Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2008 Volume II: Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life

Reshaping our Lives with the Circular Journey of Storytelling

Curriculum Unit 08.02.05
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Introduction

> "I had to search within myself for something which my classmates could not have learned in that school, in the country, or in the planet for that matter" (Cisneros interview, 1992).

Don't we all have something unique within? Haven't we all had some experience others could treasure and learn from? In teaching students to see themselves as storytellers, and by fostering a classroom culture in which all stories are valuable connections to the human experience, we, as a community of learners, unite ourselves in an ancient tradition, and in the telling of our stories, thereby pass the gift on to others.

Giving language to our thoughts and personal experiences provides the opportunity to share them with others. Therefore, the telling of our stories becomes powerful in its ability to convey the experience to others, in its ability to connect us to the human experience, while simultaneously having the ability to teach us about ourselves. In *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models, and Maxims for Writing Teachers,* Ann Berthoff cites Vygotsky's notion that language and thought are simultaneous and correlative, rather than having a sequential relationship. Berthoff says that composing is a continuum of meaning-making, that we compose in order to make sense of the world. Furthermore, she asserts that language, in its discursive character, is powerful (69). Berthoff refers to the classroom as a theater, or forum, "as language can only be realized in social context" (72). The more I read, research and reflect on storytelling, the more I am convinced that all writing connects us to others somehow, whether or not we share the author's experience. Throughout this unit students will learn to use language and thought simultaneously in order to compose and share their stories in the social context of the classroom. They will make that connection with others and appreciate each unique story. They will learn to use the discursive power of language to make their own meaning of their world. Students will learn to reflect on their experiences as well as their writing. Storytelling as a continuum of meaning-making is what I'll refer to from here on as the circular journey.

To understand what I mean by circular journeys throughout the unit, it is important to consider the recursive process of maturing, evolving, and growing. Most of our stories do not have linear paths, but rather start with the individual (already entrenched in culture, tradition, beliefs, and values) who ventures out and away, and

ultimately circles back, or returns to self, home, or values, but nonetheless is changed somehow by the journey. If we thought of our lives as a linear path, we would never return to our memories, never revisit our past, and never learn to reinvent ourselves. Throughout this unit, the students will learn to think of writing and composing much the same way. It will be a journey that is both recursive and evolutionary. Writing their stories will teach students about themselves, and learning about themselves will teach them to grow as writers.

Learning Objectives/New Haven Curriculum Power Standards

· 1.2.f: Identify and discuss underlying significant themes
· 2.1.c: Explain and explore aesthetic reactions to text
· 2.1.d: Analyze (and utilize) literary conventions and devices in order to contribute to meaning and appeal
· 2.4.c: Discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text
· 3.1.a: Use oral language with clarity, voice and fluency to communicate a message
· 3.1.b: Listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing
· 3.1.d: Write to delight in the imagination
· 3.2.f: Publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways

Rationale

This unit was conceived specifically with incoming freshman in mind. As do students in any high school, Wilbur Cross students enter ninth grade with trepidation, anxiety, fear of the unknown, insecurities, common and individual experiences, as well as their own histories and cultural perspectives. More importantly, all students enter with unique and powerful stories to tell. It is this *power* in storytelling that I am most interested in. The students will retrace the circles they have journeyed through, the process of starting at home, either literally or metaphorically speaking, venturing out into the world of experience, returning home: anew, changed, and matured for better or worse. In retracing their journeys, students will experience the power in the telling of these stories, the power of claiming and reframing all experiences in strength. Helping students to simultaneously learn about themselves, and about the writing process is the main goal, while enhancing the

dynamics of our classroom learning community becomes an immeasurably beneficial byproduct.

At the beginning of each new school year I have students write a lot about themselves, a subject they know better than anything else. I use a variety of questions and prompts that probe for the essence of each individual student so that I might catch a glimpse of who they are. In reflecting on my teaching over the years, I've realized that I've had them do this writing for my sake, so that I could get to know them better and have that knowledge help guide my instruction. But with the dynamics as such, their teacher being a strange (to them), middle aged white woman, and they, teenagers of every ethnic group, their class mates from a pool of at least 25 schools across the district, the writing, relatively personal in nature, and most importantly, the trust between all of us not yet developed, I often learn very little about my students, and they, equally as little about themselves. Therefore, instead of asking students to tell me about themselves in this aforementioned quasi-autobiographical style, we will begin the year by learning about storytelling.

Beyond just the telling of their stories, another goal is to teach students how to use the craft of storytelling to fictionalize their experiences. In fictionalizing their stories, the writers create anonymity and privacy which allows the freedom to explore topics that otherwise might be very difficult to both write about and share. Fictionalizing also allows the writer to play around with multiple perspectives. As the final phase of storytelling involves going public, there is a valued safety in having ones classmates assume that all stories are fictional unless previously identified as otherwise. Therefore, we will focus on a variety of strategies that help the writers learn to fictionalize characters, events, experiences, and family histories. Learning to appreciate literary conventions and devices is a skill that all ninth graders are required to improve upon as part of the critical stance portion of the CAPT.

Unit Overview

Just as language and thought are correlative, so too are reading and writing. You cannot very well become an inspirational storyteller if you haven't read, studied, or been moved by stories yourself. This unit focuses on a variety of stories that range from children's picture books, to young adult literature, to adult fiction. Students will study the various structures of storytelling in existing stories and in their own writing. They'll study children's picture books, Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street,* and Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* as models for telling the stories of their own journeys. The culminating project will be a collection, or portfolio, of their favorite original stories which they will share with the class orally.

I am often surprised by the overwhelming response of my students to hearing stories read, or told to them out loud. It doesn't seem to matter which age group or grade, kids love to *hear* stories, not just read them silently. Therefore, the unit will begin with the oral tradition of storytelling as I'll read to the class from a collection of children's picture books, starting with Leo Lionni. In his introduction of Lionni's *Frederick's Fables: a Leo Lionni Treasury of Favorite Stories,* Bruno Bettelheim says "Only when words begin to say something of real significance to us has [the story] served its purpose: that of providing us with the material of meaning to our existence." This supports Berthoff's idea of composing as a continuum for meaning making and reiterates the idea that language holds the power to communicate what is significant. For children, it is not just the language that is powerful, but the images as well. Lionni's picture books are as loved for their illustrations as they are for their language, both of which work together by inciting the child's imagination, and telling a story that

transmits something of meaning to the child. As we get older we develop the skill of automatically visualizing images as we take in language, but developmentally, young children need the images to stay engaged with the text.

In having stories read aloud to them, my students will be able to enjoy the entire experience of storytelling as I will model methods used by storytellers to capture audiences. For example, I'll use my body language, whether it's eye contact or gestures to punctuate important moments in the story. I'll use my voice by changing the volume, pitch, tone, speed, or dialect as called for to create mood. All of this will be gradually introduced, discussed, and imitated as the unit progresses, for students will ultimately be expected to share their stories with the class. They too will use oral language and all the aforementioned storytelling techniques in order to convey meaning and emotion.

As part of our picture book collection we'll read Aesop's fables aloud, discussing the structure, craft, and moral of each. Students will use these fables as models for their own first story, which they will eventually either read, or tell to the class. In writing these fables, students not only learn about storytelling structure and the process of fictionalizing family stories, but they also learn about themselves and their classmates. By studying fables, students will learn to fictionalize characters (for anonymity) by turning them into animal representations of themselves, or other people in their lives. Since the fables are short we'll be able to read a wide variety of them in order to explore the animal character's traits, as well as the moral of each. As they study the moral of each fable, students will begin to consider the lessons they've learned in their personal experiences as fodder for their own writing.

This segues nicely into another writing activity from Ponsot's book, the format of which is a sentence starter that begins: "Once I was _____, but now I am _____" (72). What this asks writers to do is to explore what has happened between the past and present that has been the catalyst for change. This is the journey I'd like students to explore in their storytelling in order to complete the circle, reshape what has hurt them, highlight what has guided them, and connect them to other writers in their learning community. In having students begin with childhood memories, childhood stories, we give them a natural place to start telling their stories, to explore where they've come from and how that's shaped who they are. It also allows them to naturally explore all that they've experienced, while giving them a place, a history, a story to return to. The following is an excerpt from Ponsot's text, *Beat not the Poor Desk,* which explains the rationale for using these fable writing activities: "the childhood anecdotes give the reader confidence…these anecdotes provide something imaginative for everyone to give (29). All of my students will learn that they have something to give to the classroom community.

Any of the unit's writing activities can be used with a variety of children's books. Another that lends itself particularly well to the discussion of circular journeys is Ezra Jack Keats' *Regards to the Man in the Moon.* This book speaks to a slightly older audience than "Swimmy," as the text, images, and dialogue are not only more plentiful, but more sophisticated and complicated. Yet the message is simple: Louie doesn't fit in because his father is known as the junkman. Keats might be hinting at biased class distinctions, or perhaps discrimination against children who are different from their peers; nonetheless he uses Louie as the ostracized individual who goes on a journey both literally and figuratively, only to return home, anew in his place in the world. By encouraging his would-be friends to use their imagination, Louie has redefined himself and the "junk" that initially plagued him.

Starting the unit with children's picture books has several benefits. It reminds us of what we loved about reading when we were young, or for some, introduces that joy for the first time in a way that is not

intimidating or threatening. Picture books also provide concrete examples of characterization. What Cisneros does abstractly in creating Esperanza's persona, Lionni has done by painting Swimmy as a small, unique, black fish. Picture books are the best tool I can think of to introduce students to the concept of fictionalizing their own stories in order to explore and ultimately share them. By asking students to identify and then connect personally to thematic threads in the children's stories, we are automatically, yet indirectly, showing them the endless possibilities for weaving the threads of their own experience into beautiful tapestries of fiction.

The House on Mango Street

The House on Mango Street will be an integral part of this unit in terms of both reading and writing. Cisneros writes in a style that is appealing and accessible to students at all skill levels, which is important to a classroom of heterogeneously grouped teens. Cisneros uses the stories of her life as fodder for her fictional vignettes, a craft I'd like students to learn in their own writing. Cisneros' collection of vignettes begins with the innocence of childhood, the fond memories of friends, and the bond shared with family. She then chronicles several of Esperanza's adventures out into the world, writing about events that take away innocence-ones that challenge what Esperanza knows and believes. Yet she ends up back at home, writing for those who couldn't get out of the neighborhood, or the cycle of poverty.

In this sense, *The House on Mango Street* is a perfect text for students to study structurally and aesthetically as a model for colorful storytelling that traces a circular journey and is grounded in rich cultural history. As we read "My Name," and other vignettes in *Mango Street,* the students will emulate Cisneros' writing process of using old family stories, legends, or anecdotes commonly shared orally in order to explore stories of their own. For example, Esperanza uses her name to tell a story about herself, her grandmother, and her desire to break the cycle of unfair gender expectations. She recalls an old story about her grandmother (whose name she shares) being carried off in a sack and taken as a bride to illustrate her family's traditional "place" for women. The students will later use their own names and any personal family stories, legends or traditions to tell a fictionalized story that makes meaning of their experience, while featuring elements of author's craft and theme.

As I mentioned earlier, students always seem to love hearing a story read aloud. Couple this with Cisneros' remarks about her stories, and it makes perfect sense to use audio at this stage of the unit. "For me, a story's a story if people want to *hear* it; it's very much based on oral storytelling. And for me, a story is a story when people give me the privilege of listening when I'm speaking it out loud" (Cisneros, interview, 1992). We will alternate between reading Cisneros' text, and listening to a CD of Cisneros reading *The House on Mango Street* in class. Cisneros' unique voice only adds to the personality of her already captivating vignettes from which students learn about Esperanza, the book's young Latina protagonist, her neighborhood, her family, her journey, her obstacles, and her strength. Hearing Cisneros read her own writing helps the reader envision what the author intended for her stories. Cisneros writes as a representative of those who are frequently disenfranchised, therefore it is important to hear Cisneros' voice as Esperanza as it helps to capture the essence of her character; it is also a helpful tool for the students to continue studying the techniques of storytelling for an audience.

At this point in the unit, I will have reminded the class that while Cisneros draws on her rich personal experience to tell her stories, we cannot assume that her work is autobiographical, nor should we confuse Esperanza with Cisneros. Rather, we should draw on our knowledge of storytelling, as well as our own experiences, to understand the reasons Cisneros traces Esperanza's journey; we should explore the reasons Cisneros might choose to retell the stories of those traditionally left out of American history and popular culture, from her perspective. Of this notion, Cisneros responds in the following quotation during an interview with Gayle Elliot: "I can't stand when I read authors that don't know anything about our community writing about us, or even when I read men who do know our community but don't know the half of the communitydon't know the women's halfwriting about us. I feel like Latino men misrepresent Latina women." As with the children's books, students will follow the protagonist's journey, identify and analyze elements author's craft, make personal connections, and write about the themes Cisneros tackles in n *The House on Mango Street.*

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time

While most of my students enjoy Cisneros' writing, I do get a few complaints from male students about her style being confusing, flowery, or "girlie." Therefore, this unit will also incorporate *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time,* by Mark Haddon, to represent a voice that is more typically male, as well as for having a male protagonist. I've had an amazing student-response to the novel after teaching it for the first time this year, especially from the boys. When asked to reflect on what they enjoyed so much about this novel, most students comment on Christopher's unique voice, and his

interesting perspective as a narrator. They also said that all the twists in the plot held their interest more than other books they had read.

The narrator of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time,* Christopher, who is incredibly gifted mathematically, but has other difficulties due to his having Asperger's Syndrome, tells his story, writes a book, as a way of coping with a world that is chaotic to him, but also as a way to understand the mysteries around him. Mark Haddon creates a very believable and likeable character in Christopher, as my students report having felt as if they understood this quirky kid who is otherwise mistreated and misunderstood by society. Of Christopher, Haddon says "Here is a character whom if you met him in real life you'd never, ever get inside his head. Yet something magical happens when you write a novel about him. You slip inside his head, and it seems like the most natural thing in the world (Haddon, interview, 2005)." In this sense, the novel lends itself well to the study of author's craft, creating believable characters, and using these characters to explore the issue of living with a condition that others do not understand.

Haddon's novel also provides another variation on the structure of the circular journey; Christopher too leaves home (literally when he runs away and figuratively as he enters adolescence) and returns, learning much about his world, its mysteries, and himself in between. The journey focuses on the murder-mystery of Wellington, a poodle belonging to Christopher's neighbor. Christopher loves animals and seems to have an easier time relating to them as he often misreads human emotions; he is horrified by this crime. As he sets out to solve the mystery, he keeps track of his evidence and experience in a book he is writing at the suggestion of his teacher Siobhan. She is the only person who seems to understand Christopher and encourages him to write as a method of coping and communicating. The more he investigates the murder, the more he learns

about his parents' indiscretions. The more he learns about his father, the more frightened he becomes, and sets out on a journey to find his mother. The more he learns about the world, the more he learns about himself. All of this is recursive and evolutionary as a process. Not only is his trip to London a journey, so too is the forbidden mystery-solving venture, and the entire process of writing a book. By the end of the novel Christopher has discovered the power of storytelling when he says "I was brave and I wrote a book and that means I can do anything" (221).

The bravery of book-writing that Christopher touts is the third layer for exploration of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time.* At this point in the unit, students will have more experience reading, studying, and writing stories. They'll be better equipped to reflect metacognitively on the writing process. They'll use Haddon's novel (and others we've read), to reflect on *why* we write. Reflection is an important component of their writing process, as the students will need to determine the motive, purpose, and audience for their stories, make choices, revise, and edit. None of which they'd do well without being able to reflect on their writing process. In order to reflect on their writing, the students will periodically be asked to respond to prompts about their stories, fill out reflection sheets (see lesson plans), and react to peer response of their writing. Mark Haddon remarks on the power of writing books as he said of *Curious Incident* , "It's not just a book about disability. Obviously, on some level it is, but on another level…it's a book about books, about what you can do with words and what it means to communicate with someone in a book (Haddon, interview, 2005)." The students will have to consider what it is they want to do with their words, what they'd like their portfolio writing to communicate to others.

While the formal unit will end after Haddon's novel and the sharing of their portfolio writing to this point, we will, for the remainder of the year, continue to use the strategies learned, to analyze stories for their structure (circular, or linear), for purpose, meaning, craft, and their ability to connect us with the human experience. We will also return to our portfolios through out the year as we continue to write about our journey, reflect on the writing process, and connect all of this to what we are reading at the time. So in a sense, the unit will continue as long as class does.

Classroom Activity # 1: Swimmy

Objective: Students will learn to identify the conventions of storytelling and analyze their power to convey theme.

· First I will arrange the students' desks into a semi-circle so that everyone can see the illustrations as well as each other. I will then read Leo Lionni's "Swimmy" with emotion, animation, exaggerated intonation and fluctuation of voice. I'll have students listen and look at the pictures, asking them to simply experience the story for the first reading.
· Before any real analysis of the message, I'll ask students to imagine what it is about the story, and the telling of it, that appeals to children. Their responses might include the sounds of words and phrases, the colorful, collage style paintings, the activities of the characters such as swimming and playing, the characters and their qualities, the movements or sounds of the reader, etc.
· Next I'll distribute a photocopy of the story for everyone to read on their own. As they read I'll

ask them to circle portions of the text that might appeal to kids. They will then consider and discuss what Lionni does, or the devices/craft he uses to create that appeal, and what the storyteller does to entertain the audience. We will create a list (on the board) of all the devices used to both create and tell the story. Possible discussion topics: alliteration, assonance, repetition, imagery ("medusa," "rainbow jelly fish," "sugar-candy rocks") characterization: Swimmy's name, species, size, color, actions, dialogue, etc.

· Next I will ask students to write in their journals to the following prompt: Yes, "Swimmy" is a story about a unique fish who saves his friends. But what is it *really* about?

· I am assuming they'll be able to move beyond the initial plot and will in varying capacities write about the underlying themes: problem-solving, social responsibility, social order, cooperation, living in spite of fear, overcoming evil, etc. Their journal entries will then become the fodder for further discussion of "Swimmy" and the craft and power of storytelling in general. The themes will be charted for the next lesson.

Classroom Activity #2: Meaning Making

Objective: Students will make personal connections to the story and learn to analyze the craft of storytelling as a tool for exploring their own experiences.

· We will begin class by reviewing our chart of listed themes from "Swimmy."

· I'll then ask students to choose one theme from the list that resonates with them. They will use this theme to write about themselves using Ponsot's two-part structure "Once I was _____, but now I am _____." The second blank will be filled with the theme they chose. For example: Once I was _____, but now I am socially responsible for myself and others.

· Their assignment is to free-write by naming what they were first, but more importantly to write in order to investigate what happened in the in between. What was the event, experience, or moment that served as the catalyst for change?

· After sharing their responses I will ask the students to think about what they've written, and make some very direct connections to Swimmy, the other fish, or their experiences. For example, like Swimmy, I stood out because I looked different from everyone else, or like Swimmy, I encouraged my friends to work together, or like the red fish, I was afraid to do something, or like all of the fish, I too have learned to overcome obstacles, or learning to appreciate the beauty and wonder of the world around me has helped me to feel less alone.

· Finally, students will create a graphic of Swimmy's circular journey. They will be asked to look at Lionni's language and images, and then chart Swimmy's journey by ending up wherever he/they

started on the chart. I'll encourage the students to be creative in their graphic depiction of Swimmy's journey, using concentric circles, spirals, anything, as long as they return to their starting place. I'd like to use this graphic exercise as a concrete example of the journeys we take in life, those worth writing about, but also to analyze the structure and recursive nature of stories so that the students can apply the structure to their own stories eventually.
· Finally, students will go back to their "Ponsot two-part" structured writing and create a similar circular graphic for it, considering components such as events, emotions, dialogue, actions, images, and discoveries. For this one, as in Swimmy's circle, they must ultimately return to their starting place.

Classroom Activity #3: Aesop's Fables

Objective: Students will learn to use characterization as a tool for fictionalizing personal acquaintances or experiences in stories.

· Students will take turns reading a variety of Aesop's fables aloud to the class.
· As a group we'll choose 5 fables to work with.
· Students will examine the animal characters of each fable by recording a list of traits for each animal. Example:

Frog	Hare	Ant	Grasshopper
Looks:			
Sounds:			
Acts:			
Does:			
Thinks:			
Wears:			
Feels:			
Says (direct quotation):			

· Students will share their responses with the class. (They'll have been told that there may not be an example of each character trait for each animal.)
· We'll chart student responses on the board and discuss how each trait helps to develop the character's personality and purpose in the story. We'll also discuss possible real-life, human situations or events that each fable might represent. This will help students discover ways to fictionalize experiences in future stories.
· Once we've concluded our chart, I'll ask students to respond to the following prompt in their journals: Based on all the character traits you've named for each animal, describe what type of person each animal seems to represent. In other words, match each animal to its typical human counterpart. (For example: Ant = responsible adult, grasshopper = carefree child) Reflect on which character traits led you to your conclusion for each.
· Finally, create a list of real people, or "characters" you remember vividly from your childhood: family members, teachers, coaches, babysitters, friends, etc. Next to each name, assign an animal that best resembles each person on your list. Again, think about the person's character traits, and then choose the animal that would best typify each as a character. This list will become a resource as you write your fables and other stories.

Classroom Activity # 4: My Name

Objectives: Students will be able to understand how author's craft leads to an understanding of theme.

· Students will listen to Cisneros read "My Name."
· Students will then chose a few specific passages (ones that resonate with them for one reason or another) to record and respond to.
· Students will use a three-fold dialectical journal to respond to their specific passages.
· The first column of the journal is for the chosen passages. For this particular assignment the second column will ask students to respond to the text using certain categories that get at analyzing author's craft. The third column asks another student to respond to the first students' thoughts. See example below.
· After having shared and then read their partner's reaction, students will write-to-think for homework to the following prompt: Considering your responses to the specific passages, what, would you say, are some of the ideas, or problems that Cisneros is attempting to convey in the vignette "My Name"? Which devices helped you decide this? Explain how the devices contribute to the meaning and the theme of the story.

Threefold Dialectical Journal Entry:

3 passages:	**respond in terms of:**	**2nd student reaction**
	Sound	
	Imagery	
	Characterization	
	Esperanza's experience	

· As part of the portfolio process, students will write their own rendition of "My Name." They will use many of the same (above) conventions of writing to convey their own meaning and themes.
· Students will practice reading their own vignettes in a voice and style that suits their writing. They will make recordings of their readings to listen to and adapt as they sit fit before sharing their stories with the class.

Classroom Activity #5: Storytelling Reflection Sheet

· This reflection sheet will be filled out during the writing process of each story. Students will use the reflection as a tool for revising, or re-seeing their own writing in order to improve each story.

Author's Name _____

Story Title _____

1. Why did you write this story? For entertainment? Release? Out of pride? Anger? Circle and elaborate on the most appropriate response, or write you own.

Feels good to get that off my chest. Does anyone else ever feel this way?

This story is too funny to keep to myself!!! I love that memory.

Elaborate:

2. Close your eyes, think back to your original idea for the story. Who, at that moment, was the story for?

   Is that person still the intended audience? Has your audience shifted? Is the language, topic, theme, and style suited for your intended audience? Explain.

3. Is this a story you'd be able to share with the class? So you need to make any changes in order to fictionalize certain aspects?

4. How do you feel about the story at this point in the writing process? Circle the best response, or create your own.

Woohoo! Feels good to be done. Hmmm…something is missing.

I'm stuck…don't know what I'm writing about. This story rocks!!!

Elaborate:

Resources

Appendix: Implementing District Standards

New Haven Curriculum Power Standards (grades 9 and 10)

· 1.2.f: Identify and discuss underlying significant themes
· 2.1.c: Explain and explore aesthetic reactions to text
· 3.1.b: Listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing

The first three power standards, or learning objectives, will be implemented initially during the reading process. As students read and analyze a variety of children's books, fables, vignettes, and novels, they are asked to record their responses to these texts, and decide which devices evoked those responses. Additionally, as they learn to identify and understand an author's choices, they discover the underlying themes or issues during class discussion and journal writing.

· 2.4.c: Discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text

This learning objective is less quantifiable, but equally as important to our unit. Once students learn to openly explore their reactions to a variety of texts, they can ;earn to analyze those reactions; it's the next step in an order of thinking, They must learn to evaluate everything they bring to the table as a reader, everything they are, and attempt to understand how that influences their reading of a piece. This is the beginning of reading like a writer.

· 2.1.d: Analyze (and utilize) literary conventions and devices in order to contribute to meaning and appeal
· 3.1.a: Use oral language with clarity, voice and fluency to communicate a message
· 3.1.d: Write to delight in the imagination
· 3.2.f: Publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways

These four learning objectives are implemented most during the writing phrase. With each type of story that students work on, they'll learn to apply literary conventions and devices. They will be better equipped to do this after having analyzed other writers' craft. In terms of oral language, students will have read fables, picture books, and vignettes aloud to the class, or play recordings of these readings.

Annotated Teacher Bibliography

Berthoff, Ann E. *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models and Maxims for Writing Teachers.* Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1981.

This book is less about storytelling and more about the teaching of writing. It connected to my research as Berthoff writes much of making meaning out of the chaos in our lives. Berthoff's book also overlaps ideas and strategies found in Ponsot's work.

Danoff, Susan. *The Golden Thread: Storytelling in Teaching and Learning.* Kingston: Storytelling Arts Press, 2006.

Mc Drury, Janice and Alerio, Maxine. *Learning through Storytelling: Using Reflection and Experience to Improve Learning.* Britain: Dunmore Press, 2002.

Ponsot, Marie and Deen, Rosemary. *Beat not the Poor Desk.* New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1982.

This book is a wonderful tool for teaching writing of various forms in the classroom. Ponsot shares strategies for writing, listening, sharing, and revising. She not only provides concrete structures, but the rationale behind them.

http://www.missourireview.com/content/dynamic/view

Cisneros, Sandra, interview with Mary K. Ruby for Authors & Artists for Young Adults, conducted March 5, 1992.

http://www.powells.com/authors/haddon.html Haddon, Mark, interview with Dave Weich, conducted via telephone from New York City, 2003.

Annotated Student Bibliography

The Aesop for Children. New York: Checkerboard Press, 1993.

This is a collection of hundreds of short fables that use animals as characters in order to teach an important life lesson or moral by the end. The fables incorporate human character traits, flaws, emotions, and dialogue all by personifying animals.

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994

A beautiful collection of vignettes written in poetic prose. Cisneros weaves

together the experiences of her Latina childhood in a series of interrelated,

fictional, coming of age stories. This book embodies the spirit of storytelling.

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time.* New York: Doubleday, 2003.

A very popular text with my students! This is a story about a boy, named Christopher, who lives with Asperger's Syndrome. He doesn't understand human emotion, has a hard time reading people, but he loves his pet rat, prime numbers, and anything red. Christopher sets out to solve a mystery and write a book about his life at the same time.

The novel is a great example of the power in telling your story to the world, especially one that doesn't understand you.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Regards to the Man in the Moon.* New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1981.

This picture book (the author of which is a Caldecott medalist) uses collage-type illustrations and a fantastic adventure to capture the imagination of its reader. It is a story of love, friendship, creativity, and the voyage of imagination.

Lionni, Leo: *Frederick's Fables: A Leo Lionni Treasury of Favorite Stories.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.

This is a beautiful picture book; also a nice alternative to Aesop's fables as the characters (who are more loveable and whole than those in the fables) also teach us something about life. A childhood classic to share with kids of any age.