

OKLAHOMA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD NATIONAL
BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS' VIEWS OF NO
CHILD LEFT BEHIND, THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS, AND
STORY WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“There are eight million people in New York City and each of them has a story.”

Although the numbers have grown substantially since this introduction was used for the 1960’s drama series, *The Naked City*, the theme remains constant. Each and every individual in the entire world has a story. Not only that, but each and every ‘thing’ has a story in relation to one of those individuals. Realizing this can be overwhelming or exciting depending on the view you wish to take. There is a connectedness here, a relationship waiting to be discovered. This relationship or connectedness is all woven together to give meaning to our lives.

This power that is woven by story can be experienced in many different forms. It can be read by an individual in a book or told to a friend in secret. Stories can be shared with a group through poetry, observed by a passerby or performed through music. These are just a few ways that stories can be shared. A story in my mind is a portrait illustrating the tale. Not everyone can paint a picture and make it look like Leonardo da Vinci, but everyone does have that painting inside their mind. Story is one way where that portrait can be shared with the world.

For the past twenty-five years, I have been an early childhood special educator. Story has been an important aspect of my teaching throughout my career. Although

it has been important, it has only been in the last nine years or so that I have developed a passion for story and storytelling within the curriculum. The passion began during my application process for National Board Certification. Up until that time, the power of play is what drove my curriculum. I still find play to be an extremely important educational tool, and when it combines with story I find the learning to be unlimited.

During my masters program, I learned a great deal about early childhood philosophies and strategies. I had studied special education and in the 1970s, the blending of early childhood and special education did not exist. When going through the National Board process I was able and expected to put the combination of those two programs to work with my students. Strangely enough, it wasn't until that experience that I began to understand the power story had in my classroom. This passion for story grew as I began this PhD program and was introduced to the writings of Vivian Paley. I loved her approach to learning and began wanting to learn all I could about utilizing story as a teaching tool. All of my work, both in the classroom and in this program has revolved around the use of story and storytelling within the classroom. Becoming recertified as and National Board Early Childhood Generalist last year helped me decide the path I wanted my research to study. Two factors were clear, I wanted to see how my fellow Oklahoma National Board Certified Teachers (OKECNBCTs) utilized story within their own classrooms and I wanted to learn more about story and storytelling.

While working with several kindergarten teachers on a research project involving story, I asked them what they felt captivated young children within a story. The list they developed of critical elements of story included: a sense of fun, colorful pictures and illustrations, age appropriate language, repetitive line, limited number of characters and

an easily identifiable plot. I am sure there are more elements, but these six can offer a wealth of information. Combining these elements can provide instructors multiple opportunities to help develop a love of reading and storytelling.

Storyteller, Rives Collins (1994), feels that as humans we are born ‘storytelling animals.’ He mentions that from as far back as the building of the pyramids there is evidence of storytelling in society. This promotes storytelling as a natural and common activity that should and does come easily to young learners (Cornett, 2007). Immersing children in quality relevant literature is essential, but exposure is not enough. Strategies are needed with stories that help children learn to predict, make connections, discuss, and most importantly question and re-question (Zeece, 2003).

This sense of story can provide numerous possibilities for helping children relate to their worlds. It not only can provide examples of likenesses, but offer perceptions of differences as well. For a child to actually embrace diversity, he/she must understand and empathize with ‘differences’ in society. By immersing a child in literature that discusses these differences and then offering time to play with these concepts and create personal stories, a real understanding can develop. Questions, concerns and fears can be addressed in a nonthreatening environment. Through story, fantasy and reality collide and encourage learners, who are developing skills and understanding, to embrace the world around them.

Story is effective as a teaching tool because its language makes sense of the experience. We not only teach to help children gain knowledge, but understanding and appreciation as well. Narratives start with a desire to say something. The teller must

deem it important enough to share it with someone else. Once that desire is recognized, you decide what form you want your story to take on (Ayers, 2008).

A story is driven by characters and their actions and conflicts. The basic theme of a story is usually the conflict and its solution. The changes that develop from that decision or solution, whether personal or psychological, embellish the plot. Stories of character and the human struggle are present throughout history. There are decisions made that involve truth, honesty, loyalty and results from making those choices. These stories help children understand that they are not alone in their problems and offer more personal and in depth meaning to history and their own personal views (Sanchez & Stewart, 2006).

As I continued working with the kindergarten teachers about the key elements of story, my interest in the topic continued to grow. I was interested in the strategies being used to incorporate story and storytelling into early childhood environments. Being in a Reading First school under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), I also was interested in finding out any impact our scripted program, *Voyager*, had on those strategies. I had a passion for story and storytelling within my own classroom, literature that fueled my curiosity and connections and questions involving NCLB and OKECNBCTs and their connections to each other and story. I thought a survey would be the best way to gather responses from the OKECNBCTS and I began to contemplate questions. The data sources were established and the study began.

Statement of the Problem

Research shows that reading books to young children before they enter school is beneficial to them both academically and socially. Although reading books is an

important way to get a story told, it is not the only way (Trelease, 2001; Strasse & Seplocha, 2007; Lillestolen, 2006). Research also shows that understanding what the concept of story and storytelling entails is the first step in utilizing it effectively in the classroom (Yolen, 2000). A basic definition for story is any type of narrative, and storytelling is the delivery of that narrative. Questions remain about storytelling and story as teaching and learning tools. Answering those questions may provide teachers with results to enhance a child's educational experience. Some educators find it challenging to implement the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) while also maintaining their approach to story and storytelling (Suskind, 2007). A group of educators that I believe face this challenge head on are the OKECNBCTs. I wanted to discover how, under the guidelines of NCLB, this particular group, is utilizing story and storytelling within their own individual classrooms.

Research Questions

- 1) What are OKECNBCTs views about story and storytelling?
- 2) What do they consider the benefits of story and storytelling to be?
- 3) What strategies do they use to incorporate story into their classrooms?
- 4) How do they compare NCLB guidelines and Early Childhood National Board Standards for story and storytelling?
- 5) What are their views on NCLB's influence on their use of story and storytelling in their classrooms?

Significance of the Study

Pressures continue to increase on early childhood educators as the mandates of NCLB continue to require more. NCLB requires more time, more objectives, more seat

work, more accountability, and more performance. Meeting those conditions is difficult and although they are being accomplished, other areas of the curriculum are often ignored. The Council in Educational Policy's report in 2006 stated that while most schools reported an increase in achievement, 70% also stated that instructional time in subjects other than math and reading were reduced (Olness, 2007). Elementary school leaders reported decreased instruction in music and art by 22% (Olness, 2007). Major areas recently neglected in the early childhood curriculum seem to be a sense of play and a discovery of story (Venn & Jahn, 2004). Looking at how those two areas can be incorporated into a NCLB Framework can offer benefits to all participants. I believe that this study provided OKECNBCTs with the opportunity to share strategies and innovative methods that have been successful for them within their classrooms. The results of this study, in turn, may provide ideas and experiences of utilizing story and storytelling within the early childhood classroom to any interested reader.

Theoretical Perspective

Influenced by interpretivist philosophy, my personal philosophy of curriculum research is that children construct their own knowledge through experiences, and multiple realities are attainable as the power of language leads each child through these experiences to various and unforeseen places. The unforeseen places that the research leads us are the realities which are constructed by the students. There is no one set reality, but multiple possibilities, and each one is perceived as real to the student.

The theoretical perspective of interpretivism strives to "understand and explain human and social reality" (Crotty, 1998, p.67). Following Creswell's views of the interpretivist/constructivist researcher I combined both qualitative and quantitative

methods to gain an understanding of the use of story and storytelling in the classroom (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006). I relied not only on the responses of OKECNBCTs, but my own experiences in the field and the professional literature to construct my analysis of the theme. Looking at story through this lens offers teachers the opportunity to really share how story is utilized within their classroom to help children construct their own views and knowledge. Just as there is no right or wrong answer on what the children gain in the experience, there is also no right or wrong strategy to share the story. It was interesting for me to discover the various methods teachers use to share stories with their students.

Limitations of the Study

The views are limited to the OKECNBCTs respondents of this survey. It is not assumed to be generalized to all OKECNBCTs or all early childhood teachers. The most significant limitation of this study was the lack of follow-up discussion. Discussions, clarifications and the personal connections to follow up my survey would have been extremely beneficial to the results of my study.

I think it is important to note that the number of respondents made up only about one third of the total population of OKECNBCTs. In addition to that, not knowing how many respondents I would have to my survey, I invited the respondents of the pilot study to also participate in the final survey. The anonymity of the survey keeps me from knowing how many of the pilot study respondents also participated in the final study.

There was an extremely small sample of teachers, six respondents, who worked in a Reading First School. In addition to that, the number of teachers who were unsure of their schools' status on AYP shows that this group is not working under that pressure. The respondents described themselves predominantly as early childhood teachers, so

again, the pressures upper elementary teachers may feel were not experienced by my respondents. Another concern I experienced when reviewing my results was the number of respondents who chose not to answer specific questions. I can never know their reasons for not answering questions, but have to wonder if they did not want to give an honest reply. Another possibility is that, as OKECNBCTs, they did not want to come across as complainers, so instead left the questions unanswered. Whatever the reason, the lack of completed responses constitutes a limitation in the study.

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)- Each state defines the high standards that result in continuous and substantial academic improvement for all students

Autonomy- Making intellectual and moral decisions in view of various perspectives (Castle, 2006) Using one's own understanding of personal beliefs and values to search for an appropriate course of action. (Rodgers and Long, 2002)

Literacy- Literacy will refer to the processes, programs and approaches teachers use to teach and help develop reading and writing skills within the classroom.

Literacy First- a research-based program that is approved under Reading First. It is a three year initial program working on closing reading gaps, and training teachers and principals with the necessary, researched skills to enhance the reading of all students.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) – An independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organization governed primarily by teachers. The focus is on the teacher and is based on Five Core Propositions that

encompass the Board's values in teacher performance. Through these propositions, standards for all aspects of the curriculum and educational system were developed.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – A Federal Law signed into effect in 2002. It is built on four specific pillars which include accountability, more flexibility within the states and school districts, increased options for parent involvement and a strong dependence on research based strategies for teaching. A major focus of the law is that schools use scientifically based research reading programs so all children will read on level by the end of the third grade.

Reading First- This initiative within NCLB is an effort to help each child become a successful reader. Every state may apply and the most needy will receive the support they need to succeed. The program has clear expectations on how to teach children to read. Reading First specifies that all teaching procedures must be based on scientifically-based research. The program stresses specific instruction involving phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension.

Story- Story will refer to any type of narrative. This can be a simple sentence plot describing a child's drawing to a full length novel which could be read to the students.

Storytelling- Storytelling will refer to any type of delivery of a narrative. Some examples include drama, art, discussion, and read alouds.

Strategy- Strategy will refer to any approach used by the teacher to bring stories to life in his/her classroom.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Story as a Teaching Tool

From as far back as anyone can remember, stories have been used to tell or describe experiences and events. It is one of the oldest methods known to man of communicating ideas and images (Mello, 2001). Why then do many, including myself, look at this title with the words storytelling and teaching tool in it and almost feel the clash of two separate and very different elements? It screams of opposites: fantasy versus truth, qualitative versus quantitative and global versus linear. The title also lends itself to Jerome Bruner's two modes of knowing which are the abstract or scientific approach and the narrative (creatingthe21stcentury.org). In the educational arena, due to NCLB, everyone is aware of the scientific approach. The value, however, of the narrative approach should not be underestimated (Glaubman, Kashi & Koresh, 2001).

Bruner's modes of knowing describe how he feels our brain works in processing information and learning (creatingthe21stcentury.org). The first mode of knowing mentioned is referred to as paradigmatic and logico-scientific method. It is a formal mathematical system used to define and explain in its search for the truth. The other, which is referred to as the imaginative mode, consists of more human elements that categorize various events and experiences into particular settings. These modes really should complement each other, but often, as with qualitative and quantitative research,

these two attack each other with as much force and ammunition as possible from opposite ends of the spectrum (Brown, Denning, Groh, & Prusak, 2001).

One reason for my research in this project was to blend these two modes of learning- the scientifically-based rules of NCLB with the imaginative element of story. I wanted to determine if and how story and all its underlying elements can be used effectively as a teaching tool. Before looking at its implementation however, it seems important to discuss what a story is and determine specific aspects that make a story a story. The other elements of this research project will be discussed following the descriptions of story. Those include elements of the NCLB law, teachers' views on NCLB and Early Childhood National Board Certification.

Definitions of Story

Jane Yolen, a staunch supporter of fairy tales, in *Touch Magic* (2000) feels it is easiest to define story by what it is not. She states that story is not a history, or a grammar, or a compilation, or a potpourri, salad or a stew. It is not a display of wit or a chart or map, not a lie or an opening, or a parade of techniques or my personal favorite of, definitely not an "outpouring of authorial bodily fluids" (p. 83). It is not any of these things individually, but goes much deeper in all those areas. She goes on to say, "The magical story is not a microscope but a mirror, not a drop of water but a well" (p. 32). She then begins discussing more of what story is and it is best summed up by her as "one of the most serious intruders of the heart" (p. 25). Noddings adds to this by describing stories as having "the power to direct and change our lives" (Carter, 1993. p. 5).

Dietz defines story as "an act of communication that provides people with packets of sensory material that allow the listener to quickly and easily internalize the material,

understand it and create meaning from it” (Silverman, 2006. p. 2). Hutchins adds more to the ‘what a story is not’ column by including not a sound bite or an anecdote, but instead “a narrative illustrates complex interconnections between agents, ideas, events and even abstract concepts” (Silverman, 2006. p. 2). Carter (1993) defines story as a "personification and a patterning of events around a theme or figure of significance to a particular culture" (p. 6). And Yolen (2000), states that a fantasy novel talks to the listeners more than once, first in the ear and again in the heart.

Bruner adds to his philosophy on the modes of knowing by describing story as a way for people to interpret the world, and transform or translate a private experience into a culturally negotiated or established form (Glaubman, Kashi & Koresh, 2001; Mello, 2001). Story is one of the most important human inventions and considered by many as the most important technique invented or discovered in making some aspect of an event within a social group truly memorable (Egan, 1989). All stories are constructions which provide meaning to an event through a description of the experience. What is told and how it is told is a glimpse into what the storyteller believes (Carter, 1993). Robert Coles (1989) identifies "novels and stories as renderings of life, they cannot only keep us company, but admonish us, point us in new directions or give us courage to stay a given course" (p.159).

Nancy King describes stories not only as a gift, but also our human birthright. She believes they help us share our world as well as make sense of our world as they create a connection to all aspects and people involved (King, 2007). Philip Jackson adds “stories do not simply contain knowledge, they are themselves the knowledge we want students to possess” (Blair, E. et.al., 2007).

Elements of Story

With these thoughts and definitions in mind, what then are essential elements or aspects of a story? The magnetic quality of the story is the universal power to remember, entertain, teach, inspire, create and know (Isbell, 2002, p 26). Yolen (2000) feels that first and foremost, a story must be logical and the author has to totally give in to that logic. They have a beginning, middle, and an end known as a story arc. The beginning captures the attention and provides the scene or setting. The middle digs deep into or gets to the meat of the conflict. And the end provides closure which includes the point of the story and what should be done because of it.

Paley (2007b) feels that children use stories to work their way into the adult world and that just being heard helps them realize what they are offering is important. In Csak's (2002) research on six year old children's oral stories, five story features emerged in her study. These included repetition of high interest topics, status or conditions of a child's life where there is a great deal of unspoken elements. Next, cause and effect which delves into the why of an event and the emotional ties to the teller. Building on the stories of others which is a sense of community is the next feature. Finally the role of media in the story was listed which ended up to be a very small factor.

Each and every story has a narrator and needs an audience. There are always multiple interpretations of meaning, but all include three basic elements. These are: a situation with some type of conflict, someone or something that is involved in this conflict and a sequence with a plot to resolve that conflict. That sequence is also temporal because without the time element, all that is there is just a list (Carter, 1993).

These are essential elements in a story, but to be an effective teaching tool, which is the avenue I am pursuing, it cannot be just any story; it has to be a good story. Yolen, (2000) feels that a good story must present and reflect upon the whole picture which includes light and dark, shadow and glare, and even yin and yang. While reviewing a website focusing on storytelling, I came across a short article that focused on just that idea of what makes a good story (creatingthe21stcentury.org). The list of what a good story needs is that it has to touch people in some form or fashion. It has to have substance with a conflict and resolution which involves a well defined main character who somehow grows or changes within the story. A good story must produce striking images and it cannot be wimpy. It must be geared towards the audience it is being delivered to and the deliverer must love and love to tell the story itself (King, n.d.).

This last element, which discusses the deliverer of the story, begins the true essence of this section which is using story as a teaching tool. As a deliverer or storyteller, personal views and key points are presented to the listener from the teller's viewpoint. This is definitely an important perspective, but it certainly is not the only one. The presentation of a story can be interpreted numerous ways by the listener or the audience and can be related personally to each listener's own world (Silverman, 2006). Cole (1989) adds "that there are many interpretations to a good story and it isn't a question of which one is right or wrong but of what you do with what you've read" (p. 47).

Stories for All Ages

My own personal world revolves primarily around early childhood and elementary aged students, but it was also very interesting for me to discover the use of

story not only in the high school setting, but in the business world as well. Benefits and uses of storytelling in high school include fostering group dynamics and a positive class environment. It can encourage the development and use of learning styles and multiple intelligences as well as enhancing the building of skills and interest in writing, creativity and problem-solving (Herman, 2000).

The business world can benefit from storytelling in the same way as high school students. An online article discussed another avenue storytelling pursues, and that is results (creatingthe21stcentury.org). Everyone involved in a story gets some type of result. It can reach a large population in a short amount of time and for an added incentive, it is entirely free. This, in and of itself, is a strong drawing card for the business world. The results a story may help to create or reach are as varied as the interpretations that can be made from it. Story draws on human nature and that personal aspect brings the listener into the story and encourages the process of change. Change, whether it be a big or little difference, is far easier when a person feels a connection to a suggested outcome and a story can provide that connection. Learning through story is also easy because each and every person is a storyteller and understands the process. Many businesses have reconnected to story to promote their work force because they understand that the listeners all started out as youngsters telling and listening to stories. It is not something new to learn, but rather something to be rediscovered.

The business mode looks at five sides of a story to achieve, in their opinion, the full potential of the tale. The steps include finding, digging, connecting, telling and more connecting through a specific story. The first side of finding the story is not so difficult because it already exists in the organization. The next step is to dig into that chosen

personal story for deeper assumptions and expectations that have a tremendous influence on the workplace beliefs and behaviors. When choosing a story, company goals and values and peoples' responses to them, whether positive or negative, need to be incorporated into the telling. The actual telling is the fourth side which follows the story arc of capturing interest, presenting the conflict or problem and then resolving that issue. Symbolism is also an important part of story and is just an added benefit for making the story meaningful. With these sides in mind, businesses see positive results in regard to financial aspects, goals, engagement, customer feedback, workflow cycle time, transfer of skills, and positive cultural changes (Silverman, 2007). Story as a teaching tool in business seems like it could be extremely beneficial.

This could, and I believe is, also true in the elementary school setting. Edward Said, in a 1984 essay, stated that *facts* don't stand alone and speak for themselves most of the time, but need a story to absorb, sustain and circulate them. The story is a comfortable socially acceptable way to present any type of fact or scenario. In addition to that, a story is never entirely complete since each interpretation can result in a different feeling or thought (Ayers, 2008). Going back to Bruner's modes of knowing, it was stated that the brain works at least partially in the narrative mode and creates stories to make meaning and connections out of daily events and experiences (Glaubman, Kashi & Koresh, 2001). In the search for raising educational standards to ensure we are functioning to our absolute best potential, our country has forgotten about the narrative way of knowing and learning. We are relying strictly on the scientific mode and demanding that programs presented to school districts be scientifically research based

(Suskind, 2007). The ‘numbers’ from the scores in the standardized tests that administrations are looking for cannot be as easily found in story based curriculum.

Storytelling

Story reading is common, but storytelling in the classroom is often thought of as a ‘frill’ in the educational setting. Teachers telling stories model powerful oral language and promote good attitude toward reading, literature, and oral language (Isbell, 2002). Storytelling is defined as an ancient way of sharing thoughts and images and in education those thoughts and images are then ‘stored’ as community knowledge. In an edition dedicated totally to story and storytelling, the editors of Harvard Educational Review cite Applebee, Bettelheim, Bruner and Favat as just a few of the researchers that feel storytelling is an effective teaching tools and that this strategy lies at the core of meaning making in all parts of education (Blair, et.al., 2007). These same people, as well as others like Paley (1997), Egan (1989) and Mello (2001), consider teachers as storytellers and the classroom the stage where these stories are constructed, shared and performed through the learning of each student. Their studies show children build vocabulary, speak in more complex sentences and build comprehension when frequently involved in a storytelling curriculum (Isbell, 2002).

Storytelling is brain food for all domains in a child’s development. The social and emotional domain is enhanced through the bonding and the community building aspects of storytelling. Storytelling builds knowledge, offers problem solving opportunities and stimulates higher order thinking and creativity which all dwell within the cognitive domain. Language and literacy are strengthened as children build vocabulary and listening comprehension (Cornett, 2007). Strong oral language skills that

develop with storytelling are important in gaining reading and writing abilities (Zeece, 2003). Motor skills can also improve as movement and dance are incorporated into performances (Cornett, 2007). We tell stories to prepare, reassure, and amuse ourselves and to build relationships and make sense of our worlds (Cornett, 2007). “So it is that the old, old art of storytelling still has the power of charm” (Whaley, 2002, p. 34).

Story and Play

Vivian Paley, a retired kindergarten, early childhood teacher and author, spent her entire career demonstrating the power of story as a teaching tool. Through her books, you see, hear, and feel the story she writes, the stories she utilizes in her classroom, the stories she creates to help teach certain basic concepts, and the stories the children write, illustrate, and perform in response to the other stories. Each book is like a story within a story within another story, and each layer offers new insight into the power of narrative (Paley, 2001). Paley feels passive events with story may not be enough to connect oral and written language. She feels along with narrative thought there needs to be narrative action which will then lead to a narrative community or a corporate memory. In other words, learning takes place. Paley’s writings stress more story than theory because she feels she had to take on the perspective of the children which is always centered on the power of story. With this philosophy, the plot is just as important as the dialogue which creates that strong bond between story and play (Paley, 2007b).

Similarly, Groth and Darling in *Children in Play, Story, and School* (2001), built a study involving Vivian Paley’s creation of a classroom. Paley suggests a curriculum consisting of a great deal of time on stories and books of the children’s choosing followed by play centers where children are encouraged to compose their own stories.

These stories can be dictated to the teacher and later brought to life through classroom performances. Story dictation and story enactment of a child's own story have strong potential as tools to enhance literature development. They complete the cycle which includes imagining, telling, writing, reading and dramatization. This cannot help but scaffold literacy development (Paley, 2007a). Jane Rothman (2006) describes Paley's curriculum with the metaphor of a window since with it you can see inside a child's world through their play, language, knowledge and of course stories.

What Groth and Darling wanted to discover was if Paley's type of curriculum could be created by others, what the implications for literacy development are, and how the children respond to enactments of their own stories. The researchers went to a classroom, read stories and then during center time were available if children wanted to dictate and then illustrate personal stories. No pressure was involved and children came as they chose. After the center time, the authors were invited to direct their story as a play for the class to participate in as well as view. The results show that all the children at one time or another dictated a story and produced a play. They were willing and excited participants who encouraged their teacher to continue with the practice after the research was completed. Children showed a development of understanding in relationship between words and text and also showed respect for other children's work (Groth & Darling, 2001).

The results show promises that Paley's type of classroom curriculum is possible in any early childhood program. Paley offered reasons for this as she spoke in Walferdange, Luxembourg in 1997. Throughout her speech she mentioned many specific children who taught her so much about the appropriateness of using story related play as

they were learning themselves. She goes on to discuss how different it is for adults since adults have difficulty transporting themselves into the make-believe world of story and play. Children on the other hand jump right in, utilizing play and story as their languages.

Both story and play contain the same basic elements which promote the benefits of their use together within a curriculum. These basic elements include some type of problem or activity that is dramatically portrayed by actors, actions, scenes, and props in a sequential manner to achieve a goal. Imagination is crucial in both story and play, but the amount used is up to the individual (Glaubman, Keshi, & Koresh, 2001). Many children recreate story and play strictly by reproducing scenes they have been part of or observed. Others distance themselves from their own world to create new worlds of action and fantasy. The real and the imaginary are intertwined in the same way story and play are intertwined; that is by the children in ways they deem appropriate to construct meaning out of the experience.

Through story and play, children are given the opportunity to find their place in a situation and also determine relationships between people, objects, and themselves. Play within story is a perfect way for children to express themselves and test reality while safely being hidden in fantasy. Emotional growth is often overlooked in favor of cognitive goals, but story and play offer chances for children to grow in both realms. Self-help skills can also improve through play, especially in dramatic play. Social and emotional growth is often discussed together, but story and play really address them separately and both are of equal importance. When using this type of method in a classroom, the story serves as the focus of the play. Socially, the children can act out

predictable or unpredictable roles and situations. The comfort in this scenario should lend itself to deeper more thought driven social interactions (McCord, 1995).

In addition to listening to stories, narrative interactions through play and/or drama seem to promote Piaget's equilibration theory. This theory is put to use in an article by Pellegrini and Galda (2001) which is based on friendships that are involved with conflict and resolutions through narrative processes. These interactions encourage cognitive growth, and continued practice with those activities seems to yield more mature cognitions.

Cognitive development takes place in all parts of the story and play curriculum. Counting, sorting, comparing, and sharing ideas as well as contributing to the theme being addressed all develop through the process of story. Integrating reading and writing into this type of curriculum is critical at this stage of development (Venn & Jahn, 2004). Play definitely benefits this area in development, primarily because each child is unique. With children learning at different levels and with different learning styles, no one method can reach them all. Play can offer a variety of methods to work on a skill in a way that is relevant to story and therefore relevant to the child. Teachers have the opportunity, if they listen carefully, to connect the play and stories to outside events (Paley, 2007b). The children then scaffold the materials and information present to grow at a pace that is their own.

McCord (1995) summarizes the benefits of story and play with a unique analogy. Comparing the benefits of this type of curriculum to a definition from *Joy of Cooking* she states:

Never underestimate the power of a marinade... marinades are a means of spreading flavor by immersion...the soaking period may vary from only a few minutes to many hours. The stories are our marinade. We immerse the children in stories and related meaningful activities. Some soak up the meaning quickly while others need to soak it up for weeks, repeating for mastery, for love, or for a deeper comprehension. It is our job to offer the experiences and materials so that they can self-select their form and timing of marination. If we trust them, they will produce the ingredients they need to do the task at hand. (p. 8)

Story, Empathy and Compassion

Vivian Paley (1990) also stresses empathy and compassion in her developmentally appropriate classroom. She states that “Every child enters the classroom in a vehicle propelled by that child alone, at a particular pace and for a particular purpose. Here is where the fair study of children begins and where teaching becomes a moral act” (p. 7). She goes on to weave in the concept of empathy and its importance in childhood development and the ease with which it can be developed within the framework of story related play.

Teddy is in his wheel chair all strapped in ready for the bus to pick him up. Stories are being acted out and with his eyes Teddy implores his teacher for involvement. A little boy named Edmond tells the teacher that Teddy needs to get out and participate, but it is too late in the day. The children then change the story and the plot and create a new character. Teddy will be the baby who hasn't learned to walk yet... and the story continues.

What is seen here is empathy, something that cannot be taught, but is essential for life in the 'real' world. This can be witnessed as children share in the excitement of a child's first word, as they make their own form of sign language to interact with a hearing impaired child, and as they throw a red cape over a boy in a wheelchair so he can play a part in the story. It is a skill that enhances the education of all children involved in the process (McCord, 1995).

There could be no curriculum any of us could develop that would teach this essential human emotion, empathy, essential to all of our civilized societies, the emotion, without which nothing we ever attempt to do toward a more peaceful world would ever work. And there it is, demonstrated, giving us the optimistic understanding: Yes it's there. It's worth pursuing. It's worth working for, because we see in this little incident involving play and story, that it is there. (Paley, 1997, p. 4)

Empathy is thought of as a core moral emotion and it is supported when adults use literature to promote security, attachment and nurturing. This support is evident when the adult uses literature as an example to guide children and provide specific examples, which promote a positive self-image. It is also supported when the children realize that their adult connections take them seriously and realize and accept that each child is unique and reacts to each story in a unique fashion (Zeece, 2003, 2004).

Empathy's foundation begins in early childhood as the child begins to interact with more and more people. A child's environment, culture, and temperament influence it, but child rearing practices have a strong effect as well. Stories involving attachment help a

child understand they are loved and valued. Stories about feelings and behaviors and then relating them to the child are also beneficial.

Empathy is a learned process and one way to teach it is through moral dilemmas or stories that are role played and discussed (Upright, 2002). Understanding how others think and feel is the first step in caring about how others think and feel. Using books to promote empathy is very effective. What adds to the effectiveness is having the children 'live' or manipulate the story in their world of play (Zeece, 2000).

Impacting the Future with Story

There is not a great deal of research that focuses on the impact of storytelling on development and that is one reason why it is not often looked upon as a valid form of instruction. Vivian Paley, Kieran Egan, Jane Yolen, Robert Coles and Robert Atkinson are a few researchers who have researched this line of inquiry, but we need more of it. The most important discovery for me when looking through the research for this paper was that in a study of fourth grade students, the delivery of the story had a much greater impact than the story itself (Mello, 2001). This blends right in with the views of a Native American storyteller, Gayle Ross (Hussey-White, 2006), who feels that storytelling can be used to teach ALL subjects. If delivery is the important issue, any fact or figure can be incorporated into a narrative format to make it more memorable for the learner. Ross feels people learn best through entertainment and laughter. Therefore, through the interactive format of story which engages the head, heart, and spirit simultaneously education can take place. Again, as the imagination is stimulated, learning can take place in a multitude of ways.

Through story, a basic human need of making meaning out of the world is enhanced. The mind builds stories that capture both the inner and outer life of that person. Reacting to new stories or retold tales can only build on these connections (Glaubman, Kashi, & Koresh, 2001). A story in and of itself is interpreted by each reader (Yolen, 2000). The author has his/her own destination for the writing, but it is the reader who transforms the work into personal relevance. Stories can create what Howard Gechan refers to as a 'crystalizing' experience. By that he means that through the reading, listening and discussion of the story the children relate, make a connection and therefore that encourages growth (Bushmante, 2002). One way teachers use stories is by helping make those connections for the students (Coles, 1989).

Stories that teachers utilize most often deal with moral or philosophical elements rather than curriculum standards (Carter, 1993). This, as mentioned earlier, can be problematic, especially when considering laws like NCLB. With continued research however, I believe the importance and value of these moral elements can be illuminated as well as utilized for documented evidence of the transferability of those elements to the cognitive domains (Sutton-Smith, 2001).

In the book, *Children in Story, Play and School*, Greta Fein (2001) suggests, and studies support her view, that pretend play tells a great deal about what a child thinks and feels. In one particular study in this book (Herman & Bretherton, 2001), activities involving finishing the story provided information about attachment issues. In another study, results showed that story may be one way in which children can successfully deal with cognitive and emotional ambiguity, inconsistency and difficulties (Pellegrini & Galda, 2001). Stories have the ability to change behaviors, attitudes and feelings of the

reader, and the storyteller or author has the power to lead and encourage those changes by the message and method of delivery they choose to share (Yolen, 2000; Egan, 1989).

In a study with a fourth grade class (Mello, 2001), students repeatedly connected plots of stories to their own lives. The time spent with stories gave the children a control and power over how to interpret and connect each story and that in itself is education. Through the process of listening, discussing and reflecting about stories, students were able to develop and often clarify their own beliefs while gaining a necessary appreciation of various points of views. As more stories were introduced, students would connect new thoughts to what they already had developed.

It seems to me that since the brain works partially as a narrative device, narratives need to be in the educational process. The reason for stories, as Cole (1989) states, is not just for the solutions, but more importantly a broadening of ideas and personal feelings with new aspects being continuously added. Looking at my class and relating the stories we read and share together, I again agree with Cole in that "reading stories is not like memorizing facts, we reach out to others engaging the thinking mind as well as the emotional side" (p. 127).

Connections to Story under NCLB

Early Reading and Scientifically Based Research Directors Conference 2/03

Reviewing this online presentation provided a brief outline of the views of NCLB in regard to story and storytelling in the Early Childhood curriculum. The presentation utilized a PowerPoint presentation to share NCLB's views, beliefs, and strategies in reading aloud, book sharing, and dramatic play and writing connections. All are considered valuable to help children learn about their world through the power of stories.

Numerous opportunities, variety, repetition, questioning, discussions, connections, and predictions are all encouraged when sharing books with children. When sharing these stories, it is always important to remember to listen to what the children say and build on their responses as well. Dramatic play and writing offer children other opportunities to build on what they learned in stories.

NCLB not only stresses the strategies for sharing stories but the environment as well. Books should be displayed attractively and be accessible to all. Various methods including tape recorders, computers, and puppets and writing supplies should be available for children to experience story within the classroom (US Dept of Ed. , 2009, Early Reading).

Eager to Learn! Educating our Preschoolers

This online presentation is based on the goals of NCLB and stresses the importance of early childhood programs to set goals and expectations for their young learners. In regard to storytelling, it states that storytelling may build attention span as well as vocabulary, but that vocabulary is predominantly built through peer interaction and engagement in child initiated instruction (US Dept of Ed., 2009, Eager to learn, p. 233). The other specific mention of storytelling was within a Core Knowledge Foundation curriculum of 2000. This program stresses the importance of goals and encourages the immersion of children in a sequential set of experiences including: language development, oral language, nursery rhymes, poems, finger plays, songs, strong book reading and storytelling which all promote emerging literacy skills in reading and writing.

No Child Left Behind and Scientifically Based Research

The words ‘scientifically based research’ are found over one hundred times within NCLB, and include reading programs as well as teacher training, safety issues and other programs. It is not, in and of itself, a program, but ‘woven’ throughout the law which gives it a great deal of power and influence. This phrase ‘scientifically based research’ creates a much closer and deeper involvement of the federal government with individual classroom teachers’ philosophies and practices. Scientifically based research, is defined as “research based on objective, empirical, systematic observation that follows the scientific method” (Hess & Petrilli, 2008). This in turn means that the practices and methods used to teach children must be proven effective through specific measurable testing applications.

No Child Left Behind and Reading Instruction

NCLB stresses six key concepts when considering reading and academic improvement. These include all children reading on grade level by the end of third grade, closing the achievement gaps between disadvantaged children and children with more advantages, AYP, having all students proficient by the end of the 2014 school year, annual student reading testing and scientifically based reading research. The six reading programs that NCLB emphasizes are Reading First, Early Reading First, William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Programs, Improving Literacy Through School Libraries, Reading Is Fundamental- Inexpensive Book Distribution Program, and Striving Readers (Learning Point, 2007). The program relevant to my particular research project is the Reading First Initiative.

Reading First stresses phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies as the five essential elements in reading instruction. Reading First requires screening, instructional and diagnostic assessments and provides funding for needed professional development. It also mandates that reading programs used within the classroom be scientifically research based (Learning Point, 2007). Scientifically based research is extremely prevalent in the Reading First Program. This billion dollar program provides funds to schools that apply and qualify for the grant. Schools follow the strict guidelines that the National Reading Panel developed in 1997 as a result of extensive research on what is deemed the most productive way to teach reading (Hess & Petrilli, 2008). It is impossible to look at any aspect of books, reading and story within the NCLB legislation without delving into Reading First. Reading First is a government regulated grant program based on scientific evidence which according to the National Reading Panel works in teaching reading effectively. The grant program, which serves students in kindergarten through third grade, along with Early Reading First which focuses on preschool students, is considered the academic cornerstone in NCLB. The ultimate goal of Reading First is to have all students on age appropriate reading levels by the end of the third grade. To achieve this goal, the program increases accountability and strives to ensure that all teachers are able to identify children at risk for reading difficulties (US Dept of Ed., 2009, Reading First).

Reading First has received large amounts of money since NCLB has been implemented and it provides funding for teacher training, materials needed for instruction, diagnosing and assessments (Hess & Petrilli, 2008). The scientifically research-based reading programs that Reading First require focus on what is deemed of

paramount importance to enhance reading skills followed by assessments, monitoring and reports to prove success. The key elements stressed in Reading First are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. Early Reading First stresses oral language and vocabulary, phonological awareness, print awareness and letter knowledge. Early Reading First follows scientifically based research to teach cognitive and language skills through high quality oral language and literacy rich classroom environments.

Both Reading First and Early Reading First require intensive professional development, instructional materials based on the research with various screening and assessment processes to further accountability. Currently, the grants have provided six billion dollars to schools based on need and poverty levels of students. NCLB proponents feel that with these grants and continued focus on the politically supported scientific research, that 90% of students could increase their reading knowledge to roughly average. This can be accomplished through a strong core reading curriculum, materials aligned to the research, appropriate assessment, timely intensive intervention and professional development (US Dept of Ed., 2009, Reading First).

Teacher Responses to No Child Left Behind

NCLB is built on four specific pillars designed to support the educational system. These pillars include school accountability, more flexibility within the states and school districts, increased options for parent involvement and input, and a strong dependence on research based strategies for teaching (Suskind, 2007). As with just about all aspects of this massive bill, on paper it all sounds strong and supportive. Problems arise, however, when we leave 'the paper' and enter the world of the classroom.

Accountability and scientifically researched programs are the main focus for teachers throughout the nation when dealing with the development and teaching of literacy. Reading First is the strategy adopted to meet the needs of each child and with that come assessment and scripted programs. According to the National Council of Teachers of English Executive Committee (NCTE) the primary purpose of any type of assessment is to build and improve teaching and learning. This cannot be accomplished effectively without considering the children's interests. One of the first major barriers to this belief is that the majority of standardized reading assessments deal solely with surface level concepts which rarely dig deeper into personal views, feelings, or interests (NCLB: Key Components, 2007). Under Reading First grants, the yearly standardized test is just the tip of the iceberg as far as the quantity of mandated assessments that teachers have to give to show accountability (Suskind, 2007). This is not to say that teachers are against testing. They do want their students to perform well on tests, but the type of testing they want involves more than just bubbling in a correct answer (Pennington, 2007). NCTE believes there needs to be multiple and various types of assessments to evaluate growth and learning (NCLB: Key Components, 2007). With testing holding so much power in education at this time, the concept of a child-centered curriculum is highly unlikely under NCLB (Suskind, 2007).

Although research is just about as important as assessment under the NCLB bill, the National Reading Conference in 2005 stated that there is NO research showing a correlation between increased assessment and reading achievement (Suskind, 2007). When considering that lack of correlation, a quote that sums up my views on assessment under NCLB is "You don't fatten a cow by weighing it" (Chatton, 2007, p. 490). I had to

think and then laugh at this little bit of what Chatton refers to as ‘farm wisdom.’ Testing children over and over without rich and varied experiences in between is virtually meaningless, and so far there is no evidence to the contrary. Research is showing that children that are involved in more real and global types of approaches (often denied under NCLB) “perform higher with rich retellings of stories and cohesive understanding of text” (Suskind, 2007, p. 451).

The mandates that have grown out of NCLB, however, create a classroom environment that limits teacher control in regard to goals and curriculum. This sends a message that teachers are unable to create their own pedagogy and must rely on common scientifically research generated teaching strategies. The book center that offered a wide variety and level of reading materials and took up at least one corner of every early childhood classroom is being replaced. Instead, leveled readers and scripted programs teaching specific skills in isolation for test preparation take precedence in the classroom (Chatton, 2007). Scripted programs requiring grade level teachers to be working on the same book and page in each class, and for each student, cannot possibly meet individual needs (Wollman, 2007).

The scripted programs being utilized in the Reading First plan imply that all the elements needed for reading success are contained in their plans. If success does not materialize, the fault lies with the instructor or the learner, not the program. These scientifically based scripted programs are ignoring a more current philosophy that implies that literacy learning is not just processing a set list of cognitive skills presented by an instructor to a class, but rather a social and cultural process where the whole group of learners actively construct what they know together (Jaeger, 2007). Vygotsky stresses that

learning to read is a social event not just about skills and strategies (Bushmante, 2002).

Yatvin broadens that definition a bit as more than a scope and sequence of skills to include a process combining classroom learning and culture (Suskind, 2007). NCTE proposes redefining scientifically based reading research and looking deeper into student and group progress rather than AYP (NCLB: Key Components, 2007).

Pennington (2007) offers two distinct definitions of literacy that are at the heart of the debate in instruction under NCLB. Literacy can be viewed as a practice which would include a more holistic approach valuing the use of story and social construction.

Additionally, literacy can be viewed as an institution filled with scaffolded skills that can be presented, mastered and evaluated efficiently. Teachers battling NCLB's institutional view believe that scripted programs abandon the personal touch and thinking processes in exchange for high numbers on a test.

Christensen, confronting the issues of NCLB, in 2006, stated her vision of literacy as one "that equips students to engage in a dialogue with texts and society instead of silently consuming other peoples words" (Pennington, 2007, p. 472). A major way to accomplish this goal is through story and books.

Books allow young people to explore what they CAN do beyond what the test examines. In good books, no child has to be left behind. Because young people are the protagonists in their stories and because stories are written to give a sense of hope and inspiration for the possibilities life holds, children's literature challenges the prevailing idea that it is success on reading tests that will determine success in life. (Chatton, p. 490)

Stories let children know they are not alone, they have power and the world is bigger than their problems and that there are limitless possibilities within their worlds (Chatton, 2007). Many children comprehend the stories told and can retell them with their own personal embellishments, but the specific and direct questions of a test often intimidate and make them unsure of themselves (Fukuda, 2007). Elements and characteristics that books can promote and standardized tests cannot measure include courage, humanity, ingenuity, humor and kindness.

One veteran teacher discusses her views about utilizing books under the reign of NCLB with Johnston-Parsons (2007). She feels that without talking about books, children do not enter into the community of readers. She believes read alouds motivate discussion and reading. It helps the class communicate with each other and lets the teachers get to know what the children are thinking about. In her view, no test can measure that. Her read aloud allotted time block within her scripted program is only ten minutes. That amount of time is not enough to read a fairy tale and discuss it with any significance. She admits to often rebelling against the script and offering different versions of fairy tales just to witness the conversation flourish. As an afterthought, she adds that sometimes she rebels against all of the mandates just to practice the *art* of teaching.

Oral language or discussion or story sharing are not, or should not be, considered breaks from the curriculum but as vital methods of reading inside the curriculum (Csak, 2002). When providing read alouds as one aspect of a reading curriculum, children's language awareness automatically expands. New vocabulary and sentence structure along with a sense of story structure can be applied to their own personal reading and writing pursuits and processes. "Reading practices that encourage playfulness, and are linked to

children's every day experiences are stress-reducers and intuition cultivators" (Jaeger, 2007, p. 445). Stress and intuition are just two social aspects of a child's literacy development that will not be addressed in NCLB and scripted programs' top-down, one correct response teaching philosophy. By simply letting students explore and choose their interests and levels of books and stories in free or independent reading time, unknown stresses of a child can often be defused.

Using books and stories through group projects that discuss what is known, predicted and wondered about is one way to key into a child's intuition. Intuition involves discovery, creativity, collaboration, operation, prediction, and illumination and building a sense of it within students offers many more opportunities and experiences to improve learning. The creative aspect of intuitive thinking accounts for the various points of view when discussing situations with stories. Prediction is another strong element that promotes systematic analysis of a story. Illumination brings out the connection between the reader, writer, and text which changes from not only one reader to the next but each time the story is shared (Jaeger, 2007).

Patricia Cooper (2005) who has followed Paley's storytelling curriculum her entire career wrote an article in *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* describing how the guidelines of Reading First and NCLB can be addressed in a holistic rather than direct skill based instruction. Within the storytelling curriculum there are two parts, the dictation and the drama. Both of these activities can be broken down and analyzed into the specific skills that are enhanced with their use. Oral language, through open ended conversations which build expression, syntax, vocabulary and sentence patterns, is stressed through each dictation. There has been a great deal of research on the strong relationship between

learning to read and write and oral language development through dictation that cannot be addressed with a basic skills approach. The oral language of a shy or struggling child can be enhanced through the comforting and encouraging one-on-one interaction between the child and the teacher in a dictation time. It is also an excellent time to assess and maybe address syntax and vocabulary issues. The one-on-one allows teachers to decide how to handle concerns they have in an individualized manner.

Dictation also addresses narrative form and the knowledge of how stories work, where stories come from, what stories are composed of, sequencing, plot, characters, the writing process, intent and imagination. Our society awards the linear form of storytelling to get the point across and solve the problem, and practice through dictation will help in this area. Young children can say far more than they can write so dictation spurs independent and creative writing (Cooper, 2005; Rothman, 2006).

Dictation also addresses a key element in Reading First which is the conventions of print. Knowledge of how print functions, including directionality, spaces between words, letters, and punctuation are all involved in the dictation process. Children who are read to usually observe operations of print easily; the child who dictates stories however SEES it in action. Before children get into the alphabetic code and phonics instruction, they need to realize that what is said can be written, which is encoding, and then what can be written can be studied for its parts which is decoding. The decoding process is followed by comprehension in a child's typical reading development and all these areas can be promoted through the dictation process.

After the children get a grasp on the concepts of print, dictation still offers support in word study including sight words, phonics, spelling and continued decoding. If needed,

teachers can bring up specific skills within that time. Dictation continues to meet the objectives of NCLB in its goal of reading for meaning. Searching for the meaning of text is greatly enhanced by creating that text (Cooper, 2005).

The drama section of the storytelling curriculum is another powerful motivator for future reading. The psychomotor aspect of development is often overlooked in a curriculum, and linking dialogue, description and action helps children internalize and create pictures in their minds. During the drama section, children make inferences that they were unable to make in dictation because their thoughts are brought to 'life' on the stage. Connections of print are reinforced in drama when teachers draw children's attention to the written story or script before and during the dramas. Discussion and questions referring to the dictation deepen the connection between all the processes involved in the story creations.

Cooper (2005) believes that holistic and skills approaches can be combined during both the dictation and drama phases of the storytelling curriculum. She feels that activities embedded in play and story can meet the needs of children naturally. Extra scaffolding can be included if and when concerns or extra interests arise.

Many teachers, including National Board Certified teachers, are finding ways to teach more outside the scripted programs, but at the same time they are in fear of the consequences. Seed (2008), in his article about redirecting the teaching profession in the wake of *A Nation at Risk* and NCLB, lists five conditions for improving the teaching practice. These include collaboration, empowerment, reflection, time and training. He stressed the need to promote understanding not just the memorization of facts while still working on and mastering the standards. NCLB and *A Nation at Risk* discuss the

importance of teachers, but often their requirements and what others consider good practice do not always coincide. Students need to be engaged through effective instructional methods and story is one way to promote that engagement.

One group of researchers including Invenzzi, Landrm, Howell, and Warly (2005) are trying to work within the system by keeping it scientifically based but also incorporating classroom practice and reflection (Pennington, 2007). These two bonus elements are key components within the National Board Standards. We live in a narrative society. Storytelling is often used in politics and other public speeches and events. It seems logical that it should be used within education as well (Pennington, 2007; Lillestolen, 2006). The National Board process is a step in the right direction to help unite both sides of the issues.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Description of NBPTS

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was created in 1987. It was the result of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's Task force on Teaching's response to the landmark report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* written in 1983. The Carnegie Task Force offered solutions to the problems facing our nation's educational system. They felt, "The key to success lies in creating a profession of well educated teachers prepared to assume new powers and responsibilities to redesign schools for the future" (nbpts.org). The team also outlined a plan involving retaining, rewarding and advancing accomplished teachers through a certification process. Through their suggestions and ideas, the framework of National Board was developed.

The National Board is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organization governed by a board with the majority of members being classroom teachers. It concentrates its reform efforts where it feels it will be most beneficial, with the teacher. The framework of NBPTS is based on Five Core Propositions that encompass all the Board values in teacher performance. Through the propositions, standards for all aspects of the curriculum and educational system were developed. These Five Core Propositions can be summarized as follows:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach them to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

These Five Core Propositions have been incorporated into twenty-seven fields of certification which have their own content specific standards. Each applicant for National Certification must demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of those standards through in depth portfolio entries, video-taped lessons and assessments (nbpts.org). Support for certification can also be found in many of the states across the country. Oklahoma has the Education Leadership of Oklahoma (ELO) which is a subgroup of the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation. Accepted candidates, through ELO, have their \$2300 fee paid and are offered support through workshops and conferences. Oklahoma also passed a bill paying National Board Certified Teachers a \$5000 yearly stipend for the life of the 10 year certification (Educational leadership, octp.org).

I became Nationally Certified in 1999 and recertified this past October. I believe wholeheartedly that the way to improve the school system is through quality teachers. This is an extremely effective way to identify those teachers. The aspect of impacting student learning is of paramount importance in the process. Curriculum integration, inquiry and reflection are key elements in building that impact. These elements have helped steer me in the direction of this project involving story and its impact on learners. Specific standards of NBPTS discuss the value of story in the classroom and will be listed in the following section.

Early Childhood NBPTS Involving Story

Story is referenced throughout the Early Childhood National Board Standards (2001) describing how accomplished teachers utilize it to enrich their teaching curriculum. Within Standard Five, which promotes an integrated curriculum, story is discussed a great deal in the literacy and English language arts section. Standard Five describes abilities of accomplished teachers as understanding that the mastering of reading requires the integration of numerous systems including ‘complex schemata’ which would include story structure and more ‘discrete knowledge’ like letter identification. These teachers realize that comprehension is developed by varied strategies which should involve rich oral language and discussions about books and stories. These stories should be from all genres of both classical and contemporary children’s literature to broaden a child’s world and stimulate a child’s thinking.

These accomplished teachers know the importance of making connections between presented stories and experiences their students are familiar and curious about. They read to the children, they read with the children and they have children read to each other and

by themselves to model skills in all aspects of the reading process. Teachers question all through the reading process and encourage their students to discuss their personal thoughts and ideas about the stories they share. They encourage students to question and develop their own hypotheses about story. This strategy promotes inquiry, a cornerstone of National Board teaching philosophy. Teachers encourage students, and provide ample opportunities for them to be both critical and creative about what they are reading.

Accomplished teachers demonstrate the worth of oral traditions in all cultures and share fables, folktales, folk songs and legends with their students. They stress the importance of reading at home and visiting the library for the pure enjoyment of reading. They provide time for children to just explore reading, independently and together as a group. Teachers also realize that story is easily and effectively integrated to other disciplines and aspects of their curriculum such as social studies and science.

Accomplished teachers build on the curiosity, imagination and creativity that are uniquely embedded into each child to help them build skills and stories of their own.

Strategies that accomplished teachers use to incorporate story into their classroom environment include specific scaffolding of children's ideas within story creations. They realize that story can help children uncover and explore their views about what they are studying about. The standard stresses the importance of dramatic play as "spontaneous pretending, dramatization of their own and other people's stories, reenactment of literature- as an important way to support reading, writing, viewing listening, speaking, and visually representing skills" (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001, p. 32).

Accomplished teachers recognize the importance of imagination and creative expression and nurture that within their classrooms. They have children dictate individual and group stories. These creations are often shared with the whole class to build connections between the written and spoken words. The students are encouraged to write and illustrate their own stories, poems, letters and reports. Through these experiences children gain an understanding of the permanence of writing.

When assessing a child's reading, accomplished teachers do not just think about measuring the quantity of that child's various reading skills. Instead, teachers use an ongoing process of observing and documenting what a child says and how they use reading, writing, listening and representational strategies and language. They then help build connections for continued growth. Reflection and technology are deeply entrenched within the NBPTS. Story fits within these standards as well. Reflection on not only the story, but the process, is a necessary step for both teacher and learner to pursue for deeper understanding. Technology is constantly growing and changing, and this along with the new books being released are responsibilities that accomplished teachers need to be aware and keep abreast of. Offering unique strategies to build and enhance a love and development of story appreciation combines the previously mentioned standards into a new and individual story for each learner.

Story and Storytelling Teaching Strategies

Read Alouds

Reading to children is the best activity a parent and teacher can share (Lillestolen, 2006). Gordon Wells' book, *The Meaning Makers*, looked at and verified his view in the importance of being read to by parents. Teachers can fill in the gaps if necessary too. He

encouraged verbal exchanges during and after the book in what he referred to as a 'collaborative talk.' The collaborative talk is what the adult and child share to make the "word fit the world" (Mikkelsen, 2000, p. 319). He feels we read to make sense of life. The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the International Reading Association report that "The single most important activity for building understanding and skills essential for reading success appears to be reading aloud to children" (Strasse & Sephocha, 2007, p. 219).

Drama

Drama is a safe place for children to experience different roles. Teachers find drama a motivating way to build skills in all subjects. It increases motivation, concentration and focus and stretches perspective, builds speaking, listening and non-verbal communication. Drama requires involvement which enhances interest which yields learning (Whaley, 2002; Rothman, 2006). Alfred Hitchcock provides an interesting twist in his description of drama. "Drama is life with the dull bits cut out" (Cornett, 2007, p. 216). It engages learners and can help with real life problem solving (Cornett, 2007). Drama is 'life', it is as old as 'life', but it did not start within the schools until Dewey and the Progressivists pushed it with their philosophies of learning by doing. Acting out nursery rhymes and folk tales is often the first school dramatic experience. Teachers need to look for appropriate and captivating books that are easily transferred to drama (Olness, 2007). The classroom has all the elements of theater (Paley, 2007b). Paley describes the sharing of a drama or make-believe with a child as a tiny miracle, as both parties connect and step into a magical scene. Virginia Wolf adds to this connection by describing a shared drama as reaching "the business of intimacy" (Paley, 2007b, p.151).

Oral Storytelling

Oral storytelling is defined as verbally expressing real or made up experiences to someone else. Children learn oral storytelling through “repeated verbal exchanges with important people in their lives” (Curenton, 2006, p. 80). Different cultures exchange stories differently and although most U.S. teachers follow the classic European tradition of storytelling which includes a beginning, middle and end with a specific topic and time line, we as teachers need to expand that view to include all types of cultural methods.

Stories start with a single thought or sentence. Not until most children turn five do we see a specific plot. Oral storytelling promotes readiness skills by enhancing language and literacy skills in the cognitive domain and self-identity, problem solving and reasoning skills in the social domain. Oral storytelling promotes decontextualized talk which covers past and future possibilities of objects, feelings and ideas rather than just a present view. This in turn promotes higher order thinking. Children not only use it, but they listen to it as well, which deepens comprehension (Curenton, 2006).

Teachers as Storytellers

Teachers are often insecure as storytellers, but many of the best stories are self-created (Whaley, 2002). As storytellers, teachers motivate children by involving them in the production. They promote predictive skills; questioning and answering skills, offering adequate think and response time, checking for listening comprehension, and rereading to justify children’s responses. Questions may revolve around predictions, sequencing, main ideas, character descriptions or plot and scenes (Saracho, 2004).

Children as Storytellers

Kathryn Macgrath Speaker (2000) stated that children involved in storytelling experiences show increased listening skills, improved sequencing skills, and language appreciation and show more thoughtful organization within their own writing. She went on to describe it as a very effective teaching tool. Shipp and Beed (2005), describe wordless picture books as one way of helping children develop storytelling skills. They mention researchers including Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad, and Zhang who believe that as children create narratives with these wordless picture books, they gradually develop a sense of story and improve their grasp of sequencing and oral storytelling skills. Learning takes place through listening and sharing in dialogue. Teachers add to the experience by scaffolding the child's skills in encouraging and supportive ways (Shipp & Beed, 2005).

Professional storytellers Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss feel children's own storytelling builds self-esteem. Each child, no matter what level they are, can participate. Through storytelling, an understanding of diversity develops within a fun environment (Whaley, 2002). Both storytelling and drama give life to learning. They both rely on conflict to develop and both take on roles to create the new life. Storytelling naturally integrates the arts and children's oral storytelling gives them an opportunity to think within the frames and sequence of a tale (Cornett, 2007).

Story Retelling

Stories that work well with this strategy contain repetitive phrases, unique words and detailed descriptions. Retelling builds connections and self-confidence while scaffolding learning ideas and imagination. Retelling of stories often transfers the plot to new scenes with varied characters and descriptions. This personal connection motivates

learners to build literacy skills. The circle of storytelling includes the teacher telling the story with the children listening and questioning, the teacher retelling as the children get more involved followed by the children retelling and later transforming it into their own tales and delivery of the stories in ways that are pleasing to the child (Isbell, 2002).

Stories in visual form like TV and videos do not invite children in because all the work is done for them. Telling and retelling develops a co-creation of the story. The process encourages children to use their imaginations, create their own visual images and actively participate (Isbell, 2002). Teachers can use spontaneous or retelling of stories to effectively assess language, grammar, dialect, and oral construction of story as well as memory skills (Curenton, 2006).

Readers' Theater

Readers' Theater performances bring texts to life which is one way to encourage and develop storytellers (Olness, 2007). The benefits of Readers' Theater are that it integrates listening, speaking, reading and maybe even writing. The group aspect builds cooperation and socialization. The children take on and learn to act out the feelings of the characters. No memorization is required which can also serve as a confidence booster (Cornett, 2007).

Curriculum Integration

Curriculum Integration is not new and not due to National Board; Dewey pushed this philosophy back in 1938 where he suggested theme studies and real life activities. Integration of subject areas may be the only way to hit all the 'should teach' topics that are often neglected due to time and requirements. Children's literature can be used in much

more than just social studies and language arts. Story has the potential to integrate the entire curriculum (Olness, 2007).

Storymaking

Storymaking is interactive, combining the story, the teller and the audience and when all are combined, the whole is far greater than the sum of the parts (Whaley, 2002). King (2007) believes that collaborative storymaking, where students develop stories from stories using images and abstract prompts, enhances both oral and written expression. The process creates a safe haven where children feel comfortable in sharing their thoughts and feelings. Children provide responses that they think their teacher wants because we have trained them to do that. Storymaking dissolves that problem as children realize there are no 'right or wrong' answers in the creation of a story. Another problem has been that teachers are insecure with their own creativity in story. It is very difficult to teach something that you are not comfortable with. Offering prompts and story starters takes pressure off and builds confidence in the creation of a story. The telling of the stories is just as important as the creation of them. Many children, like teachers, worry they are not good 'tellers', but all that is needed is a desire to share, a voice that can be heard and an attentiveness to the listeners.

Storymaking, as King (2007) describes it, can include finger painting, sculpting, drama and telling the story rather than just reading the story. To build confidence she uses a three level approach which includes the private level where the child works individually and for his/her own desires. The next level is the personal which can be shared with others and more attention is placed on the structure of the piece. The third level is the public level and in this phase the work created must stand alone to send the message the child or

children want to convey. “Stories flow like water, reaching crevices and cracks not immediately apparent. It is only afterward, when reflecting on a situation, that I am sometimes able to understand the nature of my response” (King, 2007, p. 207).

Storymaking helps develop a love for reading, writing and speaking and as children relax and realize there is no fear of mistakes they realize they have a lot of stories to share. Storymaking can go in infinite ways depending on the interests and the prompts presented. There can also be a strong connection to a child’s personal life which is important for a teacher to know and understand. “Images matter. Words matter. Stories matter. Connecting words to images enables us to know our story more completely, to communicate who we are, what we know and what is important to us...stories beget stories.” (King, 2007, p. 210)

Group Activities

Some children are insecure and would benefit from group storytelling projects especially when first utilizing storytelling as a teaching strategy. Group activities might include round robin or sentence stories where each child adds a line. Theme stories and descriptive stories offer children a clear picture of the topic to be discussed. Other ways to include the group are picture stories, grab bag stories and finish the story activities (Whaley, 2002; Curenton, 2006). Pretend play and puppets and dolls offer groups of children additional means to create stories together (Curenton, 2006).

Picture Walks and Picture Books

The text and illustrations of high-quality picture books weave rich stories that can excite and surprise children, make them laugh, make them wonder and make them think. Vygotsky supports the view that when children interact with text they transfer that

dialogue back and forth to their own personal experience and picture book 'stories' reach all levels of a child's development (Strasse & Sephocha, 2007). Story line is established and discussed as children travel through the pictures of a book (Zeece, 2003).

Conclusion

Questions still remained for me in regard to story. How can it be utilized effectively in the early childhood curriculum? What are the benefits of its use? What different approaches are most effective for various skills? What intrigues the teachers and the students as well? How do OKECNBCTs incorporate story in their classrooms and what effect has NCLB had on those approaches? Through my survey project I was able to answer some of those questions while gaining a deeper understanding of the beliefs and views of the OKECNBCTs. Definitions, strategies, benefits and philosophies were combined and constructed to create a clear picture of the use and value of story and storytelling within the classrooms of this group of teachers. The research will continue and the use of story will hopefully be more deeply understood. Analysis of my survey should add important and interesting information on the topic of story and storytelling in the classroom. I enjoyed the project, the challenges it created and the information that emerged through the process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As a researcher, I approached this study through an Interpretivist lens. Jerome Bruner's views that learners build new knowledge on existing knowledge served as a base to build my story research upon. Bruner believes that learning is an active process stemming from experiences that lead to personal thoughts and decisions (Cherry, 2004). I believe that teachers as well as students construct their knowledge through experiences and connections among all aspects of the curriculum. Stories can provide those initial experiences and as learners explore, search and build upon the story, learning is constructed. When looking at story and storytelling, this belief drove my research. The social interaction between text, teacher, and student when utilizing story and storytelling within the classroom strengthened my Interpretivist approach for this research. The approach is evident in the review of literature, open ended survey responses, personal reflections and analysis of data.

Crotty (1998) reminds us that even though we approach a study qualitatively, the importance of quantitative data should not be ignored:

We may consider ourselves utterly devoted to qualitative research methods.

Yet, when we think about investigations carried out in the normal course of our daily lives, how often measuring and counting turn out to be essential to our purposes. The ability to measure and count is a precious human

achievement and it behooves us not to be dismissive of it. (p.14)

This is a mixed methods research study. When looking at how OKECNBCTs value and utilize story under NCLB guidelines within their own classrooms, it was important to use data from both qualitative and quantitative methods. Creswell describes a mixed methods approach as a process that gathers numeric data with text data so the final database encompasses both qualitative and quantitative data (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). This study combines the statistical data of the closed ended survey questions with not only the open-ended survey questions, but with the professional literature and my personal experiences as well. This combination of data sources, as Gorard suggests, often has greater impact. Figures are persuasive and stories are remembered and repeated (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Working with multiple data sources can accomplish all of those actions and greatly impact a research study.

Participants

The population surveyed was the OKECNBCTs. I realized that not all of the 407 Early Childhood Generalists would answer my survey, but I wanted all to have the opportunity to participate. When contemplating choosing a sample out of this group, I kept thinking about missed strategies and missed philosophies that might be shared by those not chosen. Sending surveys to all of OKECNBCTs alleviated that problem and provided me with a wealth of data relating to story. After sending out the initial Emails and many were undeliverable, the total number of OKECNBCTs who were invited to participate was approximately 305.

Procedures

The first steps in this research project involved permissions. My district was involved in the process by granting me permission to use my school's email and local Early Childhood Generalists in the pilot study. Next, in order to get current email addresses for all the OKECNBCTs, I contacted Jennifer Gambrell of Oklahoma's Commission for Teacher Preparation, who agreed by phone conversation to supply me with that information.

I sent emails to twelve people requesting their participation in a pilot study. I told them about my project and encouraged them to access the twenty question survey online. Seven of the respondents were local OKECNBCTs, three were OKECNBCTs I had gone through the NBPTS process with, one was my colleague from my doctoral program and one was my advisor. The OKECNBCTs also participated in my final survey. Reviewing the results of the pilot study was one of the most influential and important steps in my project. Considering all the comments and critiques helped me develop a stronger, more reliable and valid survey to distribute statewide. I completed the necessary changes to my updated survey and submitted it to OSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

I received permission to use my school email to send out 4 separate emails to 407 OKECNBCTs. After I received approval from the IRB at the end of September, I began the solicitation of my participants. My first email (Appendix A) was sent to introduce myself, explain the survey, define my terms and request their participation. A large number of the supplied Email list was undeliverable. After cross-referencing my list, I believe that 305 OKECNBCTs received a correspondence. The second email was sent a few days later. It included a consent form (Appendix B) that asked for their completed

survey to serve as their consent. This second email (Appendix C) also defined terms within my research and contained the link that took respondents to my specific survey on surveymonkey.com. (Appendix D). The third email (Appendix E) was sent ten days later to thank the respondents and remind others to complete the survey. A fourth email was sent the following week that offered one last opportunity to be involved in the survey. (Appendix F)

No other contact was made with the respondents and data were analyzed. Survey Monkey provided a summary of the data without identification of the respondents. Data were analyzed in regard to the listed purposes in hopes of gaining a deeper insight into the use of story and storytelling within the classrooms of OKECNBCTs.

Data Collection

Deciding on the appropriate method to use to gather data for my study involving story within the classroom was not an easy task. Following Mildred Patten's advice in her book on Questionnaire Research (2001), I took the first step of considering the advantages and disadvantages of using a survey for my project. The disadvantages included a lack of a personal touch and possibilities of missed opportunities for follow up questions and deeper understandings of respondents' feelings. Advantages to this type of research method, in my opinion, outweighed the disadvantages simply by the number of possible respondents who could shed so much light on my questions as well as provide numerous effective strategies on how to incorporate story into the classroom.

Fink (2006) provided further support for my decision of using a survey as she referred to 'me' as the researcher and the survey as my assistant. In order for a survey to assist me effectively, I have to know what information I want and make sure there is a

strong connection between my research questions involving NCLB, story, and OKECNBCTs and the questions I pose to answer my inquiries.

The rules Fink (2006) suggests when preparing a questionnaire include: using Standard English considering length and clarity, using questions that are concrete with each one being meaningful, and paying attention to biases in wording of each question. These rules as well as the three steps, or what Fowler describes as documents (2002) are how I prepared my initial questionnaire. The steps are: a description of my purposes, a listing of possible variables to measure and my analysis approach.

A Description of My Purposes

My purpose for this project included determining the perceptions of OKECNBCTs about the impact of NCLB on the use of story and storytelling within their own classrooms. Research questions I addressed to achieve this purpose included:

- 1) What are OKECNBCTs views about story and storytelling?
- 2) What do they consider the benefits of story and storytelling to be?
- 3) What strategies do they use to incorporate story into their classrooms?
- 4) How do they compare NCLB and Early Childhood National Board guidelines and standards for story and storytelling?
- 5) What are OKECNBCTs' views on NCLB's influence on their use of story and storytelling in their classrooms?

A List of Possible Variables to Measure

The variables between respondents that were measured included types of schools OKECNBCTs teach in, years of experience, amount of freedom in curriculum and respondents' personal views on story and storytelling.

My Analysis Approach

Patton (2002) refers to content analysis as “any qualitative data reduction and sense making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453) I initially looked at the survey results through this type of approach with expectations of emerging themes. By utilizing the SurveyMonkey Website tools, I filtered and refiltered, grouped and regrouped data to gain an understanding of the responses generated by my survey. The results, I perceived, however, were not themes per se, but rather answers to my research questions. Within the filters I generated through SurveyMonkey, I gained a deep appreciation of the views the OKECNBCTs held in regard to story. Lists of benefits and strategies they used in their classrooms were also developed. In addition, OKECNBCTs’ feelings and views on NCLB, NBPTS and storytelling in conjunction with each other and individually were revealed.

My next step with my data involved what Patton (2002) refers to as a logical analysis. Logical analysis works back and forth between the data and either participant or researcher generated constructs to look for patterns and themes not immediately noticeable. I believed this approach would provide me with deeper insight into the responses as well as the respondents within my study.

Data Sources

The data sources used in this part of the analysis included my survey data, my personal experiences and the professional literature. Weaving together the survey data, my personal experiences and the professional literature in a logical analysis approach offered new possibilities for my study. There was a great deal of data within the open

ended responses of my survey that needed to be analyzed through this part of the process. Working back and forth through the respondents' choices and comments, my experiences as an OKECNBCT and the story- related literature led me to a new set of themes. The themes that emerged through this analysis were what I recognized as a depiction of OKECNBCTs.

Validity and Reliability

Strong validity and reliability are essential in a high quality survey. Fowler (2002) stresses that good questions need to be reliable in that they provide consistent measures in comparable situations as well as valid in that the answers correspond to what they intend to measure. It is also important to note that answers to survey questions have no intrinsic value. The value lies in what emerges from the combined data involving the survey, the literature and my personal experiences.

Construct validity is evidence that a feeling or attitude is really being measured in a survey, and this was considered within the pilot study. There were no statements or questions made in regard to the use of story or storytelling within the classroom. The responses to the minimal impact of NCLB were addressed by adding an additional question to the survey. This question asked how teachers believed NCLB modified their curriculum. Fink states (2006) that the pilot study bolsters both reliability and validity since it can help you see that all the topics are included and sufficient variety in the responses is available. If there are major differences in the types of responses obtained, the pilot study will show it. Ideas suggested for clarity and choice were incorporated in the final survey and are discussed in the next section.

Pilot Study

The initial survey was given to twelve fellow educators including ten OKECNBCTs, a colleague and my advisor. It consisted of twenty-two questions. Seventeen were multiple choice type questions and five were short answer/essay type questions providing space for individual thoughts and philosophies. I asked for comments regarding the clarity of the question, additional avenues of questioning I may have neglected, rewording of questions, and deletions of confusing questions. Of pivotal importance was that the survey was easy to use. I expected clear, honest and enlightening input on making sure this survey was as self-explanatory as possible. Through written and oral communications with respondents I finalized my survey. The OKECNBCTs participants of the pilot study were asked to participate in the final survey as well. The questions for the pilot study survey can be found in Appendix G.

Suggested changes were considered and incorporated into the final survey. One of the comments suggested discussing only the literacy requirements and expectations of NCLB. Another suggestion included adding an additional question about how the use of story had been 'modified' because of NCLB. The last suggestion encouraged me to add a 'never considered' response for comparing NCLB and NBPTS.

I received verbal feedback from five of the respondents voicing the clarity and organization of the survey. There were no inconsistencies or written critiques of the question formats or information requested. Seven of the ten OKECNBCTs taught in an early childhood setting and claimed that NCLB did not limit or enhance their use of story in the classroom. Although it was not the answer I expected, it did help to direct the focus of my inquiries. Questions on the lack of impact of NCLB in regard to story and

storytelling in the early childhood classroom were analyzed not only through the survey results, but through the literature search and personal connections of the researcher.

The Survey

My survey (Appendix D) consisted of twenty-three questions. Eighteen of the questions are multiple choice questions and five were essay questions providing space for comments. It was accessible through [surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), the website I utilized for developing my survey.

SurveyMonkey.com is a licensee of the TRUSTe Privacy Program. TRUSTe is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to build user's trust and confidence in the Internet by promoting the use of fair information practices. The privacy statement covers the website <http://www.surveymonkey.com>. Because this web site wants to demonstrate its commitment to your privacy, it has agreed to disclose its information practices and have its privacy practices reviewed for compliance (surveymonkey.com).

For \$19.95 a month, this website helps researchers create, distribute and begin to consider the survey results in a multitude of formats. This website company “employs multiple layers of security to make sure that your account and your data remain private and secure” (surveymonkey.com). They employ a third-party firm to conduct daily audits of their security. Data resides behind the latest in firewall and intrusion prevention technology. They also offer totally encrypted protection if the data are considered extremely sensitive. SurveyMonkey pledges to respect privacy and keep all data completely and absolutely confidential. It does collect IP addresses and keeps track of

those to analyze areas that are using their product. The site compares an IP address to a zip code which gives a general idea of where the information is coming from without specifics. When data are collected in a survey, the IP address is the only identifying record. Since there is no return email and the information goes directly to the survey site, responses will be completely anonymous not only to the website, but to me as well. This information was shared with the OKECNBCTs so they might feel more secure in the confidentiality of their responses. SurveyMonkey also provides a summary of responses through graphing of percentages to all close-ended questions as well as a listing of responses to open-ended questions.

Analysis of Data

When all the possible responses had been received, analysis of the data began. Story teaching strategies were categorized. Philosophies regarding NCLB, NBPTS and story were compared, studied, and analyzed for understanding. I relied heavily on the SurveyMonkey website to help sort and resort responses to determine how OKECNBCTs feel when considering their certification and curriculum and NCLB all within the framework of story and storytelling. My first analysis looked primarily at the basic response to each individual question. The multiple choice questions were grouped to display an overall view of the respondents. When dealing with the open ended questions, commonalities were listed and labeled based on the response, the research and the researcher's experience. Specific pairings of survey questions were compared to gain a deeper understanding of this group of teachers' philosophy of story and storytelling. I initially looked at and analyzed the first five survey questions and compared them in regard to demographic data. Questions six through eight were analyzed looking through

the lens of NCLB and specific reading programs. Story and Storytelling and NCLB thoughts and ideas were compared and analyzed through the combinations of questions nine through twelve. Next, key elements in the early childhood curriculum were analyzed by comparing the use of Reading Firsts' core elements of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. In addition to that, the core elements of NBPTS including inquiry, integration and reflection were also analyzed individually, in combination, and with the Reading First elements. Time spent with story and play on a daily basis was also analyzed within the elements of the early childhood curriculum. The final question for this section asked the respondent to compare NCLB and NBPTS in regard to story and storytelling views. A final analysis looked deeper into the early childhood teachers' views compared to the review of literature and the researcher's personal experience. It was during this logical analysis approach that new themes emerged depicting OKECNBCTs in regarding story and storytelling. I was open to the data and what information emerged through my analysis.

Triangulation

Patton (2002) states that "triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches" (p.247). Triangulating data within the survey, the literature and my personal experiences provided a strong foundation to support and present the views of OKECNBCTs in regard to story and storytelling.

Researcher Stance

As the researcher in this project, I realize that I had preconceived ideas about the survey responses. I expected to receive a large number of responses and I also presumed

that there would be a great deal of negativity concerning the guidelines of NCLB. I love using story and storytelling in my curriculum and assumed that the majority of OKECNBCTs would agree with my philosophies. I acknowledged those predisposed ideas and remained open to the data that emerged. Being an early childhood teacher and an OKECNBCT as well as the researcher creates a bias. My input and views are important. I was careful to acknowledge my views, they are influential to my research and serve as a primary data source. At the same time, I had to remain true to the data and not create results from my own experiences. This was somewhat of a challenge. I needed to consider myself as one voice out of many sharing views regarding story and storytelling.

Summary

By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, I was able to gain an understanding of the use of story and storytelling within the classrooms of OKECNBCTs. Triangulating data generated by the survey with my personal experiences and the professional literature offered credence to the data. Incorporating a thematic approach offered the researcher an opportunity to look for data that emerged within the responses.

The pilot study provided me with a great deal of information. Working with this small group of people helped eliminate future technology glitches as well as alleviate ‘unclear’ questions. Looking at all this information through an interpretivist framework provided me with a clear reference on how OKECNBCTs construct learning through story in the early childhood curriculum.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Results are presented in this chapter that show the views of teacher participants on the value of story and the impact of NCLB on the use of story in OKECNBCTs' classrooms. When considering the views, benefits, strategies in regard to story, in the eyes of the teachers in this study, the power of story is evident. Through these results, the impact of NCLB on the use of story in OKECNBCTs' classrooms can also be demonstrated. The following is a summary of responses to each question. Multiple choice questions are discussed individually first. A chart showing all responses to these questions can be found in Appendix H. Following individual discussions, multiple choice questions are discussed in combination. This is followed by discussions about the open ended questions in combination with the professional literature and my personal experiences.

Survey Summary

Demographic Results

The first five questions of my survey help to describe the respondents and the type of school where they are teaching. 118 OKECNBCTs responded to the survey. While reviewing the demographic data, I began to question the results. I realized that for the *purpose* of my research project I needed responses from teachers still working in the classroom. I needed teachers working under the guidelines of NCLB. Twelve of the

respondents stated they were no longer teaching in a regular classroom. This number was made up of librarians and college instructors, for example. The total number of teachers who identified themselves as early childhood or elementary teachers was 111. I then realized that five of these respondents considered themselves both early childhood and elementary instructors. In the end, the total number of teachers still working in the elementary or early childhood classroom was 106. I chose to use this number for all the multiple choice questions to ascertain a clear picture of how this group of instructors feels about the use of story in the classroom under the guidelines of NCLB. At the same time, I decided to include all 118 respondents' comments and views in the open ended results. Even though these twelve individuals are not working in the classroom now, they *have* worked in the classroom and have utilized story and storytelling strategies. I believe their input can shed additional light on the research questions.

1. Please select your number of years of teaching experience.

None of the respondents (0%) had three to five years experience. Nineteen (18%) fell in the six to ten year category and thirty (28%) had taught between eleven and fifteen years. Twenty (19%) of this particular group had been in the classroom between sixteen and twenty years and the biggest group of the respondents (37, 35%) have taught for over twenty years.

2. How long have you held Early Childhood National Board Certification?

Most of the respondents fell into the one to three year category for this question. Fifty-eight (55%) of the teachers had held certification for three or fewer years. Twenty-two (21%) held certification between four and six years and nineteen

(18%) had been Nationally Certified for seven to nine years. The remaining seven (6%) had been certified for ten or more years.

3. Please choose your current type of employment.

Seventy-five (69%) of all of the teachers who responded to this survey worked as Early Childhood Teachers. Thirty-six (33%) were elementary teachers. Again, five respondents identified themselves as both.

4. Please describe the type of school where you are currently employed (Please choose all that apply).

Thirty-seven (35%) of the 106 teachers reported teaching in a rural setting. Forty (38%) reported teaching in a suburban setting and the remaining twenty-six (25%) respondents worked in an urban school. Only six (6%) of all the respondents worked in a Reading First school and twenty-four (22%) worked in a Literacy First School.

5. In the past 5 years, how many years has your school achieved AYP?

Two (1.9%) of the teachers reported that their schools had not achieved AYP at all in the past five years. One (1%) teacher said that the school had achieved it one year. Four teachers (3.8%) reported achieving AYP two years and the same number reported that for three years as well. Thirteen (12%) teachers responded that their schools had achieved AYP the past four years. Forty-two (40%) respondents reported their schools had achieved AYP each of the previous five years. Thirty-nine (37%) of the teachers were not sure of their school's status in regard to AYP. One of the respondents did not respond to this question.

Summary of Demographic Data

I was somewhat disappointed in the total number of responses that I received which was right at 38%. I had originally sent out 407 emails, but only 305 were delivered. Out of those, 118 responded to the survey. I had hoped for more and that made me begin to question who in fact did respond. Upon first inspection, it looked like most of the respondents were like me, experienced teachers who had held National Certification for a long time. I was surprised, however, to see that only 3 of the 45 teachers with 20 or more years of experience had held National Certification for over 10 years. Sixteen of the respondents had just been certified in the last three years, seven held it for 4-6 years and 18 had it for 7-9 years. This diverse spread reminded me of a book I had read earlier in my course work, *Life Cycle of the Career Teacher* (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000). This book describes the phases teachers go through as they strive to be experts in their fields.

The phases are progressive and influenced by a variety of factors, such as individual development and social context. Consistent with a constructivist view of learning, however, the most significant mechanism impelling growth in this model is choice. Teachers make choices that help them grow or cause them to withdraw. The ongoing process of reflection and renewal propels teacher growth. Conversely, the absence of reflection and renewal leads to disengagement or withdrawal. (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000, p.3)

I believe that each of the teachers who responded to my survey took this intense professional growth experience of National Board Certification as a personal growth experience to impact their teaching. Just as each student is considered unique under

NBPTS, so are the teachers. Each teacher needs to reflect on their own practices in their own personal way. As they reflect and then adapt within the process, new strategies and philosophies emerge. With this in mind, it was extremely interesting to note the strategies, benefits and views these teachers have toward the use of story and storytelling within the classroom.

Another glimpse into the teachers who responded was seen in the response to the number of years of certification. Just about half of all the teachers that answered the survey received National Certification in the last three years. Could this also relate back to the previous mentioned book? For me, the memory of requests and favors needed from colleagues during the certification process are still very fresh. Returning the favor whenever possible is important to me and may have prompted these teachers to help me with my project. Another possibility is that the connection between the National Board Certification process and NCLB guidelines was seen as much stronger for these respondents and encouraged them to respond.

The information generated from the responses to the first five questions was combined and compared with the remainder of the survey. The majority of the respondents are early childhood teachers, who for the most part, have minimal concerns about AYP or Reading First guidelines. There is also a relatively even distribution between the types of communities these teachers represent. These are factors when looking at the connections to NCLB.

No Child Left Behind and Reading Programs

The next three questions of the survey are concerned with the specific reading program each teacher uses and how comfortable and knowledgeable she feels when looking at that program within the NCLB guidelines.

6. How much knowledge about the requirements of NCLB pertaining to literacy do you have?

One (1%) teacher claimed to have no knowledge about this topic. Seventeen (16.5%) reported minimal knowledge. The majority of respondents (sixty-eight, 66%) felt they had some knowledge of the NCLB requirements pertaining to literacy. Seventeen (16.5%) of these teachers stated that they had considerable knowledge about it. Three people did not respond.

7. Briefly identify or explain your classroom's reading/literacy program.

Each teacher responded with their own personal description of their school's reading program. Five teachers did not respond to this question. About ten of the respondents stated that they follow the basic guidelines of Literacy First for their reading program. Close to thirty of the respondents listed specific reading programs. The most common included Houghton Mifflin, Saxon Phonics, Scott Foresman, Frogstreet Press, Harcourt and Macmillan. In addition to the program, most of the teachers supplemented their reading program with other programs or their own strategies. The complete list of descriptions of the reading programs can be found in Appendix I.

8. How comfortable are you with your reading/literacy program under NCLB guidelines.

Three (3%) of the respondents were not comfortable at all with this situation. Fifteen (14%) felt minimally comfortable. Forty-two (41%) were somewhat comfortable with their reading program under NCLB guidelines and forty-four (42%) did feel considerably comfortable. Two respondents did not answer this question.

Summary of NCLB and Reading Programs

The comfort level of NCLB guidelines increased when looking at its personal application within each teacher's reading program. Whereas seventeen teachers felt considerably comfortable with the general literacy guidelines of NCLB, this number jumped to forty-four when applying that comfort level to the reading program used.

Story and Storytelling and NCLB

The next four questions dealt with each teacher's view on the importance of story and storytelling and how this view has been impacted by NCLB.

9. Of what importance is the concept of story and storytelling in your personal teaching approach?

None (0%) of the respondents felt that story and storytelling had no importance within their curriculum. Six (6%) of the teachers felt these concepts held minimal importance. Thirty-one (30%) of the responses were that story and storytelling were somewhat important. The majority of the teachers (sixty-eight, 65%) who responded to this question felt it had considerable importance within their teaching approach. One person chose not to respond to this question.

10. To what extent have the requirements of NCLB modified your use of storytelling?

Forty-two (41%) believed that there were no modifications to their use of storytelling under the rules of NCLB. Thirty-five (34%) stated that minimal modifications had occurred under this law. Twenty-three (23%) of the teachers responded that their storytelling curriculum had some modification. Only two (1.8%) teachers answered considerable modifications were made in regard to story and NCLB. Four teachers did not respond to this question.

11. To what extent have the requirements of NCLB enhanced your use of story and storytelling?

Fifty-two (51%) of the teachers stated that NCLB had provided no enhancement in their use of story within their classroom. Twenty-nine (28%) of the respondents stated that NCLB had provided minimal enhancement in regard to story and storytelling. Twenty (19%) of the responses shared that some enhancements were offered through NCLB. Only one (1%) teacher stated that there had been considerable enhancement in their curriculum due to NCLB requirements in regard to story and storytelling. Four of the respondents did not answer this question.

12. To what extent have the requirements of NCLB limited your use of story and storytelling?

Fifty-five teachers (53%) that responded to the survey believed that NCLB created no limitations on their use of story and storytelling. Thirty-three (32%) respondents stated that there were only minimal limitations. Fourteen (13.5%) of

the respondents showed that there had been some limitations to their use of story. Two (1.9%) teachers believed that NCLB had caused considerable limitations in their classroom's use of story. Three teachers did not answer this question.

Summary of Story and Storytelling in Relation to NCLB

This section provided two types of information. One result I expected and one that I did not. I was hopeful that the majority of Oklahoma's ECNBCTs would value the use of story and storytelling in their classroom and that was what the survey showed. I had made an assumption, however, that these teachers believed that NCLB had an impact on their use of story. Interestingly, those numbers are not seen in the answers to modifications, enhancements, and limitations of NCLB in the use of story within the OKECNBCTs classrooms. Only two respondents felt that they had to considerably modify their curriculum and that same number felt it created considerable limitations. On the other hand only one person felt that NCLB had considerably enhanced their use of story and storytelling. The highest percentage of respondents believed that NCLB had demanded no modifications, offered no enhancement and created no limitations on their use of story and storytelling within their personal curriculums.

Key Elements in the Early Childhood Curriculum

The following eight questions of the survey delve into each teacher's classroom practices involving Reading First elements, National Board Standards, and time allotted for each of them as well as story and play. Extra questions asked for changes teachers would like to make in regard to time elements for story and play and also how they compare NCLB guidelines and National Board Standards.

13. Key elements stressed in Reading First are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. How often do you use story and storytelling to enhance these elements?

Phonemic Awareness: Responses to the use of phonemic awareness within the classroom include six (6%) teachers never using it in regard to story. Seven (6.7%) stated that they used it on a monthly basis. Thirty-one (29%) used story to enhance phonemic awareness on a weekly basis. Sixty (58%) of the teachers used it on a daily basis.

Phonics: Responses to the use of story to enhance phonics were similar to the use of phonemic awareness. Six (6%) never used it, six (6%) used it on a monthly basis, thirty (29%) used it weekly, and sixty-two (58%) used it daily.

Vocabulary: The use of story and storytelling to promote vocabulary was never used by three (2.9%) teachers. It was stated by three (2.9%) of the teachers that they used this strategy on a monthly basis. Seventeen (16.5%) teachers work with story and vocabulary on a weekly basis. The majority of teachers (eighty, 78%) use story and storytelling to enhance vocabulary on a daily basis.

Fluency: Six (6%) of the teachers never use story to promote fluency. Three (2.9%) use this strategy monthly. Twenty-nine (26%) of the respondents promote fluency through story on a weekly basis. Sixty-four (63%) of the respondents reported using story daily to enhance fluency in their young readers.

Reading Comprehension: Four teachers (3.9%) stated that they never used story to promote reading comprehension. Two teachers (1.9%) use story for reading comprehension on a monthly basis. Fourteen (13.6%) used this strategy weekly.

Eighty-three (80%) teachers promote reading comprehension on a daily basis utilizing story and storytelling.

14. Key elements stressed within early childhood National Board Standards included inquiry, integrated curriculum and reflection. How often do you use story and storytelling to:

Promote children's inquiry: Two (1.9%) teachers never use story to promote inquiry. Eleven (10%) respondents use this strategy on a monthly basis. Thirty-four (32%) of the teachers answered that they promote inquiry through story weekly. Fifty-eight (56%) responded that story was used daily to promote inquiry.

Integrate story within the curriculum: Three (2.4%) of the respondents never used this strategy within their classroom. Four (3.8%) teachers used story to connect the lessons on a monthly basis. Twenty-nine (28%) use story to integrate the curriculum weekly. Sixty-eight (66%) of the teachers value this strategy enough to utilize it daily.

Promote students' reflection: Six (5.7%) of the teachers responded that they never promoted reflection through story. Ten (9.6%) stated that they did so on a monthly basis. Thirty (28%) of the respondents promote reflection through story on a weekly basis. Fifty-eight (56%) stated that they tried to promote students' reflection through story daily.

15. Amount of time spent involved with story and storytelling on a daily basis.

Three (2.9%) teachers stated that they spend no time with story on a daily basis. Twenty-three (22%) of the respondents spend up to fifteen minutes daily involved

in story activities. Thirty (29%) teachers spend between sixteen and thirty minutes with story and storytelling during the school day. Thirty-two teachers (31%) devote between a half hour and an hour to a story based lessons. Sixteen (15%) of the respondents state they spend over one hour with story and storytelling on a daily basis. Two teachers did not answer this question.

16. If there were no external constraints on your classroom curriculum, how much time would be spent with story and storytelling on a daily basis?

Only one (.9%) teacher felt that no time should be invested in storytelling. There were only three (2.9%) teachers that wanted to invest only up to fifteen minutes with this type of activity. Thirty (27%) teachers would like to be spending between sixteen and thirty minutes on story and storytelling. The largest response was thirty-four (32%) teachers who believed that between thirty and sixty minutes was a good amount of time to invest on story and storytelling. Twenty-seven teachers (26%) would like to spend between an hour and an hour and a half on story time activities. Ten (9.5%) of the respondents would prefer to spend over an hour and a half on a story during their class time. One of the respondents did not respond to this question.

17. Many teachers feel play and story often complement each other in the learning process. How much time is allowed for free play and center time throughout your school day?

There was no play or center time in ten (9.5%) of the teachers' classrooms. Sixteen (15%) teachers stated that they spent between zero and fifteen minutes during a school day on play related activities. Twenty-six (25%) of the

respondents devote sixteen to thirty minutes of their class schedule to play or center activities. The largest response for this question fell in the thirty to sixty minute time period which was the answer for thirty-two (31%) of the teachers. The remaining twenty-one (20%) respondents claimed to spend over sixty minutes in play and/or center time. Three teachers chose not to respond to this question.

18. If there were no external constraints on your classroom curriculum, how much time would be offered for free play and center time?

One (1%) of the teachers responded that they would spend no time with play and centers during the school day. Four (4%) of the respondents said they would choose to spend up to fifteen minutes daily with this type of activity. Another group of twenty-three (22%) teachers would choose to spend sixteen to thirty minutes involved in play and center time. The largest response fell in the thirty-one to sixty minute time interval that thirty-six (35%) of the teachers would choose if it were their choice. Fifteen (14.2%) of the respondents would like to spend sixty to seventy-five minutes in play and story on a daily basis. One teacher chose to not respond to this question and twenty-eight added specific comments to this prompt. Some of the comments included:

Free play and center time are a time when students build connections to the concepts being taught in class. It is essential and should include some interaction with adults to build social and cognitive skills.

(OKECNBCT)

Our children are as successful, probably more successful than most

because we continue to employ these elements of teaching while connecting it all to past and future learning. (OKECNBCT)

Children need time to play and construct learning through interaction with their environment and others. (OKECNBCT)

I would add more time for free play if I could find a way for engaged time with no arguing and quiet (at least no yelling) voices (OKECNBCT).

That is how my classroom would run if they would allow it. (OKECNBCT)

I would rotate free play and center time twice a day. (OKECNBCT)

All of these responses seem to suggest that the teachers view play as an important element within their classrooms. Some of the comments suggest an undercurrent of tension that something stops them from utilizing it as much as they would like. NCLB is not labeled as the cause, and may or may not be a reason. Those teachers that are utilizing play as they would like seem to need to validate its effectiveness. The definition that society often holds of play as a frivolous activity may still be lingering in these teachers' minds and they need to justify its real worth to young learners.

19. As an Early Childhood National Board Certified teacher, you work under the guidelines of both the NBPTS and NCLB. How similar are the guidelines of NBPTS and NCLB in assumptions about teaching and learning?

Four (3.8%) teachers stated they saw no similarity between the teaching assumptions of NBPTS and NCLB. Eighteen (17.3%) felt there were minimal similarities between the two sets of guidelines. The largest response was shared

by forty-seven (45%) teachers who saw some similarity between the two. Nine (8.7%) of the respondents believed there were considerable similarities between NBPTS and NCLB. The remaining twenty-six (24%) of the teachers have never considered a similarity between the two guidelines. Three of the teachers did not respond to this question.

Summary of Key Elements in the Early Childhood Curriculum

One question that has emerged for me is the large number of respondents who would increase the amount of time in story and play if there were no outside constraints. Naturally, I assumed the reason for this was NCLB. This is what I felt would be the major emphasis of my survey results. I assumed that there would be a multitude of comments about how NCLB had impeded their creativity and independence. This, however, was not the case. Only five teachers seemed to put any blame on the law for their time constraints. Some of their comments are as follows:

Due to the extreme pressure to meet all PASS skills before the test in Oklahoma, we don't have time for free play. I do, however, provide project time, readers' theater, etc. (OKECNBCT)

The requirements of NCLB affect my classroom in a subtle way. I don't allow them to control my pedagogical choices except as I see them fitting in to what I know to be sound teaching practice. However, my school does use a basal reader and I see effects of NCLB in that. Not all of that is bad, but if it kept me from using sound teaching practices it would be a problem. I continue to allocate my time for active involvement of students in relevant storytelling and reading experiences. (OKECNBCT)

I would love to have more time for students to make guided choices about projects they are interested in. They need to have ownership of their learning and that takes time to be creative and thoughtful learners. Time is taken away from us as mandates grow exponentially. (OKECNBCT)

Again there are no definite answers to why teachers responded as they did but I have considered some possibilities. Seventy-five of the respondents were early childhood teachers rather than elementary. The testing pressures are not as intense in most preschool settings. In my district, we have a four year old center with eighteen classes. There has been only one year that AYP was a concern and that was an attendance mandate rather than an academic one. The preschool creed focuses on the uniqueness of each child and social development that fosters learning. Each of the teachers follows the same daily schedule and basic curriculum that is considered developmentally appropriate.

My survey did not address school or district mandates that required teachers to follow the same procedures. I realize that in Oklahoma these teachers need to address all the 'PASS' objectives, but in my questions I only addressed the Reading First Objectives. Only six of all of my respondents taught in a Reading First School. Their responses showed a wide range of information. One strong consistency is that five of the six teachers utilized the Reading First Objectives for the most part on a daily basis. Only two of these teachers did the same with NBPTS guidelines. Three teachers would like to increase time in story and play, but did not feel NCLB had an impact on that time. This lack of impact was also evident in that three of these teachers did not know their school's AYP status. All of these respondents found storytelling to be considerably important.

Only two of the six felt considerably comfortable and knowledgeable about literacy within their reading program in regard to NCLB.

So it seems that although I set out to find the impact NCLB had on story and storytelling, that impact is minimal in my survey results. What did emerge were strategies and benefits that these teachers believe to be valuable in promoting the considerable important aspect of storytelling in their personal curriculum. What also emerged was a look at a group of autonomous instructors working diligently to utilize sound, engaging practices within whatever environment they may be teaching.

Further Analysis

I chose to look deeper into the data by combining responses to certain questions. To add depth and trustworthiness to my study, I analyzed those combinations along with my own survey responses and connected results to professional literature. The findings offer rich descriptions of the classrooms working to balance and blend the NCLB requirements and the NBCT standards and guidelines.

Personal Survey Responses

I have been working as a teacher for over twenty years. I have held National Board Certification for almost ten years and just became recertified this past October. I consider myself an early childhood teacher. The group of students I am serving now are kindergarten special education students. I teach in a suburban school that has been a Reading First school for the past six years. Our school earned AYP for the past five years. Although I have gained a great deal of knowledge about NCLB, I still consider myself only somewhat knowledgeable when it comes to my literacy and reading under this law. My curriculum for my children with special needs is based on themes with a

strong connection to story within each unit. Some of my students attend the regular kindergarten classroom for part of the school day and their reading curriculum had been the scripted program of *Voyager* for the past five years. *Voyager* follows the guidelines of Reading First and requires teachers to acquire over twenty hours of professional development on a yearly basis. It mandates a ninety minute uninterrupted reading block which consists of large group teaching time followed by small group stations and teacher time. Intervention is key in this program and our school has three part time retired teachers on staff for tutoring and intervention purposes. This year the reading program that has been adopted by our school is Harcourt. Children follow the same ninety minute reading block involving a large group time, station time and small group time with the teacher. We have been fortunate in being able to continue with the extra staff through Reading First funding.

My classroom does not fall under the Reading First guidelines. Story is considerably important to me in my curriculum. My children have no testing mandates and so far NCLB has not required me to modify or limit my teaching strategies. At the same time it has done nothing to enhance my program either. With story being the focus in my room, vocabulary and comprehension are stressed on a daily basis. I try to incorporate phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency with some of my children on a weekly basis. Every day I try to promote inquiry with my children through story and definitely integrate that story throughout the whole curriculum. As much as I would like to say I do the same for reflection, I must say that happens on a weekly basis only.

I spend thirty to sixty minutes daily involved with story including circle time, Smart Board and computer time, and free choice activities. I would like to increase that

amount of time to between sixty and ninety minutes. The same is true for play. Children definitely spend thirty to sixty minutes in play activities and I would like to offer more time in meaningful play activities. If I had answered this survey a year ago, I would have had to answer that I never considered a similarity between NCLB and NBPTS guidelines. Since working on this project, however, I know that there are some similarities between the two. For example, when looking at the concept of story, both see the connection to reading and future reading. Both want learners to feel and be successful readers and value varied approaches to enhance the learning experience. Both see the need to have high quality instructors working with young children. So, even if I do not hold fast to the strict, red-tape guidelines for highly qualified personnel in NCLB, the goal for a strong effective teacher is still shared by both approaches.

The benefits of story encompass all domains and enhance the whole child. My favorite strategies are dramatic retellings of favorite tales followed by the children acting out the story. I also enjoy using technology, especially the Smart Board to bring stories to life. I am sorry to say that I do not do quite as much drama as I did during my certification period. I also do not do Paley's tell, write, and perform curriculum as much as I would like. Nothing is more exciting for me than having my children complete a videotaped story and watching it on our local school based channel KQLT. The children love to see themselves on TV and it makes the story that much more exciting for them.

Autobiography

One result for me of completing the survey was a deeper awareness of the teacher I have become. The questions do not ask these things, but considering them helped me acknowledge the growth I have experienced over the years. This, in and of itself is an

important step. In *Beyond Promise: Autobiography and Multicultural Education*, (2006) Wang and Yu reference Parker Palmer's words from a *Courage to Teach* (1998) which state:

When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly. In the shadows of my unexamined life- and when I cannot see them clearly, I cannot teach them well. (p. 2)

This thought provides evidence of the importance of knowing and understanding me in order to teach effectively. In order to know and help the children I teach know themselves, I need to have a true understanding of myself. Story, for me is the vessel that helps me achieve that. Through story, I can share thoughts, feelings, views and connections that make the learning process real and relevant to children's lives.

As a new teacher back in the early eighties, I taught special education to junior high and high school students. Cultural diversity was of paramount importance. I was a white woman teaching on an Indian reservation and then in a Spanish-American neighborhood. I taught by the book, filling their cups to overflowing with facts and figures. We also spent a great deal of time just talking and reading. We discussed our views of life, hopes and dreams and read other peoples' beliefs as well. English was not their primary language and to promote skills we talked and read and wrote. It was not until years later that I realized the greatest benefit I shared with those students was time with stories- theirs and others.

I then married and moved to Oklahoma. Special education was still important to me. I was placed in an early childhood classroom and realized this was home. I loved the curiosity and excitement these young children had for all parts of life. I also loved the

thrill we all shared with each new learning experience. I went back to school for my masters and began applying early childhood philosophies to my teaching. During this time, I also had children of my own. Seeing how they developed helped me realize that children do not learn best by being fed the information but by preparing the meal themselves. My constructivist nature was emerging without my knowing it.

Next I went through National Board Certification. My passion during that time was the effective use and benefit of play in the classroom. I saw the connection I often used between story and play, but I did not realize its power at the time. My quest for knowledge continued and I began my doctorate. Right away I was introduced to Vivian Paley. I devoured each of her books and saw the passion she had. I also realized it was a shared passion. My themes of study in my classroom all revolve around story. My children's favorite experiences all revolved around story. For some reason I had just missed the story-play connection that dominated my curriculum.

An example of storytelling activities occurs each spring in my classroom. While reading the book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, my children act out the life cycle, being introduced to classical music and dance as well as sequence. They count the number of foods, learn the days of the week and learn healthy and unhealthy foods. Our dramatic presentations start with the lights out and soft music on while the students are curled up tightly on towels like an egg. As I read the story, the students begin crawling around as caterpillars, then wrapping up in our cocoon towels and then using that towel one last time as butterfly wings. We use this book in conjunction with our other spring activities which include 'raising' our own butterflies. The students see, feel, and hear the connections and make them personal for themselves. Last spring, my adult daughter,

walked in the classroom and one student went and got the jar with the caterpillars and proceeded to give her a step by step description of what had happened so far and what would happen in the future. The step by step account was very similar to the book with some added personal touches. This is what teaching with story can offer - a base or connection to be built upon to create meaning for the learners to help them make sense of their world.

Another traditional storytelling literacy tool is to incorporate specific stories in all aspects of the curriculum. An example of this can be seen when we have our BEAR unit. Of course, we read the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. In addition to acting it out for the class next door and for a school wide news broadcast, the three bears are connected to everything the students are learning within the classroom. In the sand table, there is oatmeal, three bowls and three spoons. In the kitchen, there are three different sized bears, different sized dishes and utensils. Our fine motor activities involve punching out paper bears of three different sizes to use very basic math equations to be glued to construction paper and to use for creating stories. There are three bear puppets, bear coloring sheets, and bear sorting activities. I even sing a song I learned a long long time ago in Girl Scouts that tells the story of the three bears in a very upbeat tempo. With all this exposure, children connect the story to different aspects of the curriculum and you can watch the learning develop as imagination and experiences merge.

When I first began this program, McCord (1995) provided me with a unique analogy concerning the benefits of the story-play connection. It has stayed with me and simmered in the background as I continue to offer children experiences in this type of learning experience. Comparing the benefits of this type of curriculum to a definition

from Joy of Cooking she suggests immersing children in story marinades. Through play, discussions and classroom activities revolving around story children absorb and process the story and relate it to their lives. Some children do this quickly, while others take a long time, but both reap the benefits the story offers.

So, this is my educational story. It is the way I see my role in the lives of young children. Offering and sharing stories and story activities provides the connections my students need to learn about the world. Creating this short autobiography of my teaching career provides a story. It helps me see myself as a teacher, where I have been and where I am going, and lets others make connections as well.

Autobiography can capture the complexity of a person's life in its lively depiction of multiple layers of human experiences, which shows a process of identity-in-making rather than a static picture of the self fixed in any social construction. (Wang, 2006, p. 31)

Time with Story

I wanted to get a realistic picture of how these teachers feel about the amount of time they invest and would like to invest with story and play. To do this I needed to browse individual responses to questions 15 and 16 in my survey. I had to look at the responses individually since the percentage results would not give a clear picture of how each and every teacher felt about these two questions. These questions asked how much time is being spent in story and then how much would you like to spend with story. I looked at individual responses and compared the amount of time currently being spent and the amount of time each teacher would like to spend. I also thought it would be beneficial to break apart the results of elementary and early childhood teachers. The

most compelling evidence presented is that out of the 106 respondents, 66 would like to increase their time involved with story and only two would want to decrease their time with story. Currently, one early childhood teacher does not use story, seventeen use it for up to fifteen minutes. Eighteen of these early childhood teachers utilize story for sixteen to thirty minutes and twenty-three use it for up to an hour. Eleven of these teachers work within the framework of story for over an hour. Out of this group of seventy-one teachers, forty-seven would like to increase their time at least by fifteen minutes daily.

The majority of the remaining thirty-six elementary teachers also would like to increase their time in story. Nineteen of these teachers would like to increase their story involvement by at least fifteen minutes. At the time of the survey seven teachers used story for over sixty minutes, nine used it between a half and a full hour and thirteen spent between sixteen and thirty minutes. Two teachers did not use story and five spent up to fifteen minutes in story.

A good deal of research places NCLB at the center of the 'lack of time' issue with story in the early childhood curriculum. Suskind (2007), states that some educators find it challenging to implement the mandates of NCLB while also maintaining their approach to story and storytelling. She goes on to mention that in the search for raising educational standards to ensure we are functioning to our absolute best potential, our country has forgotten about the narrative way of knowing and learning. There seems to be a consensus that the major areas recently neglected in the early childhood curriculum seem to be a sense of play and a discovery of story (Venn & Jahn, 2004, Olness, 2007).

Within my literature review, one veteran teacher discusses her views about utilizing books under the reign of NCLB with Johnston-Parsons (2007). She feels that

without talking about books, children do not enter into the community of readers. She believes read alouds motivate discussion and reading. It helps the class communicate with each other and lets the teachers get to know what the children are thinking about. In her view, no test can measure that. Her read aloud allotted time block within her scripted program is only ten minutes. That amount of time is not enough to read a fairy tale and discuss it with any significance. She admits to often rebelling against the script and offering different versions of fairy tales just to witness the conversation flourish. As an afterthought, she adds that sometimes she rebels against all of the mandates just to practice the *art* of teaching.

Working within a Reading First school has given me insight into both worlds of NBCT and NCLB. Teaching the class I do and the age I have I am not under pressure to perform. I have watched teachers struggle for autonomy within scripted programs. I have discussed with many the ways they can add some of their own approaches to the lessons. Story is a key ingredient in National Board Early Childhood Standards. As an NBCT, I continuously look for more ways and therefore more time to invest in story during my school day. Although I do not feel pressure I appreciate that it is there. I am also encouraged to see that it is not slowing down OKECNBCTs who continue to teach from their hearts. These teachers realize that comprehension is developed by varied strategies which should involve rich oral language and discussions about books and stories. These stories should be from all genres of both classical and contemporary children's literature to broaden a child's world and stimulate a child's thinking (Early Childhood National Board Standards, 2001).

Time with Play

The desire for more time for play in the classroom is extremely strong in my survey. This was evident in the results of questions 17 and 18 which asked how much time is being spent in play and then how much time would the respondent like to offer play time. None of the thirty-four elementary respondents wanted to decrease play in their curriculum. Twenty-three, in fact, would like to increase their play time. There were three early childhood teachers who wanted to decrease their play time. On the other hand, forty-seven of the seventy-two early childhood teachers who responded to this question wanted to increase their play time.

Of special importance to me is increased play time involved with story. Teachers have the opportunity, if they listen carefully, to connect the play and stories to outside events (Paley, 2007b). Both story and play contain the same basic elements which promote the benefits of their use together within a curriculum. These basic elements include some type of problem or activity that is dramatically portrayed by actors, actions, scenes, and props in a sequential manner to achieve a goal. Imagination is crucial in both story and play, but the amount used is up to the individual (Glaubman, Keshi, & Koresh, 2001). Cognitive development takes place in all parts of the story and play curriculum. Counting, sorting comparing, and sharing ideas and contributing to the theme being addressed all develop through process. Integrating reading and writing into this type of curriculum is critical at this stage of development (Venn & Jahn, 2004).

Paley (1997) sums up the story-play connection exceptionally well in one of her lectures.

What is this miraculous event going on? The children are not surprised.

Nothing surprises them that takes place during play or story time. They

expect to understand. Play is their language and story is their second language. Or is it the other way around? It matters not. Somehow they intertwine and count and explain what we are doing together in this classroom. Play and story take us where we want to go. (p. 7-8)

Comparisons between NCLB and NBPTS

Survey results from questions 13 and 14 show the views teachers have when comparing elements listed of NCLB and NBPTS. I wanted to look at this more closely to determine how many teachers are utilizing all of these elements consistently. I thought it would also be important to look at the results considering early childhood/elementary and the views on similarity between the guidelines and the standards.

I determined that twenty-two of the respondents said that they practiced all of the eight elements including: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Inquiry, Integration and Reflection, on a daily basis. This group was made up of fifteen early childhood teachers and seven elementary. Within the early childhood group, nine saw some similarity between NBPTS and NCLB, two saw minimal similarities and one saw considerable similarities. Three of this group never considered a connection. The seven elementary teachers were split as well. One teacher each considered minimal, some and considerable similarities. The remaining four had never considered any similarity between NBPTS and NCLB.

Table I illustrates the entire list of the responses in regard to how the respondents compared NCLB and NBPTS and how often they incorporated the teaching elements into their curriculum. There are a large number of respondents who say they try to incorporate all these approaches into their reading curriculum on a daily basis. Averages

exceed 50% for the most part. One area that was of interest was the decline in numbers when no similarity between NCLB and NBPTS were observed. Elementary scores remained higher within the NCLB framework. This seems to coincide with the logic that early childhood teachers are not as concerned with the NCLB requirements. They present results that are high in both types of approaches. Again the freedom and lack of pressure may be a strong determining factor for these results.

Overall the results again show the autonomous processes that may be taking place within these classrooms. The teachers are combining teaching elements that work in meeting the needs of their students. They know what is needed and why it is important in the learning process. Varied approaches both scientifically researched and developmentally appropriate are blending to create truly engaging learning environments. Research is showing that children that are involved in authentic types of instruction, such as storytelling activities which are often denied under NCLB, “perform higher with rich retellings of stories and cohesive understanding of text” (Suskind, 2007, p. 451). She

Table I: Comparing Teachers' Views of the Key Elements of NCLB and NBPTS

KEY ELEMENTS	Considerable Similarity between NCLB & NBPTS		Some Similarity between NCLB & NBPTS		Minimal Similarity between NCLB & NBPTS		No Similarity between NCLB & NBPTS		Never Considered a Similarity between NCLB & NBPTS	
	8 EC Teachers	3 ELE Teachers	33 EC Teachers	15 ELE Teachers	13 EC Teachers	6 ELE Teachers	1 EC Teachers	3 ELE Teachers	18 EC Teachers	9 ELE Teachers
Phonemic Awareness	5 use daily 63%	2 Use daily 67%	20 use daily 61%	10 use daily 67%	7 use daily 54%	2 use daily 33%	0 use daily	0 use daily	10 use daily 58%	5 use daily 55%
Phonics	7 use daily 88%	3 use daily 100%	23 use daily 72%	11 use daily 73%	7 use daily 54%	1 use daily 16%	0 use daily	0 use daily	8 use daily 44%	5 use Daily 55%
Vocabulary	7 use daily 88%	3 use daily 100%	27 use daily 84%	14 use daily 93%	9 use daily 67%	4 use daily 67%	0 use daily	1 use daily 33%	14 use daily 77%	5 use Daily 55%
Fluency	5 use daily 62%	2 use daily 67%	20 use daily 61%	9 use daily 60%	8 use daily 61%	4 use daily 67%	0 use daily	2 use daily 66%	12 use daily 70%	5 use Daily 55%
Reading Comprehension	6 use daily 75%	3 use daily 100%	26 use daily 83%	10 use daily 67%	13 use daily 100%	6 use daily 100%	0 use daily	2 use daily 66%	15 use daily 83%	5 use Daily 55%
Inquiry	5 use daily 62%	3 use daily 100%	20 use daily 61%	6 use daily 40%	6 use daily 46%	4 use daily 67%	0 use daily	2 use daily 66%	11 use daily 61%	5 use Daily 55%
Integrated Curriculum	5 use daily 62%	2 use daily 67%	23 use daily 72%	7 use daily 46%	11 use daily 84%	5 use daily 83%	0 use daily	1 use daily 33%	14 use daily 77%	4 use Daily 44%
Reflection	4 use use daily 50%	2 use use daily 67%	21 use use daily 66%	7 use use daily 46%	7 use use daily 54%	4 use use daily 67%	0 use use daily	2 use use daily 66%	11 use use daily 61%	4 use use Daily 44%

believes we are relying strictly on the scientific mode and demanding that programs presented to school districts be scientifically research based. Jaeger (2007) states that these scientifically based scripted programs are ignoring a more current philosophy that implies that literacy learning is not just processing a set list of cognitive skills presented by an instructor to a class, but rather a social and cultural process where the whole group of learners actively construct what they know together. Vygotsky stresses that learning to read is a social event and not just about skills and strategies (Bushmante, 2002). Teachers battling NCLB's institutional view believe that scripted programs abandon the personal touch and thinking processes in exchange for high numbers on a test (Pennington, 2007).

One group of researchers including Invenzzi, Landrm, Howell, and Warly (2005) are trying to work within the system by keeping it scientifically based but also incorporating classroom practice and reflection (Pennington, 2007). This view coincided with my beliefs about the respondents to my survey. They are utilizing the guidelines of NCLB. They are working within the box. At the same time, however, they are reaching any and all ways around and outside of the box to meet the needs of each young learner. They say that they read to the children, they read with the children and they have children read to each other and by themselves to model skills in all aspects of the reading process. Teachers question all through the reading process and encourage their students to discuss their personal thoughts and ideas about the stories they share. They provide time for children to just explore reading, independently and together as a group. Teachers also realize that story is easily and effectively integrated to other disciplines and aspects of their curriculum such as social studies and science. Accomplished teachers build on the

curiosity, imagination and creativity that are uniquely embedded into each child to help them build skills and stories of their own (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001).

Story's Value and NCLB's Effect On It

The last multiple choice group of questions I wanted to analyze further included OKECNBCTs' beliefs on the value of story and the impact NCLB had on that belief. To do this I again needed to divide the early childhood teachers and the elementary teachers. I next filtered the four distinct views about the importance of story and looked at the modifications, enhancements, and limitations under NCLB in regard to story. This included the responses to questions 9, 10, 11 and 12. Table II illustrates all the responses to this analysis. Strong beliefs were evident on the importance of story in both the early childhood and the elementary teachers. This is what I assumed it would be, and it was exciting to realize that my passion for story and storytelling is shared among my peers. I remained surprised, however that no matter which way I sorted and shifted the data, there is not much evidence of the impact of NCLB within the survey results. I realize that this may be just within the framework of story. Story can and is obviously being worked into the NCLB guidelines. What I did not expect is that in only one category, which was the six teachers who felt story was minimally important, there was a larger percentage than the 'NO' category. In this case four teachers believed that they had to make minimal modifications in their use of story due to NCLB. These results were clear and consistent in showing that within the group of OKECNBCTs, the value of story far outweighs the effects NCLB has on their teaching curriculum. They realize the importance of the accountability required within the law. They remain firm in their beliefs and practices to

help educate their students. A major way to accomplish this goal is through story and books.

Books allow young people to explore what they CAN do beyond what the test examines. In good books, no child has to be left behind. Because young people are the protagonists in their stories and because stories are written to give a sense of hope and inspiration for the possibilities life holds, children's literature challenges the prevailing idea that it is success on reading tests that will determine success in life (Chatton, 2007, p. 490).

The story is effective as a teaching tool because its language makes sense of the experience. We not only teach to help children gain knowledge, but understanding and appreciation as well (Ayers, 2008). "The magnetic quality of the story is the universal power to remember, entertain, teach, inspire, create and know" (Isbell, 2002, pg 26).

Table II: Comparing Views on the Value of Story and the Impact of NCLB

	Considerably Important		Somewhat Important		Minimally Important		NO Importance	
	EC (46)	EL (22)	EC (21)	EL (10)	EC (4)	EL (2)	EC (0)	EL (0)
NO MODIFICATIONS	19 41%	9 37%	9 43%	7 70%	1 25%	0	0	0
MINIMAL MODIFICATIONS	18 39%	6 25%	7 33%	2 20%	2 50%	2 100%	0	0
SOME MODIFICATIONS	8 17%	9 37%	5 23%	1 10%	0	0	0	0
CONSIDERABLE MODIFICATIONS	1 2%	0	0	0	1 25%	0	0	0
NO ENHANCEMENT	24 51%	11 48%	12 57%	5 50%	2 50%	1 50%	0	0
MINIMAL ENHANCEMENT	12 25%	5 22%	7 33%	3 30%	2 50%	1 50%	0	0
SOME ENHANCEMENT	10 21%	7 30%	2 10%	2 20%	0	0	0	0
CONSIDERABLE ENHANCEMENT	1 2%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NO LIMITATIONS	26 54%	11 46%	10 48%	7 70%	2 50%	2 100%	0	0
MINIMAL LIMITATIONS	16 33%	8 33%	8 38%	2 20%	1 25%	0	0	0
SOME LIMITATIONS	6 12%	5 21%	3 14%	0	1 10%	0	0	0
CONSIDERABLE LIMITATIONS	0	0	0	1 10%	1 25%	0	0	0

Open-ended Responses

The remaining four questions ask for personal views about story and storytelling which created a more complete picture for my research questions.

20. Please list and/or describe your views on specific benefits of utilizing story and storytelling for the young learner.

Eighty-five teachers responded to this question. Thirty-three chose to not answer it. The complete list of responses (Table III) follows this analysis. I printed off the list of responses to this open ended question and started to look for similarities within the list. While reviewing the list of benefits, I looked for themes to emerge. It was the professional literature that helped me discover the three themes to categorize the list of benefits. The benefits listed include construct or build, connect and create with story.

Through story, a basic human need of making meaning out of the world is enhanced. The mind **builds** stories that capture both the inner and outer life of that person and reacting to new or told stories can only build on these **connections** (Glaubman, Kashi, & Koresh, 2001). Storytelling is brain food for all domains in a child's development. The social and emotional domain is enhanced through the bonding and the community **building** aspects of storytelling. Storytelling **builds** knowledge, offers problem solving opportunities and stimulates higher order thinking and creativity which all dwell within the cognitive domain. Language and literacy are strengthened as children **build** vocabulary and listening comprehension (Cornett, 2007).

Story dictation and story enactment of a child's own story have strong potential as tools to enhance literature development. They complete the cycle which includes imagining, telling, writing, reading and dramatization. This cannot help but scaffold literacy development (Paley, 2007a). Dietz defines story as "an act of communication that provides people with packets of sensory material that allow the listener to quickly and easily internalize the material, understand it and **create** meaning from it" (Silverman, 2006, p. 2). Hutchins adds "a narrative illustrates complex **interconnections** between agents, ideas, events and even abstract concepts" (p. 2). One way teachers use stories is by helping make those **connections** for the students (Coles, 1989).

Nancy King describes stories not only as a gift, but also our human birthright. She believes they help us share our world as well as make sense of our world as they **create a connection** to all aspects and people involved.(King, 2007). The presentation of a story can be interpreted numerous ways by the listener or the audience and can be related personally to each listener's own world (Silverman, 2006). Cole adds "that there are many interpretations to a good story and it isn't a question of which one is right or wrong but of what you do with what you've read" (p. 47).

All stories are **constructions** which provide meaning to an event through a description of the experience. What is told and how it is told is a glimpse into what the storyteller believes (Carter, 1993). Robert Coles (1989) identifies "novels and stories as renderings of life, they cannot only keep us company, but

admonish us, point us in new directions or give us courage to stay a given course" (p.159).

A story in and of itself is interpreted by each reader (Yolen, 2000). The author has his/her own destination for the writing, but it is the reader who transforms the work into personal relevance. Stories can **create** what Howard Gechan refers to as a 'crystalizing' experience. By that he means that through the reading and listening and discussion of the story the children relate, make a **connection** and therefore grow in the learning process (Bushmante, 2002).

By reviewing the literature and the benefit responses, three key words seemed evident to me. When looking at the responses, all the benefits seemed to fit neatly into the categories of construct (build), connect and create. Story has the power to build skills in all areas of development. It offers connections between past and present, text and reader, and known and unknown to name a few. It also has the potential to help create understandings, imaginations and creativity. Table III includes many of the responses and illustrates the possibilities for story to construct, connect and create in the classroom.

Table III: OKECNBCTs' Views on the Benefits of Story

BUILDING BENEFITS	# *	CONNECTING BENEFITS	# *	CREATING BENEFITS	#*
Cognitive Domain	4	a text to text connection	1	imagination	1 3
Higher order thinking	5	a text to reader connection	1	creativity	6
Stretch understanding	4	a student to student connection	1	curiosity	1 3
Fluency and expression modeling	7	a student to teacher connection	1	a love of language	2
predicting	6	a connection to prior knowledge	4	Empathy	5
print awareness	2	also a connection w/in the curriculum	4	a sense of excitement	6
sequencing	4	the connection of reading to writing	7	a fostering of inquiry	1
Helps students grasp new concepts	3	Causes them to think and interact with other learners	1	A more meaningful experience	3
Motor Domain	5	Connection to real life experiences	9	Bring story to life	6
Drama	2	Connects student to community	1	A sense of story	5
Puppets	3	Children begin to Make their own connections	1		
Self-help Domain	3				
Deal with personal problems related to stories	3				
Language Domain	5				
Increase vocabulary	6				
Increase comprehension	3				
Build oral language	8				
Social Domain	8				
Encourages Participation	3				
Captivates interest	2				
Hooks the learner	1				

***Note: # represents the number of teachers who responded in that particular way**

21. Please list several teaching strategies you are currently using to include story and storytelling into your curriculum.

After looking at the benefits of story, I started digging deeper into how those benefits come to fruition. The strategies that emerged for me consisted of two specific categories and a combination of the two. The strategies fell into a teacher-driven category, a student-driven category and a combination of both. Teacher driven strategies are activities that a teacher leads in order to share a story. The most common response in that category was the read aloud. Student driven strategies are activities that the children take to their own destinations. Drama was the most popular strategy listed in that category. Along the same lines, within teacher and student driven strategies, story retellings and reader's theater were the most popular strategies listed. These activities occur as children and adults work together to bring the stories to life. All categories are equally effective and are strongly supported within the literature. Table IV provides the entire list of story-related strategy responses. I printed off the list of responses to this question from SurveyMonkey and categorized the responses in what I considered student or teacher driven strategies or both.

The National Association for the Education of Young children and the International Reading Association state "The single most important activity for building understanding and skills essential for reading success appears to be reading aloud to children" (Strasse & Sephocha, 2007, p. 219). Oral language or discussion or story sharing are not or should not be considered breaks from the

curriculum but as vital methods of reading inside the curriculum (Csak, 2002). When providing read alouds as one aspect of a reading curriculum, children's language awareness automatically expands. New vocabulary and sentence structure along with a sense of story structure can be applied to their own personal reading and writing pursuits and processes.

OKECNBCTs realize that comprehension is developed by varied strategies which should involve rich oral language and discussions about books and stories. These stories should be from all genres of both classical and contemporary children's literature to broaden a child's world and stimulate a child's thinking (Early Childhood National Board Standards, 2001). Mikkelsen (2000) encouraged verbal exchanges during and after the book in what he referred to as a 'collaborative talk.' The collaborative talk is what the adult and child share to make the "word fit the world" (p. 319). He feels we read to make sense of life.

Readers' Theater performances bring texts to life which is one way to encourage and develop storytellers (Olness, 2007). The benefits of Readers' Theater are that it integrates listening, speaking, reading and maybe even writing. The group aspect builds cooperation and socialization. The children take on and learn to act out the feelings of the characters, no memorization is required which can also serve as a confidence booster (Cornett, 2007). Strategies that accomplished teachers use to incorporate story into their classroom environment include specific scaffolding of children's ideas within story creations. They realize that story can help children uncover and explore their views about what they are studying about. The standard stresses the importance of dramatic play as

“spontaneous pretending, dramatization of their own and other people’s stories, reenactment of literature- as an important way to support reading, writing, viewing listening, speaking, and visually representing skills” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001, p. 32). Teachers need to look for appropriate and captivating books that are easily transferred to drama (Olness, 2007). The classroom has all the elements of theater (Paley, 2007b). Paley describes the sharing of a drama or make-believe with a child as a tiny miracle, as both parties connect and step into a magical scene. Virginia Wolf adds to this connection by describing a shared drama as reaching “the business of intimacy” (Paley, 2007, p.151).

Table IV: Story-related Strategies

Teacher-driven Strategies	#*	Teacher & Student Driven Strategies	#*	Student-driven Strategies	#*
Story walk	2	Read together	3	Drama and plays	17
Introduce & reinforce social studies, science & classroom community	10	Readers' theater	10	Art responses to story-drawing the characters or painting the scenes etc.	6
Reinforce math & history and the core curriculum	4	Make individual & class books	3	Partner reading w/decodable books they take home	2
4 square instruction	3	Story retelling	22	Puppet creations & play	9
Picture Books	1	Author studies	3	Role playing	3
Read alouds	15	Finger plays and poetry	2	Story necklaces	1
Chapter books	4	Flannel board retelling	8	Author's chair	3
Storytelling	4	'What if' story writing	1	DEAR time	2
Story mapping	2	Extend stories	2	Show and Tell times	
Graphic organizers	2	Tell personal stories	2	Journal writing	11
Cause & effect questions	1	"Me" bags to tell stories	1	Write plays and scripts	2
Webbing & char. traits	3	Round robin stories	2	Story rewrite w/new ending	3
Picture walks	2	Choral reading	4	Project writing	2
Prediction discussions	5	Shared reading	4	Book reports	1
Retelling cards	3	Rereading	3	Diorama	1
Story elements presentations	6	Group story writing	2	Create own stories and fables	1
Scissors & paper to tell a story	1	CD's and Smartboard activities	7	Props in center time	5
Big Books	2	Creative writing	2	Making a story their own	1
Authentic literature with activities to take home and retell		Inquiry- let the kids decide what they want to learn and find books in library	1	Students write, publish and share their stories with a Karaoke microphone	1
Fables and classic literature reading	2	Creative movements	2	Small group reading presentations to whole group	3
Review questions	3	Journal sharing	2	Present plays to other classes	1
Read at rest time and imagination takes over	1	Interactive writing w/younger students	1	Dress up clothes and costumes (child created too)	5
Build interest through music	3	Small group skill- fluency-comprehension practice	3	Character journals-	1
Guest readers (or teacher) who come dressed in character	3	Reading at nursing home-book buddies			
Real life stories to promote writer's workshop	2	Different versions of mother goose & other stories & then make up their own stories			
Storytelling apron	1	Small group guided rdg.	1		
Story starters	1	Flip books & other 3D foldables	1		
Audio/ visual presentations	2	Memory stretchers	1		

***Note: # represents the number of teachers who responded in that particular way**

22. The process of National Board Certification encourages you to broaden your teaching approaches as well as try new strategies to motivate learners. Please list any approaches or strategies, if any, involving story and storytelling that emerged during the certification process that you are no longer using in your classroom.

Only seventy of the teachers completed this question. Forty-eight of the respondents chose not to respond. Out of seventy responses, forty-nine of the teachers stated that they have not stopped using any of the strategies they began using during the National Board Certification process. One teacher commented that she used even more story-related strategies due to her school's adoption of Literacy First. The remaining twenty-one comments about strategies no longer being used are listed in Table V. An interesting observation about the list is that the first seven responses listed have to do with drama. It seems from these small results that when strategies are dropped, drama is one of the hardest hit.

The list is a small list compared to all the other questions. It is encouraging that the majority of teachers have not stopped utilizing effective teaching strategies in regard to story. On the other hand, questions remain as to why twenty-one of the respondents have felt the need to drop story related strategies. It is possible that even though NCLB may not be the cause, there may be either district or PASS requirements that are limiting some of these OKECNBCTs.

Table V: Strategies no longer being used in the classroom

1. Puppets, and story briefs.
2. I did classroom plays and the study of Native American cultures.
3. We still do a few plays as read alouds or readers theater but not so involved to make the puppets and backdrops, etc
4. Reader's workshop, plays, reader's theater
5. Students played with puppets and often wrote their own little plays. Time constraints have caused some of this to be eliminated along with having a class who gets out of control without a lot of structure
6. During my NBCT process, my class worked on a play , "The Country Mouse and the City Mouse." We wrote the play, designed and painted the sets, and read/learned the lines. We presented the play to parents and other classes. Now there is no way I would have time to do this.
7. During NB process, students used multiple modalities to reenact stories: musical instruments, blocks, art, group collaboration I don't do as much now because of our 2.5 hours per day
8. Giving the child more time to share what they know and what they have learned.
9. Author's chair
10. Guided reading
11. Keeping individual baskets of books students that included picture books, predictable books, higher level books and books of high interest to the child.
12. Round robin reading , whole group instruction
13. I was sending home story bits to have students retell a story to parents. Star readers were reading to small groups of students each day.
14. I use and discard and re-use as the year dictates. Every class is different and some years the ideas I have used just don't fit the class.
15. Parent volunteers reading in the classroom
16. During the National Board process I found more time for individual instruction and individual leveled books for students to take home
17. I was teaching pre-k when I earned my certification and am now teaching 2nd. I am finding that many of the strategies used with the younger students can be adapted for 2nd. I am able to add a more sophisticated writing component to their work. I am constantly reflecting back on the process and how I can connect my early childhood beliefs to this 2nd grade classroom. It seems that NCLB (test scores) drive the district to provide and mandate procedures that are not always developmentally appropriate. Fortunately, our district supports the notion that our resources (basals) are just that- resources to be used according to our professional decision making in the best interest of student achievement
18. I learned to listen to my students & allow them time to address any issue that was on their mind. I find myself now saying OK, we'll talk about that later we, must get back to the lesson now. I'm so pressed to teach the total curriculum that I find that I don't have the necessary time for each child.
19. Collaborating about social studies- my children discussed wants and needs around Christmas time. They cut out pictures of items they wanted and items they needed to live. In small groups they talked, planned and finished a large collage about wants and needs. They decided at the end of our project that we should bring new things (toys) and things kids might need for Christmas and we donated items for the homeless shelter
20. I still use peer tutoring when needed but I've change to a book buddy type format with older students.
21. I continue to broaden and modify the strategies I use. The things I learn and do are molded to fit that particular year's group. i.e. puppets have been very successful this year but were modified and eventually dropped last year because others things kept the students interest better.

23. Please elaborate on one personal example, whether it was a positive or negative experience, involving story and storytelling within your classroom.

Seventy-eight teachers responded to this question. It was extremely interesting for me to note that twenty-three of the responses were somehow related to drama or acting. These teachers found drama to have a strong impact on their students and held an extremely important place in their teaching memory. It also is interesting to note that drama was one of the first strategies to be eliminated in busy schedules in the previous question. The literature supports the strong influence that drama can provide for young children.

Only three of the respondents related a somewhat negative experience in regard to story. These comments discuss misinterpretations and changes with stories and how a specific story fits into the reading program. The remaining responses share personal experiences where children made gains, developed a deeper understanding and made important connections. Table VI shows several of the drama related personal experiences, the negative responses and a sample of the other various experiences shared by the respondents. The entire list of experiences can be found in Appendix J.

I was excited about the responses to this question, especially the strong connection with drama. What was troubling to me is that 34 chose not to respond. Again I do not have the answers to why they did not respond. Possibilities could include no memorable experiences with story, lack of a desire to finish the survey or perhaps not wanting to put on paper what they were actually feeling. I will not ever know the real reasons and can only guess as to the reasons. The positive responses, however can offer a source of showing the need and value of story within the early childhood classroom.

Table VI: Sample of Personal Experiences

DRAMA RELATED PERSONAL EXPERIENCES
Story of Three Little Pigs. Retold the story using music/dance to act out story. Children loved it. They ask to do it again and again.
Students enjoyed doing reader theaters, acting out characters in the story, changing story endings, and demonstrating through drawing different scenes for their stories.
Reader's Theater has been positive. I often have students who are very low readers who have been able to shine through Reader's Theater.
As a group, we retell the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears by acting it out with props, such as spoons/bowls, chairs, etc. We do this several times so all children can participate.
I have a "classroom friend" volunteer who for 8 years has come to my room once a week. She is very involved in our Community Theatre and is very dramatic in her readings. The students absolutely adore her so of course our weekly activities always center around literature. Mainly we do play acting of stories, singing, and lots of poetry.
We recently acted out Barn Dance by Bill Martin, Jr. The children commented on the rhythm and rhyme of the words. Also, I heard, "This is fun!" (Love of literature!) Students were focused on the story sequence as the characters approached the barn.
NEGATIVE RESPONSES
I read a story that I thought was within the same topic area. I did not pre read the story and it was way off.
I was asked if the story I was telling was in our reading curriculum
Nursery Rhymes - Different versions are sometimes confusing to the early learners. They want it told the way their parent tells it. I have heard them say, " I didn't tell it right".
OTHER EXAMPLES
Almost daily, when I am reading aloud (a chapter book which is a couple of levels above the reading level of my highest reader), my students are making text-to-self and text-to-text connections, both of which enhance 'meaning making' and strengthen comprehension.
I taught the children how to give a brief sentence of two when telling the story. The other students would then have to ask questions. This would peak interest before the student would continue on with the story.
Just recently, we talked about history as being a story about what happened. Then we started telling our own personal histories. It was a very rich discussion that helped my first graders see a reason for history.
I told an embarrassing moment story and then had the students tell one. Then we wrote stories about them. They were able to all pull stories from prier knowledge of past experiences and create good stories. It was a good sharing experience. And very informative.
I use storytelling or a good story when I want to redirect the students.
I often tell stories as fables to teach the children lessons. Many times the stories are to teach the importance of why we do things a certain way or procedure we need to follow. It often provides examples of consequences when we need them.
I used story necklaces with my class. My students loved retelling their stories to friends and families with their necklaces. I then presented the idea at a workshop and many teachers had never used story necklaces and were excited to learn a new strategy.
I did my masters studies on the benefits of reading orally to my students. It showed a significance increase in their vocabulary and reading skills. I try to read to my students as often as possible!

Comparing Programs, Strategies and Benefits

To determine how the teachers each felt, I needed to browse the individual responses. I brought up each of the respondents individually in SurveyMonkey and then copied and pasted the answers to each of these three questions. It did not take long for four different categories to emerge from this data. The categories include the non-respondents, those concerned with NCLB, matter of fact respondents and the enthusiastic respondents.

Nonrespondents

I did not include this group as a category at first since there was no data to analyze. After labeling the other categories, however, I decided that this was an important aspect of my survey. Out of the 118 respondents, 85 responded to these questions and 33 (28%) chose not to respond. I cannot say for sure why those 33 people did not respond to this question, but I do have several opinions. So, my first opinion is that the respondents did not mind clicking on an answer to a survey, but did not want to invest the time and added effort to answer. This would have forced them to really think and discuss their views on benefits and strategies of story and storytelling. The other option, in my opinion, is that this group may be a little intimidated under the NCLB framework. Perhaps they did not want to say anything negative. Perhaps they were somewhat discouraged about their inability to use story in their classroom and did not want to discuss it. Another option is that the respondents did not know enough about the NCLB framework to share their views with me.

Concerns with NCLB

This is the group of respondents I thought would be the largest when I began this project. I assumed that the majority of teachers would feel pressure and constraints in their curriculum due to the law. Actually in response to these questions, only five teachers (5%) mentioned NCLB or time restraints. Some of these comments included:

Before NCLB, I was free to use any materials that I choose. Now the district and state choose the time I get to spend on reading stories and storytelling. (OKECNBCT)

I wish I had more time in the classroom for story time, but with all of our curriculum requirements, it's not always possible. (OKECNBCT)

We use 'Reading Street' by Scotts Foresman. We use it daily, as it is set up in the Teacher's Edition. Our administrator has put strict guidelines on our teaching since NCLB. (OKECNBCT)

We completed a 5 year grant with Reading First (Thank goodness!) It is quite difficult to have the Reading First mentality of 'fidelity to the core' (which I disagree with anyway) The literature choices in the manual are often poor and have no relativity or connections to the children (who reads about bugs in January in OK!). (OKECNBCT)

I wish I had more time in the day. They need to be read many stories a day and I just don't have the time for as many as necessary with everything else I have to teach. (OKECNBCT)

I have thought about the reasons for such a small number and again there are several options. One that has seemed to emerge throughout the analysis is the autonomy

within the group of respondents. Castle (2006) defines autonomy as the “ability to make intellectual and moral decisions by considering various perspectives” (p.1096). Decisions in educational approaches are then made which serve the needs of all. Yes, NCLB is alive and well in the classrooms, but the focus is on learning not restraint. These teachers are able to apply their practices effectively in all types of situations. Another result that I had not anticipated was the low number of teachers who taught in Reading First schools. The other teachers may not feel the pressure teachers within a Reading First school may feel. The last option I considered was the large number of teachers who worked in the early childhood classroom. Again the pressures may be more apparent within classrooms at the elementary level.

Matter of Fact Responses

This group of respondents numbered about thirty (24%) or so. These responses consisted of clear cut comments involving specific reading programs and then uses of story. There did not seem to be a connection between the reading programs and the strategies within this group. I wondered if like with the nonrespondents, this group did not really want to share doubts and concerns about their curriculum. There is evidence that story is being used in these classrooms. The strategies and benefits are specific and clear. What seems missing to me with this group is personal connection and passion. There seems to be more to the answer than is stated in the response. Some of the comments included items like:

We use Literacy First for assessments but also use Scott Foresman.

(OKECNBCT)

When reading stories the children are introduced to new vocabulary.

(OKECNBCT)

I read a chapter book to the class daily. I also read picture books two to three times a week. (OKECNBCT)

We use parts of Literacy First, Reading First, a reading program, Reading Street, and have a reading specialist for K & 1st. (OKECNBCT)

Learner is completely engaged with storytelling. It teaches character, setting, beginning, middle, and end, etc with stories. (OKECNBCT)

We use Scott Foresman, Earobics and Compass Learning as resources as well as Literacy First literacy activities. (OKECNBCT)

I think it helps children learn by doing hands on activities. (OKECNBCT)

Story retelling, reader's theater, and author's chair are strategies. (OKECNBCT)

Enthusiastic Responses

This group made up over half (50%) of the responses. When looking at them it was specific words that illustrated the excitement. Vocabulary used such as 'supplementing', 'enriching', 'enthusiastic', 'love', 'animation', 'combination of strategies', 'inquiry', 'weaved and integrated', 'thematic', 'engaged', 'compliments' 'reinforces' and 'motivators' were used to show the connections between story and the various reading programs being used. These responses illustrated what I see as an autonomous nature of OKECNBCTs. Castle (2006) describes this nature as an understanding of not only *what* to teach but *why* it needs to be taught. Some of my favorite responses that really illuminated this quality include:

I believe it is very beneficial. In fact, I am a teacher who taught kindergarten

for 6 years and has now moved to 2nd. We decided that we would redo the 2nd grade curriculum (without permission from our district, SHHH!) to incorporate more trade books and activities that would engage the students. They get bored with the basal [sic] readers and activities from our reading curriculum. We decided we would use the vocabulary and spelling and try to go another way with the actual materials the students use. (OKECNBCT)

My classroom houses 20 second graders. We use authentic literature to read, analyze, speak and write about stories. We practice reading individually, in small groups and in large groups. We are an Oklahoma A+ school that is committed to teaching with and through the arts. Literacy is enriched with drama, movement, visual art and music. Multiple Intelligences are considered as lessons are created. This is the foundation of differentiation, allowing all students to be successful and challenged. Stories engage the interest of children. They can get excited about recreating, extending or rewriting a story. They are building more complex thinking skills which they will need as 21st century citizens who will be required to think creatively and solve problems that we are not even aware of at this time. (OKECNBCT)

In regard to story, some of the teacher's comments were: "I don't know how to NOT use it. I have a wonderful principal who 'gets' it. (OKECNBCT)
Story is everything. (OKECNBCT)

We use stories to connect things we know & apply new concepts.
(OKECNBCT)

Thematic Results

Since I had incorporated my personal experiences and professional literature into the analysis of the specific survey questions, I assumed that my research was complete for this study. Studying the results, however, kept me questioning, analyzing and looking for more connections. Results did show that story was considered very valuable by the respondents. The teachers, for the most part, made no modifications, experienced no enhancements and felt no limitations from NCLB in regard to story. Comments did show the teachers needed or wanted more time to incorporate story, as well as play, in the classroom. Drama was a key element in the responses, both positively and negatively. Drama was listed more frequently than any other student driven strategy within the survey. It was also listed most frequently by the few respondents who have stopped using some strategies since the certification process. Drama was also the most talked about story-related memory listed. There was an abundance of data in regard to story and storytelling, but I realized what I was focusing on was the teachers themselves.

Finally, after a great deal of deliberation and further analysis, themes became evident which seemed to describe the OKECNBCTs. Through my analysis which combined my experiences, the professional literature and the survey results I gained a much deeper understanding of OKECNBCTs. This understanding is found in the following six themes depicting OKECNBCTs:

- 1) OKECNBCTs seem to see the whole picture.
- 2) OKECNBCTs seem to be autonomous teachers.

- 3) OKECNBCTs can work with ‘the box’.
- 4) OKECNBCTs seem to know the importance of story.
- 5) Drama plays a key role in story and storytelling strategies.
- 6) Time will always be an issue for OKECNBCTs.

Theme 1: OKECNBCTs seem to see the whole picture.

The respondents believed that story and storytelling play an integral part in the education of young children. As with Vivian Paley’s classroom, story is not seen as a fun little ‘add on’ activity, but a fundamental part of the curriculum. Out of the 118 total respondents, 73 (62%) found the value of story to be considerably important. The number of respondents who found it somewhat important was 38 (32.5%). This left only a very few who did not see the real value of story and storytelling within the curriculum. In combination with that, over 85% of all the respondents stated they utilized each Reading First Strategy (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, reading comprehension) and all three NBPTS approaches (inquiry, curriculum integration and reflection) at least on a weekly basis. This to me is a very high percentage and offers strong evidence of how OKECNBCTs are incorporating teaching strategies from different fields of thought to meet the needs of the young learners they teach. One respondent illustrated this theme with the following:

Story is everything. We use stories to connect things we know and apply new concepts. Students develop a love for learning with the enjoyment of being read to/ with or to others. It is a way for children to get attention from older reading buddies, parents and teachers. They can use creativity and high order thinking skills by predicting, empathizing with characters and class discussion

about main events. Children are sequencing, previewing, predicting, summarizing, etc. when reading stories. They are finding patterns and hearing think aloud strategies for reading. (OKECNBCT)

Theme 2: OKECNBCTs seem to be autonomous teachers striving to promote autonomy in their students.

Rodgers and Long (2002) define autonomy as:

using one's own understanding in relation to one's beliefs and values to search for an appropriate course of action. Autonomous actions are those that have been freely chosen, willingly self-regulated and for which one accepts full responsibility. It is built on a foundation of respect for self and others. (p. 310)

Both of these authors work with preservice early childhood teachers. Their goals for themselves and their students are shared with the respondents to my survey. Few would argue the beliefs and philosophies of Developmentally Appropriate Practice. This is how experts in the field of education have demonstrated how young children learn. What is not always stressed, however, is the 'why' of it all for each individual instructor. Each teacher needs to internalize and develop their own philosophies based on sound research and their own experiences. They need to question all that is discussed. This will then promote not only autonomous instructors but also autonomous learners.

The use of story and storytelling is considered a sound developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The respondents to my survey work in all different types of classrooms with all different types of responsibilities and

requirements. They have internalized story's value and incorporated it into their specific curriculum. One teacher's comments fit neatly into this theme:

The requirements of NCLB affect my classroom in a subtle way. I don't allow them to control my pedagogical choices except as I see them fitting in to what I know to be sound teaching practice. However, my school does use a basal reader and I see effects of NCLB in that. Not all of that is bad, but if it kept me from using sound teaching practices it would be a problem. I continue to allocate my time for active involvement of students in relevant storytelling and reading experiences. (OKECNBCT)

When looking at the responses to the survey, the numbers again show and promote the idea of autonomous instructors. In regard to NCLB, 84 (74%) made no modifications in their use of story because of it. NCLB did not enhance nor limit 92 (81%) of the teachers use of story in the curriculum. Still, as was shown in the previous theme, the teachers are covering all the reading requirements and still managing to make sure story plays a big role. Another example of autonomy was shown to me in the list of reading programs being used. Only 11 (10%) of the 108 respondents who described their reading program did so with just a name of a program. The rest may have said they used Scott Foresman etc. but then added other programs and practices that they used to supplement the program. This combination of programs and strategies illustrate how OKECNBCTs develop what they believe to be sound appropriate practice for their students.

Theme 3: OKECNBCTs can work with ‘the box’.

NCLB expects certain results from teachers. This sense of accountability has been perceived as negative by many educators (Anderson, 2009). Many teachers claim that it is the accountability requirements that have narrowed the curriculum. They feel NCLB has stifled their teaching, leaving little time for sound practice to be utilized. New research, (Anderson, 2009) however is refuting that claim. What this study has shown, unfortunately, is that little has changed over the last century in most classrooms. There have been minimal changes in regard to strategies and instructional time. English/ Language Arts is still addressed for about 33% of the day. Math was and is being studied about 17% of the day. There has been little change in time on science and social studies which are focused on approximately 5% of the day. These numbers have not changed since NCLB, but have remained relatively constant. In the same way, the predominant teaching method of lecture and memorization is still being seen in 90% of classrooms. Unfortunately again, those statistics were relatively the same in a study in 1912 (Anderson, 2009).

Anderson (2009) suggests teachers stop using accountability as an excuse in their teaching practices. “Teachers must stop hiding behind the specter of accountability and take responsibility for doing what’s best for their students” (p. 417). The connection for me is clear from the results of my survey. The National Board has certain standards that it expects its applicants to meet. This too provides a framework of accountability. The OKECNBCTs do not fear a negative impact of NCLB because they are working within that framework without a fear of accountability. They see the value of accountability and have faith in their own practices to satisfy that requirement as well as the needs of each

student. 95 of the 115 respondents who responded to this question felt that they have at least some knowledge about literacy requirements of NCLB. Although this number stays about the same (94) how they feel about their own reading program under NCLB, the number of those who feel they have considerable knowledge jumps from 22 to 46 respondents. These teachers, it seems to me, are learning more about what is important and adapting it to their own personal reading program. Another response that shows the ‘inside and outside of the box’ theme is the connections seen between NCLB and NBPTS. Sixty-four (55%) of the respondents think that there is at least some similarity between the two ways of thinking. This is illustrated in the following comments:

My classroom houses 20 second graders. We use authentic literature to read, analyze, speak and write about stories. We practice reading individually, in small groups and in large groups. We are an Oklahoma A+ school that is committed to teaching with and through the arts. Literacy is enriched with drama, movement, visual art and music. Multiple Intelligences are considered as lessons are created. This is the foundation of differentiation, allowing all students to be successful and challenged. (OKECNBCT)

Going through the National Board certification process forces you to dig into your practices more deeply, to think outside the box. It emphasizes individualization, authenticity, equity, and making sure instruction fits into a larger framework of theory and goals. These are all things that we know are important but that can get lost in the daily grind. (Maki Mai, n.d.)

Theme 4: OKECNBCTs seem to know the importance of story and incorporate it successfully in the curriculum mandated.

There is certainly no one right way to incorporate story into the curriculum. This was made extremely clear to me by the long list of story strategies shared in my survey. Seventy responded to the strategies question and came up with 84 groups of teacher and student driven strategies. What was especially interesting for me was that the total number of responses of 265 strategies from 70 respondents. Story read alouds, retellings, journals and drama were some of the most popular strategies listed. The popularity of those strategies coincides with the professional literature and my classroom as well. What is important to me is that with each strategy used, some clear benefit of the story is evident. One teacher offers a clear explanation:

The more I can connect the theme or main idea for whatever concept I am teaching to the child's prior knowledge or real work experiences the more likely the child will make the connection and comprehend. Story and storytelling is the means to that end. (OKECNBCT)

Theme 5: Drama plays a key role in story and storytelling strategies.

I can definitely relate to the responses and results my survey generated about drama. I love working with drama with my students. Every year we act out *The Little Red Hen*, the *Three Pigs*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *The Gingerbread Man* and *On Monday When It Rained* as well as *The Mitten*. These stories are definite and we always add a few more that become each classes' favorites. When I look back over my years of teaching, I recall specific groups of children and how they performed a certain story. We watch old videos that refresh our memories on the

children we worked with and the fun we had with drama. When reviewing the survey, 23 (29%) of the 78 respondents listed some sort of drama activity as their favorite activity. When looking at the list of strategies, drama was listed seventeen times. If you add the readers theater, dress up and costumes, puppets, and role play, the number of drama related strategies increase to 48 (18%) out of the 265 total number.

At the same time, there are days when I relate to the respondents who no longer use the drama strategy in their classrooms. Seven (33%) respondents out of twenty-one who said that they have dropped some strategies since becoming certified named drama as the strategy. Drama does take time. I sometimes cringe when I realize we need to act out a story 2 or 3 times so everyone can participate (especially when I have to pick kids up and fly them through the air because they are the owl in *The Mitten*). They take time and then we might not have time to do something else before lunch etc . But, drama is a fabulous way to make connections and that realization always prevails in my classroom. Evidence of the power of drama is seen in the following responses:

During the National Board process I was writing about one of my students who rarely spoke. When we acted out "The Three Bears," she was Goldilocks. She did repeat the lines after I said them, which was a major accomplishment for her. The "fun" of acting out the story seemed to help her relax and use her verbal skills. (OKECNBCT)

After reading the Three Billy Goats Gruff, I had the children act out the story by taking turns being the characters. We used the classroom table and chairs as the bridge. My student's that hardly ever get involved couldn't wait to stomp across the bridge and repeat the lines from the story. My quietest student was

very excited to be the Troll under the bridge. Then when we drew in our daily story journals, I had most of my class draw a bridge with a Troll and three Billy goats. Each one of them could retell this story with ease. (OKECNBCT)

At the beginning of the year, we studied fables. In collaboration with our Media Specialist (also a NBCT), we read and acted out favorite fables. Children worked cooperatively with a group, planning and sharing their fables. They had criteria to meet. Their story must include the announcement of the title, acting it out had to include a beginning, middle and end and they had to share the moral at the end. We also include criteria and vocabulary from the National Standards for the Arts- specifically drama standards. They could use any art materials needed to create their props and costumes. Children were given a weighted checklist as their assessment. Another experience was to create a shadow puppet show for another fable. This was a project the media specialist worked on with small groups. They were required to include the setting, characters and story. They were given a rubric before they began. They shared their shadow puppet show and the media specialist recorded their performance. At another time, they viewed their video, reflected on their work and assessed themselves using their rubric. By then, the students had a firm grasp of character, setting, problem, solution, beginning-middle-end, and the characteristics of fables. The next step was for students to write their own fable. We used our classroom agreements (which the students created) as the "moral" of our

fables. Children chose the agreement they wanted to use and animals from one habitat (a little science lesson integrated into our unit). Their story needed the other elements mentioned above as well. To create their stories, we moved slowly through the writing process. I truly feel confident that my students understand story structure and the characteristics of the genre of fables.

(OKECNBCT)

This final example provides clear evidence of how drama can work effectively within the standards and/or pass objective framework. The input from NCLB, NBPTS and story through drama strategies can positively impact student learning.

Theme 6: Time will always be an issue for OKECNBCTs

I had assumed time would be a theme that dominated my responses. I expected to hear over and over again about the NCLB requirements that hindered use of story and storytelling. This is not what the data showed. Time was mentioned, but it was more in the lines of there is just not enough time in the day to do all the teachers want to do. The theme of time emerged out of the analysis of the survey. Most teachers voiced the opinion that they would like to offer more story time and more playtime throughout the day. Time was not discussed negatively very often at all. The following teachers do not really say why, they just would like more time:

I wish I had more time in the day. They need to be read many stories a day and I just don't have the time for as many as necessary with everything else I have to teach. (OKECNBCT)

During NB process, students used multiple modalities to reenact stories:

musical instruments, blocks, art, group collaboration ...I don't do as much now because of our 2.5 hours per day (OKECNBCT).

It would be interesting to see the responses of the teachers before NCLB. Was there still a problem of not accomplishing all that was in the lesson plans? I would like to hope that time is a factor because the children spent too much time discussing the plot of a story or wondering why the character acted the way he/she did.... Could this be a reason?

Summary of Findings

The responses to the twenty-three questions generated a great deal of information. First and foremost, the responses offer significant data that OKECNBCTs are a unique group of teachers utilizing numerous teaching approaches. The respondents, for the most part, value the use of story and storytelling and invest a good deal of time with it during their school days. Through more extensive analysis, descriptions of the OKECNBCTs became evident. These descriptions are strong teaching characteristics that portray the respondents of my survey.

The teaching strategies and programs these teachers use are not hindered by NCLB. The results do not suggest that the teaching approaches are enhanced by NCLB either. The results do show that the majority of these teachers are promoting and utilizing story and storytelling as a strong teaching tool. Although most respondents would like more time devoted to story and play throughout the day, there was little blame placed on NCLB.

Drama emerged as an important theme within story and storytelling. Only story retelling was listed more frequently as teaching strategy in the teachers responses. It was also viewed as a top story experience in a quarter of all the respondents. Interestingly, it

was also listed as the most common element to be eliminated in these teachers' teaching experience. Drama's effectiveness and drawbacks warrant further discussion and consideration.

The professional literature provides a good deal for support for the use of drama's effectiveness within the classroom. OKECNBCTs realize the importance of drama in the curriculum. One standard stresses the importance of dramatic play as "spontaneous pretending, dramatization of their own and other people's stories, reenactment of literature- as an important way to support reading, writing, viewing listening, speaking, and visually representing skills" (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001, p. 32). Both storytelling and drama give life to learning. They both rely on conflict to develop and both take on roles to create the new life. Storytelling naturally integrates the arts and children's oral storytelling gives them an opportunity to think within the frames and sequence of a tale (Cornett, 2007).

Drama is a safe place for children to experience different roles. Teachers find drama a motivating way to build skills in all subjects. It increases motivation, concentration and focus and stretches perspective, builds speaking, listening and non-verbal communication. Drama requires involvement which enhances interest which yields learning (Whaley, 2002; Rothman, 2006). As the research stated, "Drama is life with the dull bits cut out (Cornett, 2007, pg. 216). It engages learners and can help with real life problem solving. Drama is 'life', it is as old as 'life', and has been involved in the schools since Dewey encouraged learning by doing.

Patricia Cooper (2005) follows Paley's ideas of an early childhood format with her storytelling curriculum. The drama section of the storytelling curriculum is a powerful

motivator for future reading. The psychomotor aspect of development is often overlooked in a curriculum and linking dialogue, description and action helps children internalize and create pictures in their minds. Gayle Ross (Hussey-White, 2006), feels people learn best through entertainment and laughter and through the interactive format of story which engages the head, heart, and spirit simultaneously then education takes place. Again, as the imagination is stimulated, learning can take place in a multitude of ways.

Time may be the main reason for not using drama in the classroom as well.

Teachers realize that drama does require a good deal of time to work effectively with the children. The reason may not be NCLB or PASS objectives, but maybe just not enough time in the day to get everything done that a dedicated teacher needs to get done.

Unfortunately, when running out of time, many will choose activities that do not require so much effort to complete. I am hoping that the teachers who have had to drop some of their drama activities will reconsider when they reflect on some of their favorite teaching moments.

The percentages throughout the survey results show that these teachers value the use of story and storytelling in their curriculum. Combining the professional literature and personal experience strengthens that stance. The analysis provides qualitative evidence of story and storytelling's worth in the early childhood educational environment.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand how, under the guidelines of NCLB, the OKECNBCTs utilize story and storytelling within their own individual classrooms. Through analysis of the data, the primary finding appears to be that this group of teachers states that they do not feel limited by NCLB. Within their own particular classrooms they believe NCLB has had minimal impact on their use of story, according to the Likert scale portion of the survey. The survey consists of separate types of data, with the multiple choice section providing numbers and percentages for basic responses. The data in this section show limited information on the impact of NCLB within this group. The open-ended section, however, offers opportunities for a more personal response from the OKECNBCTs. Within this section my analysis led me to a deeper way of looking at this group of instructors and the way NCLB affects their teaching decisions.

My first research questions asked the views of OKECNBCTs teachers in regard to story and storytelling. The views of these teachers are shown through the numbers and respondents' voices within the responses. High percentages are shown in the results of the amount of value placed on story in the classroom. Primarily positive comments enhance the views shown in the numbers. The group consensus seems to be placing a considerable value of story within their classrooms.

The second research question dealt with what the OKECNBCTs considered to be the benefits of story. Understanding the benefits of story is crucial to promote learning through this process. Through my interpretation of the open-ended data I was able to categorize benefits of story into construct, connect and create. Stories build skills. Stories connect and create learning. My next research question involved the strategies OKECNBCTs use to incorporate story into their classrooms. The data from the open-ended survey responses in my study generated an extensive list of specific strategies this group of teachers is utilizing. Categorizing and justifying strategies as teacher and/or student driven strategies promote variety in storytelling approaches. This serves as a reminder that all children learn differently and meeting learning needs through a variety of approaches enhances learning.

Analysis of my fourth research question showed minimal comparisons between the NCLB guidelines and NBPTS position regarding story and storytelling. On its face, the data did not show connections between NCLB and NBPTS and there does not seem to be a clear link between the two. One-fourth of the respondents had never even considered a comparison, even though all study participants by definition are National Board Certified, meaning they are quite familiar with NBPTS. However, NCLB and NBPTS are two completely different systems and have a different focus, so this lack of connection may be understandable. NCLB deals with mandates and standards and NBPTS promotes teachers meeting individual students' needs. They come from different perspectives, but both claim to be framed with the intention of promoting learning in young children. What further analysis of the data provides is an understanding that, at least in response to this survey, these OKECNBCTs may not be looking at big-picture

views of their own teaching such as examining connections between NCLB and NBPTS. This is troubling, especially in view of the fact that NBPTS specifically promotes reflective teaching.

The final question relates back to the purpose, and results show that respondents feel NCLB has not influenced the use of story, either positively or negatively, in this group's classrooms. Interpretation within all three data sources—the survey, the literature, and my own experiences—as to reasons for this apparent minimal impact from NCLB in regard to story in the respondents' classrooms yielded several themes serving to describe OKECNBCTs in relation to NCLB. Though the Likert scale portion of the survey indicates little effect of NCLB, the open-ended question responses and the other two data sources provide a more complex, if discrepant, picture of teachers who are indeed choosing what to include and what to exclude in their teaching day. Weaving those three data sources together offers rich descriptions illustrating how OKECNBCTS promote the use of story within their classrooms, even under the almost unconscious influence of the federal and state mandates included under the NCLB umbrella.

Each element in this study provides a critical piece in the purpose. No Child Left Behind is considered by politicians to have the answers for teaching all children. This study shows that this group of instructors, when asked directly, reports not being threatened or intimidated or impacted by the law to any real extent within their teaching. This is not surprising, considering that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards celebrates the teacher as the critical piece in the classroom; his/her gaining expertise is vital in promoting effective learning. Though my study does not address how The OKECNBCTs integrate NBPTS in their classrooms, one assumption of this study is

that because they are board certified, they do indeed know and practice the beliefs of NBPTS. A particularly salient point beyond my research questions is that only six of my respondents teach in Reading First schools which are defined as working with students of poverty. Though there had been anecdotal evidence that NBCTs tend to teach in more affluent schools, this study demonstrates that to be the case, at least regarding OKECNBCTs.

The themes depicting the OKECNBCTs came from a continuous analysis of the survey data, the professional literature and my experiences in the classroom. Through an interpretivist lens, the data analysis constructed thoughts and beliefs that provided understanding as well as ongoing questions about the use of story and storytelling within this group of participants regarding NCLB and their particular status as Oklahoma early childhood teachers who are nationally board certified.

Emergent Themes

The combination of the three data sources provided six overlapping themes depicting the OKECNBCTs. The list of these themes includes:

- 3) OKECNBCTs seem to see the whole picture.
- 4) OKECNBCTs seem to be autonomous teachers.
- 3) OKECNBCTs can work with 'the box'.
- 4) OKECNBCTs seem to know the importance of story.
- 5) Drama plays a key role in story and storytelling strategies.
- 6) Time will always be an issue for OKECNBCTs.

Within these themes a deeper understanding of the OKECNBTs is seen. This group of instructors seems to understand how to best meet the needs of their students in the classrooms where they are working.

Encouraging Interpretations

Story and storytelling fit perfectly within the National Board Guidelines that promote inquiry, curriculum integration and reflection. A story causes you to wonder. This encourages questioning which promotes learning. Stories can and should be integrated into any part of the curriculum. A story can help make connections for learners which might not be experienced otherwise. These connections, in turn, encourage deeper thinking or reflection on how those connections apply to each child's world.

In addition to the National Board Standards, story also works well within NCLB guidelines. Betsy Rogers, 2003 National Teacher of the Year who earned early childhood national board certification in 2000, defined the role of teachers and the 'big picture' this way:

I believe we have a moral imperative to our profession to (ensure) the quality of teaching... It is time for teachers to take charge of our own profession and set standards of excellence for all teachers to (ensure) that all children, no matter where they live, have a quality teacher in the classroom. (Anderson, 2009, p. 417)

Rodgers and Lang (2002) discuss the tensions and struggles early childhood teachers face in the classroom. They are under pressure from parents. Parents today are educated individuals who know what they want for their children. They also have

policies to work under that are still considered new and different and challenging.

Rodgers and Lang question,

Might it be possible that the parents have expectations for what is to happen in classrooms because they are intelligent people who made sense of their own educational experience? Might it be possible that policy makers continue to legislate more regulations because they care about education and the children in the classrooms? If these statements are plausible, how might we respond differently? What changes might occur? (p. 302)

Looking at learning and teaching through that lens offers a hope of working together to promote learning in young children. Story and storytelling provide benefits and strategies to connect everyone involved with the education of a young child. Story is familiar. It is shared. Everyone has a story.

Implications for Early Childhood Education

The research presented in this study offers evidence that although there may be pressures and tensions working under the guidelines of NCLB there are possibilities. These possibilities are made obvious when the benefits of story, which include constructing, connecting and creating, are seen through imaginative story-related strategies. The respondents in this study are working within the framework and meeting the needs of each individual learner. As autonomous instructors, OKECNBCTs, are combining requirements and best practices to make sure these needs are met. I believe seeing the value of story incorporated into the early childhood classroom offers any educator the opportunity to construct their own practice accordingly.

This study emphasizes the value of story in the early childhood classroom. In the past few years, ‘accountability’ and ‘time on task’ have been the center of curriculum planning much more often than ‘once upon a time’. This study provides early childhood educators explicit benefits for utilizing story in the learning process. These benefits can be used as a defense and/or a platform for teachers wanting to work ‘outside the box’, along with strategies for doing so.

The lists of strategies, benefits and remarks shared by the respondents of my survey may serve as springboards to future learning in early childhood classrooms. They provide a framework for other teachers to adjust and adapt as needed. Integrating story throughout the curriculum, building themes around stories and developing projects for real life learning are all encouraged through this research project.

The comments and views shared within this study combined with my personal experiences and professional literature bring the use of story and storytelling to life in the classroom. Examples, emotions, feelings and thoughts all merge and offer other educators the opportunity to join right in. Through this study, the power of story is clearly seen.

Connecting my own teaching to the experiences of study participants

When reviewing the benefits my respondents listed for story and storytelling, the thought of ‘LEGOS’ kept popping into my mind. Granted, I am an early childhood teacher, but when I think of ‘LEGOS’, I picture blocks to build, connect and create. All of the listed benefits of story and storytelling seemed to fit nice and neatly into one of these categories.

The building blocks can be divided into the developmental domains of language, cognition, socialization and even motor and self-help skills. Story can help increase vocabulary and comprehension as well as oral language and auditory skills including listening and processing. Specific skills such as sequencing, predicting, print awareness and reading in general can be enhanced through story. Stories can stretch understanding as well as a child's memory. Social skills can improve through discussion and increased attention to various possibilities within a plot. These discussions can even encourage self-help skills as children work out problems found with stories. A final benefit listed that of hands on activities, including drama and puppets, builds learning through a child's physical development.

Those benefits in my mind are all one big tower climbing straight up. The connecting blocks can change that vision with one small block. By connecting two towers together or just branching in a new direction, a whole new list of benefits emerges. The connections listed in the responses of benefits includes: a text to text connection- one story to another; a text to reader connection – how does this story relate to 'me'; a student to student connection – how do other readers feel about the story; and a student to teacher connection – what can we both learn through sharing this story.

There are more connections listed within the benefits and they include a connection to prior knowledge. This connection makes the story much more meaningful and personal to the reader. There is also a connection within the curriculum that can be brought together through story. Integrating the curriculum through a relevant story can enhance learning in all subjects. A final connection also connects back to the cognitive building blocks and that is the connection of reading to writing. Story and storytelling

can offer that learning experience without direct instruction. As children experience the story, they begin to make their own connections.

The tower has now branched out into different directions and we might begin to wonder about the final result. What is it that has been created? Respondents' thoughts included imagination, creativity, and curiosity, a love of language, a sense of excitement, and a fostering of inquiry. These creating blocks are not always tangible or measurable, but in my mind these are the benefits that bring the stories to life in the learners.

The metaphor of Legos can be considered in a linear fashion where within a given story a child builds a skill, connects it to something else, and then creates something out of it.

This is definitely a possibility. It is also a possibility, however, for each one of the categories to stand independently while learning within a story.

Story strategies

After looking at the benefits of story, I started digging deeper into how those benefits come to fruition. My thinking took me back to my early childhood days when I stepped out on the playground. See-saws are not found on the school yards anymore due to safety concerns, but this is what came to my mind as the main strategy themes emerged.

There are two distinct roles that are played out on a see-saw. These are giver and receiver roles in my opinion. The child on the ground needs to actively give a push to get himself/herself off the ground and get the ride going. The child up in the air, however, can have just as much fun receiving that push and zooming down to the ground without exerting any effort. Neither of these types of strategies is better than the other, and each type is needed in the learning process.

The giver of each push, or story-related strategy, in my mind is the student-driven strategy. The student-driven strategies listed most often by the respondents include drama, readers' theater, puppet play, journal writing, dramatic play and various types of story retelling. The receiver of the push or story-related strategy in my mind is the teacher-driven strategy. The most popular teacher-driven storytelling strategy by far was 'read alouds.' In a read aloud, a teacher reads a story or tells a story to the listening classroom. The respondents also listed using stories to integrate the curriculum as an important strategy. They also listed strategies promoting deeper understanding of stories being studied like webbing, mapping, and discussions of character traits. Some respondents listed strategies which could fall under teacher and/or student driven strategies or both depending on the activity involved. Some strategies within this category included Smart Board activities and story discussions.

The power of drama

As I have mentioned several times in this project, Vivian Paley informed my practice tremendously. Her strong connections between play and story are what hooked me. Her passion for drama with children continues to captivate me. One personal connection she provided was her inclusive approach with children with special needs. In all her books, she describes children with disabilities without identifying them as disabled children. Instead, she starts where ever the child is functioning and builds from that point. In my classroom, all of my children are identified with some type of disability, but that does not mean they are treated a certain way because of that disability. The children are expected to do their best and build their skills on a daily basis. Combining story and drama is one way to offer success and growth to all participants.

Children need to feel safe and secure in their learning environment to take risks, develop critical thinking skills, and master skills needed to succeed through their education. For children to feel safe, a classroom community must be developed that accepts each child where and how he/she is and welcomes what he/she has to offer the classroom. Within this classroom community lays a learning environment that offers children activities and experiences that are exciting and engaging and relevant to their developmental needs. Story in a playful way such as story reenacting fits nicely into this learning environment. It offers parts for all learners to enhance skills no matter what level they are functioning on.

A book that I use every year is *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. The story helps my children learn about winter and it is a great story to involve all of my children in its reenactment. Each of the children can have their own part and each of the parts is just as important as the next. For some children I need to prompt or just give a cue. Others need hands on direction and guidance and others still, need me to get right down there with them to help them accomplish their goals. The exciting part for me is that it is all Okay... where they are is where they are and story can help them build on that knowledge base. Some of the children memorize their parts, and of course that is different from year to year. All of the children, however, are given center stage for their part and that experience is motivating and exciting for most young learners. Learning sequence and order and aspects of 'the production' help children understand the concept of story which will continue to benefit them in all aspects of learning. This example illustrates so effectively how drama can be incorporated into the curriculum. While the

children are immersed in the drama and all its elements, specific skills needed for meeting standards are also being addressed.

Implications for Future Research

Much needed in the body of research regarding story and storytelling is a look at a similar study of teachers in Reading First Schools. It would also be useful to see how the responses of National Board Certified teachers differ from those of other early childhood and elementary teachers. Another avenue for researcher might involve older children. It is quite possible that you would also get more negative responses in regard to NCLB from this group of instructors. Or, perhaps this research, like Anderson's (2009) study, will show that teachers still can make choices in their educational approaches.

Other needed studies in order to more fully explore the topic of story and storytelling in early childhood classrooms in the era of NCLB would be ethnographic and/or lifeworld studies examining deeply one teacher's classroom and curricular decision-making. A quantitative study using my survey as the basis for developing more fully a statistically valid instrument could also add to the body of knowledge in this area.

An area that I stressed in my literature review that was not as evident as I expected in the results is the concept of empathy. Only a few teachers mentioned what I consider to be a major benefit of the use of story in the classroom. I believe further research in this area would be of interest. I did not address it specifically in a question, but I did think it would be mentioned more than it was. Paley mentions that empathy is not really a concept that can be taught. It can, and it must be experienced, and I believe story is one of the best ways of accomplishing that. I think that further discussions directly addressing the concept of empathy would be valuable for researchers and

teachers. I feel it is one of the strongest, often untapped, benefits of story. A study designed to examine the connections between story and empathy would add to the body of knowledge in the field.

Another type of research that I think would build on this small study would be a teacher research project involving videotaping or tape recording children and classes involved in story and seeing what type of themes and data emerge in those scenarios. Being a kinesthetic learner myself, putting it all together to see, hear and feel story in action could inspire me to incorporate it into my teaching. Comparing the children's abilities in all the developmental domains in story rich and minimal story environments would also be enlightening. This could also develop as an Action Research project. Having teachers construct their own philosophies by the experiences they witness in their classrooms could definitely promote the use of story and storytelling within all ages of learners.

Implications as a Researcher

I believe it is important as a researcher, especially when presented with conflicting results, to scrutinize not only your data but your data instruments as well. It seems imperative to my research to take a closer look at possible flaws or weaknesses within my study. Just as I was open to the data that emerged, I was open to information this critique would offer.

My first concern is my initial definition of story that I sent out with my first email. I wanted the definition to be extremely general so the respondents could build upon it with their personal approaches. I defined story as any type of narrative whether a one line sentence plot describing a child's drawing to a full length novel read by the

teacher. What I was trying to determine was *how much* the teachers use story and *how* they use story. In hindsight, there is a possibility that my general definition was too vague, so that participants considered reading a basal reader or providing reading time to be examples of story and storytelling. Basal readers and teacher read aloud may be part of a story rich curriculum, but my operationalization of the term “story” did not include an intent to view them as representations of story within a classroom. Thus, I have no way of knowing what the OKECNBCTs who participated in my study meant when answering the question regarding wanting to spend increased time with story in their classrooms.

My next area of concern is the survey itself. Again, I can look back and realize clarifications and layered questions I should have included in my survey. I definitely wish I would have provided opportunities for the respondents to discuss restraints they feel in the classroom. The responses show that though teachers may not consider NCLB directly responsible, there still seem to be time constraints that are felt by most. Could it be district guidelines, principal’s requirements, PASS objects or possibly parental pressures that limit or stifle teaching approaches? All are possible reasons for strategies not being used any more or for story and play times to be restricted.

There is conflict within the NCLB questions as well. If a teacher has minimal knowledge about the law in regard to reading or a reading program, then the questions about how story curriculum is modified, limited or enhanced by it are basically null and void. This continues on through the comparison of NCLB and NBPTS too. I definitely wish I would have requested examples on how teachers are combining the key elements of both through the lens of story. I still believe it is being done; that teachers promote inquiry, integration and reflection while working with phonemic awareness, phonics,

vocabulary, fluency and comprehension while discovering a story. Although results of the study show this to be true, future studies should focus on this area for clarity and specific details and examples.

The last area that should have raised a red flag for me earlier was the number of teachers working within Reading First schools. I had only six respondents within this category and this was the group I assumed would have a big impact on my data. I never considered that the number of OKECNBCTs working in the Reading First schools would be so low. This thought could promote another study in and of itself. – ‘How can low-socioeconomic schools attract NBCTs?’

I regret not having requested participant volunteers for follow-up interviews and discussions. These conversations could have clarified their responses and enlightened my study. As with a conversation, oftentimes things unsaid are just as important as the words spoken. This thought stayed with me throughout the survey responses. First consideration was the relatively small sample of OKECNBCTs who responded to my survey. Even though 118 out of 305 (38%) participants was an above average survey response rate, I had hoped more would have been willing and enthusiastic participants. Possibilities for this lack of response include uncertainty of anonymity, or an unwillingness to discuss frustrations or tensions. Again these are just speculations, but the lack of response does have a voice of its own.

Another concern within this same line of thinking is what comes across as relatively politically correct answers. Again, much is unspoken. A relatively large number of respondents chose not to answer the open-ended questions. Roughly 30 respondents provided what could be considered politically correct responses to the

multiple choice questions without taking the chance of categorizing or ostracizing themselves through their own personal responses. There were also a number of respondents who seemed to comment with brief politically correct responses to the open-ended questions.

The last concern for me within the unspoken framework involves approaches that teachers may not be completely cognizant of or comfortable discussing. Even if NCLB has little impact, there is some type of standards that need to be met in all classrooms. In Christine Sleeter's book, *Un-standardizing Curriculum*, her suggestions might present insight into some of these rote or politically correct comments. During a phone call, Dr. C. E. Sleeter (personal communication, April 24, 2009) explained the connection. She discussed a standards driven curriculum in comparison to a standards conscious curriculum. A standards driven approach starts the curriculum *with* the standards and decisions are made regarding how best to meet them. Within a standards conscious approach, standards are set aside at first to determine main ideas that are deemed important. Strategies are developed to help children process and develop understandings and these understandings are then mapped against the standards. The basic difference is that in the first approach the standards drive the curriculum and in the second they are used as a reference.

I believe that comments like "When reading stories the children are introduced to new vocabulary." and "We use Literacy First for assessments but also use Scott Foresman," are not only politically correct, but also standards driven. Not addressing this type of response through verbal or written feedback was a rather large drawback within my research.

Although I believe more understandings and opportunities concerning story, NCLB, NBPTS and OKECNBCTs could have developed with altered and additional questions and discussions, there are still some very worthwhile results. The weaving together of my personal story experiences, the professional literature and survey results offered a great deal of important and relevant data.

Conclusion

I found the process of researching the concept of story to be extremely interesting. Looking at it in story in regard to NCLB and NBPTS was also very enlightening. I assumed that I knew the answers to the questions I addressed, but what emerged was the unexpected. With the data I gained a deeper respect for OKECNBCTs. I was and am pleased that my passion for story and storytelling seems to be shared with my peers. I am encouraged to find out that story still is being used a great deal in the respondents' curriculum. I gained confidence that although I still do not agree with many of the mandates involved with NCLB, teachers are working within the framework and doing so successfully. Accountability is important. Making sure children learn is important. Combining the worlds, mentioned earlier, that Bruner refers to as the modes of knowing cannot help but enhance the learning process (creatingthe21stcentury.org). Looking at learning through the scientific as well as the narrative gives all kinds of learners the opportunity to thrive. As Patricia Cooper mentioned, there are ways to combine both of these modes of learning, and story and storytelling activities have proven to be very successful. Story has the power to connect all parts of the curriculum and all parts of the child. No child will hear the same exact story being told. The interpretation will change from day to day. That is part of its power, it is part of its attraction. The story "speaks

many times to the listener. Once in the ear, and again and again and again in the echo chamber that is the heart (Yolen, 2000).

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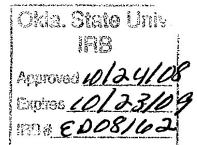
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Initial Email of Explanation



Initial letter of explanation

Dear Fellow Early Childhood Generalists,

My Name is Carol Ford, and I am a teacher in Muskogee Public Schools. I earned National Certification in 1999 and am currently working on recertification. Hopefully, I will hear good news in November. I am also working on my dissertation for my PhD. in Education. The topic for my dissertation involves story and storytelling. I am trying to discern how Oklahoma's EC Generalists utilize the concept of story and storytelling under the confines of No Child Left Behind. This is where you come in! I will be sending a survey to all Early Childhood Generalists in Oklahoma concerning this topic. Response rates to surveys are not usually very high, so I am sending this letter ahead of time to assure you that the survey will not take a great deal of time and I believe the information it will generate will be very beneficial to educators and students alike. The survey consists of 23 questions of which 18 are multiple choice and the remaining 5 require short answers. I would greatly appreciate your help and participation.

I will also be sending a consent form that stresses the complete confidentiality of your responses. I will accept your completed survey as given consent. The survey will be found on the following website: <http://www.surveymonkey.com>. A direct link will be provided in my next email. I would really appreciate your responses within two weeks. This website is a licensee of the TRUSTe Privacy Program which is monitored on a daily basis for security and confidentiality. IP addresses are the only identifying record kept in the data base and that is comparable to a zip code to show the general area of the respondent.

The concept of story and storytelling has become extremely important to me over the last few years while attending Oklahoma State University. I have read a great deal of Vivian Paley's beliefs on story and play in the curriculum and have tried to incorporate them into my classroom. Teaching early childhood special education children has given me the chance to use them in all aspects of my curriculum. I am interested in finding out your views on story and storytelling, how you utilize them in your classroom, and how NCLB might have affected those strategies. I am also interested in finding out the role that the National Board Certification Process had in your current teaching philosophy. For this survey, I think it is important for you to know how I define the key terms in my project;

Story- Story will refer to any type of narrative. This can be a simple sentence plot describing a child's drawing to a full length novel which could be read to the students.

Storytelling- Storytelling will refer to any type of delivery of a narrative. Some examples include drama, art, discussion, and read alouds.

Strategy- Strategy will refer to any approach used by the teacher to bring Stories to life in his/her classroom.

Literacy- Literacy will refer to the processes, programs and approaches teachers use to teach and help develop reading and writing skills within the classroom.

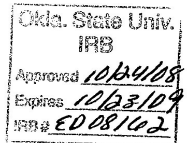
Again, I am anxious to get my project underway, and I hope you will assist me in completing my dissertation. If there are any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at okisok@sbcglobal.net or carol-ford@mps20.org or call me at 918-869-8492. Thanks in Advance.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX B
Consent Form

Carol Ford

**Consent Form for Research Project with Oklahoma's ECNBCT
TELL ME A STORY PLEASE**



Student Researcher:

Carol Ford
9151 S. 13th St. East
Muskogee, OK 74403
Home 918-687-3955
Cell 918-869-8492
okisok@sbcglobal.net

Advisor:

Kathryn Castle
OSU College of Education
235 Willard Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078-4045
405-744-8019
kathryn.castle@okstate.edu

Hello!! My name is Carol Ford. I am a special education teacher at Pershing Elementary in Muskogee and I work with kindergarten aged children. I am currently working on my dissertation at OSU. I am working toward a PhD in Education and am extremely interested in studying some of the benefits of utilizing story in early childhood classrooms.

If you agree to participate in my research project you will be asked to complete one twenty-three question survey looking into how you as an EC Generalist utilize story and storytelling in your classroom within the confines of No Child Left Behind. The information you provide will be completed on a website called SurveyMonkey which I must access through a login and password. No record of email addresses will be available with this survey so your response will be completely anonymous. All information I receive will be kept confidential and your input will remain anonymous. There is no consequence for non-participation.

There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely (Locked in my filing cabinet) and only the researcher and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

As participants in this research, you are entitled to know the nature of my research. If at any time you would like to know more about my project or the themes and data that emerge, feel free to contact me. You are free to decline to participate by simply not completing the survey. The results of the survey should provide valuable information, interesting views and philosophies, and creative strategies involved with story and storytelling. I am looking forward to your contribution to my research. I have the utmost respect for the National Certification process and feel you will have a tremendous impact on this project.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this research process by completing and returning the survey. The survey can be accessed by clicking on the link in the main body of this email. Your completed survey will serve as your consent for my analysis and future dissertation. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or irb@okstate.edu I hope you will agree to participate in this study, if you have any concerns or questions please let me know.

APPENDIX C
Email Containing Survey Link

Sincerely, Carol Ford carol-ford@mpsi20.org okisok@sbcglobal.net 918-869-8492

Email containing the survey link:

Dear ECNBCT's

Here is the survey I discussed with you earlier in the week. Just click on the link and my survey will pop up and when completed it will be filed anonymously on this web site under my specific survey site.

I want to remind you of the definitions I am using for this project and also request that you read the attached consent form and complete the survey as soon as possible, preferably within a week.

Story- Story will refer to any type of narrative. This can be a simple

sentence plot describing a child's drawing to a full length novel which could be read to the students.

Storytelling- Storytelling will refer to any type of delivery of a narrative.

Some examples include drama, art, discussion, and read alouds.

Strategy- Strategy will refer to any approach used by the teacher to bring

Stories to life in his/her classroom.

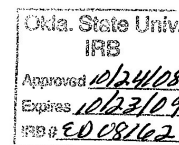
Literacy- Literacy will refer to the processes, programs and approaches

teachers use to teach and help develop reading and writing skills within the classroom.

Thanks in advance for your support, I really appreciate it!!!

Carol Ford

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=wHm_2bFJdgziS6BiYJ4Mmrtw_3d_3d



APPENDIX D

Survey for Dissertation

1. Please select your number of years of teaching experience

- 3-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 20+

2. How long have you held Early Childhood National Board Certification?

- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10+ years

3. Please choose your current type of employment

- Early Childhood Teacher
- Elementary Teacher
- Librarian
- Counselor
- Administrator

Other (please specify)

4. Please describe the type of school where you are currently employed (Please choose all that apply)

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- Reading First
- Literacy First

5. In the past 5 years, how many years has your school achieved AYP?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- not sure

6. How much knowledge about the requirements of No Child Left behind pertaining to literacy do you have?

- No knowledge
- Minimal knowledge
- Some knowledge
- Considerable knowledge

7. Briefly identify or explain your classroom's reading/literacy program

8. How comfortable are you with your reading/literacy program under NCLB guidelines?

- not comfortable
- Minimally comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Considerably comfortable

9. Of what importance is the concept of story and storytelling in your personal teaching approach?

- no importance
- minimal importance
- somewhat importance
- considerable importance

10. To what extent have the requirements of No Child Left Behind modified your use of storytelling?

- No modifications
- Minimal Modifications
- Some modifications
- Considerable modifications

11. To what extent have the requirements of No Child Left Behind enhanced your use of story and storytelling?

- No enhancement
- Minimal enhancement
- Some enhancement
- Considerable enhancement

12. To what extent have the requirements of No Child Left Behind limited your use of story and storytelling?

- No limitations
- Minimal limitations
- Some limitations
- Considerable limitations

13. Key elements stressed in Reading First are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension. How often do you use story and storytelling to enhance these elements

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Phonemic awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily
Phonics	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily
Fluency	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily
Reading comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily

14. Key elements stressed within Early childhood National Board Standards include inquiry, integrated curriculum, and reflection. How often do you use story and storytelling to:

Promote children's inquiry	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily
Integrate story within the curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily
Promote students' reflection	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily

15. Amount of time spent involved with story and storytelling on a daily basis

- None
- 0-15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- 60+ minutes

16. If there were no external constraints on your classroom curriculum, how much time would be spent with story and storytelling on a daily basis?

- None
- 0-15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- 60-90 minutes
- 90+ minutes

17. Many teachers feel play and story often complement each other in the learning process. How much time is allowed for free play and center time throughout your school day?

- None
- 0-15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- 60+ minutes

18. If there were no external constraints on your classroom curriculum, how much time would be offered for free play and center time?

- None
- 0-15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- 61-75 minutes
- 75+ minutes

Add your comments

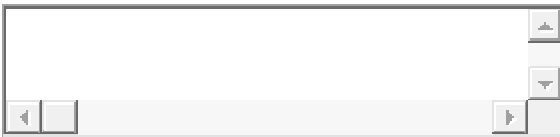
19. As an Early Childhood National Board Certified teacher, you work under the guidelines of both the NBPTS and NCLB. How similar are the guidelines of NBPTS and NCLB in assumptions about teaching and learning?

- No similarity
- Minimal similarity
- Some similarity
- Considerable similarity
- I have never considered a similarity

20. Please list and/or describe your views on specific benefits of utilizing story and storytelling for the young learner

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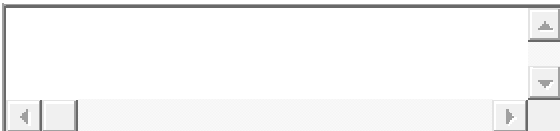
21. Please list several teaching strategies you are currently using to include story and storytelling into your curriculum

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22. The process of National Board Certification encourages you to broaden your teaching approaches as well as try new strategies to motivate learners. Please list any approaches or strategies, if any, involving story and storytelling that emerged during the certification process that you are no longer using in your classroom.

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23. Please elaborate on one personal example, whether it was a positive or negative experience, involving story and storytelling within your classroom.

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APPENDIX E

Follow-up Email



Follow up Email

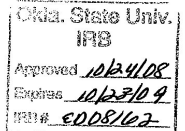
Dear ECNBCT's

I want to thank all of you who have participated in my survey. The responses are interesting, intriguing, and I cannot wait to start analyzing all the strategies and thoughts. If you have not responded yet, please do so within a day or two please. I really would like your input as well!

Again Thanks so much for your participation..... Carol Ford

APPENDIX F

Final Request



FINAL REQUEST

Dear ECNBPT's

I apologize for any inconvenience and please forgive the intrusion, but I would like to request your response to my survey one last time. I am in URGENT need of more responses for my survey on story and storytelling. I believe it will be an important study when I receive and analyze all the survey responses. PLEASE, if you have not completed the survey for me yet click on the following link and complete it today!!!!!!

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=wHm_2bFJdgziS6BiYJ4Mmrtw_3d_3d

Thank you Carol Ford

APPENDIX G





Pilot Study Survey

1. Please select your number of years of teaching experience
2. How long have you held National Certification?
3. Please choose your current type of employment
4. Please describe the type of school you are currently employed with (Please choose all that apply)
5. In the past 5 years, how many years has your school achieved AYP?
6. How much knowledge about the requirements of No Child Left Behind do you have?
7. Briefly identify or explain your classroom's reading/literacy program
8. How comfortable are you with your reading/literacy program under NCLB guidelines?
9. Of what importance is the concept of story and storytelling in your teaching philosophy?
10. To what extent have the requirements of NCLB limited your use of story & storytelling?
11. To what extent have the requirements of No Child Left Behind enhanced your use of story and storytelling?
12. Key elements stressed in Reading First are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension. How often do you use story and storytelling to enhance these elements?
13. Key elements stressed within Early Childhood National Board Standards include inquiry, integrated curriculum, and reflection. How often do you use story and storytelling to enhance these elements?
14. Amount of time spent involved with story and storytelling on a daily basis?
15. If you were in charge of your own curriculum, how much time would be spent with story and storytelling on a daily basis?
16. Many teachers feel play and story often complement each other in the learning process. How much time is allowed for free play and center time in your classroom?
17. If you were in charge of your own schedule, how much time would be offered for free play and center time?
18. As a National Board Certified teacher, you work under the beliefs and guidelines of both the NBPTS and NCLB. How do they compare?
19. Please list and describe your views on specific benefits of utilizing story and storytelling for the young learner (Suggestions for this question)
20. Please list strategies you are currently using to include story and storytelling into your curriculum (Add suggestions for this question)
21. The process of National Board Certification encourages you to broaden your teaching approaches as well as try new strategies to motivate learners. Please list any approaches or strategies, if any, involving story and storytelling that emerged during the certification process that you are no longer using in your classroom. Please explain the reasons you no longer use them.(Add suggestions for this question)
22. Please elaborate on one personal example, whether it be positive or negative of an experience involving story and storytelling within your classroom. (Add suggestions for this question)





Appendix H

Multiple Choice Items for Early Childhood and Elementary Teachers

1. Please select your number of years of teaching experience

	Count	Response Percent	Response
3-5	0	0%	0
6-10		17.9%	19
11-15		28.3%	30
16-20		18.9%	20
20+		34.9%	37

2. How long have you held Early Childhood National Board Certification?

	Count	Response Percent	Response
1-3 years		54.7%	58
4-6 years		20.8%	22
7-9 years		17.9%	19
10+ years		6.6%	7

3. Please choose your current type of employment

	Count	Response Percent	Response
Early Childhood Teacher		70.8%	75
Elementary Teacher		34.0%	36

4. Please describe the type of school where you are currently employed (Please choose all that apply)

	Count	Response Percent	Response
Rural		34.9%	37
Suburban		37.7%	40
Urban		24.5%	26
Reading First		5.7%	6
Literacy First		22.6%	24

5. In the past 5 years, how many years has your school achieved AYP?

Count	Response Percent	Response
0	1.9%	2
1	1.0%	1
2	3.8%	4
3	3.8%	4
4	12.4%	13
5	40.0%	42
not sure	37.1%	39

6. How much knowledge about the requirements of No Child Left Behind pertaining to literacy do you have?

Count	Response Percent	Response
No knowledge	1.0%	1
Minimal knowledge	16.5%	17
Some knowledge	66.0%	68
Considerable knowledge	16.5%	17

7. Briefly identify or explain your classroom's reading/literacy program
Response Count 101

8. How comfortable are you with your reading/literacy program under NCLB guidelines?

Count	Response Percent	Response
Not comfortable	2.9%	3
Minimally comfortable	14.4%	15
Somewhat comfortable	40.4%	42
Considerably comfortable	42.3%	44

9. Of what importance is the concept of story and storytelling in your personal teaching approach?

Count	Response Percent	Response
no importance	0.0%	0
minimal importance	5.7%	6
somewhat importance	29.5%	31
considerable importance	64.8%	68

10. To what extent have the requirements of No Child Left Behind modified your use of storytelling?

Count		Response Percent	Response
No modifications		41.2%	42
Minimal Modifications		34.3%	35
Some modifications		22.5%	23
Considerable modifications		2.0%	2

11. To what extent have the requirements of No Child Left Behind enhanced your use of story and storytelling?

Count		Response Percent	Response
No enhancement		51.0%	52
Minimal enhancement		28.4%	29
Some enhancement		19.6%	20
Considerable enhancement		1.0%	1

12. To what extent have the requirements of No Child Left Behind limited your use of story and storytelling?

Count		Response Percent	Response
No limitations		52.9%	55
Minimal limitations		31.7%	33
Some limitations		13.5%	14
Considerable limitations		1.9%	2

13. Key elements stressed in Reading First are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension. How often do you use story and storytelling to enhance these elements

Count	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Response
Phonemic awareness	5.8% (6)	6.7% (7)	29.8% (31)	57.7% (60)	104
Phonics	5.8% (6)	5.8% (6)	28.8% (30)	59.6% (62)	104
Vocabulary	2.9% (3)	2.9% (3)	16.5% (17)	77.7% (80)	103
Fluency	5.9% (6)	2.9% (3)	28.4% (29)	62.7% (64)	102
Reading comprehension	3.9% (4)	1.9% (2)	13.6% (14)	80.6% (83)	103

14. Key elements stressed within Early childhood National Board Standards include inquiry, integrated curriculum, and reflection. How often do you use story and storytelling to:

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Response
Count					
Promote children's inquiry	1.9% (2)	10.5% (11)	32.4% (34)	55.2% (58)	105
Integrate story within the curriculum	2.9% (3)	3.8% (4)	27.9% (29)	65.4% (68)	104
Promote students' reflection	5.8% (6)	9.6% (10)	28.8% (30)	55.8% (58)	104

15. Amount of time spent involved with story and storytelling on a daily basis

	Response Percent	Response
Count		
None	2.9%	3
0-15 minutes	22.1%	23
16-30 minutes	28.8%	30
31-60 minutes	30.8%	32
60+ minutes	15.4%	16

16. If there were no external constraints on your classroom curriculum, how much time would be spent with story and storytelling on a daily basis?

	Response Percent	Response
Count		
None	1.0%	1
0-15 minutes	2.9%	3
16-30 minutes	28.6%	30
31-60 minutes	32.4%	34
60-90 minutes	25.7%	27
90+ minutes	9.5%	10

17. Many teachers feel play and story often complement each other in the learning process. How much time is allowed for free play and center time throughout your school day?

	Response Percent	Response
Count		
None	9.5%	10
0-15 minutes	15.2%	16
16-30 minutes	24.8%	26
31-60 minutes	30.5%	32
60+ minutes	20.0%	21

18. If there were no external constraints on your classroom curriculum, how much time would be offered for free play and center time?

Count	Response Percent	Response
None	1.0%	1
0-15 minutes	3.8%	4
16-30 minutes	21.9%	23
31-60 minutes	36.2%	38
61-75 minutes	22.9%	24
75+ minutes	14.3%	15

19. As an Early Childhood National Board Certified teacher, you work under the guidelines of both the NBPTS and NCLB. How similar are the guidelines of NBPTS and NCLB in assumptions about teaching and learning?

Count	Response Percent	Response
No similarity	3.8%	4
Minimal similarity	17.3%	18
Some similarity	45.2%	47
Considerable similarity	8.7%	9
I have never considered a similarity	25.0%	26

APPENDIX I

READING PROGRAMS USED BY RESPONDENTS

- We have a school wide adopted basal series. I also use methods from four blocks as well as several others
- It is based on the skills of Literacy First. We have just adopted a reading series for the first time for Pre-K and are in the process of incorporating it into our curriculum
- We use a reading textbook and workbook. We supplement it with additional work and centers
- Phonics, phonemic awareness, and whole-word reading. We screen using Literacy First screenings 3 times a year to place in Reading Sufficiency, but teach our own created curriculum
- Houghton Mifflin program with Saxon Phonics additional supplement
- We use Literach 1st for assessments but also use the Scott Forsman reading series. We are not a Literacy 1st school
- We have a school wide adopted basal series. I also use methods from four blocks as well as several others
- It is based on the skills of Literacy First. We have just adopted a reading series for the first time for Pre-K and are in the process of incorporating it into our curriculum
- We use a reading textbook and workbook. We supplement it with additional work and centers
- Phonics, phonemic awareness, and whole-word reading. We screen using Literacy First screenings 3 times a year to place in Reading Sufficiency, but teach our own created curriculum
- We are a Literacy first school.
- We use Frog Street Press - letter recognition, beginning sounds, visual phonics. We use book-it to encourage reading at home. We read, read, read.
- We use parts of Literacy First, Reading First, a reading program, Reading Street, and have a reading specialist for K & 1st
- Literacy by Design, Comprehension strategies based Writing is guided by this curriculum
- 4 Block Model: Shared Reading, Guided Reading Groups, SSR, Words Block, Writer's Workshop, Classroom Library(check out to take books home)
- Literacy By Design Lucy Calkins writing series Literacy Centers Small group instruction
- I use a mixture of best practices such as Saxon phonics, small group literacy centers, Harcourt reading program
- Structured Language Basics from Payne Education in OKC
- I use Saxon Phonics and Spelling for 1st grade. We use Harcourt for our Reading curriculum.
- We use a balanced literacy approach. We use a year-long theme to help children make connections and continue reviewing and building on prior knowledge. I use hands-on learning centers in my classroom, lots and lots of oral language, visuals, etc
- We use Scott Foresman, Earobics & Compass Learning as resources as well as Literacy First literacy activities.
- I work with a small group of 3rd graders (5). We use Literacy First Assessment to guide instruction in phonics. I do Guided Reading lessons with students and we use hands-on materials (magnetic letters, center-type games) to work on phonics and comprehension.
- We use the Houghton-Mifflin textbook program, while also incorporating arts integration into our lessons. We assess with DIBELS, Gates-McGinitie, district benchmark tests, and teacher-made tests. We also use the Marzano method of learning vocabulary, some taken from our text, other words taken from our state's vocabulary for our grades. Half of my weekly spelling list is phonics based, while the other half contains vocabulary words from other areas of our curriculum. In the second half of the year, I use class sets of trade books for reading.

- Our literacy program is anchored in a basal reading series and supplemented with enriching reading, writing and language experiences
- I do not just one program. I pull from a few but mostly I use Frog Street Alphabet books and songs and integrate learning letters and sounds into the entire school day. For reading I choral read a set of four different predictable books at a time with my class and send home them home once a week until every child has read every book at home. The students read to books to each other during free reading time and we also incorporate many of the books as storytelling without the book. I incorporate higher level books during class time to build vocabulary and just simply build a love of books
- Reading First literacy block, 120 minutes of uninterrupted reading and 30 minutes of intervention
- We use Houghton Mifflin Pre-k program with my own ideas
- The students learn to read using a balance of phonics and whole language instruction and practice
- We use Macmillan Reading series, literacy centers, and whole group language activities
- We use the Scott Foresman Reading Street Program
- We use a basal reader in my 2nd grade classroom. In addition, I supplement with various thematic books. Phonics and spelling are in conjunction with the reading series. Comprehension is strengthened, phonetic awareness and print recognition is enhanced, higher level of interest in reading and understanding, higher level thinking skills developed
- I am using the newly adopted Macmillan program. I also use Language Based Education from the Payne Center, ideas from Mary Legan and Debbie Dillard. I teach both whole group and small group as well as with learning stations.
- I work with four year olds primarily. The classrooms have an adopted program of literacy which they do daily, but also literacy centers. My job as the speech path for this building is such that I go into the classroom for 30 minutes, 1x a week and do sound lessons, rhyming activities, identification of category items, finger plays and stories. I also have my regular caseload. My activities go hand-in-hand with the skills they are gaining in the classroom. I feel our district is ahead of the curve in recognizing how early childhood skills can be addressed through various means.
- We use the Building Blocks model which is the EC form of Four Blocks. We do not use publisher's curriculum, we write our own
- Balanced, multi-sensory, structured, direct instruction whole group and small group instruction Focus on structure and texture of literacy
- No set reading program. We read books in the PreK classroom that pertain to the theme.
- I use our newly adopted "Treasures" reading program. I think it's MacMillan/McGraw Hill. I use the stories and strategies in Treasures to teach whole group instruction. I also have small group guided reading sessions. Students mostly do seatwork during this time, because I have a reading tutor in the room during group time. She works with a group while I work with a group. My students have been doing some literacy related seatwork and then they read and take A.R. tests. I've just started training students on literacy centers, though, because I have several students who have trouble working on seatwork independently. We have a Success maker computer program. Students are tutored on the computer at their level for 15 min. and we have 2 sessions each week. I try to have a story time daily. I use 6 traits writing, but don't have daily writing workshop time due to time constraints. I try to have a lesson at least once a week, but often have students write at other times. I link the phonics skill to spelling. I often supplement Treasures phonics with other materials. I try to pull in extra things, too. I have Linda Hoyt's book called Interactive Read-Alouds and I've begun using some ideas from her book. I also like to use Reader's Theater. I haven't gotten into it much this year, but plan to pick up the pace with Reader's Theater. I promote A.R. and have incentives for meeting goals. Students have fluency practice each night with their regular homework reading

- I am now the reading specialist for the elementary. I screen all children K-5 with DIBELS. I have a pull out program for the students that score at 20% or scored intensive on the test. I am currently using Structured Language from Payne Education Center for my main focus
- We use Saxon Phonics and Scott Foresman Reading Series
- We follow the Literacy First model using assessments for spelling, phonics, and phonemic awareness as well as the DRA to determine reading levels. Children receive whole group as well as small group instruction in reading and spelling.
- Literacy First School for 7 years. Literacy Centers utilized. Flex grouping instruction. Harcourt Reading Program
- We have been trained in NYC/Columbia University-Reading and Writing Project. We create numerous reading/writing activities throughout our day, but have specific reader's and writer's workshop with mini-lessons, active engagement, conferences and conclusion each day.
- I currently use Scott Foresman for phonemic awareness. We also use Saxon phonics for the reading component
- Our literacy program is based on the district adopted basal (Scott Foresman) with a district teaching calendar given to us. I also use Guided Reading leveled books
- The reading program we use is called Voyager Universal Literacy. our Reading Block consists of: Friendship Circle, Reading Stations, Teacher Station, and Writing Connection
- Our district has adopted the McGraw-Hill Treasures program for our KG reading curriculum
- Using quality assessments, both formal and informal, I determine my students' needs and tailor a literacy program to ensure success for all.
- We use Macmillan and supplement with our own curriculum
- We use "Reading Street" by Scott Foresman. We use it daily, as it is set up in the Teacher's Edition. Our administrator has put strict guidelines on our teaching since NCLB.
- My classroom literacy program is based on Mary Legan's Reading Ideas book. Her strategies are hands on and her sequence of instruction is ideal for early childhood education. Students read about, discuss, write about, and experience various aspects of skills essential to reading and writing success.
- each child is assessed in the areas of phonics and phonemic awareness then each child is instructed at his/her first identified need
- Each week we read/sing a letter song and color song. I teach using thematic units, and include thematic literature that is read daily. I also re-read a story each week. By the end of the week the students are reading the predictable book with me. We make books as a class and take turns sending them home to read with family
- I use a mixed phonics and whole language approach. We have a strong focus on oral vocabulary and writing
- Balanced Literacy with and extra focus on oral language development
- Leveled to meet individual needs. Guided reading, leveled according to assessments administered, and interventions implemented. Follow up assessments to assess gains/losses
- My classroom houses 20 second graders. We use authentic literature to read, analyze, speak and write about stories. We practice reading individually, in small groups and in large groups. We are an Oklahoma A+ school that is committed to teaching with and through the arts. Literacy is enriched with drama, movement, visual art and music. Multiple Intelligences are considered as lessons are created. This is the foundation of differentiation, allowing all students to be successful and challenged.
- I have taught in a full-day Kng program for the past 3 years. We completed a 5 year grant with Reading First. (Thank goodness!) We are still asked to adhere to many of the Reading First practices. We adopted Scotts Foresman this year so it is a learning process and quite difficult to

have the Reading First mentality of "fidelity to the core" (which I disagree with anyway). The literature choices in the manual are often poor and has no relativity or connections to the children. (Who reads about bugs in January in OK!) Along with instruction from the teacher guide, my 90 minutes of Literacy includes 40 minutes of literacy centers. Under the grant, the centers were not allowed to be integrated. Now, we have a little more creativity and flexibility in center activities. During other times of the day, I work in author studies and re-enacting stories. We use Dibel's to assess students every other week and they are placed in intervention - -20 minutes a day/4 days a week based on those scores

- The reading program is based on the PASS objectives for third grade. I use supplemental material of all types to accommodate the reading process. Students work in whole groups, small groups and individually.
- Saxon Phonics supplementing with Literacy 1st
- The district adopted literature series, Open Court literacy program, literature books.
- whole group instruction: shared reading guided comprehension modeling of reading strategies
small group instruction: guided reading writing workshop phonics instruction
- I use explicit, systematic phonics instruction, literature (almost whole-language) including think alouds, and reading texts to reach every student I can
- Guided reading groups, based on reading fluency and comprehension. Daily practice reading in class with reading assignments each night for homework. I maintain a reading log and award prizes as students reach their reading goals
- I teach a separate phonics program plus phonics based reading program. We also use Accelerated Reading in our school
- I teach music, but I incorporate stories with the T-1, 1st & 2nd graders. I begin with a "hook" to get them interested in the story, I read the story, we discuss the characters and the events, then we either listen to the music or sing the song pertaining to the music. The children are allowed to retell the story as a choral or individually and act it out
- We are a Reading First school. We have to test the children using the DIBELS tests. We have to have a 90 minute reading block in which we have whole group reading/ reading centers/ small group instruction/ and independent seatwork time
- I use a combination of strategies from Four Blocks, Literacy First, and other trainings I've attended throughout the years. My students are assessed on a regular basis and instruction is individualized accordingly. The 5 second grade teachers in my building group for guided reading instruction based on these levels. I integrate trade books into all other areas of the curriculum including Math, Science, Social Studies, and English
- My school district just adopted Rigby's reading series. We love it. As a title teacher we used leveled guided reading books to teach our groups. We level our students with the Developmental Reading Assessment to get an accurate level and move them up (or down) by doing running records on leveled texts
- I model writing several times per day, talking while demonstrating what I am doing. I read as a group, shared reading. I meet with each group daily and use guided reading and or work individually with students. Children are working at learning centers while I work with small groups. Reading and writing are available at each and every center and at rest time on their mat. We finish each day with a story or quick write about a story
- Whole group, flex groups, SSR, Phonics, Reader's Theater, computer software, AR, STAR
- Macmillan/McGraw Hill- this is the first year to use it. We are still trying to figure it out.
- We use the four blocks method. We use Literacy First as our reading assessment for reading sufficiency. I do writing, guided reading, working with words, and quiet uninterrupted silent reading and read aloud every day
- We are presently using the newly adopted basal program (Scott Foresman Reading Street)

- My classroom was thoroughly saturated with reading and writing in all the curriculum areas. I had the most success with integrating listening skill, higher order thinking skills and spelling skills into science, math, and reading all day long. As a librarian I try to move around the AR program by adding excellent trade books that strengthen social studies, science , and math. I strongly recommend the books on parts of speech and fun books on poetry that cover all areas of our curriculum
- Literature Book and A.R. book tests
- All reading/literacy is selected by the early childhood team to correlate to an overarching theme based on PASS. We use quality literature for reading out loud, morning message and journals for writing, phonics and knowledge of print skills
- I use our district's adopted reading program (Scott Foresman) supplemented with Early Success and Know-Its. I teach these under the parameters of the Four Block model
- The main component in my program involves using real books and literature. I use a modified "guided reading" approach along with "The Daily Five," which I've also modified to suit my purposes. I supplement with our reading series. My students do lots of writing and I publish their work...their published pieces also become a major part of our reading program
- I am a PreK teacher with two half day sections of 20 students in each section. I use the Frog Street Press Curriculum with all of it's extensions, computers literacy games, and many Lakeshore reading/literacy manipulatives for centers
- Our current adopted series is Macmillan. We previously used Harcourt and I still use many of their materials. I incorporate phonemic awareness, phonics, oral language, read alouds in lessons on a daily basis. Student reading and writing is incorporated on a regular basis.
- I do units of study with non-fiction themes like spiders. We read, write and draw about what we learn. I use puppets that have a letter theme to develop letter/sound skills and to involve parents with the child retelling at home and answering questions, finding pictures, etc. to earn rewards. I use "Me Bags" (show and tell with a journal) to strengthen skills like beginning sounds and rhyming. A child must complete the journal page with a parent and then the class gets to ask questions to figure out what they brought
- As of this year, we are fully utilizing Comprehension Toolkit, as a district, and my reading/literacy program utilizes fiction and non-fiction from a variety of sources, focusing on small group and differentiated individual instruction
- Our school uses Scott Foresman for literacy. However, I take an eclectic approach and use what best meets the needs of my students
- Very phonics based. hands -on using letter tiles incorporate Saxon phonics, Scott-Forsman, and Navigate Readiness
- My classroom is k-3 class of 17 students identified as gifted/talented. I use district curriculum for non-readers and early readers, plus provide lots of extra language arts center activities, such as bookmaking, magnetic alphabet letters, reading area, listening center, etc. Other groups practice oral reading from district reading curriculum, plus individual reading contracts which address OK-PASS objectives for their grade level. As much as possible, most language arts activities are incorporated into social studies and science activities. Peer tutoring is also prevalent in the classroom.
- Houghton Mifflin program with Saxon Phonics additional supplement
- We use Literach 1st for assessments but also use the Scott Forsman reading series. We are not a Literacy 1st school

APPENDIX J: *Personal Story Experiences*

Drama Related Responses
Students retold, reenacted the story of Corduroy. They had to predict what would happen as the story entailed, explain how the store compared to real life comparisons, and tell how each character felt throughout the story. They had to relate this story to the own life of wanting a special toy.
2. During a fairy tales unit, I provide masks and other props for students to retell stories. For Three Billy Goats Gruff, I provide a balance board for students to use as the bridge - the students love to act out the story repeatedly.
3. Our Media Director loves storytelling. She has done the book, Baby Rattlesnake, with our 2nd graders for many years. She tells the story and they act out some of the parts. The love it!
4. Story of Three Little Pigs. Retold the story using music/dance to act out story. Children loved it. They ask to do it again and again.
5. Students enjoyed doing reader theaters, acting out characters in the story, changing story endings, and demonstrating through drawing different scenes for their stories.
6. Reader's Theater has been positive. I often have students who are very low readers who have been able to shine through Reader's Theater.
7. As a group, we retell the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears by acting it out with props, such as spoons/bowls, chairs, etc. We do this several times so all children can participate.
8. I have a "classroom friend" volunteer who for 8 years has come to my room once a week. She is very involved in our Community Theatre and is very dramatic in her readings. The students absolutely adore her so of course our weekly activities always center around literature. Mainly we do play acting of stories, singing, and lots of poetry.
9. We recently acted out Barn Dance by Bill Martin, Jr. The children commented on the rhythm and rhyme of the words. Also, I heard, "This is fun!" (Love of literature!) Students were focused on the story sequence as the characters approached the barn.
10. I love it when parents come to me and say that their child acted out one of our stories at home, or used retelling to repeat the story.
11. The play "The City Mouse and the Country Mouse" was the best example. It was a wonderful experience for me, my students, and parents.
12. The best experience is when I hear students using the props or books to retell the stories we have done together as a class. That lets me know what vocabulary and story structure they have truly internalized
13. The students have learned a great deal about explorers of the Americas through the use of stories and storytelling. For instance, we have used readers theater and student created dramas to deepen the students' understanding of the content.
14. During the National Board process I was writing about one of my students who rarely spoke. When we acted out "The Three Bears," she was Goldilocks. She did repeat the lines after I said them, which was a major accomplishment for her. The "fun" of acting out the story seemed to help her relax and use her verbal skills.
15. My students love to dramatize stories they know. This gives them an opportunity to be someone else and feel less inhibited to try new words while acquiring a new language.
16. At the beginning of the year, we studied fables. In collaboration with our Media Specialist (also a NBCT), we read and acted out favorite fables. Children worked cooperatively with a group, planning and sharing their fable. They had criteria to meet. Their story must include the announcement of the title, acting it out had to include a beginning, middle and end and they had to share the moral at the end. We also include criteria and vocabulary from the National Standards for the Arts- specifically drama standards. They could use any art materials needed to create their props and costumes. Children were given a weighted checklist as their assessment. Another experience was to create a shadow puppet show for another fable. This was a project the media specialist worked on with small groups. They were required to include the setting, characters and story. They were given a rubric before they began. They shared their shadow puppet show and the media specialist recorded their performance. At another time, they viewed their video, reflected on their work and assessed themselves using their rubric. By then, the students had a firm grasp of character, setting, problem, solution, beginning-middle-end, and the characteristics of fables. The next step was for students to write their own fable. We used our classroom agreements (which the students created) as the "moral" of our fables. Children chose the agreement they wanted to use and animals from one habitat (a little science lesson integrated into our unit). Their story

needed the other elements mentioned above as well. To create their stories, we moved slowly through the writing process. I truly feel confident that my students understand story structure and the characteristics of the genre of fables.
17. I've never had a negative experience with story telling! Three of my favorite stories to tell, retell, and act out are "Wide Mouth Frog", "The Crayon Box that Talked" by Shane Dewolf and "A Promise is a Promise" by Robert Munsch. That last two were long projects - -covering over a month. The children performed their versions of the story and incorporated music and dance into the retelling.
18. I had a student who was being stubborn about his individual reading time. He was bored, it was too hard, too easy etc. I connected with him about our liking for movies. After sharing with him that a book is a movie written on paper and that he could be the director making the story come alive, he has been reading without hesitation. He has even asked to read books I did not think he would even be interested in.
19. Every class has a favorite story that they want to hear over and over again. This year my class has retold their favorite story in their journal writing and in the large group area they made backgrounds for this year which I laminated so that it could be reused as they acted the story out on the carpet. I made a power point story where I could take pictures of the children and show them acting the story out with the words on the page. Then we recorded their voices into the microphone and put their words into the power point.
20. There are so many...For example, I use "reader's theatre" a lot with my students to help with fluency...it has greatly improved the fluency of my students. I also use "story gloves" to help them with various comprehension strategies.
21. After reading the Three Billy Goats Gruff, I had the children act out the story by taking turns being the characters. We used the classroom table and chairs as the bridge. My student's that hardly ever get involved couldn't wait to stomp across the bridge and repeat the lines from the story. My quietest student was very excited to be the Troll under the bridge. Then when we drew in our daily story journals, I had most of my class draw a bridge with a Troll and three Billy Goats. Each of them could retell this story with ease.
22. This year's parents and students can't wait for the next puppet assignment. I am often asked clarification questions about what the child remembers. I think that this will increase these students vocabulary, comprehension and story recall skills.
23. I am not a big puppet person BUT each time that I use them in my Pre-K class, the kids eyes light up! The reactions from my students encourage me to use the puppets as a strategy.
Negative responses
24. I read a story that I thought was within the same topic area. I did not pre read the story and it was way off.
25. I was asked if the story I was telling was in our reading curriculum
26. Nursery Rhymes - Different versions are sometimes confusing to the early learners. They want it told the way their parent tells it. I have heard them say, " I didn't tell it right".
27. Last year my class wrote their own stories. Being able to share their own stories with their parents on our share night had a big impact on them.
28. We read "Mancrow" which was a story from Africa. Later I gave each child an Indian name for our Nov. Native Am. emphasis....one little boy wanted Mancrow because his last name was Crow and when he made his headdress, he had 1 red feather just like our story.
29. I've introduced mystery stories to my 1st graders. We are presently reading a story by Bill Wallace (an Oklahoma author) called, Trapped in Death Cave. It is a murder mystery and they are loving it.
30. My favorite part of the school day is reading aloud to my students. We choose books from all different genres. After reading Charlotte's Web to my students, we watched the movie. We were discussing how different the movie was from the book. One student said.... You know what...the movie wasn't near as good as the book. I loved it!
31. Almost daily, when I am reading aloud (a chapter book which is a couple of levels above the reading level of my highest reader), my students are making text-to-self and text-to-text connections, both of which enhance 'meaning making' and strengthen comprehension.
32. I taught the children how to give a brief sentence of two when telling the story. The other students would then have to ask questions. This would peak interest before the student would continue on with the story.
33. Just recently, we talked about history as being a story about what happened. Then we started telling our own personal histories. It was a very rich discussion that helped my first graders see a reason for history.
34. I told an embarrassing moment story and then had the students tell one. Then we wrote stories about them. They were able to all pull stories from prier knowledge of past experiences and create good stories. It was a good sharing experience. And very informative.
35. I use storytelling or a good story when I want to redirect the students.

36. I often tell stories as fables to teach the children lessons. Many times the stories are to teach the importance of why we do things a certain way or procedure we need to follow. It often provides examples of consequences when we need them.
7. I used story necklaces with my class. My students loved retelling their stories to friends and families with their necklaces. I then presented the idea at a workshop and many teachers had never used story necklaces and were excited to learn a new strategy.
38. I did my masters studies on the benefits of reading orally to my students. It showed a significance increase in their vocabulary and reading skills. I try to read to my students as often as possible!
39. To build self-esteem, I choose a child for student of the day. They help dictate a story to me about them and we share it with the class. Then they get to take it home later that day.
40. I read Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day and I set up an Australia in my classroom for students to do sit if they were having a bad day. The time allowed was a 3 minute egg timer. When other students saw that someone was having a bad day, they showed sympathy and consideration. It is a great tool.
41. I cannot recall one NEGATIVE experience derived from story and storytelling! I believe that it is VITAL for the first grade classroom every single day!
42. Story time is always a special time for my students and me. They are always calm and attentive listeners. They look forward to this special time ..some of which they don't get at home.
43. They have all been positive
44. Using stories has always been a positive experience for me. I do not do storytelling per se (making up a story), but I loved to use chapter books and get kids to become involved in predicting and anticipating the outcome of each chapter / story.
45. We read the story Dozgzilla aloud in class and discussed the story. We discussed beginning, middle, and end of the story. We brainstormed things that would happen in the story after the ending. (It is a perfect story to extend.) I put three colors of paper into a jar and had the students draw one out. They had to write the beginning, middle or end of the extended story depending on which color they got. They put their names on the paper, then put the paper back into the jar. After the story parts were written, I drew out three different colors of paper with names. Each child read their part of the story, beginning with the child that had the "beginning" color. The children loved their stories and loved the response from the other students. Even the children with writing and reading problems had a positive experience with this assignment
46. One of my favorite uses of storytelling is allowing my first graders to tell the story of the loss of each tooth as it comes out. Often that means telling a story about something that has just happened, or something that happened last night at home. All the children listen to the classmate tell their story. It has to be loud and clear enough for all to understand (I don't repeat). Then students are called on to retell the beginning, middle and end of the story, and identify the setting and characters. This is a very simple, spontaneous and meaningful activity that reinforces so many speaking, listening and literature skills.
47. In my student's take home reading journal, the mom wrote, "That was so much fun. His dad, brother and him read the book over and over and told the story real scary (at home) all week." His brother was a former student and was excited to read the book again. During a hay ride a 5th grade girl asked me to tell the same story...she hadn't heard it since pre-k!
48. I cannot think of one specific ex. I know that my children love to listen to stories and we have very good conversations about the stories that we read in class.
49. This is always been an extremely positive experience. I am able to see the pupils lengthen their attention span. They often try to look for library books with the same author and a follow-up book in a series (such as Junie B. Jones for example).
50. Allows students to become a part of the story and one child who was never read to actually had one of those light bulb moments. Oh, this is what stories are! type thing
51. Often times I use art to "hook" my students before we write stories. I create art shapes on the chalkboard to brainstorm vocabulary and ideas they might use in their story. Because I use lots of color and create simple shapes, it gets my student going and excited to begin writing their own story. Usually, I present a story or other source of inspiration to get them interested in creating their own story. Ex. We are currently writing fall leaf stories. I drew a big colorful leaf on the board with colored chalk. Then we brainstormed our ideas within the leaf. It was a very successful story writing experience.
52. I have found that when I introduce items and characters before the story that the children are more excited and attentive. Then, I place items on a board after the story and they decide if the items were in the story, and if so, where in

the story and how they were used. This seems to set the stage, aid in interest, and provide a tie in of vocabulary.
53. Introducing Phonics Concepts through stories and poetry. Weekly Fluency Poems Fluency Journals
54. currently I'm using the story Bunny Time Telling Time from Breakfast to Bedtime to teach the concepts of "before", the past, and time. My students are relating to the story, because many things that occur in the story occur at home, they attend to the rather lengthy text because it's fun and rhythmic and they are beginning to understand the concept of "past" & "before" as I use the illustrations to demonstrate the concepts.
55. I just don't know how to respond to this!! :) I can't think of anything negative. It is such a wonderfully fun and successful way to teach! I use some form of it every day.
56. We were having a discipline problem in the bus lines in the cafeteria after school. I took a book over today and read to the students and it changed the behavior of the children drastically. I would like to actually tell stories on my own without books but my memory isn't what it used to be.
57. Every time I read a story I hear my students using the same wording and vocabulary that was used in my stories. When I hear my students using new vocabulary that they have been exposed to in my stories, it makes my day!
58. Children develop a love for a particular author and request those stories over and over. One such story is The Five Chinese Brothers. I find this interesting because this was one of my favorite stories as a child. I think the ability of the brothers to use their special powers to save the other brothers is appealing to young children. It also contains a certain amount of mystery to it. Year after year I have read this story to my students and I have never grown tired of it.
59. Joe was having difficulty with sketching pictures and labeling them using sounds and stretching out words. He wanted an adult sitting with him from beginning to end. I decided to change/alter our label unit to label books. The students think of a familiar or favorite thing and break it into parts. Four page books-(example: elephant, trunk, eyes, legs) Joe felt more at ease for several reasons: the pages were 1/4 sheets stapled together and so the expectations seemed less overwhelming, the focus was on one specific thing and he was not trying to think of a story. We worked on this unit for two weeks and by doing so he was able to feel confidence. He was able to share his books with others and read the words. This confidence carried over into our next unit.
60. I always love it when a parent comes to me and says how their child has come home from school telling about the story we read in class. Or when they share facts with their families from books we have read, and everyone from home is amazed!
61. At the beginning of the year, I introduce the elements of a story by having the students write their own stories. (autobiography) One of my students was adopted and didn't know a lot of his story. I think both the National Board Process and NCLB stress the importance of meeting the needs of every student. My adopted student needed a lot of sensitivity and encouragement for that assignment, and I was very happy to give it to him.
62. Students use personal experiences to create stories in the classroom. Once they have told about their experiences, they learn to write those down and put them in proper paragraphs. We do a study every year of our community and the many famous people who have come from it. We then visit their museums or memorials in town and write about what we learned and experienced there.
63. It was a time when a pre-k student of mine lost a cousin in a car accident that they were very close to and it helped him so much express his feelings.
64. Our children are loving the Skippy John Jones books. They beg for them to be read, and will frequently quote phrases from the books and tell each other their favorite parts of the different books. They also write stories about Skippy in their Journals or variations of the books
65. A story read in class about gardening, branched out into hunting and how planting a wheat field would attract wildlife to a specific area.
66. Our new reading series uses big books each week to introduce stories and themes. The kids love them and love re-reading them over and over and over!
67. I read Martin's Big Words to my class. We discussed what the author meant by "big" words and how we each could make the world a better place. When we drew pictures, two students who did not often agree, got into a disagreement about how one of their drawings (a person drinking coffee) could make the world a better place. The one student explained that grown ups seem much happier after they drink their coffee, and smiles help everyone. The first student smiled, and said oh, I get it. Interestingly, these two students seemed to be friends after this and they would even verbally support one another in learning and friendships. Without the coffee-drinking discussion based on the story of Martin's Big Words, these two students would not have found common ground
68. When I introduced the concept of contractions, I asked my students to stand up and stick their arms out as far as possible. Then I asked them to pull their arms back in and give themselves a hug. Next, I explained that when something is big and gets smaller that it contracts. Then I gave the example of the words do and not coming together to be the word

<p>don't. I said that don't was a contraction. I asked several other students to think of other words that are contractions. Then I told each student to go home and tell their folks that they learned about contractions at school today. The next day, I asked how many parents were surprised at how smart they were. The kids love impressing their parents and learning new things.</p>
<p>69. Our class may a call to the author of a story we read in class. The story was about a veterinarian and her clinic. We actual spoke to the author and she answered our questions. The kids were so excited!</p>
<p>70. Students get so involved in a specific story, they cry during the story.</p>
<p>71. I enjoy looking for words with the sound we are working on for the week and the kids also listen for it as I'm reading and watch the words as I read. We point out a lot of words as I read that have our sound or are a vocab word we have been working on.</p>
<p>72. I have an author of the month program that has really sparked student interest in particular authors. They feel like they get to know them. I have had older students comment to me about how they went on to do author studies on their own or follow some of the same authors I presented in class on their own.</p>
<p>73. I can't really narrow it down to one. In general I would say that it is the ability to get children engaged in the "story" that is so motivating even when the children struggle academically. It gives them a purpose for all of the tediousness that is really involved in learning to read. What is reading and writing anyway, without a story?</p>
<p>74. Well, one of my students was talking to his mom about the chapter book we had just finished reading. It happened to be A Dog Called Kitty by bill Wallace. He told her how sad it was. She asked "How come you think all the best books are so sad?" and he said, "Because that makes our heart grow." So the mom emailed me thanking me for "helping her son's heart to grow." :)</p>
<p>75. Our school has a high Hispanic enrollment and often has students who come not knowing any English. One particular student came in November to our classroom and I decided to just immerse him in English all day. By January he was volunteering to hold books as we listened to tapes and by March he reading aloud the easy books we used for a particularly interesting snake unit. Stories meant everything to him and gave him a comfortable environment to learn in. He tested out of ESL in 2 years!!</p>
<p>76. I know when a story has been successful when the first words out of the students mouths are "do it again!"</p>
<p>77. I love to share personal stories with the children and then get them to share their own personal stories. They love to hear them and many years later, 30 to be exact, I have heard my former students retell the stories to me that they heard in first grade! Now that's comprehension!</p>
<p>78. My class of 20 students read 424 books in the month of October.</p>

APPENDIX K
OSU IRB Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Friday, October 24, 2008
IRB Application No ED08162
Proposal Title: Tell Me a Story, PLEASE!

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 10/23/2009

Principal Investigator(s):

Carol M. Ford ✓ 9151 South 13th Street East Muskogee, OK 74403	Kathryn Castle 235 Willard Stillwater, OK 74078
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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

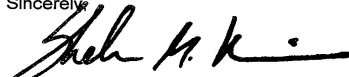
The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Carol Mae Ford

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: OKLAHOMA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED
TEACHERS' VIEWS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND,
THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS,
AND STORY WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

Major Field: Curriculum and Social Foundations

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Pennsylvania on June 13, 1957. The daughter of Roy and Anna Mae Owens. Married to Ronnie Joe Ford and the mother of Rian and Rafe Ford.

Education: Graduated from Bloomsburg State University in PA in 1979 with a degree in Special Education.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Education from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK in December,

Experience: Employed as an Early Childhood Special Education teacher in Muskogee, OK since 1982.

Earned Early Childhood National Board Certification in 1999

Earned Early Childhood National Board Recertification in 2008

Professional Memberships:

Muskogee Education Association

Oklahoma Education Association

National Education Association

American Association of Teaching and Curriculum

Name: Carol Mae Ford

Date of Degree: May, 2009

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: Oklahoma's Early Childhood National Board Certified Teachers' View of
No Child Left Behind, The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,
and Story within the Curriculum

Pages in Study: 180

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Education

Scope and Method of Study: This was a mixed methods study to determine how Oklahoma's Early Childhood NBCTs view the connections between NCLB, NBPTS and story. An online survey was sent to all of Oklahoma's Early Childhood NBCTs which consisted of multiple choice and open ended questions. Analysis consisted of a combination of the survey results, the researcher's personal experiences and the professional literature.

Findings and Conclusions: Results of the study show that story was considered very valuable by the respondents. The teachers, for the most part made no modifications, experienced no enhancements and felt no limitations from NCLB in regard to story. Comments did show the teachers needed or wanted more time to incorporate story, as well as play, in the classroom. Drama was a key element in the responses, both positively and negatively. Drama was listed more frequently than any other student driven strategy within the survey. It was also listed most frequently by the few respondents who have stopped using some strategies since the certification process. Drama was also the most talked about story-related memory listed. Themes that emerged from the study describe the OKECNBCTs as autonomous instructors who understand the value and benefits of story and storytelling and utilize effective story-related strategies that construct, connect and create learning within the curriculum.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Kathryn Castle
