

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

TEACHER PERCEPTION OF STORYTELLING
IN SOCIAL STUDIES

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By

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTION OF STORYTELLING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

By

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Master of Arts in Education, Elementary Education

This study examined teacher perception about using storytelling in the classroom to determine whether teachers perceived the potential benefits of integrating storytelling into the Social Studies curriculum and to determine if professional development was needed in this area. Fifteen teachers grades 4-6 responded to a questionnaire of their knowledge about storytelling and their use of storytelling in their curriculum. Questions were related to: storytelling integration across the curriculum, professional development needs, and the use of digital technology. Three teachers were subsequently interviewed to better ascertain more details of their perceptions about using storytelling in the classroom and to explore examples of strategies they used. Findings indicated that teachers have limited knowledge about what storytelling is and how to use it effectively in the classroom. The researchers concluded that teachers need professional development in utilizing storytelling as a vehicle to enhance the Social Studies curriculum.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Since the beginning of time, humans have used stories to explain the world around them. Rogers and Ricci (2013) stated that storytelling emanates from a deep human desire to share meaning and experiences with others. By using storytelling as a pedagogical tool, educators will support the timeless human interactive process that connects children to the lives, times, and events of others. Storytelling is a human interactive process that connects us to the world and to one another. In a competitive society where we share information through text messaging, sound-bytes, cell phones, and discs that we burn, we need to be reminded of our humanity. Storytelling is an innately human process. We recommend that educators consider whether or not we are sacrificing essential parts of our humanity in exchange for the benefits and conveniences of technology. As educators, we must consider the resulting potential loss of a basic human interface and learning process, storytelling, due to increasing requirements and greater expectations for the use of technology in the classroom.

A fifth-grade student interviewed by McNamee (2013) said it best when responding to the quote presented in a questionnaire for an action research project. The quote is the motto of The Compassionate Listening Project (2013) which reads “an enemy is one whose story we have not heard” (para. 1). The student responded “I think it means if you are enemies with someone you have never heard their background of why they act like this” (McNamee, 2013, p. 3). Clearly, this child understood the power of hearing the other side of the story. The other side of the story links us together in a way that allows us to see part of ourselves in one another. If we can share meaning and

experiences with everyone we meet, perhaps there would be far fewer enemies in the world.

Stories can illuminate the value in each person's or group's approach to life and demonstrate value in the blending of everyone's strengths (Rogers & Ricci, 2013). What better than the stories of others to understand or imagine life through another's eyes? Stories become shared reference points, drawing people into more meaningful associations. These shared reference points found in story help mitigate the "either-or" polarity or the "my way, your way" approach often found to be a barrier to working together productively.

Storytelling is a natural fit within the Social Studies curriculum. Burstein and Knotts (2011) stated that Social Studies is about perspective taking. What better than the stories of others to understand or imagine life through another's eyes? Though perspective taking is integrated throughout all content areas, Social Studies is ready-made for storytelling. After all, the word "*story*" is part of the word "*history*," and history is a key component of Social Studies.

The purpose of this study was to determine what teachers know about storytelling and how it is used in the classroom. The hypothesis for this thesis was that fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade teachers today do not know much, if anything, about storytelling. We posit that there is a need for storytelling professional development. Without proper professional development, teachers may never know how to incorporate storytelling into their classrooms or discover its many benefits.

The following chapter will present literature that seeks to bring to light the definition of storytelling, along with a rationale for why every teacher should use

storytelling in their day-to-day teaching. Due to the lack of professional development in storytelling, teachers are not cognizant of the many benefits of storytelling or how to incorporate them into their daily classroom teaching.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of research related to the benefits of integrating storytelling as a pedagogical tool in Social Studies. The literature review of this study includes research related to six key questions. (a) What are the different types of storytelling? (b) How can storytelling promote cultural knowledge and connections? (c) What are the cognitive rewards of integrating storytelling into the curriculum? (d) How do English Language Learners (ELLs) and academically diverse learners benefit from storytelling? (e) What strategies are available for teachers to begin using storytelling while incorporating the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS)? (f) How does digital storytelling support the storytelling process?

Types of Storytelling

Green and Del Negro (2010) suggested there are two distinct types of storytelling: library-storytelling and traditional storytelling. In library storytelling, there is a close connection between storytelling and reading. Library storytelling developed with a belief that engaging students' imaginations and listening to oral literature helped prepare them for reading. Early librarians thought of this type of storytelling as a type of reading guidance. Library storytellers believed themselves to be interpreters of literature, integral to engaging listeners in the appreciation of literature, language, and literary heritage. Morris (2013) suggested that library-storytelling allows students to participate in storytelling events.

The National Storytelling Network defines traditional storytelling as “the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener’s imagination” (n.d., para. 5). Therefore, storytelling is

interactive, requires the use of words (American Sign Language included), presents a story, and encourages the use of listeners' imagination. Storytelling is also often combined with various art forms, making it ideal for arts integration in the classroom. Additionally, Rogers and Ricci (2013) defined storytelling as a tool for communicating complex ideas, truths, and knowledge about our world, our work, and our practices about teaching, learning, and leadership.

Although Green and Del Negro (2010) suggested two types of storytelling, there is another type. A third type of storytelling is digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is the art of combining narrative with digital media such as image, sound, and video to create a short story (Robin, 2008). As educators, we face the growing concern that students must be technologically proficient in order to be prepared for their future workplace. We know that computers and stories are engaging when they are experienced separately. Digital storytelling blends the two into an effective communication tool.

Cultural Knowledge and Connections

Storytelling can promote cultural knowledge and connections. People have shared information since the beginning of time through storytelling. Before written text, stories took on narrative form and were communicated orally. Mello (2001) suggested that storytelling is one of the oldest methods, if not the oldest method, of communicating ideas and images. Evidence of storytelling has been found in ancient cultures and languages, such as Sanskrit, Latin, Old German, Chinese, Greek, Icelandic, and Old Slavonic (Davies, 2007). Celtic bards used storytelling as a way to make sense of their origins. Epic tales would be presented through poetic narrations which have been preserved in folklore and legend.

Narrative voices from the past are central to the connection between storytelling and Social Studies. It is important to note that Language Arts is regularly integrated into the Social Studies classroom or vice versa. Storytelling will help children develop into compassionate citizens who are committed to social justice; because storytelling gives students a picture of the whole that will help them to recognize multiple perspectives and see the world in a way that promotes culturally-sensitive decisions (Mello, 2001). Likewise, Kennedy (1998) contended that storytelling allows students to validate who they are, which then leads to giving value to others.

Children are asked to reflect upon their own cultural values when they are faced with the cultural values of others, such as those from other countries. Shimojima (2012) concluded that when we examine our cultural values, universal values are recognized across cultures, such as love of family, cherishing children, belief in education, and the dignity of every human being. When children learn the stories of others, they are challenged to consider how they would treat people of different religions, who eat different food, dress differently, or listen to different music. Are these things that should divide us as humans or are they things that should bring us together with a respect for differences when we think back to universal values? Although historical events took place in faraway locations in times different than our own, children relate better to these past events when they are told through another person's eyes, or even better, another child's eyes (Shimojima, 2012). This is an area where historical fiction can be utilized as a link between Language Arts, Social Studies, and storytelling.

Stories based upon folklore, folktales, urban legends, and myths, are all forms of storytelling that give insight into culture. Folktales are stories that are filled with symbols

of lasting meaning. These “stories are not good because they are old. They are old because they are good” (Ellis, 2012, p. 26). According to Ellis, teaching with folktales and folklore from diverse cultures is to teach students different ways of life that they are not likely to experience themselves.

Storytelling is an educational linguistic activity because it allows individuals to share their personal understanding with others. Without narrative interaction, humans could not express themselves or pass down knowledge. Bruner (2004) emphasized that storytelling plays an important role in how humans translate their individual personal experiences of understanding into a public culturally-negotiated form.

It has been proposed that by hearing the story of others, we recognize different vocabulary, meanings, plot lines, truths, and possibilities that give insight into different cultures. This awareness of others “can provoke the creation of meanings and values beyond our culture’s prescriptions” (Garrison, 2004, p. 94). Stories give students a frame for possible life experiences that they may not have otherwise known existed.

Jolly stated “there is a need in our culture to celebrate diversity and reach those who don’t have the answers” (Jolly as cited in Carlson, 2008, para. 2). Stories are the perfect vehicle to transmit cultural knowledge in an open-minded environment. Additionally, the Youth, Educators, and Storytellers Alliance (YES) asserts that celebration of diversity with storytelling gives students an understanding of and empathy toward other races and cultures (2006).

In an effort to develop a youth violence-prevention program, Werle (2004) explored thirteen eighth-grade students’ written responses after listening to stories about true-life experiences of violence. Storytellers included United States military veterans

who had received special training from and were members of the Veterans Education Project. These storytellers shared their own experiences of violence through oral histories to de-glorify war, provide positive role models, and encourage teens to think critically and become respectful citizens. Themes of the storytellers' lived experiences included: child abuse, rage, fighting, substance abuse, depersonalization, posttraumatic stress disorder, guilt, remorse, and anger. Students used the technique of free writing to identify their thoughts and reactions to the stories they heard. The data identified three themes: students gained insights into realities of others' experiences through listening to stories; there was an emotional response to the stories and storytellers; and students responded positively to and were engaged by the stories. The findings of this study support the use of storytelling in teaching youth about the effects of violence. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that school nurses use the storytelling model to teach violence-prevention education programs.

Daisey and Jose-Kampfner (2002) conducted research about how storytelling can be used to help break cultural stereotypes. With the understanding that Latinos are the fastest growing minority group in the United States, storytelling was used as a strategy to teach a broader range of students and potentially break female gender and cultural stereotypes. Before storytelling activities about fictional and famous Latinas, 150 middle school Latina students were asked to draw pictures depicting images of Latinas. These images portrayed Latinas in stereotypical work environments and roles including factory and domestic workers. After hearing biographies and oral narratives of fictional and famous Latinas, the same students drew new pictures. These drawings demonstrated considerable changes of occupations for Latinas. Interviews revealed that before hearing

biographies and oral narratives of fictional and famous Latinas, students were unaware of potential careers. Although the Latinas had participated in career-day activities, it was the active participation in storytelling that made the stronger impression. Oral storytelling of Latina biographies was used to teach powerful, stereotype-breaking messages.

“Biographies help students understand that things can be other than they are, thus providing them with expanded possibilities and the ability to imagine new stories and endings for themselves” (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002, p.581). The conclusions of this study emphasized the power of storytelling: that storytelling helps students understand and speak about the world around them. Stories and storytelling promote cognitive functioning in addition to cultural awareness.

Cognitive Rewards of Storytelling in the Curriculum

Many researchers have found that storytelling activities in the classroom provide multiple cognitive rewards (Daisey & Jose-Kampfner, 2002; Collins & Cooper, 2005; Stenson, 2006; Forrin, MacLeod, & Ozubko, 2012). Collins and Cooper (2005) contended that the numerous cognitive rewards of utilizing storytelling in the classroom included: enhanced imagination and visualization, developed appreciation of the beauty and rhythm of language, increased vocabulary, refined speaking skills, improved listening skills, and allowance of students to interact with adults on a personal level. Additionally, storytelling promoted enhanced writing and reading skills, interest in reading, enhanced critical and creative thinking skills, nourishment of students' intuitive side, student recognition of literature as a mirror of human experiences, and increased student understanding of their own and others' cultural heritage.

Other researchers have described the ways in which story reading is different from storytelling. Storytelling requires the participant to orally communicate narrative. Researchers Forrin, MacLeod, and Ozubko (2012) concluded that students have increased memory as a result of the production effect. Production effect is the finding that people have better explicit memory for words spoken aloud when compared to reading them or thinking about them silently. In this way, storytelling promotes the production effect and supports long-term memory. Further, the act of telling stories encourages communication, increases vocabulary, promotes long-range thinking, and increases opportunities to pursue the implications of decisions and behaviors (Stenson, 2006, p. 142). Classroom storytelling is active and interactive, the way that students learn best.

Storytelling has been linked to reading improvement by increasing children's comprehension and vocabulary development (Trostle & Hicks, 1998). These skills are embedded across the curriculum. In addition, storytelling is a means of providing access to the language for both English Only students and second-language learners. Storytelling is a strategy in which students' emotional affects are lower while participating in an activity that involves listening to and using oral language. Opportunities to use language increase one's ability to develop oral language skills (Shin, et al., 2009). Therefore, students should practice storytelling daily in order to continually develop their oral language skills. McGrath-Speaker (2000) presented the rewards of storytelling on young children's' cognition and learning as "improved listening skills, better sequencing abilities, increased language appreciation and more thoughtful organization in their own writing" (p.184). Herein, storytelling combines listening, speaking, and writing.

Additionally, storytelling can even the playing field for students who have not mastered reading skills. The Youth, Educators, and Storytellers Alliance of the National Storytelling Network (YES, 2012) reminds storytellers that students practicing reading comprehension skills such as inferring, predicting, determining cause-and-effect, etc. are learning these skills through listening. Similarly, writing skills are being practiced when students listen to plot lines, sequencing, emotion, and character development within storytelling. Cognitive advantages are developed with the use of various storytelling strategies in the classroom.

The results of a study of 31 fifth-grade students from a small K-8 school in Southern California (McNamee, 2013) suggested that the majority of students found storytelling engaging. The implications included a need for teacher professional development with classroom storytelling strategies. McNamee (2013) specified “it is the story and the interaction that engage students with one another, life, and content” (p. 8). Likewise, Norfolk (2006) stated “storytelling is the ideal teaching method to engage the attention, emotion, and imagination of upper-elementary students, allowing learning to take place” (p. 83). When the subject matter becomes more intense and requires learners to think at a higher cognitive level, students tend to tune out. Teachers need to be aware of this and plan lessons and stories that are engaging and activate students’ imaginations.

English Language Learners & Academically Diverse Learners

Storytelling is one way to help address the literacy needs of diverse learners such as English Language Learners (ELLs) and students identified with special needs. For ELLs storytelling is a great way to bridge apparent cultural divides by encouraging many interpretations of the core story the teacher is telling. It helps children connect prior

knowledge and experience, and promotes reading comprehension in ways that build the capacity of all children to academically succeed (Craig, Hull, Haggart, & Crowder, 2001). Thankfully, children with a wide range of oral and written abilities can participate in storytelling that can be used to bridge their diverse literacy experiences.

Storytelling offers a collaborative link between the special population classrooms (ELL and Special Education) and the general education classrooms. Researchers Craig, et al. (2001) provided ways in which these two classrooms can work together: providing a social context for literacy, helping children in developing interesting ideas, encouraging role-taking and inferential comprehension, developing literary themes, and tapping into children's prior knowledge. Additionally, the following collaborative strategies from Craig, et al. (2001) are ones that many teachers are likely to already do: use story probes to emphasize different types of narratives by asking children to give details in the story that relate to their own lives; let children overhear your thoughts while you describe what you are thinking about or how you are thinking through a problem as you solve it; use pictures or objects to sequence the daily schedule and review this throughout the day while using familiar rituals to transition from one event to another; and invite family and community members to share stories with the class.

Researchers Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) presented a concept known as funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge was described as historically accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being. Teachers can invite parents, relatives, and family friends of the students into the classroom to share their funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge is innovative in its special relevance to teaching. Funds of knowledge is

different than the more general term culture and the concept of a culture-sensitive curriculum (Moll, et al., 1992). A culturally-sensitive curriculum relies on folkloric displays, such as storytelling, arts, crafts, and dance performance. The theory developed by Moll, et al. sought to exceed the rote-like instruction that students commonly encounter in the classroom. By bringing in the child's outside world, students were able to learn and share their culture with classmates. While ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential utility for classroom instruction can be found within the students' homes, teachers rarely use these resources.

Students with limited English proficiency may also struggle with creating congruence between the type of discourse used in school and their own family's narrative style (Kamhi, 1996). It is incumbent on all educators, particularly special educators, to recognize a child's cultural approach as just that, a cultural approach, as opposed to identifying it as a language disability.

Teachers who use storytelling can aid in their students' comprehension by incorporating components of a language that relies on storytelling, American Sign Language. The Deaf rely on visual cues and emotions to fully comprehend what is being discussed. American Sign Language is very visual, very emotional, very animated, and uses hyperbole, or exaggeration, to present their story. If a storyteller is using a word such as *intrigue*, an EL student may not know the meaning. However, if the speaker acts out the word, the student may be able to connect it with the word in his or her language. For example, to act out the word *intrigue* a storyteller may tip-toe over to something, pick it up, look at it from all angles while frowning their eyebrows in a questioning form, and

then popping them up when they have discovered something. Therefore, utilizing visual cues and emotion are imperative in storytelling.

Storytelling Strategies & the Common Core

There are numerous proven strategies for storytelling integration. Included among these are: teacher guided read-aloud and discussion, teacher picture walk with text, student retell of stories, shared reading and grand conversations, utilizing folk-tales (Green & Del Negro, 2010), and blending narratives (Harris, 2007). With the ever-changing demands on teachers, it is necessary for teachers to seek out professional development opportunities or for districts to offer professional development on storytelling. Professional development does not always need to emphasize something new, but can be a reminder of important strategies that have stood the test of time.

Green and Del Negro (2010) suggested that there are specific qualities of stories that appeal to children of different ages. For upper-elementary students these researchers recommended that tales of the fantastical are attractive. Students can take the familiar fairy tale and re-imagine it with more advanced cognitive skills. Literary and fantasy tales can easily be adapted into oral storytelling. Also popular with upper-elementary age students are ghost, horror, and suspense tales, humorous stories, myths and legends, riddles, tales of conflicts and issues, and historical and current events stories. This variation in text structure supports the emphasis of a balanced-literacy program in the California CCSS (CDE, 2012).

Macphee and Whitecotton (2011) shared literacy strategies that engage young learners to construct knowledge of history, self, and others. Two fourth-grade classes in the southeastern United States, studying the events of the Revolutionary War, examined

multiple perspectives with historical fiction text, discussion, trade books, and textbook. Students worked in small groups to create tableaux to share their newly-created understandings. A tableau is a “dramatic expression in which students take on the characteristics of humans and/or objects to create a still scene that conveys meaning using their bodies and facial expressions” (p.265). Tableaus are storytelling, without movement or words. Findings suggested that students are more successful readers and writers when they are engaged socially. Students demonstrated that they could construct deep understandings of themselves, others, and historical events when engaged in social activities. Literacy was used as a tool to support the construction of content knowledge.

Woodhouse (2008) discussed advantages as well as disadvantages of storytelling. Some advantages were that storytelling enables students to share stories of success, develop a sense of community, explore personal roles, and make sense of their lives. Storytelling also enhances student creativity, concentration, as well as imagination. Along with advantages, Woodhouse provided disadvantages for both teachers and students. Preparation for storytelling takes time. Additionally, in order for storytelling to be successful, students must feel safe to share potentially uncomfortable topics within stories. Teachers need to anticipate that students will need guidance at various stages of the storytelling process. Due to different learning styles, some students may struggle with the visualization that storytelling requires.

The use of storytelling supports the integration of the California History-Social Studies Content Standards and the California CCSS. In the fifth grade, students learn about the story of the development of the United States. There are many fascinating stories within this history. Included are stories of American Indians, European explorers,

colonists, free blacks and slaves, women, children, and pioneers. Integrated within these stories are the cultural aspects of race, religion, ethnicity, and gender (CDE, 1998). The California CCSS does not include new standards for Social Studies, but it does include standards by which students must show their understanding of language, reading literature, reading informational text, writing, speaking and listening (CDE, 2012).

Telling stories about literature that is related to any content area supports the requirements of the California CCSS (YES, 2012). One example is with reading and providing evidence of one's thinking. During or after a storyteller tells a story about historical literature, the storyteller can ask questions that require students to infer information that was not explicit within the story. Answers should include a direct quote from the story to provide evidence of the student's thinking (YES , 2012).

One additional example of incorporating storytelling with content areas and the California CCSS is in the category of speaking and listening. Storytelling is beneficial not only for the teller, but for the listeners (YES, 2006). The California CCSS (CDE, 2012) and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2014) emphasize the four Cs: communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and comprehension. Listening to storytelling promotes all of the above. "Storytelling is a collaborative activity which can only be accomplished in the presence of and with the cooperation of others" (YES, 2012). The California CCSS provides a framework in which to better support Language Arts skill integration with all content areas.

Digital Storytelling in the Classroom

Digital storytelling is a means by which students can become creative storytellers using technology to communicate a story. Students select a topic, conduct some research,

write a script, and develop it all into an interesting story. Usually, elements such as recorded audio, computer-based graphics, music, and video clips can be added to create a multi-media story (Robin, 2008). According to Burmark (2004), integrating visual images with written text improves student comprehension. Teachers can create their own digital stories to enhance engagement when introducing new content.

Students in today's classrooms are what Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) refer to as digital natives. They have grown up with unprecedented access to technology. They are able to communicate, interact, process information, and learn through technological avenues. Similarly, today's up-and-coming teachers are digital natives themselves. Therefore, it seems natural that technology become a large part of their classroom experience. Teachers should capitalize on student interests. Teachers can create quick and quirky video clips as a way to help students connect with curriculum (Dreon, Kerper, & Landis, 2011). Additionally, teachers can have students create their own digital stories.

There are seven elements, according to Lambert (2006), that are critical components of effective digital stories: point of view, a dramatic question, emotional content, the gift of your voice, the power of the soundtrack, economy, and pacing. While these elements are effective, creating a digital story also needs to include research of topics, writing scripts, storyboarding, and assembling the final product using video-editing software. Digital storytelling offers a multitude of opportunities for teachers to engage their students in all content areas. It helps struggling readers envision text and offers a platform for visually communicating their meaning. Digital storytelling also integrates an instructional activity that requires a host of cognitive, interpersonal, organizational, and technical skills (Dreon, Kerper, & Landis, 2011).

In a study of students ages nine through thirteen, Morris (2013) focused on the engagement and response of students as audience members of digital storytelling. This study determined that the roles of creating and telling a digital story and viewing digital storytelling are more closely related than in traditional storytelling. Rather than asking *if* digital storytelling is interactive, it is suggested that we determine *when* digital storytelling is interactive. Due to the continuous switching of engagement and attention between creating, editing, and viewing, digital storytelling is different than traditional storytelling and library storytelling because students are constantly engaged in multiple creative processes simultaneously.

Movies are one form of digital storytelling that is prevalent in both our society and the classroom. Stanton, the Pixar writer and director behind *Finding Nemo*, *Toy Story*, and *WALL-E*, talked about some of his storytelling rules in his TED Talk, *The clues to a great story* (2012). He suggested that stories do not happen by accident. Great stories take place as a result of meticulous design and planning. His five rules of storytelling include: 1) make me care, 2) take me with you, 3) be intentional, 4) let me like you, and 5) delight me. Stanton's first rule is especially relevant for teachers. Although he was referring to a mode of digital storytelling, all forms of storytelling have the power to make students care about what they are learning. If teachers can make students care, then students will be more invested in their attainment of knowledge.

The research in this literature review offers insight into how students benefit from storytelling in the classroom. The rewards of storytelling include increased cultural knowledge, cognitive benefits, and universal access for all students. Storytelling activities can be used throughout all content areas.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this research study was to determine what teachers know about storytelling and how it is used in the classroom. The hypothesis was that fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade teachers do not know much about storytelling. We anticipated that there is a need for storytelling professional development. The data collection instruments included an online questionnaire as well as one-on-one interviews. The interviews were chosen based on responses to the questionnaire.

Population & Setting

The subjects in this study all worked within a small K-8 school district in suburban southern California. This district included seven K-5 elementary schools, two K-8 schools, and two middle schools containing grades 6-8. According to the California Department of Education (2013), the district employed approximately 400 certificated staff members, including administration. The district provided instruction to 6,600 students.

The target population for this study was 30 fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade teachers. The ages, gender, as well as years of experience varied among participants. Subjects were initially recruited by using a staffing chart to identify all teachers of fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade self-contained classrooms or single subject teachers of Language Arts and Social Studies.

Methods

First, the subjects received an email inviting them to participate in the study. Participants were asked to reply whether or not they would participate in responding to

the questionnaire. If they were willing to participate, they were instructed to print all pages of the consent form, sign the second page, and return it to the researcher in an envelope marked confidential through district mail.

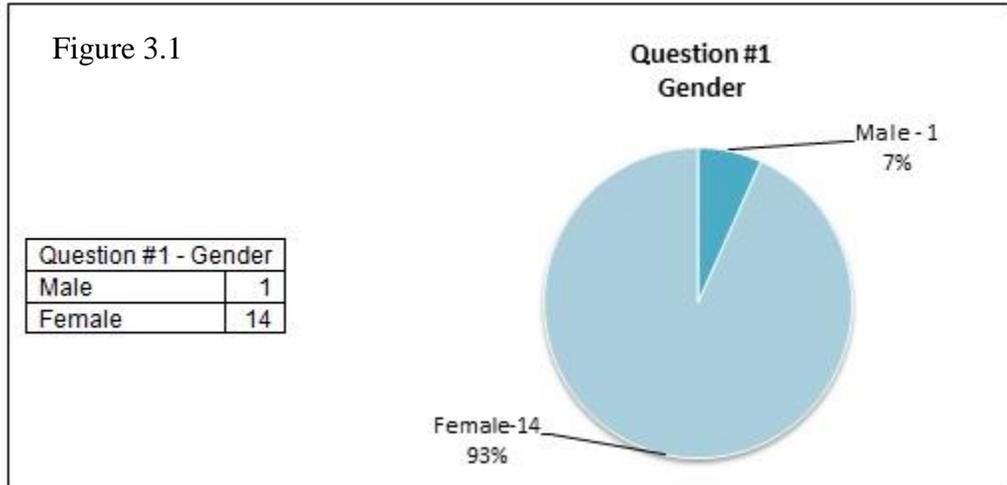
Upon receipt of the signed consent form, the researcher sent a second email to the participant with a link to the online questionnaire (see Appendix A). There was no further contact with subjects unless they were selected for a follow-up interview. The questionnaire took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Initially subjects had a two-week window in which to print and sign the consent forms, mail the consent form to the researcher, and complete the online questionnaire. However, due to a lack of responses, the two-week window was extended an additional two weeks. This resulted in twice as many respondents.

Next, at the end of the response window, the researcher compiled questionnaire data and analyzed it for common themes. Identification of common themes then helped the researcher identify three follow-up interview subjects. In addition to common themes, criteria included participant responses to question number nine (9) from the questionnaire. The researcher hoped to identify interview candidates who had a negative, positive, and neutral perception of storytelling. This process took approximately two weeks.

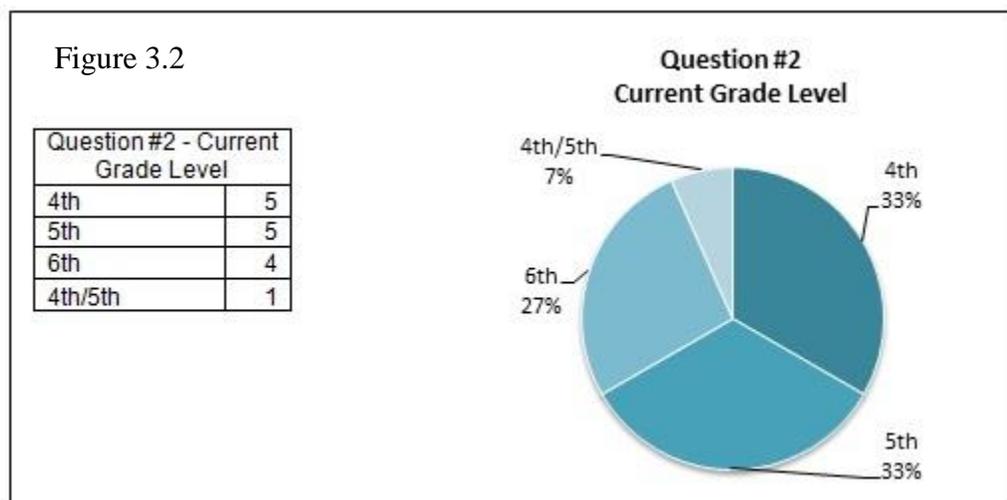
Names were only requested on the questionnaire if participants were willing to be interviewed. Names were used in order to contact participants to schedule interviews. Then, subjects were contacted by email to schedule their interviews. Each of the teachers interviewed were asked the same 10 questions (see Appendix B). The researcher traveled to a convenient location for each subject. Finally, the interview responses were compiled to prove or disprove the research hypotheses.

Questionnaire Participants

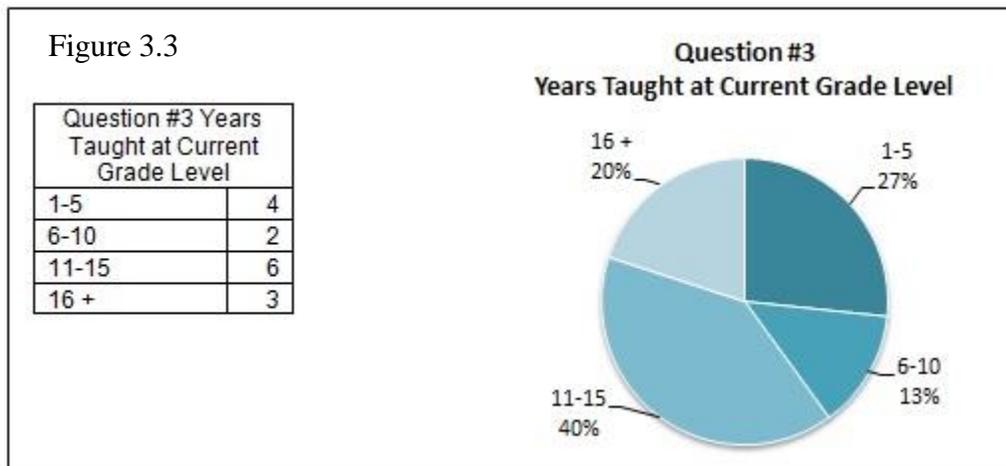
Initially, 30 teachers were invited to participate in this study. Of the 30 invited, 15 teachers agreed to complete the online questionnaire (see Appendix C). The questionnaire documented fifteen responses. Fourteen of the questionnaire respondents were female (93%). One respondent was male (7%) (see Figure 3.1).



The respondents were composed of teachers from fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. There were five fourth-grade teachers (33%), five fifth-grade teachers (33%), four sixth-grade teachers (27%), and one fourth-fifth combination teacher (7%) (see Figure 3.2).

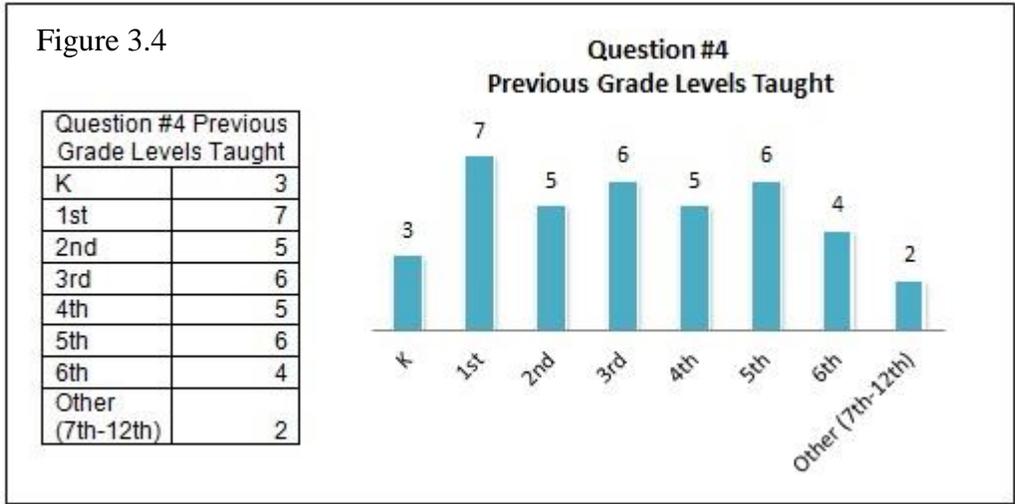


The responses indicated a wide variety of years teaching at their current grade level. Four respondents (27%) had been teaching at their current grade level for 1-5 years. Two respondents (13%) had been teaching at their current grade level for 6-10 years. Six respondents (40%) had been teaching at their current grade level for 11-15 years. Three respondents (20%) had been teaching at their current grade level for 16+ years (see Figure 3.3).



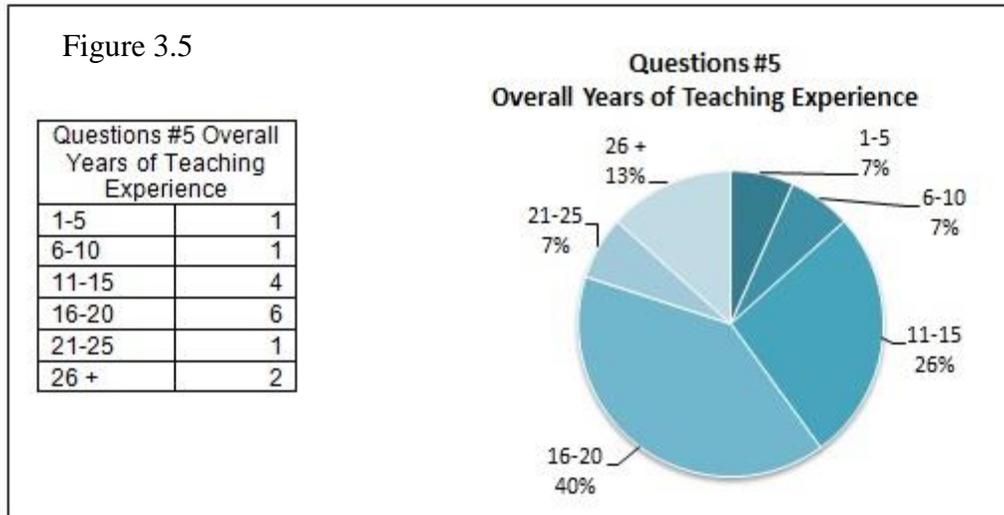
Throughout the participants' previous years of teaching experience, they had taught a variety of grade levels. Three respondents had taught kindergarten. Seven respondents had taught first grade. Five respondents had taught second grade. Six respondents had taught third grade. Five respondents had taught fourth grade. Six respondents had taught fifth grade. Four respondents had taught sixth grade. Two teachers indicated “other” which included grades 7-12 (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4



The respondents' overall years of teaching experience varied. One teacher (7%) had been teaching for 1-5 years. One teacher (7%) had been teaching for 6-10 years. Four teachers (26%) had been teaching for 11-15 years. Six teachers (40%) had been teaching for 16-20 years. One teacher (7%) had been teaching for 21-25 years. Two teachers (13%) had been teaching for 26+ years (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5



Interview Participants

Eleven teachers replied that they would be willing to participate in a one-on-one interview. Three teachers were selected for the one-on-one interviews and are referred to as Teacher #1, Teacher #2, and Teacher # 3 within this study. Each teacher was interviewed within her classroom. These teachers were selected for an interview because their response to question number nine on the survey was clearly a negative vision of the usefulness of storytelling, or a positive vision, or a neutral vision. Question nine asked the respondent to give an example of a lesson taught that demonstrated the validity of a series of claims related to storytelling.

Teacher #1 is female and at the time of this study taught fifth grade in a self-contained classroom. She was identified as the only participant with a negative response to question nine of the questionnaire. Teacher #1 responded with “I do not use storytelling in my teaching.” She had been teaching fifth grade for the past 11-15 years. She had previously taught fourth grade. Overall, she had been teaching for 11-15 years. Due to the fact that Teacher #1 was the only participant to indicate that she did not use storytelling in her teaching, she was interviewed by both researchers for Language Arts and for Social Studies.

Teacher #2 is female who and at the time of this study taught fourth grade in a self-contained classroom. She was chosen to participate in an interview because, on question nine of the questionnaire, she indicated that she used storytelling in Social Studies to supplement the limited amount of information presented in the textbook. She told her students the story of John Fremont and the Bear Flag Revolt in a way that engaged them far more than the “one sentence” included in the text. Teacher #2 had been

teaching fourth grade for the past 11-15 years. She previously taught kindergarten through fifth grades. Overall, she had been teaching for 16-20 years.

Teacher #3 is female and at the time of this study taught sixth-grade Social Studies and Language Arts. She was chosen to participate in an interview because, on question nine of the questionnaire, she indicated that she integrated storytelling, technology, and Social Studies. She modeled storytelling techniques by having students watch YouTube videos of professional storytellers. Then she taught students to tell a folktale or legend related to their own ethnic background. Teacher #3 had been teaching sixth grade for 11-15 years. She previously taught kindergarten, second grade, third grade, and fourth grade. Overall, she had been teaching for 16-20 years.

Chapter 4 Results

Chapter three provided the purpose, population and setting, methods, and participant demographics. Chapter four presents results of the online teacher questionnaire as well as the findings of the one-on-one interviews. The purpose of this study was to determine what teachers know about storytelling and how it is used in the classroom. Furthermore, the hypotheses were that teachers today do not know much, if anything, about storytelling and that there is a need for storytelling professional development.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire responses indicated that teachers were knowledgeable about the uses and benefits of storytelling. This was evident within the responses to questions seven, eight, and eleven on the questionnaire (see Figure 4.1).

In question seven “Are you aware of the benefits of utilizing storytelling in the classroom?” a combined 87% of respondents were moderately or extremely aware of the benefits of utilizing storytelling in the classroom (see Figure 4.2). Likewise in question eight “Teacher rating of 12 statements about the benefits of storytelling,” to include: not valid, slightly valid, moderately valid, and extremely valid, respondents documented their perceptions of the validity of twelve claims about storytelling (see Figure 4.3). All 15 teachers agreed that the following claims were either moderately or extremely valid: (1) enhances imagination and visualization, (2) increases vocabulary, (3) improves listening skills, (4) enhances critical and creative thinking skills, and (5) helps students understand their own and other’s cultural heritage.

- Figure 4.1 Questionnaire Questions
- 1) Gender
 - 2) Current grade level
 - 3) Years taught at current grade level
 - 4) Previous grade levels taught
 - 5) Overall years of teaching experience
 - 6) Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote “Storytelling is the commonality of all human beings, in all places, in all times. It is used to educate, to inspire, to record historical events, to entertain, to transmit cultural mores.” Collins & Cooper
 - 7) Are you aware of the benefits of utilizing storytelling in the classroom?
 - 8) Teacher rating of 12 statements about the benefits of storytelling, to include: not valid, slightly valid, moderately valid, and extremely valid.
 - 9) Please give an example of a lesson you have taught that demonstrates the validity of one or more of the above statements.
 - 10) Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote “The telling of a tale links you with everyone who has told it before. There are no new tales, only new tellers in their own way, and if you listen closely you can hear the voice of everyone who ever told the tale.” William Brooke
 - 11) Teacher rating of levels of knowledge about integrating storytelling in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science to include: little to no knowledge, slightly knowledgeable, moderately knowledgeable, extremely knowledgeable.
 - 12) Teacher rating of frequency in which storytelling activities are used in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science to include: never, rarely, sometimes, often.
 - 13) What storytelling strategies have you used?
 - 14) Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote “An enemy is one whose story we have not heard.” Motto of the Compassionate Listening Project
 - 15) Have you participated in professional development about storytelling strategies in the classroom?

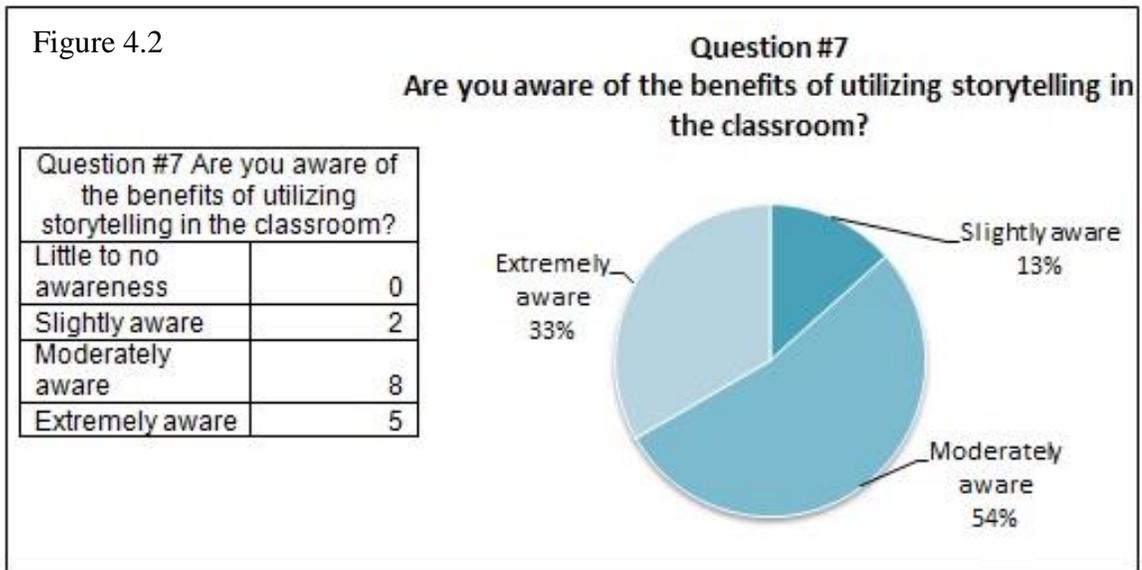
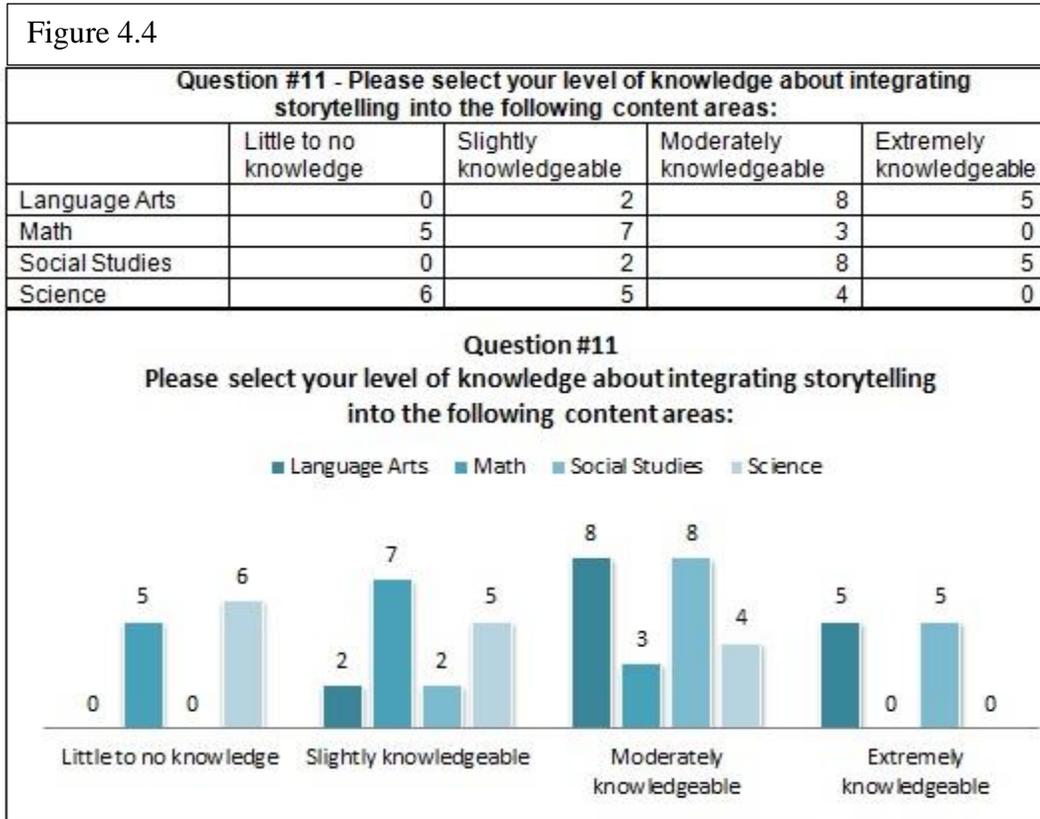


Figure 4.3				
Question #8 - Please rate your perception of the validity of each of the following statements about storytelling:				
	Not valid	Slightly valid	Moderately valid	Extremely valid
Enhances imagination and visualization	0	0	3	12
Develops appreciation of the beauty and rhythm of language	0	1	4	10
Increases vocabulary	0	0	6	9
Refines speaking skills	0	2	5	8
Improves listening skills	0	0	5	10
Allows students to interact with adults on a personal level	0	1	7	7
Enhances writing skills	0	2	9	4
Develops reading skills and sparks an interest in reading	0	2	5	8
Enhances critical and creative thinking skills	0	0	8	7
Nourishes students' intuitive side	0	1	5	9
Helps students see literature as a mirror of human experience	0	2	4	9
Helps students understand their own and others' cultural heritage	0	0	4	11

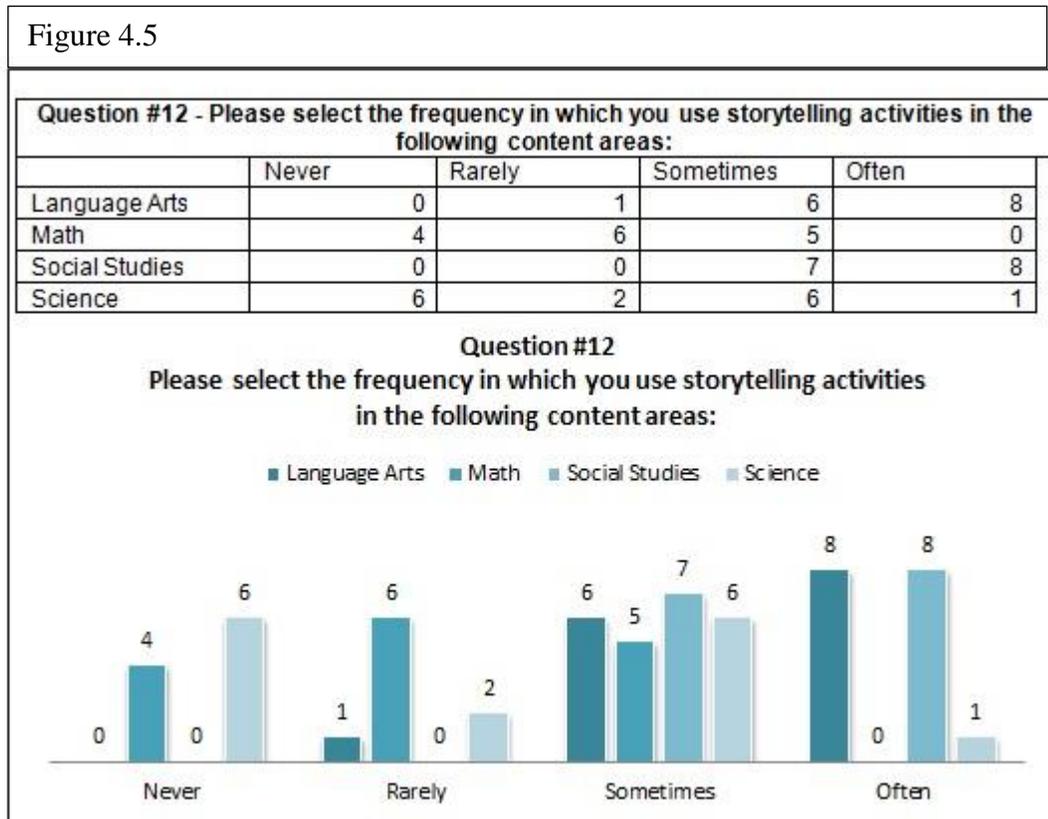
Moreover, the data in question 11 “Teacher rating of levels of knowledge about integrating storytelling in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science,” to include: little to no knowledge, slightly knowledgeable, moderately knowledgeable, extremely knowledgeable, indicated that teachers were more knowledgeable about integrating storytelling within the Social Studies and Language Arts content areas (see Figure 4.4). Thirteen of the 15 teachers answered that they were either moderately or extremely knowledgeable about integrating storytelling into these two content areas. Furthermore, from question 11, it was clear that teachers were less knowledgeable about integrating storytelling into Math and Science.



Questionnaire questions nine, twelve, and thirteen indicated how teachers have used storytelling in the classroom. Question nine asked teachers to “Please give an example of a lesson you have taught that demonstrates the validity of one or more of the above statements”. The statements that teachers were reflecting upon were from question eight (see Figure 4.3). The responses varied and were analyzed for common themes. Six teachers’ responses indicated that they used storytelling activities in Social Studies. Six teachers’ responses showed that storytelling was used in Language Arts. Three teachers indicated that they did not use storytelling (see Appendix C).

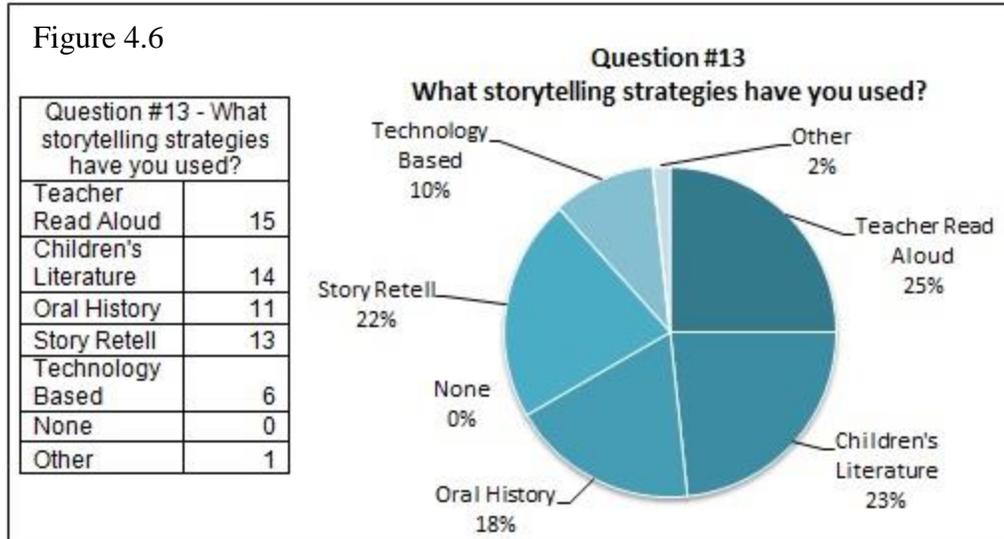
Question twelve asked teachers to select the frequency in which storytelling was used in the content areas of Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. The results revealed that more teachers used storytelling activities in the content areas of Language Arts and Social Studies than they did in Math and Science. Fourteen teachers

identified that they used storytelling activities either sometimes or often in Language Arts. Fifteen teachers identified that they used storytelling activities either sometimes or often in Social Studies. By comparison, ten teachers identified that they used storytelling activities either never or rarely in Math; and eight teachers identified that they used storytelling activities either never or rarely in Science (see Figure 4.5).

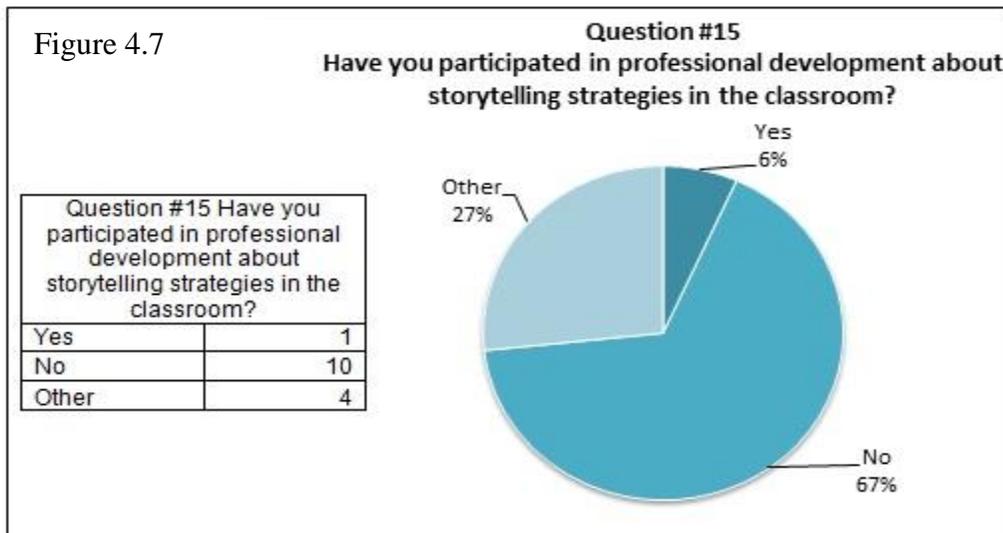


Question thirteen was the final question that presented ways in which teachers used storytelling. In question thirteen, teachers were asked to select multiple storytelling strategies that they used within their classrooms. The most frequently used strategies were teacher read aloud (25%), children’s literature (23%), story retell (22%), and oral history (18%) (see Figure 4.6). From these responses, it appeared that storytelling

strategies were being used in the classroom, however it remained unclear as to whether or not these strategies were intentional uses of storytelling.



One question on the teacher questionnaire very clearly displayed the need for professional development. Question fifteen asked teachers if they had participated in professional development about storytelling strategies in the classroom. Results indicated that a resounding 67% of the teachers had not participated in storytelling professional development (see Figure 4.7).



Interviews

The interview with Teacher #1, a fifth-grade teacher, revealed that she was uncertain about the true definition of storytelling. She saw storytelling as either relating content to real-life or as something that has a beginning, middle, and end that is linked to a skill or content area. When asked if she thought read aloud was storytelling, she was again uncertain. She felt that if read aloud was used to create interest in a content area or create interest in reading, then it was likely storytelling. However, if teachers were expected to teach concepts with storytelling, then maybe read aloud was not storytelling.

When asked questions related to the use of storytelling strategies, Teacher #1 immediately thought of Social Studies. She referred to Social Studies as being nothing but stories, yet her Social Studies textbook contained few, if any, stories at all. She was uncertain about what storytelling in Social Studies would look like, but she believed that it would be an easy fit. Additionally, for Teacher #1, linking storytelling with Language Arts came to mind. She thought it would be especially relevant to teach the elements of a story with storytelling.

When asked specifically about using digital storytelling, Teacher #1 was hesitant to conclude that technology had an impact on students' abilities to tell stories. She did, however, explain that students are very sophisticated and because they are exposed to a multitude of technology, they demand a higher level of entertainment to remain engaged. She believed that, with technology, students are exposed to different styles of storytelling, including video games.

Teacher #1 felt that she had not formally been taught any storytelling strategies, clearly demonstrating the need for storytelling professional development. She would like

to know what makes storytelling, storytelling. Additionally she would like to know what students are expected to learn from storytelling, whether storytelling is a teaching tool or a learning tool, and what strategies are available to teach storytelling and to use storytelling to teach.

When Teacher #2, a fourth-grade teacher, was interviewed, she believed that storytelling tells a story that accompanies the current curriculum. These stories go a little more in depth, give inside knowledge, and make the content more interesting than the students' textbook. She believed that read aloud can be storytelling when it delivers information about the current content. Read aloud stories are fascinating, whereas the textbook is often vague and dry in comparison. Teacher #2 explained that storytelling is engaging for her students. Often times, she finds herself going off-topic with a story because she loves to share her personal knowledge. Her students would rather listen to her tell a story then read about the same content in a book. However, throughout the interview, it was clear that Teacher #2 did not have strict guidelines about what storytelling was.

Teacher #2 used storytelling more in Science and Social Studies. The majority of the stories she shared with her students were from personal experience or knowledge. One example that she shared was a story that related to the Bear Flag Revolt. Her sister owns a ranch in southern Monterey County close to a mission that had been attacked during the Bear Flag Revolt. Everyone was killed in the attack and the mission's gold was stolen, supposedly buried in a nearby creek. Because her sister's property was bordered by two creeks near the mission, historians came to her ranch and asked if they could search the creeks on her property. The historians offered to share half of the

findings with her. This story created a real-life connection between the past and the present making it more relevant and engaging for students.

Teacher #2 believed that students' attention spans and reading abilities have decreased with the use of technology. Students now spend more time playing video games and/or watching television than they do reading books. She finds that students are reading less, which in turn affects their storytelling. They are not able to apply critical thinking and answer questions because they do not have enough experience reading. Another result of less reading is that students have a harder time telling a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Students tend to ramble more, having trouble organizing their thoughts. Teacher #2 links the increase in technology usage to a decrease in the quality of book reports over the years. Parents have expressed that they cannot get their children to read books anymore. Teacher #2 also recognized the benefits of technology in relation to assessing the validity of what students read and hear. She encourages students to look up information on-line to confirm what she tells them or what they are reading in a textbook. She teaches that they should not always rely on what the textbook says.

When asked about professional development needs, Teacher #2 stated that she doesn't think she has ever had professional development about how to use or teach storytelling. She referred to memorable teachers and professors who shared stories as they taught. One of her most interesting history professors had been to the places he taught about, therefore he was able to give the inside scoops about places by sharing his personal experiences. More than anything, Teacher #2 accredits her storytelling ability to the fact that she loves to talk and share her personal experiences; she said that storytelling just comes naturally to her.

Teacher #3, a sixth-grade teacher, stated that storytelling is telling a story, whether it be about curriculum or life. Within the classroom, stories can be told by students or by the teacher herself. She said that we use stories in our everyday lives. Some people are natural storytellers and can make the most mundane experience sound fascinating, whereas others who are not natural storytellers can bore you when sharing something that should be exciting. While teaching history, stories interweave the past and the present. When a teacher tells a story, students want to open up and tell their own stories; thus making more of a community in the classroom.

Storytelling is used in a variety of ways in Teacher #3's classroom. She said that she is always telling stories about *dead guys* who did wonderful things. She uses a lot of hyperbole when she talks about these *dead guys* and things that you don't find in the history book. Sometimes, students bring in interesting topics based upon the stories that they had heard. She had recently given a storytelling assignment to her students that required them to find a folktale from their own ethnic background and rewrite it in their own words. Students then practiced telling their rewritten story to their peers before telling it to the class. Upon reflecting on this assignment, she realized that she needed to take more time teaching students specifically how to develop their storytelling skills. She will bring the assignment back next year after researching ways to prepare students to become better storytellers.

When asked about the use of technology and its effect on students' storytelling abilities, Teacher #3 thought technology brought storytelling into the classroom more, therefore increasing students' abilities to tell stories. She demonstrated the Story Builder program that she had recently learned about at the Computer-Using Educators (CUE)

conference. With this technology, her students created a conversation with a peer along the lines of a story they had read by Judith Viorst. This conversation was animated as though it were being typed on the screen in real time. Students were required to include story elements and literary devices such as problem, solution, and figurative language. This activity was so engaging that students couldn't wait to share their own stories and see the stories of their peers. Though this type of storytelling is not the traditional face-to-face type, Teacher #3 believes that it is valuable and offers a high level of engagement for students.

When Teacher #3 was asked about her professional development needs in regard to storytelling, she said that there is a need for it. She would like to have a workshop taught by somebody with experience teaching storytelling to students. She is also interested in learning the right kind of language to teach storytelling to a child and how to make it non-threatening. A major obstacle for students when telling stories is their fear of public speaking.

A common theme among teachers interviewed was that they were uncertain about a clear definition of storytelling. They had all generalized their understandings of storytelling and utilize it in their classrooms in a wide variety of ways. All three teachers expressed a need and desire for further professional development in storytelling.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Storytelling can be thought of, in the general sense, as the interactive process that humans have used throughout history. More specifically, one may define storytelling as library-storytelling, traditional storytelling, or digital storytelling. Regardless of the definition, storytelling can promote cultural knowledge and connections, provides cognitive rewards, offers access to the curriculum for ELLs and academically diverse learners, and can be used within all content areas in conjunction with the California CCSS.

The purpose of this study was to determine what teachers know about storytelling and how it may be beneficial when used in the classroom. The hypothesis was that fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade teachers do not know much about storytelling. It was expected that teachers need professional development in storytelling.

Findings from this research suggested that teachers do not know enough about the use of storytelling in the classroom. Teachers want a clear definition of storytelling, as well as strategies to use. They are asking how to use storytelling as educators, and also how to teach students to become storytellers. Teachers tend to rely upon their own natural storytelling abilities and tell stories primarily about their own lives and experiences. They can recognize story elements in many media, but are unable to explicitly prepare lessons which contain storytelling. Instead of planning a lesson around a known story, teachers tend to plan the lesson and then weave a story into the lesson when it comes to mind. Storytelling is being used spontaneously, not strategically.

The questionnaire and interview data showed that the majority of teachers in this study used storytelling primarily in the content areas of Language Arts and Social

Studies. This was anticipated because Language Arts is composed of reading, writing, listening to, and verbalizing stories in both fiction and non-fiction. Social Studies tells stories of the past and teachers realize the use of storytelling makes the content more engaging, as opposed to when history is taught as a list of names, dates, places, and events. Teachers are not as comfortable using storytelling in Math and Science. However, Results of this study showed that teachers see the benefit of using storytelling in all content areas and want more information about how to incorporate it across the curriculum.

Teachers had mixed feelings about digital storytelling. In one way, digital storytelling provides new opportunities and avenues to express and experience stories; however digital storytelling takes away the face-to-face human interaction that often times makes storytelling unique and special. Digital storytelling uses modern technology which is likely to be highly engaging for students. Although the world is becoming increasingly technology-based, teachers have to be mindful that traditional communication cannot be sacrificed if we want our children to become compassionate, well-rounded adults. While technology can support storytelling in the classroom, teachers must remember that the *story* is most important.

There was a consensus among the teacher participants in the study about the need for further professional development in storytelling. All of the participating teachers said that they had either not participated in adequate professional development in storytelling or they expressed interest in further professional development. Teachers recognized the many benefits of storytelling in the classroom, and therefore wanted to receive the training. School leaders should support the use of storytelling activities in the classroom

and provide professional development on the subject. Textbooks should be analyzed for their inclusion of storytelling activities, entertaining and educational stories, and folklore materials.

Based on the findings of this study, further research should be conducted to illuminate the benefits of storytelling and the best ways for teachers to use it in the classroom. This study provided a brief introduction of how storytelling supports the California CCSS across the curriculum. Further research should be conducted to explicitly guide teachers in using storytelling as a means to satisfy the California CCSS, once teachers are comfortable and familiar with these new standards. Additionally, questions for future research may include: 1) How does storytelling affect student engagement? 2) What are the effects of digital storytelling on students' abilities to tell stories? and 3) Is technology reversing the oral tradition of storytelling?

Storytelling is clearly important, as story is experienced in all aspects of life and has been integral throughout human history. In order for children to learn about the past, engage in meaningful communication, acquire new information, build relationships, and have a voice in this world, they must have the ability to understand and tell stories. Storytelling did not begin and will not end in a classroom; however teachers have the power and responsibility to foster the development of this lifelong skill.

Researchers (Trostle & Hicks, 1998) recommended that professional development in storytelling may provide teachers with the necessary tools and motivation to incorporate storytelling into their lessons. Teachers are interested in storytelling and want professional development, but are hesitant to invest energy into implementing storytelling

strategies. Storytelling is a gift that teachers can give their students, whether by telling stories or by teaching them to become storytellers themselves.

Storytelling is a means by which teachers can incorporate the California CCSS and increase engagement. Stanton insisted that,

We all love stories. We're born for them. Stories affirm who we are. We all want affirmations that our lives have meaning. And nothing does a greater affirmation than when we connect through stories. It can cross the barriers of time, past, present and future, and allow us to experience the similarities between ourselves and through others, real and imagined... Probably the greatest story commandment is "Make me care" -- please, emotionally, intellectually, aesthetically, just make me care. We all know what it's like to not care... Use what you know. Draw from it. It doesn't always mean plot or fact. It means capturing a truth from your experiencing it, expressing values you personally feel deep down in your core. (Stanton, 2012, TED Talk)

Teachers should use what they know to make emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic connections with students through storytelling. If students are making connections with what they learn, they are more likely to retain the information.

We recommend that teachers challenge themselves to include more storytelling in their classrooms and then assess if student learning is greater or retained longer. If teachers experiment with integrating storytelling into the curriculum, we anticipate greater student success. Additionally, we recommend that teachers visit the National Storytellers Network (YES) website, where teachers will find resources for integrating

storytelling in the classroom. One final recommendation is for teachers to be proactive and seek out storytelling professional development opportunities.

Humans make sense of the world through storytelling. Storytelling fulfills some of our most basic social and individual needs. Through storytelling, we can imagine worlds we had never dreamed possible and can better understand the perspectives of others. Teachers should use storytelling in the classroom to benefit all students across the curriculum. Using storytelling in the classroom creates a sense of community that teachers cannot ignore. With the thoughtful use of storytelling, teachers have the power and responsibility to make students care.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

4/6/2014

Teacher Perceptions of Storytelling Questionnaire

[Edit this form](#)

Teacher Perceptions of Storytelling Questionnaire

* Required

Gender *

- Female
 Male

Current grade level *

- 4th
 5th
 6th

Years taught at current grade level *

- 1-5 years
 6-10 years
 11-15 years
 16+ years

Previous grade levels taught *

- K
 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 Other:

Overall years of teaching experience *

- 1-5 years

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1/5

- 6-10 years
 11-15 years
 16-20 years
 21-25 years
 26+ years

Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote:

"Storytelling is the commonality of all human beings, in all places, in all times. It is used to educate, to inspire, to record historical events, to entertain, to transmit cultural mores." Rives Collins & Pamela J. Cooper

Are you aware of the benefits of utilizing storytelling in the classroom? *

- Little to no awareness
 Slightly aware
 Moderately aware
 Extremely aware

Please rate your perception of the validity of each of the following statements about storytelling (Questions adapted from Collins & Cooper, 1997): *

	Not valid	Slightly valid	Moderately valid	Extremely valid
Enhances imagination and visualization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develops appreciation of the beauty and rhythm of language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increases vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Refines speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

skills

Improves listening skills

Allows students to interact with adults on a personal level

Enhances writing skills

Develops reading skills and sparks an interest in reading

Enhances critical and creative thinking skills

Nourishes students' intuitive side

Helps students see literature as a mirror of human experience

Helps students understand their own and others' cultural heritage

Please give an example of a lesson you have taught that demonstrates the validity of one or more of the above statements.

Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote:

"The telling of a tale links you with everyone who has told it before. There are no new tales, only new tellers in their own way, and if you listen closely you can hear the voice of everyone who ever told the tale." William Brooke

Please select your level of knowledge about integrating storytelling in the following content areas. *

	Little to no knowledge	Slightly knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable
Language Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Math	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please select the frequency in which you use storytelling activities in the following content areas. *

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Language Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Math	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What storytelling strategies have you used? *

(Write in additional strategies in the "other" field)

- Teacher Read Aloud
- Children's Literature
- Oral History

- Story Retell
- Technology Based
- None
- Other:

Please record you thoughts in response to the following quote:

"An enemy is one whose story we have not heard." Motto of the Compassionate Listening Project

Have you participated in professional development about storytelling strategies in the classroom? *

If yes, please describe in the "Other" box below.

- Yes
- No
- Other:

Would you be willing to participate in a one-on-one interview to better measure your perception and use of storytelling in the classroom? *

Please type yes or no. If yes, please provide your name and contact information in the space provided for this question.

Submit

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100%: You made it.



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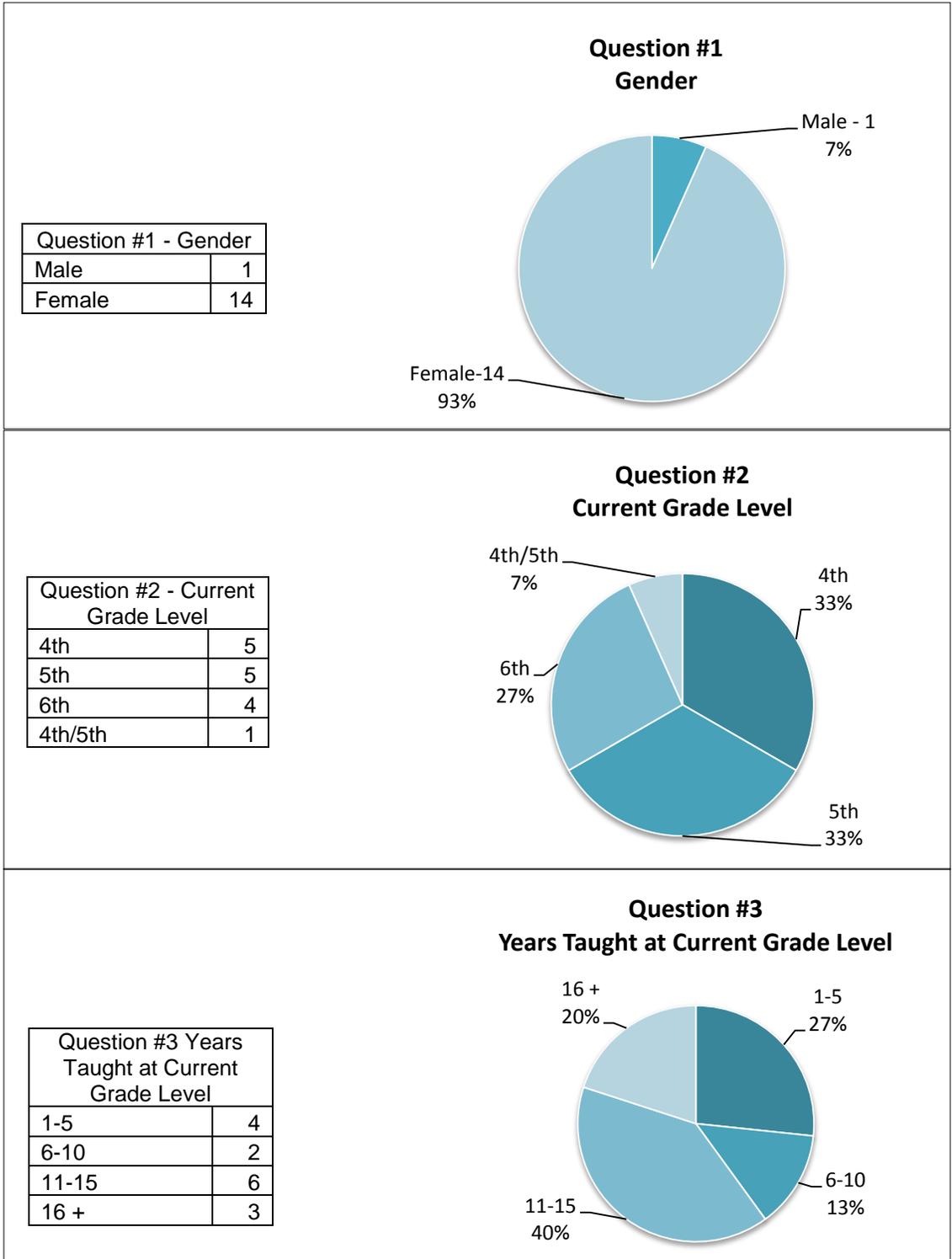
Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. What is storytelling?
2. What are your thoughts about using storytelling in the classroom?
3. How have you used storytelling in Social Studies?
4. How have you used story telling in the other content areas (i.e. Language Arts, Math, and Science)?
5. When did you last use a storytelling strategy in your Social Studies lesson?
Explain what the lesson was and what strategies were used.
6. How did you learn about storytelling strategies?
7. Explain your professional development needs in relation to storytelling.
8. What are your thoughts on the use of storytelling throughout all grade levels?
9. Has the use of technology increased or decreased students' ability to tell stories?
10. What is one of your personal memories involving story telling? Why is that memory important to you? Why does it stand out in your mind?

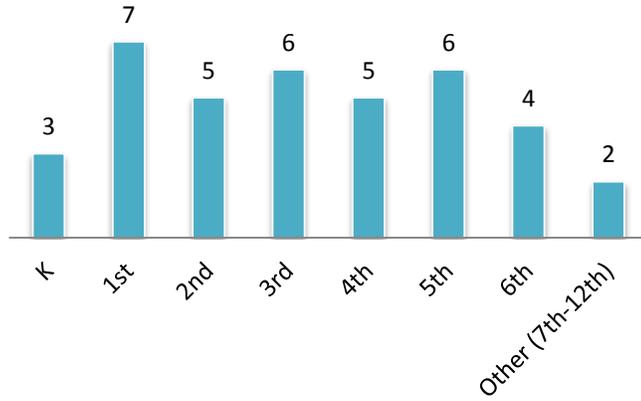
Appendix C

Questionnaire Results



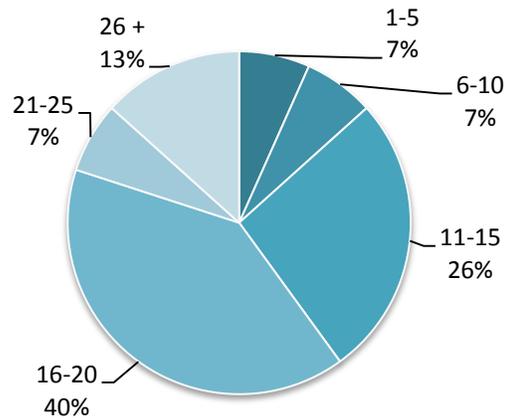
**Question #4
Previous Grade Levels Taught**

Question #4 Previous Grade Levels Taught	
K	3
1st	7
2nd	5
3rd	6
4th	5
5th	6
6th	4
Other (7th-12th)	2



**Questions #5
Overall Years of Teaching Experience**

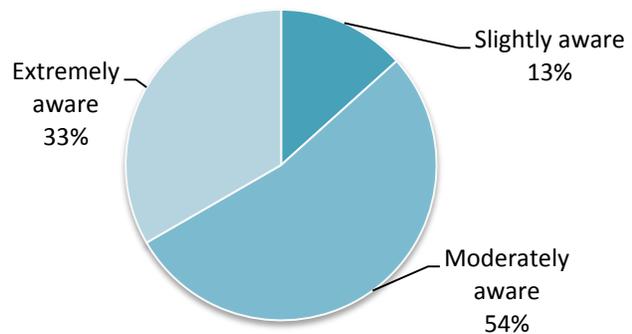
Questions #5 Overall Years of Teaching Experience	
1-5	1
6-10	1
11-15	4
16-20	6
21-25	1
26 +	2



Respondent	Question #6 - Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote: "Storytelling is the commonality of all human beings, in all places, in all times. It is used to educate, to inspire, to record historical events, to entertain, to transmit cultural mores." Rives Collins & Pamela J. Cooper
1	Storytelling is the heart of my classroom. It is what glues us together throughout the school year. One of the rewards my students LOVE is extra story time. It's the sweetest thing!
2	We certainly would not know much about our history if storytelling had not been an important part of cultures in the past.
3	I believe this quote to be true. Storytelling was the most primitive form of record keeping as far back as prehistoric man and thrives today as a vital way to keep history alive. It also has an innate way of propelling us into the future as well as allowing us to relive the past.
4	I agree. Ancient philosophers taught lessons through storytelling, bards travelled to spread news and legends to people who could not read. I find that science and history are much more interesting to my students when I have a story to share - either something that really happened to me, or I go more in depth about a particular person than our history book does.
5	Oral tradition is one of the oldest traditions known among humans. It was a way to share news, to try to explain the unexplainable (where the stars came from, why it rains, etc.), and to entertain. Storytelling is an art and can often get information across to the listener more effectively than simply reading.
6	This is a very accurate quote. I love story-telling in every form. In the classroom, I read/write to my students and also read their stories, and we all listen to each other's stories. We also read stories, listen to stories on CD, and watch DVD's that tell stories applicable to the curriculum. In my private life I read books, watch movies and television programs that are all forms of storytelling. Listening to the life stories of others is how we learn, celebrate, empathize, and enjoy our lives.
7	People of diverse backgrounds can be inspired by storytelling. It can bring people together and teach in a unique way.
8	Story telling is how information was passed down from generation to generation when there was no written language and/or when most of the population was illiterate.
9	I think this quote is correct. We all have stories, and stories are what make the world a functioning place.
10	This is a true statement. Throughout history, beginning orally, humans have told stories to inform, educate, and entertain. Whatever the culture, situation, phase of development, or status of safety, humans have felt the need to tell stories. Without stories, much of our past would die and humans would lose our ability to learn from and honor the past.
11	Inspires me to pass down history through stories
12	Most of our communication centers on storytelling -- whether it is just the simple stories of how we spent our day or the greater story of how we fit into the world. As a history teacher, storytelling is a normal part of how I teach.
13	I agree with Collins and Cooper's quote, in that storytelling "is used to educate, to inspire, to record historical events, to entertain, to transmit cultural mores," and often does all these things simultaneously. In addition, storytelling is something that everyone can relate to; it transcends all ages, all cultures.
14	
15	I couldn't agree more with this statement. Storytelling is an integral part in "telling the story of history". Students can be inspired, educated and entertained all at the same time through the use of storytelling in the history curriculum.

Question #7
Are you aware of the benefits of utilizing storytelling in the classroom?

Question #7 Are you aware of the benefits of utilizing storytelling in the classroom?	
Little to no awareness	0
Slightly aware	2
Moderately aware	8
Extremely aware	5



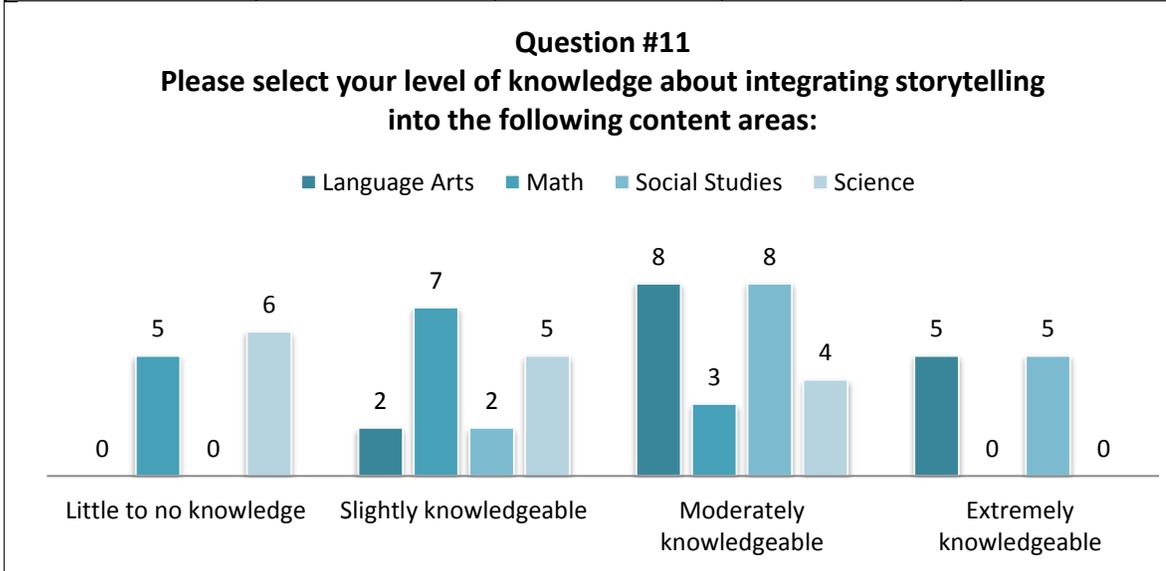
Question #8 - Please rate your perception of the validity of each of the following statements about storytelling:

	Not valid	Slightly valid	Moderately valid	Extremely valid
Enhances imagination and visualization	0	0	3	12
Develops appreciation of the beauty and rhythm of language	0	1	4	10
Increases vocabulary	0	0	6	9
Refines speaking skills	0	2	5	8
Improves listening skills	0	0	5	10
Allows students to interact with adults on a personal level	0	1	7	7
Enhances writing skills	0	2	9	4
Develops reading skills and sparks an interest in reading	0	2	5	8
Enhances critical and creative thinking skills	0	0	8	7
Nourishes students' intuitive side	0	1	5	9
Helps students see literature as a mirror of human experience	0	2	4	9
Helps students understand their own and others' cultural heritage	0	0	4	11

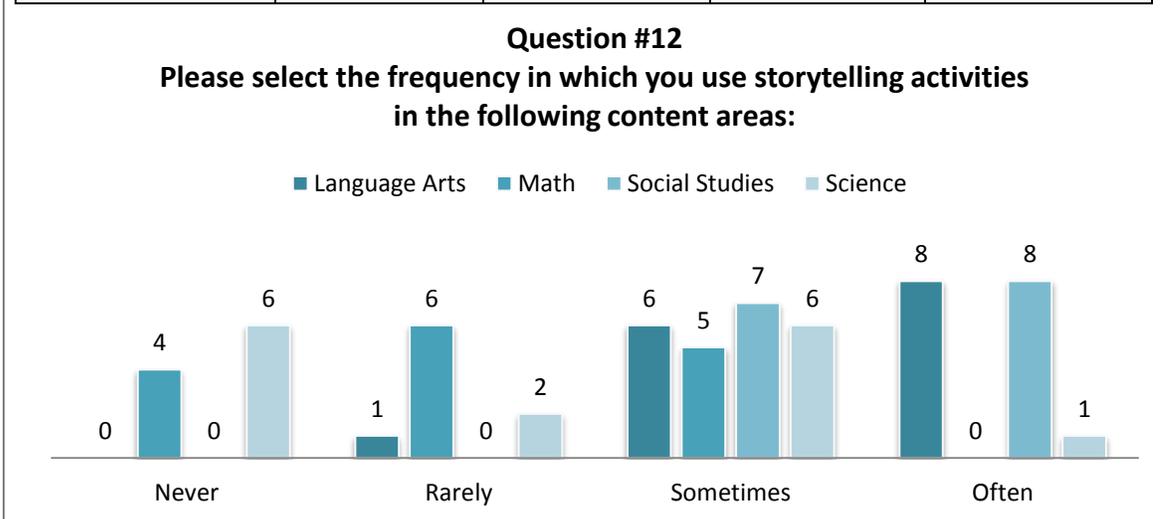
Respondent	Question #9 - Please give an example of a lesson you have taught that demonstrates the validity of one or more of the above statements.
1	Recently we have been learning about the Civil Rights Movement and leaders like Rosa Parks, Dr. King, and Nelson Mandela (South Africa). One of the books I read during this unit of study is The Sandwich Swap. The book really helps students think creatively about human differences and how our individuality makes us better as a group.
2	Using the idea of students telling stories about themselves as a precursor to writing the story. Others can ask questions and help the teller make should they have told their story clearly before writing it.
3	In reading Bud Not Buddy with my class students were able to gain a different perspective during a different time. We had a wonderful class discussion talking about voice and the time period the story took place. Students were also able to correlate historical events and how the theme of the story is applicable to their lives. The story sparked many emotions and allowed for my students to write about themes normally not spoken about (prejudice) and they were able to grasp someone else's point of view through the story. Very powerful.
4	In our history book, it states that John Fremont was a map-maker from the U.S. exploring Alta California (owned by Mexico at the time) making maps, and that he led the Bear Flag Revolt. That's it - literally one sentence about him! I ask the students why would an American be walking through territory that isn't even his to make maps? What did he need maps of Alta California for? Then I explain that he was married to a U.S. Senator's daughter... The U.S. had paid him to make maps, but he suddenly disappears and leaves the rest of his "map-making" team behind in Colorado, then pops up in Sonoma, CA at Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo's house and takes him hostage to Sutter's Fort. (Vallejo wanted Alta California to become part of the United States, so why would they take him hostage? but that's another story.) Sutter claims he had no choice but to help hold Vallejo hostage. Really? Then Fremont runs off to the Northern California/Oregon border where the U.S. Army is waiting... How did Fremont know the Army was there? U.S. claims no knowledge of this and said Fremont acted on his own... Fremont kills several people, but is later pardoned by the U.S. government.
5	Understanding their own and others' cultural heritage: Each year, I share the diary of one of my ancestors from when they traveled across the US and settled in Wyoming. I also share the diary of DeAnza's journey (recorded by a priest) from when he traveled through the San Fernando Valley to Ventura. It is interesting for the students to hear what the area looked like over 200 years ago.
6	
7	I don't use storytelling in my teaching.
8	Improves listening skills. During classroom storytelling time, students are quiet and attentive. Most students are successful at summarizing the story.
9	I had students write a story about a family tradition they do, and then they shared that story with the class.
10	My poetry unit. During the time we study poetry, there is more oral reading than any other time of the year. Depending what is being read, the students and I laugh together, cry together, or become thoughtful. Some poems are better than others. Some poems I love, they hate. We debate the meaning of certain poems, with the students having surprisingly strong opinions about some of them. The experience of sharing stories enhances their thinking, opens them up to new ideas, and helps them to appreciate what they once thought was "boring."
11	Use of stories such as Edward the Emu to initiate conversation about self-esteem, self-image
12	This year, after teacher modelling and watching professional storytellers on youtube, students were required to find a folktale or legend from their family's ethnic background. They had to rewrite the story and practice telling it so that they could present it to the whole class.
13	Recently: compare and contrast characteristics in the trickster tales of Ancient West African culture.
14	
15	When studying ancient cultures of the Middle East, I read aloud one of the selections from "A Thousand and One Arabian Nights". Students are fascinated by the creativity, descriptive passages, and general cleverness of the story itself. Many want to hear more stories because they are captivating and spur an interest in the culture and purpose of the stories in the first place.

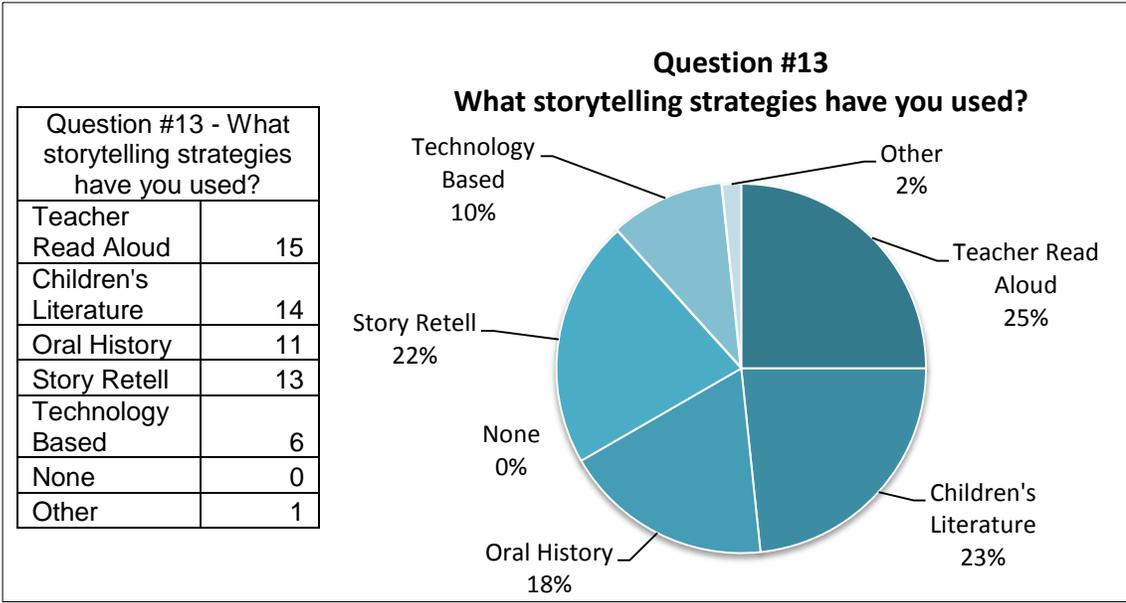
Respondent	Question #10 - Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote: "The telling of a tale links you with everyone who has told it before. There are no new tales, only new tellers in their own way, and if you listen closely you can hear the voice of everyone who ever told the tale." William Brooke
1	Hmmm...this one is tougher. Each story leaves a lasting print on the listener/reader's heart. We are changed by the stories we hear and share. Those changes have impact on us as writers because we gain ideas and strategies to tell our own story.
2	It makes me think of stories handed down through my own family and how the story gets embellished and more exciting as it is retold.
3	Reminds me of a game of telephone where there is one thing that is supposed to be transferred from one person to another yet gets muddled in the translation; such is history.
4	I first heard of the true story of Fremont and Vallejo from some university professors who had closely studied the lives of these two men. I never would have thought to look up information on these important historical figures from California history. I always tell my class where I learned this information because they look at me in disbelief. They want to know why this juicy info is not included in their history book.
5	Each of us adds and/or subtracts a little from the stories we tell. As it is passed on, it changes and has a life of its own. If you examined it closely, you could pull it apart and see who and what was added, and how it changed because of who was telling the tale.
6	
7	Tales are passed on from generation to generation and can resemble tales from other cultures.
8	As with history, a story is told with the tellers bias. You need to know who told the story and understand her perspective to find the truth in any tale.
9	I can see where they are going with it, but I feel like you can have a new tale if you have a new experience. People can have similar experiences, but they can also have brand new ones.
10	I disagree that there are no new tales. Sometimes I read something that totally takes me by surprise in the originality of the idea....The Hunger Games, Harry Potter, and Code Name Verity are examples of stories that are not only well told, but original in their conception.
11	This quote made me reflect on the fact that everyone and everything is interrelated and to take a step back and think of the connection with others.
12	Didn't someone else say that Shakespeare wrote the plots of all the books that have come after him? This winter we have been reading stories about the great flood -- Gilgamesh, Noah, and the Matsya Avatar of Vishnu. Students have been challenged to think about their similarities and differences, and draw conclusions about why these stories exist in so many cultures.
13	This reminds me of teaching archetype in literature. Themes of literature and themes of life are universal.
14	
15	To think of storytelling as actually being connected with a part of history through the reader is an awesome concept. Many students at 6th grade do not understand this, but participate in their own unique way of reading a story out loud and giving it their own version of how they tell it.

Question #11 - Please select your level of knowledge about integrating storytelling into the following content areas:				
	Little to no knowledge	Slightly knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable
Language Arts	0	2	8	5
Math	5	7	3	0
Social Studies	0	2	8	5
Science	6	5	4	0



Question #12 - Please select the frequency in which you use storytelling activities in the following content areas:				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Language Arts	0	1	6	8
Math	4	6	5	0
Social Studies	0	0	7	8
Science	6	2	6	1





Respondent	Question 14 - Please record your thoughts in response to the following quote: "An enemy is one whose story we have not heard." Motto of the Compassionate Listening Project
1	It's tough to be angry with someone who has shared their story with us; that is the nature of compassion.
2	It reminds me of a great book I've read to the students called Enemy Pie. It definitely reinforces the idea that you need to think about things from someone else's perspective.
3	Hmm, never thought of it that way before.
4	Agreed. I try to remember that there are two sides to every story. The truth is somewhere in the middle.
5	When people feel they are not being heard, hard feelings and anger may develop, as they don't feel they are understood. A basic human need, I believe, is to be heard and to be understood. One doesn't have to agree with it, but everyone needs to be heard.
6	I guess. While I understand the intent of the quote, I feel that someone with empathy might first write a story in their mind in order to try to befriend the "one whose story we have not heard". In that way we, as human beings, can give the other person the benefit of the doubt. It's not my favorite quote.
7	Once you know why someone behaves the way they do, you can recognize their motives. These motives may not be what you originally thought. Getting to know someone breaks down the walls of enemies.
8	We tend to dislike those things we do not understand. Therefore we may view a person or culture or idea as the enemy because we don't understand it. Once we understand something about the person/culture/idea we are no longer afraid of it.
9	I don't think this is correct. There are lots of people whose stories I have not heard, that does not make them my enemy.
10	This quote intimates that once we understand one's motivation, we cannot hate them. I disagree with that statement vehemently. I cannot imagine any level of understanding of, for example, Adolf Hitler's story that would cause a reasonable person to not hate him and consider him an enemy for what he did to humanity. Knowing a person's story allows understanding, it does not automatically induce friendship. Unfortunately, there are still people in the world that are evil to the extent that a civilized person must consider them an enemy in order to better humanity.
11	Wow! Powerful quote! It makes me look at adversity in a different light. I need to look more personally into the cause of the behavior that I don't like.
12	Until we have walked in another's shoes, we cannot really know who they are. As teachers, we only see the side of the child that exists during the school day -- most of the time we don't know the outside story. Sometimes, our students' real lives DO get in the way of doing their best for us.
13	I often pose to students- how many things exist that we are unaware of? We often think something is nonexistent simply because we have not experienced it.
14	
15	This is often the truth about how 2 opposing sides of an issue can misconstrue or misunderstand the viewpoint of the other simply because they do not have any background information or have not heard "the other side of the story". In history students are encouraged to look at opposing viewpoints in order to understand persuasive arguments and write to persuasive essay prompts.

Question #15
Have you participated in professional development about storytelling strategies in the classroom?

Question #15 Have you participated in professional development about storytelling strategies in the classroom?	
Yes	1
No	10
Other	4

