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SCCTE Call for Articles

The South Carolina Council of Teachers of English welcomes contributions to *South Carolina English Teacher* (SCET), a journal that represents varied perspectives, formats, and voices focusing on the teaching of English in our state. SCET publishes teacher research, critical essays, teaching strategies, bibliographies, interviews, personal essays, short stories, poetry, and other creative works including photography and drawings. We invite original artwork for our cover design. Each manuscript should be no more than 12 double spaced, typed pages in current APA style. SCET is a blind, peer-reviewed journal. Place the author's personal and institutional identification including an e-mail address on the cover page only. Please attach a copy of your manuscript in Word, subject heading, SCET, to mstyslin@mailbox.sc.edu. Deadline for submission for the next issue of SCET is July 30, 2015. All submissions postmarked by this date will be considered.

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From the Editors

It is with great pleasure that we bring to you this latest volume of *South Carolina English Teacher*, which continues to serve as a forum where practitioners and scholars can share best practices in English Language Arts teaching and learning. The pieces in this volume encourage us to consider approaches to ELA pedagogy that promote social justice, re-envision traditional approaches to teaching writing, and integrate drama into the teaching of literature.

In “Culturally Responsive Literature Circle Roles,” Todd S. Cherner, Lauren Santaniello, and Emma Savage-Davis provide suggestions for expanding the traditional roles given to students as part of literature circles by adding roles that encourage students to engage in critical, culturally responsive readings of texts. Meanwhile, Barbara Gilbert presents the results of a project she completed with teacher candidates that used a diverse array of children’s literature to help in developing their understanding of cultures different from their own in “Children’s Literature as a Means of Developing Pre-Service Teachers’ Cultural Awareness.”

The Re(Thinking) the Teaching of Writing section contains selections that offer new

perspectives on well-established pedagogical approaches to writing instruction. In “Teaching and Managing Writing Workshop”, Rebecca G. Harper and Gordon Eisenman provide ideas for teachers looking to incorporate writing workshop into their classrooms, with a particular attention on how to manage both time and student expectations to maximize the impact of this instructional approach. And in “Teaching Students to Think about Their Writing,” Thomas R. McDaniel explores how metacognitive approaches can encourage students to become more reflective, and better, writers.

The issue closes with an essay on the power of reading. Shannon Burgess describes the difference literacy made in her life and in the life of her father in “I Never Knew He Couldn’t Read.”

English teachers in South Carolina are working in a time of great uncertainty, as standards, assessments, and educator evaluation systems are seemingly constantly revised. The work of these dedicated authors reminds us of the critical importance of what happens in classrooms, as students and teachers work together to make meaning of texts and of the world.

Culturally Responsive Literature Circle Roles

By Todd S. Cherner, Lauren Santaniello, & Emma Savage-Davis

Miss Bell is a third-year 7th grade English teacher. Her class of 24 students recently began reading *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis, and Miss Bell has decided to use literature circles as a way for her students to engage the text. Before beginning the novel, Miss Bell placed her students in four groups of six and awarded them the opportunity to pick their roles out of the traditional nine, which included Summarizer, Travel Chaser, Vocabulary Enricher, Concrete Connector, Discussion Director, Imaginative Illustrator, Literary Luminary, Creative Questioner, and Rigorous Researcher. Through the use of literature circles, Miss Bell's students are able to take an active, independent role in their own learning. Furthermore, Miss Bell is able to use this activity to formatively assess her students by spending a few minutes with each group. She begins her first formative assessment by observing a group of six students, consisting of two boys and four girls. Amber, who is the group's Summarizer, begins leading the discussion for her group.

"At the start of the chapter, Momma tells Byron and Kenny to go to the store to get milk and some other things, but they're upset because Byron and Kenny think they're on welfare. It turns out that they're not really on welfare. They just have to sign something that says their dad can pay for the groceries later. A week after that, Kenny finds Byron at the store eating cookies. Kenny is mad at Byron, but they both end up eating the cookies anyway. And then, Byron sees a bird and throws a cookie at it and kills it! Byron is upset the bird is dead and later Kenny finds Byron buried it in a grave."

"Why is Byron so upset about killing a bird when he's mean to everyone else?" James, the Discussion Director, asks.

Sera, the group's Creative Questioner, picks up her pencil and says, "I'll add that question to our list. Is there another question I should add?" "Where did Kenny go after Byron threw apples at him when the bird died?" Ned, who is the Travel Chaser, asks with his pen poised above the paper.

"That's a question Sera can add too," Sandra, the Vocabulary Enricher, answered. "I don't think it says it in the book."

"We should read that part over again just to be sure," Maria, whose role is the Literary Luminary, tells her group. "It was one of the sections I chose for us to discuss, anyway, so I think it would be a good place to start."

The group agrees, and Miss Bell watches as the students pull out their books and turn to the correct page. She documents the performance of each student by making comments in her notebook and then leaves the group as they begin to read, feeling proud of their accomplishments.

Introduction

This peek into Miss Bell's class is only a small example of teachers and students who engage and participate in literature circles across the United States annually. As reported by Anderson and Corbett (2008), "Tens of thousands of teachers have implemented literature circles in their classroom, which translates into millions of students who have engaged in this type of literacy instruction" (p. 25). Interactive and engaging for learners (Monroe-Baillargeon & Shema, 2010), literature circles are ideal for student-centered instruction (Cameron, Murray, Hull, & Cameron, 2012), and they have become fixtures in English language arts (ELA) classrooms across all grade levels (Anderson & Corbett, 2008). Indeed, literature circles have been part of the ELA classroom for some time. Since the 1980s, literature circles have been shaping the way ELA classrooms are organized (Daniels, 2006). Arising in response to teacher-led text-based instruction (Witt, 2007), literature circles have taken growing role in the ELA curriculum taught in North American and the United Kingdom. (Anderson & Corbett, 2008, p. 25). In response to their popularity, literature circles received distinction in the Standards of English Language report published jointly in 1996 by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association (Marchiando, 2012). Based off of book clubs for

adults (Allan, Ellis, & Pearson, 2005), literature circles have widely been praised for creating an engaging, participatory method for reading and sharing texts (Fredricks, 2012).

An Overview of Literature Circles

In structure, literature circles consist of small groups of students who gather together to discuss and analyze literary texts in the classroom (Allan, Ellis, & Pearson, 2005). Within these groups, students take on specific jobs that empower them in becoming active learners and leaders, which changes traditional teacher-centered literary instruction (Anderson & Corbett, 2008). In addition to the sense of empowerment and control students have over their learning, the success of literature circles also exists within the discussion that takes place in each group. While students are working together, they are concurrently interacting with their peers, which gives them access to alternative thoughts, ideas, and perspectives about the text (Monroe-Baillargeon & Shema, 2010). In this way, students are socially constructing meaning together (Vygotsky, 1968) and becoming active participants in the learning process. This results in students creating “new context(s) where discussion among members becomes the event within which the transactional sharing and listening of multiple ideas continually shapes and reshapes meaning” (Certo, Moxley, Reffitt, & Miller, 2012, p.244). With the use of literature circles in the classroom, students effectively learn social skills and begin to understand how working together to achieve a common goal can reap both intellectual and personal benefits.

As noted by Anderson and Corbett (2008), literature circles can often be referred to by different names such as *Literature Response Groups* or *Peer-led Literature Groups*, and the roles in the groups can also differ. Teachers may choose to use only a few selected roles, and other times they will simply create their own roles, such as Webmaster (Wilfong, 2009). However, the unifying characteristic of literature circles is that they are “highly structured” (Anderson & Corbett, 2008, p. 26) literary experiences designed for students to engage a text deeply by analyzing its different components and working with peers to make sense of it (Bloom, Lipsett & Yocom, 2002).

When teachers implement literature circles,

different roles are offered to students, and each role is designed to encourage students to read the text from a different, unique perspective (Marchindo, 2013) that sets a purpose for their reading. Commonly used literature circle roles and tasks include:

- Discussion Director: Students in this role take charge of their group and lead the conversation.
- Summarizer: Students in this role provide their group with a brief summary of what they were assigned to read.
- Connector: Students in this role make connections between the text and the world around them.
- Creative Questioner: Students in this role compose questions that arise during group discussion.
- Literary Luminaries: Students in this role make note of quotes from the text that stand out to them or seem important.
- Travel Chaser: Students in this role create a list or map that chronicles the location of the characters as they move throughout the story.
- Vocabulary Enricher: Students in this role find new vocabulary words and look up their meanings to share with the group.

After roles have been assigned, students must dedicate themselves to fulfilling their task to its full extent, until it is time for the students to change roles and take on new responsibilities (Marchiando, 2013). These responsibilities require students to record their thoughts, observations, and understandings of the text as related to their literature circle role while they read. Additionally, although their roles vary, students should be encouraged to recognize that no one task is more important than another. Each of the roles

contributes to the success of the group. When students participate and perform effectively and collectively, the group is ultimately able to uncover deeper understandings of the text (Allan, Ellis & Pearson, 2005).

The benefits of literature circles go beyond increased comprehension, a sense of empowerment, and interactive discussions (Marchiando, 2013). Studies have shown that when students participate in literature circles and actively engage in their roles, they become more confident readers (Allan, Ellis & Pearson, 2005; Anderson & Corbett, 2008; Carrison & Ernst-Slavit, 2005; Certo, Moxley, Reffitt & Miller, 2010; Fredricks, 2012; Hsu, 2004; Pitman, 1997). Literature circles also promote higher-order thinking skills (Cameron, Murray, Hull, & Cameron, 2012), responsibility (Daniels, 2006), enjoyment and engagement in reading (Certo, Moxley, Reffitt & Miller, 2010), classroom motivation (Witt, 2007), growth in written and oral language (Anderson & Corbett, 2008), self-determination and a sense of accomplishment (Blum, Lipsett & Yocom, 2002), and creative responses to reading (Allan, Ellis & Pearson, 2005). Furthermore, as stated previously, literature circles promote peer interaction (Marchiando, 2013). These interactions are fundamentally important in the classroom because exchanging their literature circle roles gives students the opportunity to transact with the text from different vantage points. However, while literature circles are an effective instructional method for students to engage texts, they can be improved. Although the successes and benefits of literature circles are well-documented, they lack a “culturally relevant component” (Fredricks, 2012, p.495).

Traditional literature circles require students to take on a series of roles such as those encompassed in the opening vignette, but the roles do not take into consideration multicultural students, texts, or diverse literary viewpoints (Fredricks, 2012). For example, as Miss Bell’s class discusses *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, students may overlook or be uncertain about different multicultural references. The chapter titled ‘Every Chihuahua in America Lines up to Take a Bite out of Byron’ explores the cultural boundaries between African Americans and people of Mexican descent during the 1960s. Its topic may cause confusion to students because

of the cultural references it contains. For example, in this chapter, Byron gives his hair a “conk treatment,” and unless students have relevant background knowledge, they may not understand both its meaning and the Watsons’ reactions to it. All in all, as literature circles are meant to help students self-manage their learning in cooperative groups (Cameron, Murray, Hull, & Cameron, 2012), offering students the opportunity to analyze texts in terms of diversity and power is needed if literature circles are to be considered a culturally relevant instructional strategy (Fredricks, 2012). In response, we are putting forward three new literature circle roles instructors can assign students, which include: the Author Perspective, the Multiculturalist, and the Criticalist. When incorporated into literature circles, these roles help satisfy the need for a multicultural component to be added (Fredricks, 2012), which helps promote cultural respect, sensitivity, understanding, and an inclusive way of thinking. Additionally, these new literature circle roles offer teachers a tool to discuss sensitive topics related to race, diversity, and ethnicity that may otherwise go undiscussed.

Literature Circles as a Response to the Changing Demographics of Public School Students

The face of America is dramatically different today than it was 50 years ago. According to *The Today Show* (Costello, 2013), the kindergarten class beginning school in 2013 was 49.9% minority, and the United States Census Bureau (2013) predicts that Whites will be a minority by 2043. Furthermore, the National Center for Education Statistics (2013) already predicted a demographical change for the United States public schools in grades PreK-12, stating that only 48% of students will be White, 16% will be Black, 27% will be Hispanic, and 6% will be Asian/Pacific Islander, while 1% will be American Indian/Alaska Native and 3% will be two or more races. However, the racial demographics of teachers have remained mostly stable. Feitstritzer (2011) reported that the proportion of PreK-12 teachers who are White has dropped from 91% in 1986 to 84% in 2011. While the fastest growing groups of non-White teachers are persons of Hispanic origin and races other than Black. Though there has been a small shift in the racial demographics of teachers, the

majority of teachers are still White. This dynamic creates a mismatch between the racial demographic of teachers and students. In response, adding new literature circles roles that analyze texts through multicultural lenses offers teachers a culturally responsive method for discussing literature (Fredricks, 2012), which is described below.

Author Perspective. The students' job is to analyze the author's representation of diverse groups of people. As they read, students should consider how the author portrays the different groups. To guide their thinking about this topic, students should ask themselves if the groups are represented equally. If the students decide that the groups are not represented equally, they should consider why and how the author's representation is not equal. If they are represented equally, students should consider what makes the author's descriptions equitable.

In her classroom, Miss Bell introduces the Author Perspective role to the literature circles. Four new groups of six students have been created and together they actively discuss The Watsons Go to Birmingham. Miss Bell circles the classroom to assess her students' progress and participation. She pauses near a group comprised of familiar faces, as well as some new ones. This new group consists of Sera (Summarizer), Dean (Author Perspective), Amber (Creative Questioner), James (Literary Luminary), Gabe (Multiculturalist), and Linda (Criticalist). Sera begins the discussion by summarizing Chapter 9:

"Kenny and Mr. Watson talk about why Byron has to be sent to Alabama to live with their grandma for a while. Mr. Watson explains that life is hard for African-Americans, especially in the South, and that Byron has to be ready for it. When they leave for Alabama, Momma says she has the whole trip planned out because they can't stop anywhere they want because it's dangerous for Black people. Mr. Watson makes fun of Southern hillbillies, but no one is looking forward to the long trip."

"Mr. Watson makes fun of White Southerners a lot," Amber says. "Do you think they're represented fairly and equally, Dean?"

"I think Mr. Watson tries to be funny to cover up serious issues," Dean explains. "I don't think the point is whether or not the author is treating Southerners fairly. I think the author is trying to show how African-Americans aren't treated equally by Whites during the Civil Right

Movement and that it's dangerous. Mr. Watson tries to hide the danger from the kids by telling jokes and talking like a hillbilly."

"There aren't many White characters in the book," James notes as he scans over the paragraphs he has chosen for their discussion. "Except for their neighbor, Mrs. Davidson. I think she's White. She's the one who gave Joey the White doll, remember? Joey was upset about it."

"That's right," Gabe agrees. "She seems nice, but I'm not sure if she's White. I'm not sure if it says that."

"If it doesn't say that, then maybe that means something," Dean suggests. "Maybe the author is trying to show that although race is important during the Civil Rights Movement, kindness shouldn't be limited to Blacks or Whites, but should be shown by all people. If that's the case, then the author is being fair."

When utilizing the Author Perspective role in literature circles, students are able to actively examine the writer's intention when representing various ethnic groups. They are able to see the text through a multicultural lens while simultaneously delving deeper into it. In the above vignette, Miss Bell's students were able to uncover some important messages regarding race and equality in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. They were able to interpret the reasons behind Mr. Watson's frequent, and sometimes inappropriate, comments toward Southern Whites, and use the text to reinforce their understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, while the group might have been confused about Mrs. Davidson's ethnic background, through this lens they were able to stumble across a very meaningful theme: kindness, love, and sincerity is not restricted to one race or another. In fact, the group's uncertainty regarding Mrs. Davidson's ethnicity may indicate the students' conceptualization of kindness as related to race. In this way, the role of Author Perspective provided Miss Bell's students the opportunity to dig deeply into the text and actively explore and interpret it.

The Multiculturalist. The students' job is to consider how the author presents different cultures in the text. Students should consider if cultural generalities—features that are common to several, but not all, members of a culture—are used to describe a group of people. Furthermore, they should consider if stereotypes—characteristics used to describe all members of a

group of people—are either positive or negative. Lastly, students should contemplate if universal themes—patterns of behavior such as a mother’s love for her child—are used to describe a group of people.

Satisfied that this group has a firm understanding of the Author Perspective, Miss Bell asks them to consider and discuss the role of The Multiculturalist. The group contemplates for a moment, and together they decide to turn to Chapter 7. Sera begins:

“Byron comes home wearing a hat and a bandana. Momma makes him take it off and is really mad. Byron got his hair straightened because he wanted to look Mexican. When Mr. Watson comes home from work, Momma tells him that they now have a Mexican son. Mr. Watson isn’t happy about it either, so he shaves Byron’s head! Kenny thinks it’s really funny!”

“What does it mean to have Mexican hair?” Amber asks in confusion.

“The book says that Byron’s hair was straight and sticking up at strange angles,” James explains, opening his book and pointing to the quote.

“It’s being used negatively,” Gabe asserts. “It is a negative stereotype that carries through the entire chapter. Not only does the book make fun of Mexican hairstyles, but it also makes fun of the culture in general, especially when Mamma and Mr. Watson call Byron all sorts of names.”

Dean says, “This culture isn’t being treated fairly and equally by the author. The Watsons are being nasty. Even though Byron disobeyed his parents, they weren’t being nice at all.”

Gabe nods his head in agreement. “The story is meant to dispel racism, but this is a bad lesson to teach kids. It’s practically saying it’s okay to make fun of some races for the way they look or act.”

“Do you think it comes up again later in the book?” Amber asks.

“We should read on to find out,” James tells the group, so they open their books and keep reading.

The role of the Multiculturalist in literature circles is to help students become more mindful and aware of stereotypes. Through this lens, these students were able to uncover a subtle nuance within *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. In chapter 7, the students noticed that stereotypes were used to describe Mexicans

because of Byron’s hair treatment. Indeed, emotions were present throughout the discussion, indicating the views and moral standing of the students in how strongly opposed they were to the use of negative stereotypes. The role of the Multiculturalist is vital in literature circles so that these discussions can flourish and students can become more mindfully aware members of society.

The Criticalist. The students’ job is to analyze the text for power. Students should question who has the power, who does not have the power, and how the dominant group uses its power. They should also consider if the group of people who are not empowered attempt to resist the dominant group. In addition, students should contemplate how the dominant group became empowered and/or maintain their power, and how the groups of people who are not empowered lost their power, or if they ever were empowered.

Miss Bell now asks the group to consider The Criticalist. As the Summarizer, Sera begins once again:

“Chapter 14 starts on a Sunday. Joey goes to the local church while the others stay at home. There is a loud BOOM and everyone goes running. A White man bombed the church with a lot of little girls inside. Some of them die. The Watsons think Joey was killed. Kenny is upset and runs home. Joey shows up and Kenny thinks she’s an angel, but it turns out she wasn’t in the church at all when it happened. The chapter ends with Kenny running to tell the family that Joey is okay.”

“Why would someone bomb a church with little girls inside?” Amber asks.

“Because the girls inside were Black,” Gabe explains. “The man who did it didn’t like African-Americans just because of the color of their skin.”

Linda nods in agreement and adds, “White people were in power during this time period. This was the Civil Rights Movement, though, when African-Americans were fighting for equal rights. Bombing the church was his way of protesting against them. He used fear and murder in an attempt to keep his power.”

“Didn’t anyone try to stop him?” Amber asks, her nose scrunching in appall. “Didn’t anyone try to resist?”

“It doesn’t say in the book,” James says as he flips through the pages. “But remember,” Linda says, “we learned in class that many people did

resist White supremacists and that they protested after the bombing and throughout the Civil Rights Movement. Isn't that right, Miss Bell?"

"Let's discuss this as a class," Miss Bell says. She claps her hands twice, capturing the class's attention, and opens the floor for a class-wide discussion.

Chapter 14 is a critical point in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, and the role of the Criticalist ensured that Miss Bell's students were not lost to the tragedy of the historic bombing in 1963. In this instance, the role of the Criticalist enables students to go beyond the text, digging deeper and incorporating their background knowledge to explore the concept of empowerment regarding racial identity. The students in Miss Bell's class were able to make informed observations after reading this chapter as they considered power and how it was used. All in all, whether in small group discussions or with teacher guidance, this role enables students to look sharply at the world and evaluate it.

Conclusion

As the diversity of students continues to evolve, ELA teachers need to update the roles they use for literature circles. Because multiple

research studies have shown the benefits of literature circles, ELA teachers should continue to use literature circles as part of their instructional methods for reading novels. However, the current literature circle roles do not directly address diversity and power, which are significant themes in many multicultural, young-adult novels (Cai, 2002; Landt, 2006). Using *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, an award-winning novel, as our example text, we created vignettes to illustrate how conversations students may have about that novel would be influenced by them taking on these new roles. Because traditional literature circle roles guide the purpose of how students read the text, these new roles also guide students' reading of a text. The difference, however, is that whereas the traditional roles analyze the text for setting, plot, characterization, theme, and other literary qualities, these new roles will focus students' reading on the multicultural themes that are so often part of young-adult novels. In this way, these new literature circle roles address Fredricks' (2012) concerns and make the case that literature circles can be a culturally responsive instructional strategy.

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Emma Savage-Davis is a professor of middle and secondary level education at Coastal Carolina University. She began as an educator in the Chicago Public School system for almost 12 years before moving into higher education. Her research interests include classroom climate, access to quality and equitable education, and school partnerships. She provides professional service to community outreach programs, school-based partnerships, state, regional, and national education associations, and national and SPA accreditation teams.

Lauren Santaniello is the author of *Death of Ignorance*, a young adult novel published by *Stories to Tale*. Originally from New Jersey, Lauren holds a teaching certificate in Literature and Secondary Education, and she will be awarded her graduate degree in literacy from Coastal Carolina University this coming May. Professionally, Lauren is an advocate of literacy education and creative writing, and she spends much of her time visiting schools and public libraries to promote a lifelong love of reading.

Children's Literature to Develop Pre-Service Teachers' Cultural Awareness

By Barbara Gilbert

Introduction

Researchers posit the need to prepare pre-service teachers for a more diverse student population (Sleeter & Milner IV, 2011; Tyson & Ball, 2011; Walton, Baca & Escamilla, 2002). In one study, Walton, Baca, and Escamilla (2002) conducted a national study of teacher education preparation for diverse student populations, and they recommended teachers address the needs of all students culturally, socially, and linguistically. Additionally, they suggested that teachers needed to understand diverse cultural patterns and their historical impact. Unfortunately, other researchers found that most candidates do not feel prepared to teach students different from themselves leaving many low-income schools with teachers who may be less qualified or new to the profession (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Haldaway & Florez, 1987-1988; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Martin & Williams-Dixon, 1994). To help teachers feel prepared, Nieto and McDonough (2011) found it was important for teacher educators to provide supports, such as inquiry projects, to help pre-service teachers as they explore culture. These studies have been important to me as I prepare pre-service teachers to work with students in low-income rural areas with an increasingly diverse student population.

The Study

This study took place with a cohort of education majors in the junior block of their program of study. This particular cohort of students was small with four students: two European-American females, one African-American female, and one European-American male. The two European-American females, Megan and Clarissa (all names are pseudonyms), were traditional-age college students while the African-American female, Danica, and the European-American male, Brent, were slightly older than the traditional college student. Both had attempted other

career choices, had families, and then decided they wanted to become teachers.

In this study, I examine the effects of an inquiry into culture through an exploration of children's literature. I wanted the pre-service teachers to have an awareness of the changing demographics of the schools since many of them are from the area surrounding the university. Like many rural areas in South Carolina, the demographics of the area have changed in the last few years. I also wanted the pre-service teachers to have a way to address the cultural needs of their future students.

To help the pre-service teachers learn more about the cultural groups in Garrison County (pseudonym), the pre-service teachers each selected a cultural group represented in the county's schools about whom they wanted to know more. This helped ensure that they had appropriate texts to use in their next field experience or student teaching. My goal was to help the pre-service teachers feel comfortable teaching those who are different from themselves. After they determined the cultural group that they wished to focus upon, I asked them to record what they knew about the cultural group (Szecsi, Spillman, Vázquez-Montilla, & Mayberry, 2010). The pre-service teachers then read at least three children's books about the cultural group they selected, creating a text set specific to their particular cultural group. Table 1 shows the students, the cultural groups they selected, their prior knowledge, book selections, and new understandings.

Method

I collected data throughout the four-month semester that I worked with the pre-service teachers. Data included participant observation, artifacts created by the pre-service teachers, and interviews, which I recorded and transcribed. To ensure credibility of my findings, I incorporated data source triangulation (Denzin,

1978) as well as member checks (Stake, 1985). Additionally, I applied the five validity criteria proposed by Herr and Anderson (2005)—which included outcome, process, democratic, catalytic, and dialogic validity—to judge my work. I entered all data into N'Vivo so I could develop codes to sort my data into categories.

Data Analysis

For this inquiry, the pre-service teachers created an artifact listing their prior knowledge, which they added to as they read creating their new knowledge. Each also presented their books to the rest of the group so everyone had the benefit of learning about new texts. I recorded their discussions, which I transcribed. At the end, the pre-service teachers created an exit slip explaining how this engagement might help them as a future teacher. Using the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy, I read and coded the data. I then used the coded data to develop themes for analysis to develop a narrative description of my findings.

Findings

Each pre-service teacher took a turn sharing the books he or she selected so everyone could benefit from knowing some the books that were available. Brent selected the Latino culture and his selections ranged from biographies to realistic fiction (see Table 1 for his text selections). Brent shared the following about his books:

I picked the Latino culture. A couple of the books are about famous Latino people and *My Name is Gabito/ Me llamo Gabito: The Life of Gabriel Garcia Marquez* (Brown, 2007) is one of them....He is a writer from Columbia....He came from working on poor banana plantations in Colombia. There were unfair working conditions and he still fights for workers' rights....This was my favorite one – *The Pot that Juan Built* (Andrews-Goebel, 2011)...It talks about Juan Quezada, and he is from a small village in Mexico called Ponce de LaTeze. He rediscovered the traditional ways of making pots and pottery.... Everything he does is the original primitive way.... He basically built up the economy of that whole town....He taught the whole town how to make pots in the

traditional way and people come there all the time – even today to buy these pots. It showed the rich history they had with all of the natural resources. I guess I learned overall that the Latino culture has a rich history and culture and customs and they hold onto them.

In addition to gaining cultural knowledge, an important component of the culturally relevant framework (Gay, 2000, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995 & Nieto, 2010), Brent mainly focused on critical issues such as the social inequities faced by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a writer who fought for workers' rights. He also discussed how Jan Quezada changed the lives of the villagers, who previously had to leave the village to find employment. As he was concluding, Brent mentioned the rich history, culture, and customs of the people.

In his written reflection of this engagement, Brent mentioned the importance of books when introducing cultures to the students. Like Cai (2008), Brent felt the experience would open his future students' eyes to other cultural groups and the challenges that many experience and will act as a window into the lives of cultures different from their own. Brent also felt that reading about the Latino culture through literature broadened his perspective because he saw how important the family and the community are in the lives of many Latinos. Brent also learned about the challenges faced by many Latinos such as the impact of unfair working conditions like those faced by Gabriel Garcia Marquez in *My Name is Gabito* (Brown, 2007), and the hardships of unemployment like those faced by the villagers in *The Pot that Juan Built* (Andrews-Goebel, 2011). By reading these books, Brent felt a connection to the people he read about and he believes he will feel connected to his future students who may be from other cultural groups. See Table 1 for Brent's new understandings.

Megan, who said she had "minute Latino heritage," also read texts about the Latino culture (see Table 1 for her text selections). In her discussion, she said:

I called some of my Latino family in Las Vegas to find out about the types of things they read. They told me about– *Abuelo y Los Tres Osos* (Tello, 1997) –translated that is

“Grandfather and the Three Bears”. It’s basically the same storyline....I thought it was funny how the tales they tell coincide with American tradition... My favorite was probably *In My Family/En Mi Familia* (Garza, 2000). It’s English on one page and Spanish on the next page. It was so full of their history and how they do things. It told how every Saturday the whole family would get together.... It’s just their family units and how they celebrate. It’s just a lot different. They told about customs....They kiss each other’s cheek. That’s just what they do....It talks about how when we first meet somebody, we call them a friend. It’s not an acquaintance here, it’s a friend. In this, when they meet someone, it’s an acquaintance. They don’t use the term *amigo* freely. You have to really know a person. So they don’t use the term like we do. Another book that I read was *My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz* (Brown, 2004). She invented salsa dancing. She brought it to America....It was good to see how it was brought here and how we do it as well....When they do have the big gatherings with all of their families, they typically always dance. It is one of their favorite pastimes, and it was passed down from one generation to the next.

Megan relied on her Latino family members for advice on what to read as she gained cultural knowledge (Gay, 2000, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995 & Nieto, 2010) of the Latino culture. When she shared her books in class, she focused on comparing and contrasting the two cultures. This was especially evident when she shared *In My Family/En Mi Familia* (Garza, 2000) as she provided examples of the norm in European-American culture and contrasted them with the family in the book. However, she was surprised that *Abuelo y Los Tres Osos/ Grandfather and the Three Bears* (Tello, 1997) was similar to the English version of this traditional tale. She normalized that traditional tales started in America.

In her written reflection, Megan said that using culturally relevant books would help her as a future educator because they will help all students feel more comfortable. She felt that English-speaking students would be more comfortable interacting with Spanish-speaking students. Additionally, she felt that the Spanish-

speaking students would feel that the teacher recognized their culture in the curriculum (Gay 2000, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; and Nieto, 2010). Megan felt that accepting individuals came with understanding individuals. By using literature in this way, Megan can help students see the world of others in addition to their own worlds (Cai, 2008).

While Brian and Megan focused on the Latino culture, Danica, an African-American pre-service teacher, focused on the African-American culture even though she is a cultural insider (see Table 1 for her text selections). In her presentation to the class, she spoke about her rationale and process for choosing materials:

My thinking behind this was the progression of the culture – from where they were to where they are now. So I started with *Henry’s Freedom Box* (Levine, 2007)....This book, *Chains* (Anderson, 2010), is new to me. It’s about two sisters who are slaves, and they are promised freedom upon the death of their master.... I did my book talk on *Roll of Thunder* (Taylor, 1991) so I won’t go into the details. But, it’s around the time that we were sharecroppers. I’ve never sharecropped in my life. My ancestors who preceded me were sharecroppers...I’ll move on to this one about Jackie Robinson, *Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson* (Denenberg, 1990). Jackie Robinson was the first African American baseball player in the major leagues. What surprised me is when the team went to an away game; he had to sleep on the bus or in a car. He wasn’t allowed in the hotels or the restaurants. So the team would go in and he would be sitting out there by his lonesome. But he became one of the best ball players. Next, I have a book about Martin Luther King (Rappaport, 2007), and you know all of the great things he did. Next is Mr. Obama, the president (held up *Who is Barack Obama?*) (Edwards, 2009). It’s about where he came from. What I like about Mr. Obama is he feels my pain. He just paid his student loans off about 5 years ago. He and his wife, Michelle, are actually lawyers.

Even though Danica is African-American, she chose to focus on the African-American culture for this engagement. In her prior knowledge, she said that African-Americans have made great strides. When sharing her books, she took

an historical perspective showing African-Americans from the time of slavery to the presidency. During her discussion of the texts, Danica acknowledged her African-American background and stated that she came from sharecroppers, something she had not mentioned when conducting a book talk on the same book. As she talked about her books, she explained the new knowledge she gained. For example, when Danica talked about Jackie Robinson, she indicated that she was surprised to learn that hotels did not allow him to stay with his teammates, and she was surprised to learn that the Obamas just paid off student loans, something she will be doing upon graduation.

In her written reflection, Danica indicated that books provide historical background so students can see how times have changed. She felt that it was important for the students to know their own history and the history behind what people had to go through. Theobald (1997) believes that young people need to be aware of their history and given the opportunity to tie it to their own circumstances so they have a sense of their political efficacy or feel allegiance to their homes and communities. By doing this engagement and recognizing the important contributions made by African-Americans, Danica felt secure enough to mention her family's history of sharecropping; however, she did not address issues of racism that still exist today. McDonough (2009) also noticed that a first-year teacher easily discussed racial issues from an historical perspective, but was reluctant to discuss current issues. Much like the teacher in McDonough's study, Danica was "historicizing" (p. 534) racism, but not acknowledging its presence in her life. See Table 1 for Danica's new understandings.

Discussion

This study is a glimpse into one teacher educator's classroom demonstrating the impact of studying children's literature representative of the cultures of the pre-service teachers' future students. As indicated by the pre-service teachers' prior knowledge of the culture they selected, the focus was on food and holidays. As scholars (Banks, 2004; Lazar, Edwards, & McMillon, 2012) suggest, culture is more than foods and holidays. By participating in this

inquiry, the pre-service teachers' new knowledge showed that they saw culture as values, beliefs, and ways of interacting (Lazar et al, 2012).

Gaining this deeper knowledge of the cultural groups likely to be represented in their future classrooms was important for the pre-service teachers for several reasons. First, it helped them see that their future students needed to be included in the curriculum (Nieto, 2010). The pre-service teachers also saw that students needed to feel connected to others in their cultural group (Ladson-Billings, 1995). They also saw the need to expose their students to different perspectives (Banks, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2002). By selecting books written by cultural insiders, the pre-service teachers were more likely to be presenting materials that were accurate and authentic (Gay, 2000).

This study only begins to look at the ways to prepare pre-service teachers to teach a more diverse student population to prepare them to work with students who may be different from them socially, culturally, linguistically, or economically. Teacher educators need to conduct more research to determine if pre-service teachers' dispositional attitudes toward diverse student populations can disrupt the cycle of teacher turnover in high poverty schools.

Pre-service Teacher	Cultural Group	Prior Knowledge	Texts Read	New Understandings
Danica	African-American	Food Were forced to America Have made great strides	<i>Henry's Freedom Box</i> <i>Chains</i> <i>Roll of Thunder Hear my Cry</i> <i>Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson</i> <i>Martin's Big Words</i> <i>Who Is Barack Obama</i>	Importance of knowing historical background Impact of history Importance of knowing one's own history
Megan	Latino	Different food and culture Celebrate Christmas Have large families	<i>Abuela</i> <i>Abuelo y los Tres Osos</i> <i>Esperanza Rising</i> <i>In My Family/En Mi Familia</i> <i>My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz</i>	Reverence for grandparents Traditional tales are shared across cultures History of the Great Depression in Mexico and immigration across the border Traditions associated with dancing
Brent	Latino	Very family oriented Often quiet when around English speakers Have a distinct food culture Hard-working	<i>My Name is Gabito/ Me llamo Gabito: The Life of Gabriel Garcia Marquez</i> <i>Abuela</i> <i>Too Many Tamales</i> <i>The Pot that Juan Built</i>	Traditions of making pottery Reverence for grandparents Social inequities History Importance of family and community

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Teaching and Managing Writing Workshop

Rebecca G. Harper & Gordon Eisenman

Writing Workshop is a method of writing instruction that involves the implementation of a block of time for writing, beginning with a quick write and mini-lesson on a particular skill or strategy, and culminating usually with author's chair, a time where students can share their writing with the class (Atwell, 1998; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Graves, 1980; 1994). During the workshop time, students take part in a number of activities. All are working on writing, yet students are often at various stages in the writing process. While many students may be writing independently or taking part in peer activities such as review and revision, the teacher may elect to work with a small group on a particular skill or strategy (Atwell, 1998; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Graves, 1983; Graves, 1980; 1994).

This approach to teaching writing is often used in classrooms across grade levels and content areas because of its flexibility and individualized, student-centered nature. It has been found to be utilized in a variety of ways, with teachers modifying the practice to best fit their instructional needs. For example, Lawrence (2008) found in his study of six high school English teachers that many were utilizing the writing workshop to teach writing in their classrooms. During these workshop settings, the teachers were conferencing with students, offering instruction on author's craft such as voice, and students were taking part in peer revision and review. Similarly, Shelton and Fu (2004) found that writing workshop was utilized to integrate various genres of writing including narrative and expository writings in their case study of a fourth grade teacher.

In a study conducted by Whitney et al. (2008), teachers utilized writing workshop in some form or fashion, though in different manners. Although the writing workshop utilized by each teacher differed in some way, the basic premise of the writing workshop model was followed in his or her classroom. Similarly, Graves, Valles, and Rueda (2000) found that though each teacher differed in some manner as to how s/he taught writing, each participant utilized the writing

workshop model in the classroom, emphasizing process over product. Furr's (2003) action research in his own classroom described the use of a modified writing workshop as a vehicle to teach expository writing, while Peyton, Jones, Vincent, and Greenblatt (1994) profiled the use of writing workshop in the English as a Second Language (ESOL) classroom. Although there are subtle differences in the implementation of the instructional approach, the use of writing workshop is common in English Language Arts classrooms, and is used to encourage writing across genres and content areas.

Despite the fact that writing workshop offers flexibility and differentiation within instruction, teachers are often challenged with how to implement and manage this instructional approach. According to the literature, teachers receive limited instruction in both writing pedagogy and classroom management (National Commission on Writing, 2003; Graves, 1978; www.ncte.org; www/nwp.org; Wesley & Vocke, 1992). In many cases, pre-service and graduate degree programs do not require courses in either area, while those that do most often require only one. Both fields are unique in the fact that the content of each transcends all grade levels and subject areas. In order to be effective, teachers must be good classroom managers (Metsala, & Warton-McDonald, 1997; Morrow, Tracey, Woo, & Pressley, 1999). Similarly, all teachers, regardless of subject area or grade level are writing teachers in some form of fashion. Yet, the lack of background and professional development in either area often creates numerous issues in the classroom, ranging from general management problems to ineffective instruction.

Frequently, teachers are unsure of the methods or strategies that should be utilized in the classroom. Their unfamiliarity with the teaching of writing, coupled with their lack of experience with classroom management tactics and strategies, often combine to create the perfect storm, especially when it comes to new instructional approaches they would like to integrate into their classes, such as writing workshop.

Although writing workshop in itself is not a new instructional practice, for many teachers, they encounter it for the first time through professional readings, graduate course work, or through professional development. Because of this, many view writing workshop as a new and novel approach to writing, partially because of their limited exposure to a variety of writing programs or strategies. In many cases, the only knowledge regarding writing instruction teachers have had is limited to experience with scripted and outlined programs that explain and detail exactly what is to be said, done, and taught on a daily basis. Many teachers are teaching writing through district-wide instructional programs, textbook materials, or other highly structured writing programs with little or no professional development in the subject. Plus, what little professional development teachers have had is, according to *The Neglected R* (2008), in need of a major revamp.

Similarly, teachers face the same issue when it comes to classroom management. In most pre-service education courses, students typically are required to take one course in classroom management or less (Blum, 1994; Landau, 2001), yet the most common concern of beginning teachers is classroom management (Ganser, 1999; Jacques, 2000; Ladd, 2000; McCormacke, 2001). Plus, beginning teachers report that poor classroom management skills and disruptive students are the most significant barriers to being a good teacher (Fideler & Haskelhorn, 1999), and many are unsatisfied with the preparation received from their teacher education program in classroom management (Merrett and Wheldall, 1993).

Before teachers can effectively implement writing workshop in the classroom, they must first understand the components and physical make-up of the method. A solid understanding of the approach is imperative for successful classroom integration. However, just understanding the method is not enough to ensure that it will be successful in the classroom. In order to successfully utilize writing workshop in the classroom with minimal classroom management issues, there are several recommendations for implementation.

The Components of Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop generally consists of several components or parts. Normally, these

include a mini-lesson, independent writing time, conferencing, and author's chair, which is also known as share time. However, it is a good idea to begin the writing workshop with a writing warm-up or Quick Write.

What is a Quick Write?

A quick write is exactly what it sounds like – a writing engagement that is quickly completed. It is a low stakes writing engagement that is non-graded and completed in 3-5 minutes of time. Prompts or quick writes can take a number of forms including: excerpts of literature, poems, songs, pictures, objects, video clips, etc. Depending on the type of quick write, the teacher may ask the students questions about it, ask them to respond in some manner, describe the object, borrow a line from the text, etc. Once the students have completed the task, the teacher should encourage students to briefly share. Ideally, the teacher should spend part of this time, once directions have been given, writing on his/her own. Because the research suggests students should see their teachers writing (Gillespie, 1991), it is imperative students view writing as a worthwhile task, one that all take part in, including teachers.

Since quick writes are often open-ended and incomplete, they can become a natural place for seed ideas to develop. Many times students find they can extend quick writes into larger pieces at a later time. Having these to pull from often addresses the issue many students have when writing: not knowing what to write about. Because these quick writes serve as a resource for writing inspiration, teachers are able to quell the common, "I don't have anything to write about," complaint from students by directing them to leaf through their quick write folders for ideas and inspiration.

Although quick writes are flexible in nature, many teachers need ideas and resources to quickly locate potential quick writes for their classrooms, thus making implementation easy and seamless. A good Quick Write resource is Rief's (2003) *100 Quick Writes*, which includes 100 different literature excerpts with prompts and questions that can be implemented across a variety of grade levels.

The Mini-Lesson

The next part of writing workshop is the teacher led mini-lesson. Mini-lessons can, like

the quick write, address a plethora of topics and only last about 10 minutes. Many times, mini-lessons begin with a read aloud that addresses an area of focus for the lesson. Often, the teacher chooses an area that students have demonstrated a weakness in or an area of writer's craft that the teacher wants the students to begin implementing in their writing. For example, the teacher may introduce the concept of a repeated line in writing, crafting effective leads or clincher sentences, or using strong verbs in writing. Regardless of the topic, the teacher begins the mini-lesson by introducing the topic, demonstrating the skill of craft by modeling it, and then allowing the students to practice it during writing time. Mini-lessons can also address grammar and editing components. In fact, mini-lessons are excellent opportunities to effectively teach grammatical components since according to Weaver (1996), grammar is best taught in context and not in isolation.

Because teachers often need ready-made resources to save time and planning, there are a couple of excellent books that can be used as mini-lesson resources. Fletcher and Portalupi's (2001) *Craft lessons: Teaching Writing K-8 and Nonfiction Craft Lessons: Teaching information Writing K-8* include a variety of mini-lesson ideas on a number of topics across grades K-8. Included in the abbreviated lesson plans are supplemental texts needed, reference to appendices in the book, if required, and any suggestions for implementation. These books are good starter texts for teachers who have limited experience with mini-lessons and can serve as an introduction into mini-lesson instruction.

Writing Time

The bulk of writing workshop includes time for students to write independently for a large chunk of time, normally about 30 minutes, depending on the class. At this time, students are working on their own personal writing topics, or perhaps a common writing piece. Some students may be further along in the writing process than others, but the block of writing time allows all students to comfortably work on their personal writings regardless of the stage they are currently in. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see some students drafting compositions during this time while others have

already moved on to conferencing with a peer or with the teacher.

At times, the entire class may be working on a similar topic or theme, but on other occasions, the class may simply be writing in a particular genre, say biography, with each student independently researching and writing about their chosen individual. It is also fairly common to see students writing across a variety of genres. For example, one student may be writing selections of poetry while another crafts a narrative. Because of the flexibility of writing workshop and its unique ability to morph and meld with the needs and skills of the class, students are able to capitalize on their interests and background knowledge to compose writing pieces that are both interesting and relevant to their individual interests.

Conferencing

As stated above, because students are able to proceed in the writing process at somewhat of a self-pace, time during the independent writing block is often used for conferencing, both peer and teacher. Students who have drafted a piece of writing that is ready for review and feedback often begin conferencing with a peer. Because conferencing is something that many students have not had adequate experience with, it is important for teachers to model this behavior. Conferencing procedures and expectations often become opportunities for mini-lessons. In order for conferences to be effective, teachers must model what is expected. Often this is achieved through a model conferencing session between the teacher and a student or between two students. During this time, appropriate coaching may be done to ensure students know what to expect during this time. This may include types of questions that could be asked during conferencing sessions, checklists that may be utilized, or procedures for proper feedback. Once peer conferencing has been modeled appropriately and routines and expectations have been addressed, students should be able to complete this task on their own.

Similarly, students need to know what to expect when they conference with teachers. For example, will the teacher read the entire paper and make comments? Should the student ask for suggestions on the entire paper? Should grammar and editing be included in the

conferencing? Depending on the class, and/or the assignment at hand, the teacher may simply skim through the paper offering suggestions as needed, or respond to a specific concern of the student. Regardless, the teacher should keep certain items in mind when conferencing. First of all, it is recommended the teacher and student sit side by side and not across a desk or table. The student writing remains in front of the student, because, after all, it is the student's writing. Opinions vary on whether or not students or the teacher reads the writing aloud. In many cases, especially in upper grades, compositions can be quite lengthy, and the orally reading of such is time-consuming. Similarly, in primary grades, some students may struggle with reading and can benefit from having the teacher read the writing aloud while tracking the words. However the teacher decides to proceed with the reading of the paper, he/she may begin by asking the student to first talk about the writing. This may include asking them to give an overview of the text or it may involve having them explain any areas they need help with from the teacher.

Conferences should be kept brief so teachers have the ability to conference with as many students as possible. Ideally, conferences should last about 5-7 minutes, which allows teachers to see a number of students in one class period. It is a good practice to keep a running record or checklist of student/teacher conferences so that teachers can quickly see who they have already spoken with and who they have not. This is also helpful when communicating with parents and administrators as it allows them to see student progress and the process of informal assessment in the writing classroom.

It is important to note, however, that conferencing time should not be used for editing and proofing papers. Conferencing is an opportunity for students and teachers to discuss their writings and make revisions as needed. Often, students, and teachers for that matter, confuse revision and editing. The process of editing is much more simplistic and straight forward as it involves addressing grammatical, spelling, and mechanical errors, as well as inconsistencies in formatting. Revision, on the other hand, is much more invasive, and requires the writer to carefully consider items such as word choice, sentence placement and fluency,

organization and flow, and voice. Appropriate time should be devoted to explaining the nuances of each so students are focusing on actual revision activities during conferencing and not simply editing papers during this time.

Author's Chair (Share Time)

The creation of a successful writing community includes designated time for students to share their writings. During writing workshop, this is often achieved through the Author's Chair time, which usually takes place at the end of the workshop period. At this time, teachers allow a few students to come to a designated place in the classroom to orally share their writings. In many classrooms, there is a chair where the student sits when he/she reads his/her writing, but in some classes, a podium may also be used.

Author's chair is not necessarily a time for students to critique each other's work. However, students in the audience may choose to ask questions about the piece and respond to the writing. The main purpose of this part of writing workshop is to give students a sense of ownership of their writing and to allow them to share their creative pieces with their classmates. Typically, because author's chair takes place at the end of the period, it only lasts about 10 minutes and serves as the workshop wrap-up for the day.

Managing the Writing Workshop

Understanding the components of writing workshop is essential for successful implementation, but without properly managed routines and procedures, as well as a logical room arrangement, implementation will not be as successful.

Physical Arrangement

Much like a classroom arranged for effective and optimal classroom management in general, the physical environment of a writing workshop is extremely important. According to Sterling (2009), in order to create a physical environment that is conducive to learning, teachers might pay close attention to how they arrange their rooms. Because writing workshop begins with a whole class mini-lesson, desks should be arranged so that all students have a clear view of this area. In addition, instructors should choose a position where they have easy access to all materials needed for the mini-lessons. This mini-lesson,

ideally, should take place in the same area of the classroom each time. By doing so, students know where to focus their attention for this part of writing workshop.

Similarly, space for conferencing and small group engagements is important. There should be places within the room where students can go and conference with peers and their teacher without disturbing other students who are independently writing. This can be accomplished by having areas in the room that are tucked away from the main class area so that students are able to discuss and talk about their compositions with minimal disruption. Many teachers have small tables and chairs in an area of the classroom or small clusters of desks in close proximity to each other so students can correspond with each other.

A classroom library should be located in some area of the room where students have easy access to mentor texts for reference. There also should be areas of the room where students can go to write on their own away from their desks. Primary teachers often call these reading or writing nooks, and may include comfortable furniture such as beanbags, soft chairs, or areas on the floor with pillows so that students can be comfortable as they write. Other classes may simply have a few desks or tables located in an area away from the main instructional area that will allow students to read and write in a quieter setting.

Managing Transitions

It is important to manage the transitions between components of the writing workshop. Students need to be taught the expectations for how to move smoothly from one area of the classroom to another. In order to reduce or eliminate interruptions due to transitions, the teacher may plan how to move students from one area to another, decide on a group signal to get students' attention, and teach students the procedure. Before allowing movement the teacher may provide a prearranged signal for students to stop the current activity, give clear precise directions for movement, and then monitor the transition. By planning for and monitoring during transition times, teachers may minimize breaks in learning.

Managing Resources and Materials

Part of a successful writing workshop includes making certain that the appropriate materials and resources are available and ready for use. In many cases, mini-lessons use mentor texts, or trade books as models for exemplary writing. It is preferable to have an extensive classroom library from which to pull mentor texts during writing lessons. Because the research indicates that students become better writers when exposed to a variety of reading materials (www.ncte.org), it is important for teachers to have a number of trade books on hand for students to peruse as models for writing.

Other materials needed for a successful writing workshop include revision and editing supplies such as highlighters, pens, post its, and revision slips. These items could be housed in a specific place so that students know where to access them when needed. It is also important that students have ready access to these materials and should not be required to obtain permission to get the needed supplies. Instead, students should be able to pick up the materials when needed with minimal disruption to the class. Only materials needed at each specific part of the workshop should be available to students in order to minimize disruptions. By allowing the students access to the goods needed to complete their writing tasks, teachers are able to work with other students in conferences or small groups without being interrupted over trivial matters.

Managing Routines and Procedures

Just as a classroom functions more efficiently with routines and procedures that address management concerns, a writing workshop period functions better when routines and procedures have been established and practiced over a period of time. For example, one routine of writing workshop is the warm-up or quick write. By opening each writing period with this task, the teacher is establishing a set procedure for the beginning of this work period. As a result, students are aware of the tasks that should be completed and instructional time is not wasted. Because a well-managed classroom is one in which optimal learning occurs, establishing routines and procedures can help a class function

efficiently and ensure that the time spent in class is focused on learning.

Just as there should be procedures for specific chunks of time during the period, there should also be established procedures for simplistic tasks such as obtaining supplies, getting assistance with a task, and conferencing. Instituting clear procedures allows students the ability to manage their own tasks and learning. For example, a student who is aware of the conferencing procedures and has practiced them knows how to proceed when he/she has reached that stage of the writing process. Time is thus saved because the student does not have to seek assistance from the teacher or another student to determine what his/next steps are.

One item to remember when establishing routines and procedures is the fact that in many cases, less is more. There need not be a procedure spelled out for every single task. Just as there should not be an extensive number of rules for students to follow in class, there should not be an overwhelming number of procedures either. Instead, teachers should focus on the most important tasks of writing workshop, in this case, conferencing, completing quick writes, writing time, and publishing, and developing clear cut procedures for these tasks. Plus, the routines and procedures should be grade-level and developmentally appropriate.

Serving As a Facilitator

One of the biggest benefits of writing workshop is the fact that it gives students ownership over their own writing by allowing them choice in topic selection and also differentiates among ability levels. This is achieved through the variation of assignments as well as the differentiation regarding the pace at which students complete a writing task. Because students are given greater control over their writing assignments, the teacher assumes a role much more related to that of a facilitator and guide rather than a dictator or provider of knowledge. Instead, students are allowed to capitalize on their own strengths and background knowledge, with the teacher offering assistance and guidance as needed. In many cases, the teacher develops lessons based on the individual strengths and weaknesses of students as well as

the needs of the class as a whole. This practice allows students to indirectly guide and plan the curriculum based on their individual needs.

In addition, it is not uncommon to see students helping choose upcoming genres of study or topics they want covered in writing workshop due to the nature of writing workshop. While the framework of writing workshop stays the same, the flexible nature of the approach ensures that each class is unique and the teacher can tailor the instruction based on student needs and interests.

Conclusion

Writing workshop is a structured approach to the teaching of writing. It can be used in classrooms across grade levels and content areas because of its flexibility and individualized, student-centered nature. By managing the process in a student friendly manner, teachers can ensure maximum student-centered learning and avoid potential classroom management issues, all while delivering instruction best suited for their students.

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Teaching Students to Think About Their Writing

By Thomas R. McDaniel

As a former English teacher in public and private secondary schools, I spent a lot of time and effort trying to teach adolescents how to write. Now as a college professor, and as an editor and consulting editor for several journals, I continue to work with students and professors—on improving papers for classes and manuscripts for publication. From one end of the spectrum to another, those of us who write need help.

One of the neglected aspects of the writing process, in my view, is metacognition: the reflective thinking that must go on every time we put our ideas on paper for others to read, understand, and (even) enjoy. Toward the end of encouraging metacognition, I developed a short essay for my college students—most of whom are preparing for teaching careers—to illustrate how metacognition can work to improve written expression, especially in the classic argument essay. This concept can help them with their own writing and also with student composition assignments when they too become teachers. That essay is presented below:

A Metacognitive Reflection on Writing the Essay

Good writing is good thinking. [Hmmm...I wanted to write a short essay on writing to help my students reflect on the essay writing process, and here I am thinking that a short, strong sentence might be a good way to start. Of course, I sometimes use my introduction to build up to my thesis more gradually and then end the introductory paragraph with the thesis statement itself. Now, I guess I should develop my thesis. Maybe it will work if I begin with an entirely new paragraph so that my direct opening thesis sentence will have more punch, standing all alone as the opening paragraph.]

How can I convince you, dear reader, that what I say is true? [Should I actually say this or simply begin the task of doing it? Well, let's see how it works since I know I am going to revise once I finish my essay.] A former teacher of mine, quite a good writer herself, once observed: "How

can I know what I think until I see what I say?" That thought is a bit confusing, perhaps, but I think she meant that the very act of writing is the way she could formulate, express, and then review some less well-formed idea that had been floating around in her head. For her, writing was the way she clarified her thoughts. [Gee, that sounds pretty good! I like the way my final sentence connects to my opening thesis sentence.]

Because, as I am planning to prove, good writing is good thinking, her statement makes perfect sense to me. [Should I be writing this in first person? I think that works better than third person for this kind of essay since my objective is to persuade my readers of a certain claim, concept, or thesis that reflects my personal view about writing. Besides, this is not the kind of argument that requires a lot of research support and documentation. I can argue more personally from the first person perspective and connect with my readers in a more informal way.]

Anyone who wants to think clearly should work at writing clearly--and vice versa. But is it important to think and write clearly? Indeed it is. [Okay, I think this sets up my essay well enough, but now I am going to have to develop some sub-arguments to make a convincing case. I probably will need three or four, depending on how long this essay ought to be and depending on how many good reasons I can come up with!]

In the first place, education at all levels--and certainly in any liberal arts college--should help students develop precise, logical, and accurate thoughts. The world is a complex place, and in the "information age" we are bombarded with so many conflicting and confusing ideas it is a real challenge for writers to be both analytical and reflective. Writing is just such a means to make that process possible. [Is this a convincing reason to support my thesis? Maybe I should elaborate in a follow-up paragraph.]

The outside world may expect graduates, no matter how competent they may be in their chosen fields, to be able to think clearly and express those thoughts well in writing, but the

outside world is not going to teach them how to do that. That is the golden opportunity students have in the classroom, and it is an opportunity they should cherish--painful as that process sometimes is. [So, I have developed one sub-argument to support my thesis; it might be useful here for me to come up with an example, something to illustrate or support my contention.] For example, I remember a student who came back after graduating with honors in her BA degree and proceeded to tell me about the demands of the business world. She said, "My boss doesn't like my reports and keeps sending them back to me. He says they have to be better--but he never tells me how to do that! I wish I had developed my writing skills more fully when I was in college." [This example works pretty well, I think. Let me move on to my second sub-argument.]

[I guess I could go on to develop more sub-arguments and find a way to support each, but I think this is enough to make my point for my undergraduate readers. I will certainly want to have a strong and interesting conclusion--and not just a summary. First, though, I need to get all of these metacognitive passages in brackets out of the essay. Metacognition is just the act of thinking about thinking, so I believe students will see my own thinking about my writing in action, and then I can see what it is I have finally put on paper. I hope it is clear, interesting, persuasive, and (most importantly) thoughtful. When I revise, I will work on those qualities for this essay. After all: Good writing is good thinking, and thinking does not end with the first draft!]

Extending Metacognition: A Classroom Exercise

To help students apply the thesis in the sample essay to their own thinking, I follow these steps in an instructional activity:

Step one – Ask students to read the essay above and think about these questions:

- Is the thesis clear? Interesting? Important? Valid?
- Does the author ask himself useful questions along the way?
- Are there additional reflections and questions that the author could or should ask?

- How effective are the examples and supporting details in “proving” the thesis?
- Do you see any expression flaws or weaknesses—like word choice and pronoun reference—that should be addressed in a revision?
- Do you see any mechanical errors, like punctuation, that should be corrected in a revision?
- Is the language gender neutral?

Step two – Tell students to find a partner (or assign pairs or triads) to discuss their analysis and evaluation of the essay by:

- Sharing their responses to the questions above.
- Finding areas where partners or group members agree and disagree.
- Identifying three of the most important conclusions from this discussion.

Step three – Reconvene the class to hear “partner reports.”

- What were the salient analytical and evaluative findings?
- What can students take away from this exercise to help them write a more thoughtful and effective essay?
- What makes metacognition an important part of the writing process?

Step four – Assign a specific argument essay topic for the next writing exercise:

- Review the thesis/support process.
- Review the metacognitive process.
- Set a deadline for the essay assignment.

These steps ensure that students will have opportunities to read, reflect, analyze, evaluate, share, review, and apply concepts of exposition and metacognition as you help them become more reflective writers.

Conclusion

Those who write for teachers or editors can improve the quality of their work by being more thoughtful about their writing process. In our email/texting/Facebook/Twitter/Instagram age—where speed trumps reflection—reminding writers to think about what they are going to say

and how they are going to say it can temper their temptation to go with top-of-the head, immediate expression. Even after such considered reflection, revising an essay or article is essential (of course!), but well begun is half done. All of us, including this writer, can produce better work

if we think before we write and reflect while we write so that quality trumps quantity as the ideas in our head become words on paper or on the computer screen. Indeed, good writing is good thinking!

Dr. Tom McDaniel is a Professor of Education and Senior Vice President at Converse College in Spartanburg. He has published 8 books, 30 textbook chapters, and more than 250 articles in Education, Humanities, and Social Science journals. He is Executive Editor of *The Clearing House*, a journal for secondary school educators. His latest book is *School Law for South Carolina Educators*, 2015 edition.

Keeping Up with the Bennets: Applied Theatre, Secondary Classrooms, and the 19th Century English Novel

By Beth Murray & Spencer Salas

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?”

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

“But it is,” returned she; “for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.”

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

“Do not you want to know who has taken it?” cried his wife impatiently.

“You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.”

This was invitation enough.

(*Pride and Prejudice*, Chapter 1)

Since 1979, the Jane Austen Society of North America has not only celebrated the 19th Century English novelist’s December birthday, but also her “genius” with an annual autumn conference bringing together aficionados from across the continent for workshops, scholarly lectures, festivities, and of course, a dancing ball. Despite the formidable commitment of society’s membership, devotees are hard to come by in secondary English classrooms. Whether in the Carolinas or the Lake Country, engaging culturally and linguistically diverse adolescent readers in the social worlds of the early 19th Century English landed gentry can be daunting. In our own experiences as adolescent readers, our first encounters with *Pride and Prejudice* roughly coincided with the release of 68 episodes of “Upstairs/Downstairs,” 11 episodes of “Brideshead Revisited,” and, a royal wedding. A national fascination with all things “English country houses” created a certain level of motivation for some of our classmates—and especially our middle class, White, female teachers. That said, the novel’s opening lines—with its tongue-in-cheek, decontextualized dialogue between a husband and wife who address each other as “Mr. and Mrs. Bennet” left us somewhat confused and very uninspired. We were in for a long read.

Teacher educators in a large New South doctoral granting institution in Theatre Education

and Teaching English as a Second Language respectively, we first began thinking together about our teaching and learning experiences with literacy, diversity, and “the classics” a couple of years ago. In large colleges of education such as ours, departmental territories are often jealously guarded. Moreover, Theatre and TESOL teacher educators—and by virtue the candidates they advise—often perceive themselves on the margins of English Education. But, we argue here, it doesn’t have to be that way. In a shift to the Common Core, there is increased awareness about literacy across secondary content areas and, furthermore, a need for teacher-leaders across disciplines to take up texts collaboratively with our adolescent students and each other.

Here we present an extended example of how English Educators might leverage applied theatre for creating adolescents’ entrée to canonical 19th Century texts. As Gallagher (2008) argued, adolescents engage in the simultaneous distance/presence of theatrical performance as a means of negotiating their evolving positionalities in the real and imagined worlds they inhabit. Applied theatre, with its emphasis on participatory and embodied meaning-making is a generative process that potentially creates multiple opportunities for adolescents to apply and stretch their experiences and knowing in generative ways.

In the sections that follow, we illustrate how we have leveraged applied theatre processes with teachers and teacher candidates to access the Bennet family and more broadly, the 19th Century English novel. Our work here is informed by Wilhelm’s (2004, 2008) discussions about the potential of textual enactment for engaging students whose primary ways of knowing fall outside literacies generally privileged by schools. In addition, our work is specifically inspired by Neelands and Goode’s (2000) highly practical glossary of “available forms” for theatre artists and educators. The strategies we outline here might be used individually or as an ensemble

opportunity for meaning-making and symbolic representation of adolescents' experiences. Our intent is to create a direction for teachers interested in exploring the potential of process-oriented enactment strategies for fostering spaces for adolescent readers' engagement with the 19th Century English novel and other "classic" texts they might encounter in the secondary English curriculum. While this article argues for and frames the use of applied theatre strategies to access distant texts, it is important to remember the strategies work with a wide variety of texts—from ancient to contemporary, fiction to non-fiction to poetry and beyond. A teacher may opt to use one strategy or a series. The most important step is to simply begin.

Building Context(s) with Applied Theatre

"Applied Theatre," as its name would suggest, emphasizes the practical over the theoretical. In contrast to more traditional performance-oriented dramatic approaches, applied theatre focuses on generating the creative energy of participatory, open-ended embodied processes. A contemporary movement with ancient precedents, applied theater has long been leveraged in public performance as a means of transacting with the word/world (see, e.g., Prendergast & Saxton, 2009). In terms of adolescent learners, blending the interplay of immediacy and distance in theatre is a way of fostering complex identity exploration through the safe distance of fictional characters and the immediate voices of their everyday.

Neelands and Goode (2000) identify four macro strategy categories for Applied Theatre. These included: context building; narrative action; poetic action; and, reflective action. The Neelands and Goode macrostrategies have much in common with during/while/and after-reading sequence commonly used to scaffold reading. In the sections that follow, however, we limit ourselves to three examples of context building we have found particularly strategic for approaching *Pride and Prejudice* with adolescents.

1. The Walk and the Talk of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet

Place students in pairs. Project the opening lines of the book (above) in a place visible to all or provide each pair with a copy of the text.

Challenge students to decipher who is saying what and to read the passage as dialogue, only speaking as Mr. or Mrs. Bennet. Once they are comfortable with the words, have them read again, standing face-to-face about six feet apart. Stop and discuss a little about what is going on under the words, in the subtext. Who has power? Who does not? When does it change? How do you know? Have them read again, playing with where they stand in relation to each other, moving closer together and farther apart based on what they think is happening in the relationship. Remind students this can be stated outright in the words (e.g. "I am out of here!") or it may be more subtle. Alternatively, sometimes you say one thing and do another. Remind them that there are many correct interpretations. Have students, still in pairs, create a portrait or frozen picture of the Bennet parents that reveals something about their relationship. Have each pair share as on-lookers observe and collect words to describe the Bennet parent relationship. Working in pairs not only creates a safe social context for all students to explore ideas, it also naturally scaffolds communication across cultural and linguistic borders for many students with oral, spatial and gestural options as well as opportunities to observe and build on the ideas of others. Similarly, the ideas are generated in waves of increasing social risk. Text analysis occurs in the pair work. Deepened interpretive work occurs as on-lookers analyze other pairs' statues—within earshot of the "statues." It all builds on and feeds each other, thus it belongs to and reflects the group.

2. A Family Portrait

Have pairs or small groups scour the following two passages for additional clues about the Bennet family. Using the passages for reference, have the class arrange volunteers as members of the Bennet family sitting for a portrait. Unlike the first pair exercise, the choices for how the family is arranged is made by the on-lookers negotiating among themselves and directing/designing the portrait sitting. The players in the portrait are merely the artists' clay. This condition both shares the burden of creativity between the groups and fosters rich discussion. Once the portrait is set, end the activity, or allow those outside the portrait to provide a line of dialogue for each family member. As students progress through the book, revisit the family portrait to

capture changing relationship dynamics and explore interior thoughts of the family members as well, layering voice-overs from on-lookers as well as stylized physical choices:

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news. (Chapter 1)

The evening altogether passed off pleasantly to the whole family. Mrs. Bennet had seen her eldest daughter much admired by the Netherfield party. Mr. Bingley had danced with her twice, and she had been distinguished by his sisters. Jane was as much gratified by this as her mother could be, though in a quieter way. Elizabeth felt Jane's pleasure. Mary had heard herself mentioned to Miss Bingley as the most accomplished girl in the neighbourhood; and Catherine and Lydia had been fortunate enough never to be without partners, which was all that they had yet learnt to care for at a ball. They returned, therefore, in good spirits to Longbourn, the village where they lived, and of which they were the principal inhabitants. They found Mr. Bennet still up. With a book he was regardless of time; and on the present occasion he had a good deal of curiosity as to the event of an evening which had raised such splendid expectations. He had rather hoped that his wife's views on the stranger would be disappointed; but he soon found out that he had a different story to hear. (Chapter 3)

If students struggle to be curious about the nuances of being a Bennet, first do the same exercise with a more familiar family group, perhaps from a more contemporary novel, the media, or a fictional family students know from television. Whether students are reading or looking at video clips, they are wondering how relationships can be identified then subtly represented through spatial and gestural choices

in the confines of portrait “language.” The pressure to come up with ideas rests more on the large group than the “actors” creating a diverse array of entry points for participation and risk, accommodating a diversity of students by design.

Include 2-3 sentences describing how this method will engage culturally and linguistically diverse students—this idea needs to be reinforced.

3. Masks and Gender/Then and Now

The gendered roles depicted in Jane Austen's book were pushing the envelope in her time—with her own gender a secret until after her death, as female authorship was considered unseemly. To help students explore and articulate a comparison between the gender roles of today and of Jane Austen's time, provide each student with a neutral mask (available at a craft store or easily made). You will want to help them explore the communication possibilities of the mask first with warm ups. It takes away facial expression and voice, opening up the world of gestures, walks, proximity and a whole host of other physical possibilities for communication. Being able to see themselves in a mirror or reflective window helps, but is not vital. Regardless of space, prepare two one-minute segments of dance music, one from the time of *Pride and Prejudice* (e.g. Haydn's Symphony No. 94 In G Major - Menuet & Trio) and the other from today (an instrumental drum cadence or dance beat that says “contemporary” to teens may work better than a specific song with lyrics). Break students into small groups, explaining they are to create two different scenes that tell the same story; one is contemporary, the other from the time of our novel. Both stories are told without words or facial expressions, using masks, movement, and music. The plot of both stories is: Young people are at a dance. A couple forms. They like each other. Someone else feels left out. The dance ends. The couple goes their separate ways, but their future looks promising.

Explain the scenes will happen based on two pieces of music. Play the clips. Let groups begin planning. Once they have some ideas, explain that you will play each clip several times for them to rehearse (all groups at once), allowing a few moments of discussion between plays. Work through both songs separately, then end with the then and now songs back-to-back so groups can

master their transition. Share and discuss. What was the same? What was different? How would you describe the gendered roles in each? How have times changed—and stayed the same? The choice of music can be an opportunity for strong cultural relevance, if framed properly. Some teachers like to challenge students to recommend music, within established parameters, to foster student investment as well as broaden teacher knowledge about teen playlists. This activity centers around a universal phenomenon which teens know well, so it links them to each other, to the text and to the world.

Applied Theatre in a New English Education

A new English Education committed to “culturally sustaining pedagogy that perpetuates, fosters, and sustains linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 95) has focused on the robust literacies of minority and minoritized communities and how such cultural repertoires might be leveraged for accessing the curriculum in sustaining/sustainable ways (see also, e.g., González, 2005; Kinloch, 2010, 2012; Kirkland, 2013). We too embrace the plurality of literacies; and, we recognize that although the “canon” of English literature has greatly expanded since we sat in our high school English classes in the 1980s, there is much more curricular work to be done. To that end, applying theatre to language/literacy settings multiplies access for students and their teachers and supports the democratic project of reading for meaning-making.

The catalyzing impact of applied theatre in the English Language Arts—as well as the English Language Learner—curriculum is not limited to books that seem long ago and far away. These strategies work for nearly every written text; they actually embrace the broadest definition of text.

The key is to see the strategies as embodied analysis tools and perspective-enlivening exercises, not simply ways to “act out” a story for comprehension purposes. For students and teachers, enactment around texts constructs varied relevant entry points to the generative “transactions” (Rosenblatt, 1994) between the reader, text, and poem—by offering linguistic, kinesthetic, auditory, emotional, embodied engagement. These entry points, by their design, make space for diverse perspectives as the classroom becomes the site of readers’ responses as not just tokens of talk, but rather the aim; the collective creation “dynamically constructed between local and global discourses” (Medina, 2010, p. 53). As such, Prentki and Preston (2008) described applied theatre as, “A broad set of theatrical practices and creative processes that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional . . . to ordinary people and their stories, local settings, and priorities” (p. 9). Likewise, Cohen-Cruz (2012) challenged the field with the concept of “engaged performance”—space-making for the arts to foster depth and feed complexity as words and worlds co-mingle.

In the meantime, it is very likely that ordinary teachers and students will continue to encounter the Bennets. While we do not imagine their en masse conversion to Janeite status, it is our hope that the processes we have described here and the broader principles of applied theatre might be “invitation enough” to take up the 19th Century English novel with less objection—if not felicity.

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I Never Knew He Couldn't Read...

By Shannon Burgess

As a small child, dad would never read to me; but oh, the great stories he could tell. He would lift me with his strong arms on to his safe and secure lap and bring his stories to life. It wasn't until I was in high school that—by mistake— I discovered my dad couldn't read. The directions on the box of instant potatoes were Greek to him! Sure, he tried to cover it by asking me to read the directions while he mixed—but the only ingredients were butter, salt, water and the flakes. At that very moment, my eyes were opened to a whole new understanding why my dad would say that an education is not important.

My dad was the BEST! Although he was a man small in stature; he was my protector, provider and giver of endless bear hugs. My dad was my biggest fan and always had time to wipe the tears when my heart was heavy, so I had to make sure I didn't embarrass or hurt him by this new discovery. It kept running through my mind how it was so clear now why he never read to me and just always said he was too tired.

After this revelation, the transition from teaching my dolls in my bedroom to teaching a "real-live" person was now a reality. But, how do you teach your own dad to read? Flash cards and "cute" songs would not work. Just as I was ready to break down in tears, I remember my favorite teacher, Mrs. McFarland, always saying you learn to read by being read to. So, why not read to my dad!

I decided the copies of *Progressive Farmer* and *Field & Stream* would become more than a monthly subscription at our house. That evening as bedtime approached, I talked to dad and told him that it would not be long until I would be graduating high school and going to college and I wanted us to start spending more time together. I told him I wanted to learn more about farming,

agriculture and fishing (since this was his livelihood). I told him that we could read the magazines together and he could shed light on these things that he knew so much about.

The following evening after supper, I sat on the arm of his old raggedy recliner and we began to turn the colorful pages of the magazines and take adventures to places we had never visited before. I would read the articles and point to each word as I read. (I would even mark some articles so we could re-read them later.) REPETITION, REPETITION, REPETITION, right?

Dad and I continued this for months and as those important bonding times progressed, I noticed that dad would look back at some of the same articles even when it wasn't "our" time to read together.

I can still remember the cover of the *Field & Stream* magazine that melted my heart and is still tucked away in my parent's attic. The cover, from the December 1982 issue, was festively covered with a giant bass wearing a bright red Santa hat. As I was helping mom set the table, dad suddenly bellowed out, "THE BIGGEST BASS EVER CAUGHT IN A COVE IN NORTH CAROLINA!!!" I cannot explain the feeling that came over me. I ran to my dad's side and hugged him. With an almost childlike voice, my dad whispered in my ear, "Thank you."

Field & Stream and *Progressive Farmer* magazines still arrive at my parents' house each month, and yes, my dad still takes different adventures each month— but now he doesn't only look at the pictures; he reads the words!



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