results.

Discussion

Research shows that Readers Theater is motivating, promotes fluency, and might also aide in comprehension. The main goal of this study was to improve students’ understanding of character in a narrative story. This study found that embodying

character traits increased character comprehension, which increased overall comprehension. I documented students' use of emotional vocabulary becoming more sophisticated as the workshop progressed. Perhaps most vital to this whole process was encouraging students' interaction with their characters through theater games and group discussions.

Understanding Character Traits Leads to Comprehension

Examining my results, I found that embodying character and understanding character traits went hand in hand. Readers Theater allows students to personify characters with their bodies, voices, and emotions. Scaffolding the physicality of a character with theater games like Walk/Stop allowed students to literally walk in their character's shoes. Adding Parr's (2010) *Feelings Flashcards* to our theater games in week two allowed students to integrate character emotion with movement. With the flash cards students could momentarily try on a feeling and decide if it fit their character. Adding a vocal workshop on week three allowed students to express their characters' traits through their voices. Students were able to create diverse voices appropriate to each different character they played. Knowing that different characters have different voices is important to comprehension. When a reader is reading silently they hear the character's voice in their head. This is difficult for educators to measure, but is an important strategy to teach students (Griffith & Rasinski, 2004). However, it is only effective if the educator makes the connection for students between the external vocal work and how this might aide in their silent reading.

Putting it All Together

By the end of week three I added all three strategies together into a game I called Walk/Talk/Feel. Playing this game allowed students to see hear and feel their character, that is, they could empathize with that character. Empathy is something that all readers must develop to understand and even enjoy a narrative (Hodges et al., 2016). Embodying characters gave students insight into their traits, which lead to a deeper understanding of character problem and evolution. Similar to the Hodges and colleagues (2016) study, this not only benefited character comprehension "but also their (students) global comprehension of the story" (p. 24), allowing students to delve deeper into the story. For instance, when Steven stepped into the Frog Prince's shoes and wrote "I'm trying to get more than what I have" on his character map (See Table 3), he showed that he understood not only his character's problem but a universal problems for most main characters in a narrative. Ann's exclamation "We're not living happily ever after!" showed she understood the conflict in the story. If the main characters were happy and satisfied with what they had, there would be no reason for a story. In these two exclamations both Steven and Ann showed they understood the crux of all story problems.

Students' Emotional Vocabulary

Students use of emotional vocabulary became more sophisticated as the workshop progressed (See table 2). I analyzed my students' use of vocabulary, following the example of Young and colleagues (2017) and Keehn and colleagues (2009). Young and colleagues "analyzed content vocabulary words" (p.2) and used word walls. Keehn and colleagues introduced and defined new vocabulary words at the beginning of each week, and emphasized this targeted vocabulary as students rehearsed throughout the week. Unlike the two previously mentioned studies, I did not implement direct vocabulary

instruction. Instead I integrated Feeling Flashcards (2010 Parr) into improvisational games, allowing students to choose their characters feelings by physically exploring emotional vocabulary. In these constructivist games I allowed my students to build their own knowledge. Constructivists acknowledge that, "Learning can occur in the absence of observable indicators" (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 87). This is why it was important to use discourse analysis to code my students' words and quantify their emotional vocabulary gains (Gee, 2014).

Importance of Class Discussion

Henderson and Buskist (2011) found that though reading comprehension can be heightened by class discussions, these discussions are only helpful if the teacher engages personally with the text, and is aware of her own methods of reading comprehension. This awareness allows her to ask necessary questions and to teach reading comprehension to her students. According to the Texas Education Agency, part of being a good reader is activating background knowledge, generating questions, and making inferences. (2002,). Directing a Readers Theater script puts the teacher in the director's chair, inviting them to personally think deeply, ask relevant questions about the script, and then think aloud with their actors/students.

Theory

Inspired by Vygotsky's Social Constructivism learning theory, I scaffolded higher levels of thinking during classroom discussions. (Tracey & Morrow, 2012) Like Vygotsky, I believe that "Children learn as a result of their social interactions with others" (Tracey & Morrow, 2012 p.127). I strove to facilitate, rather than lead, conversations between students, so they could learn as a result of their social interactions

(Tracey & Morrow, 2012). To differentiate learning, I also facilitated the discussion between pairs of students playing the same character. These discussions in pairs and as a class were imperative to furthering students' understanding of both character and story.

Some discussions were more productive than others. Spolin (1986) found that evaluation was one of the three essentials of theater games. I, too found that it was vital to engage students in evaluation and discussion immediately following a theater game. The circle of chairs allowed my students to quickly transition from standing to sitting, taking the energy and the focus of the game into our discussion. During these conversation, I explicitly connected how all this "fun" helped them become a better reader.

When to Have Discussions

Young and colleagues (2017) also included discussion immediately following the Friday performances. I also found this to be a fruitful time for discussion, especially for students to self-examine their own performance and how they might improve it. It was also very productive to prompt student conversation immediately following written work on their character maps. For example, while discussing his *Chicken Big* character map Jerome, "really got the emotional arc of his character, Goliath" I wrote in my journal. Then I made the reading connection for Jerome and all my students telling them, "I want that kind of thinking and questioning when you're reading a book. You need to answer the questions on the character map in your heads while you're reading". This is a kind of metacognition in keeping with the constructivist theory, "Teaching students to monitor whether or not they are comprehending what they read" (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 81).

Limitations

I was not able to assess my students' reading levels prior to the first day of instruction. Because of this the reading level for the overall pre- and post-test script *Gretchen Groundhog*, may have been too low for many of my students. My students were different ages, grades, and reading levels, making it difficult to find the right zone of proximal development (Tracey & Morrow 2012) for all my students. However, most classroom have diverse reading ranges As the weeks progressed the scripts did gradually become more complex. Another limitation is that this study was only done with one group of students, and further Readers Theater studies focused on character and overall comprehension are needed before generalizations can be made. Despite these limitations students did show measurable gains in comprehension.

Conclusion

When explaining Constructivist Inquiry theory in action, Tracey and Morrow (2012) said it's a "…teacher's job to create an enticing curriculum and a supportive, motivating environment" (P. 61)**.** Our daily theater games, which started each of our classes, not only motivated and focused students, but also acted as a springboard into discussion about the lesson of the day and the script of the week. Perhaps more importantly to students, the games were fun. Papert (1998) wrote "…fun and enjoying doesn't mean easy" (p.1). Activities that are "hard fun," Papert goes on to explain "…require concentration and discipline." Readers Theater, which leads to a public performance, requires both of these traits.

Readers Theater lends itself to an active project based literacy curriculum.

There has been a great deal of focus on using Readers Theater as a tool to support fluency, but not as much on comprehension. Comprehension, deriving meaning from text, is the ultimate goal of reading (Applegate et. al, 2009). Readers read narrative text to empathize with characters, to find out will they or won't they live happily ever after. Knowing how to understand these characters will make them better comprehenders and better readers.

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APPENDIX A

Table 2.1 Emotional Vocabulary

Emotional Vocabulary Scale							
First Degree		Second Degree			Third Degree		
Student: Ann							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
Scared	Brave		Dumb	*ABSENT*	?	Annoyed	Brave
Frightened	Bossy		Scared			Bossy	Nervous
	Friendly		Silly			Loving	
	Bold		Brainless			Worried	
	Proud		Dreamer				
	Stubborn						
	Caring						
	Loud						
	Daring						
Student: Jerome							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
Shy	Bold	Scared	Happy	Hero	Brave (sort of)	Sad	Proud
Stubborn	Neat		Brave		Determined	Happy	Friendly
	Serious		Calm		Selfish	Brave	Nervous
			Caring			Stubborn	
						Serious	
						"Coursous"	
Student: Jessica							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
Scared	*ABSENT*	*ABSENT*	Dumb	Clueless	?	Happy	*ABSENT*
Nervous			Brainless			Friendly	
						Sorry	
						Loving	
Student: Kurt							
Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
	Lazy	Scared	Loving		Nice	Rude	Scared
	Dreamer	Caring				Mean	Shy
		Loving					
		Helpful					

Student: Mariam							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
?	Loud		Silly	"Not the sharpest beak in the flock"	?	Loving	Sad
	Brave		Funny				Scared
	Bossy		"Not that bright"				Proud
	Friendly						Nervous
	Proud						
	Helpful						
	Caring						
	Leader						

Student: Mike							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
Shy	"Not going outside"	Friendly	Scared	Crazy	Talking	Loud	Happy
Nervous	"Staying inside"	Leader	Exaggerate	Curious	Calm	Mean	Friendly
		Creative	Over react			Wise	Stressed out
						Mature	

Student: Steven							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
?	Likes to dream	Scared	Shy		?	Sad	?
	Lazy		Bold			Annoying	
						Selfish	
						Loving	

Student: Soo Mi							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
?	Lazy	Scared	Dreamer		?	Happy	Scared
	Creative					Friendly	Shy
						Curious	
Student: Tyler							
Pre-Test	**Pig Pre**	**Pig Post**	**Chicken Pre**	**Chicken Post**	**Frogs Pre**	**Frogs Post**	**Post-Test**
?	Bold	Smart	Nice		Nice	Bored	Scared
	Neat		Brave		"Frog-like"	Stubborn	Annoyed
	Serious		Caring				Nervous
							Doubtful

APPENDIX B

Table 3.1 Character Problem and Change

	Student: Ann							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	She's terrified of going out on groundhog day	My little brothers will not go outside	*NO RESPONSE*	It doesn't	*ABSENT*	I'm not happy	We aren't living happily ever after	*NO RESPONSE*
Change	She went out on groundhog day	She doesn't change		?		?	She goes from annoyed to worried to loving and caring	

	Student: Jerome							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	The problem is she is too shy to take on the role of the groundhog	He's scared to go outside	*NO RESPONSE*	The other chickens think he's big too	That there is a thief	He can't find anyone to turn him into a frog	As a frog he's more happy	*NO RESPONSE*
Change	She faced her fears and took the role of the groundhog	He's a lot braver		He has changed the way he feels different, because he is a chicken	Also happy	He is more grateful		
	Student: Jessica							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	She doesn't want to go out for groundhog day	*NO RESPONSE*	*NO RESPONSE*	We don't know what Goliath is	Always wrong	I turned the frog prince into a carriage	I haven't changed	*NO RESPONSE*
Change	She went outside for groundhog day			My idea of Goliath	Got stupider	?		

	Student: Kurt							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	She's scared for Groundhog Day	The fourth little pig is trying to open the door	*NO RESPONSE*	Trying to decide what the big chicken is. A fox stole an egg	*NO RESPONSE*	Prince bother him	No	*NO RESPONSE*
Change	She gets out	He's not afraid of wolf		It's a chicken		Helps him		
	Student: Mariam							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	I came out of my shell and go out for Groundhog day	My little brothers will not go outside. They are scared	*NO RESPONSE*	The fox is stealing	Goliath is a cow	The prince has been gone for 7 hours	She ends up loving the prince	*NO RESPONSE*
Change		She does not change		No Change	She changed her mind about Goliath			

	Student: Mike							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	I don't want to come out because I'm cold	I'm scared to go outside because I think there's a wolf outside	But his real problem is that he thinks there is a wolf, but there's no wolf	I think the sky is falling	Also I think the sky is dripping, and the world is a refrigerator	Someone keeps nagging me for help	I am also a little bit loud and kind rude and mean	And winter is over
Change	I've gotten more encouragement			I stopped being scared	I was notified that none of this is real	I give good advice		And I finally came out

	Student: Steven							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	*NO RESPONSE*	I'm not smart	*NO RESPONSE*	I thought I was an elephant	The eggs were stolen. I think I'm not a chicken. I like acorns	*NO RESPONSE*	I'm trying to get more than what I have	She will not even look for her shadow
Change		He's not afraid to go outside		From thinking I'm an elephant to being a chicken			I'm miserable. I'm happy and thankful	

	Student: Soo Mi							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	I'm so shy to go outside for Gretchen Groundhog day	I afraid outside	*NO RESPONSE*	A fox stole an egg	*NO RESPONSE*	I waved my magic wand. I turned frog prince into carriage	I don't have a change	*NO RESPONSE*
Change	I changed, I am not shy	I didn't change		I think it's a chicken				
	Student: Tyler							
	Pre-Test	Pig Pre	Pig Post	Chicken Pre	Chicken Post	Frogs Pre	Frogs Post	Post-Test
Problem	I went out for groundhog day	He won't go outside	He went out and explored. Scared	I am now a chicken not an umbrella	I'm huge	Need to be a frog	He's a carriage	She won't go out for ground-hog day
Change		He goes outside				I turned into a frog		