

Oh the Places We'll Go!

Incorporating Reader's Theatre and Artistic Interpretation to Build Reading Skills

Nikki Guevara

Overview

As a student in my educational journey through different school settings, I remember being particularly enjoying watching theatrical performances in the form of informal class plays and more formal school productions.

As a high school student, I particularly enjoyed being a part of school theatre productions offered through my high school. Some of my fondest memories of interacting with friends and being able to artistically express myself were in minor roles in my school production of *Grease* and *The Princess and the Pea*. These plays gave my fellow classmates and myself opportunities to step outside of our comfort zone and participate in artistic expression.

I also remember some of my best memories from elementary school were shared with my art teacher. She had a way of making everything interesting and relative to what was going on at the time. I remember being so proud of my art work when it was selected to hang in the hallway on the way to the cafeteria. There was a sense of pride in my artistic depiction of which ever subject we were studying at the time.

I especially enjoyed studying the styles and techniques of different types of artists and studying as well as imitating their chosen technique. My elementary school and high school art teachers both did an excellent job of incorporating various artist studies and exposing me to different forms of artistic expression: sketching, painting, watercolor, working with clay, etc.

As a teacher in an urban school district, I encounter struggling readers each and every year. Many of them come to my classroom at least a year or more behind in reading. This is mainly due to a lack in prior experiences and background knowledge either due to time or financial situations.

As I reflected and researched on my personal learning opportunities that promoted personal interest and presented educational knowledge, I decided to write a unit incorporating the usage of theatrical play while focusing on Caldecott award-winning books in order to help build reading strategies for struggling readers in my classroom and

throughout my grade level. Incorporating the artistic element based on Caldecott awards will also promote interest and creativity in the classroom.

Picture books, in the form of Caldecott award-winning books, are a great way to encourage students to participate in and enjoy literature. The images are also beneficial for struggling readers that need the images to help visualize and connect the reading to the pictures in their head.

Picture books are also a great way to teachers to model think alouds and comprehension of text. Students can use the pictures provided to help make sense of what they are reading and the events in the story that are taking place. Picture books are beneficial for readers of all ages.

By incorporating performance in the form of reader's theatre along with intertwining artistic depiction in the form of styles of art, this literacy unit will serve multiple functions. The elements of performance and artistic expression will promote comprehensive reading skills and continue to build literacy knowledge and understanding for third graders at my school.

While attending the seminar, "Playful Response to Children's Stories" lead by Mark West from The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, I began to realize how I could use theatrics and artistic interpretations dealing with children's stories to help promote creativity and mastering literacy skills in the classroom.

Children's literature is very versatile but speaks to a large audience due to its diversity of subject matter and topics. Many picture books give way to great lesson plan and activities to incorporate literacy and art in order to further reading skills such as fluency and comprehension.

Throughout Mark West's seminar, I have learned the process and importance of "play" in the classroom and throughout life. Presently, too many children are directed away from "play" and using their imagination. In an effort to regain some of the creativity children possess, I have designed a literacy unit that encourages students to use literacy and imaginative play in order to succeed in the classroom.

I will use literacy elements in a language arts setting to help master reading skills such as: decoding, word recognition, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension to generate a literacy unit promoting the act of play and theatrics with an artistic twist.

I am creating a literacy based unit centered around children's books that have received the Caldecott award in order expose students to elements of artistic expression through reading instruction.

I plan for other teachers to utilize this literacy unit and find it useful for not only promoting literacy skills such as decoding, word recognition, vocabulary, fluency and

comprehension, but also giving students the ability to "think outside the box" and to be creative in the classroom. By incorporating artistic expression, reluctant and or struggling readers can participate and engage in promoting literacy skills and exercising their individual artistic expression.

Demographics

Bain Elementary School is an elementary school serving over 1000 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The school is located in Mint Hill, North Carolina in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. This school system is the second largest in North Carolina and the nineteenth largest in the nation.

Teachers at my school use flexible grouping to differentiate student instruction based on individual needs. Programs such as Accelerated Reader, Math Investigations and hands-on science lessons, help reinforce concepts learned in the classroom in a more interactive approach.

Technology is constantly used to enhance learning opportunities on a daily basis. Teachers in grades K-2 have their own document camera to utilize in all subjects at any time throughout the day. Teacher in grades 3-5 have individual Smart Boards in order to promote visual and hands on learning for all students. Teachers also have subscriptions to online magazines such as Scholastic News and teaching resources such as readinga-z.com.

In regard to the literacy curriculum, the Imagine It curriculum is utilized as well as novel studies, guided reading, small group instruction, flexible grouping, book clubs, and vocabulary studies are just a few of the techniques and teaching strategies used on a daily and weekly basis.

I am a third grade teacher at our school. This is my eighth year in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district. I have taught first, second and third grade over the years in my teaching career.

I have experienced the vertical planning aspect by teaching in a variety of grades over the past eight years. I have seen the developmental process of students *learning to read* in grades K-1 and also *reading to learn* in grades 2-3. Learning to read and applying that information is a vital skill for success throughout one's education endeavors as well as a life skill that must be mastered.

I am one of eight third grade teachers. I teach using the North Carolina Standard Course of Study as well as implementing the new Common Core curriculum. I incorporate various other literacy-based teaching methods including: Pat Cunningham's

Four Blocks, Guided Reading, differentiated teaching methods, flexible grouping, 21st century skills, technology and current research-based strategies to teach and promote reading skills.

Rationale

This arts integrated literacy unit based on role-playing and artistic depiction is intended for third graders to help master literacy skills to ultimately increase comprehension. This unit will be based on Caldecott award winning books that we will explore using reader's theatre and role-playing for interpreting characters and practicing fluency to promote comprehension.

Students will be exposed to artistic topics of reader's theatre and visual expression in order to learn more about the act of role-playing to bring stories to life. The act of "bringing stories to life" will help promote comprehension in various selected Caldecott award winning books that will transcend into future reading of self-selected books because literacy skills and techniques dealing with comprehension will have been put into place.

Since many of my students need additional fluency practice as well as opportunities to engage in artistic expression, this unit will be useful to developing students' artistic awareness as well as promoting literacy development in the areas of decoding, word recognition, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension of text in several selected Caldecott award winning books.

According to the American Library Service to Children, the Caldecott Medal was named in honor of nineteenth-century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children. Each year one illustrator of a children's books receives this distinguished award.

I plan to expose students to multiple Caldecott award-winning books through class read alouds to promote literacy skills and awareness of artistic expression through multiple opportunities to interact with different types of text.

My unit will begin with an introduction to the popular Caldecott-award winning book, Where the Wild Things Are. This 1964 award winning book has proven to be an excellent piece of literature as it is still read and enjoyed in present day. It was also made into a movie recently in 2010.

We will use reader's theatre approaches and artistic depiction to further analyze this piece of literature as well as promote fluency in the process. Students will be able to

engage in this piece of literacy due to its imaginative nature and unique artistic interpretation of "wild things" and the faraway land where the main character, Max, travels to.

Another Caldecott-award winning book we will take an in-depth study approach to will be Officer Buckle and Gloria. This 1996 Caldecott award winning book is a rarity because it is a Caldecott-award winning book that is humorous. In this story, Officer Buckle is a safety patrol officer that gives unentertaining speeches about safety up until the point where Gloria, an entertaining dog, joins him for his presentations at schools.

The book has an interesting twist when uninformed Officer Buckle finally sees what Gloria is really doing when this duo is out on their safety patrol speeches. Students will be able to role-play extensively with this piece of literature in order to better interpret the characters of Officer Buckle and the infamous Gloria.

We will also incorporate the most recent Caldecott award-winning book for 2011, A Sick Day for Amos McGee. This endearing book of trials in life and the friendships that surround someone is a great example of true friendship. This book also has several characters for role-playing opportunities to better understand the meaning of cooperation and sacrifice. The illustrator's choice of wood blocking, in this award winning book, was a unique example of artistic expression as she creates beautiful pictures for this newly created children's book.

At the end of this unit, students will have had exposure to role-playing in the classroom, award winning books in areas of artistic expression as well as multiple opportunities for fluency practice that leads itself to overall elements of comprehension. They will also have improved reading skills by being exposed to new vocabulary, new strategies for decoding and fluency, as well as collaboration with peers by engaging in artistic expression in various ways.

Background

According to G. E. Tompkins in the 2006 edition of *Excerpt from Language Arts Essentials* (1), there are five factors for reading instruction that promote reading skills. Those factors include: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Equally important are skills of word identification as well as motivation. Students need to be well versed in each of these topics in order to succeed as a reader.

By directly teaching reading skills and strategies in these areas, along with modeled reading skills and thinking aloud with read alouds in the classroom, students will increase his or her reading abilities in and out of the classroom setting.

Decoding/Word Recognition

According to LaBerge & Samuels (2), "capable readers have a large bank of words that they recognize instantly and automatically because they can't stop and analyze every word as they read. Through a combination of instruction and reading practice, students' knowledge of words continues to grow."

In this unit, I will incorporate word identification and decoding skills in order to increase word knowledge and how to sound out unknown words for my struggling readers to help promote quick recognition, strategies for success and increased vocabulary.

Vocabulary

J. Pikulski and S. Templeton describe the power of vocabulary in their 2004 article, *Teaching and Developing Vocabulary: Key to Long-Term Reading Success* (3). They quote that the "greatest tools we can give our students for succeeding, not only in their education but in life, is a large, rich vocabulary."

In this literacy-based unit based on role-playing and artistic depiction, I plan to use read aloud books and various forms of literature to expose and broaden the vocabulary of my students. By increasing their vocabulary, I am ultimately increasing their reading skills because I am presenting new information that will increase their background knowledge and schema for future reading experiences.

Fluency

The National Reading Panel report (4) defines reading fluency as "...the ability to read text quickly, accurately and with proper expression." Capable readers have learned to read fluently—quickly and with expression. Three components of fluency are reading speed, word recognition, and prosody (Rasinski, 2004).

According to the National Reading Panel, a recent study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education found that "fourth grade students' oral reading fluency is a strong predictor of silent reading comprehension. Moreover, the same study found that nearly half of the fourth graders studied had not achieved even a minimally acceptable level of reading fluency. Fortunately, a solid body of evidence suggests that fluency can be taught and that effective instruction in fluency leads to overall improvements in reading."

Some strategies to put in place to promote fluency include: accuracy in word recognition, modeling fluent expressive oral reading for students (reader's theatre), repeated (practiced) reading of authentic texts, performance of poetry, scripts (reader's theater), assisted (scaffolded) reading, focus on phrased reading, be sensitive to text difficulty, create synergistic instructional routine.

In my unit, I will reader's theatre scripts that I create as well as student-created scripts based on selected Caldecott award-winning books for fluency practice. By practicing fluency, students will have practice and capabilities of reading "quickly and with expression." This reading strategy will promote the next level of learning, comprehension.

Some Caldecott award winning books that will be used for read alouds and classroom instruction include: Kitten's First Full Moon, Jumangi, The Hello, Goodbye Window, The Lion and the Mouse, Officer Buckle and Gloria, Where the Wild Things Are, A Sick Day for Amos McGee, The House in the Night and Owl Moon.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the main goal of reading instruction. It is the top of the "reading mountain" so to speak. Comprehension is not only important in the present when a student is reading and responding to text, but it is important for future instances of recalling information.

By incorporating "play" in the classroom in forms of role-playing and artistic expression, students will have practice reading fluently in the classroom with peers and work towards becoming more proficient with comprehending text that is read and have the ability to recall the information at a later time.

One of the primary goals of this unit is to promote the area of "play" in the classroom. Through role-playing, dramatic interpretations of picture books and exposure to artistic depiction through Caldecott illustrators, students will further develop their literacy skills in an unconventional and engaging way.

Strategies

Some strategies I plan to use include **read alouds and journaling**. **Read alouds** will be used throughout the unit in order to model proper reading skills, increase vocabulary as well as promote class discussion. Caldecott titles include but are not limited to: Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak, Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathman and A Sick Day for Amos McGee illustrated by Erin E. Stead and written by Philip C. Stead.

Journaling in the form of a composition or spiral notebook will be used on a daily basis to integrate writing across the curriculum. Students will have opportunities to write, ask questions, record artistic interpretations, illustrate, etc. in their own journals regarding our Caldecott-award winning read alouds. It will be a place of reflection for opinions on stories, subject matter and classroom activities.

The unit will begin with a prereading strategy, **Turn and Talk**, to discuss prior knowledge of Where the Wild Things Are. This allows students to orally discuss thoughts and information based on this piece of literature in a non-threatening way before the unit begins. In third grade, students will be able to verbalize their opinions and thoughts regarding this popular children's story.

Reader's Theatre will be used throughout the unit in teacher-made and student-created scripts based on selected Caldecott award-winning books. Reader's theatre is an influential way to motivate students about reading. Students will use scripts, perform in groups and practice by rereading to accurately depict characters from selected texts.

Reader's theatre is a great teaching strategy to encourage students of all abilities to participate and become engaged with a piece of literature. Students will use this strategy to develop their fluency and have opportunities to enhance their comprehension of selected Caldecott award-winning texts.

Readinglady.com is an educational and free website that I have come across when studying reader's theatre. I will use this site for students in several ways. This site gives

numerous free readers theatre scripts that can be downloaded and used in the classroom or for homework to further practice and master fluency.

Another helpful site with different types of reader's theatre scripts can be found on Aaron Shepard's website, aaronsheward.com/rt/RTE.html. This site gives free scripts for extended practice as well as media clips for students to visually see scripts in action. Another free site for script examples can be found at: timelessteacherstuff.com.

Artistic depiction will be a focus as we study Where the Wild Things Are. Since the topic of a "wild thing" can vary, students will be given the opportunity to illustrate their own wild thing. This example of artistic depiction will allow students to embrace the meaning of a Caldecott award-winning book by incorporating artwork in their literacy studies.

Students will have the ability to create his or her own wild thing and give it a written description. All of the "wild things" will be published in a **class book** in order to showcase the artistic abilities throughout the classroom. Students will also have the opportunity to work with a form of wood blocking-the artistic style of the 2011 Caldecott award winning illustrator, to engage in artistic expression by creating their own artwork.

Throughout the unit, students will keep a **vocabulary** section in their journals to further their vocabulary knowledge by learning unknown words. I will also work in small groups in a guided reading format in order to incorporate vocabulary tasks to improve word knowledge and word meaning.

Story maps will be used as a comprehensive tool before, during and after working closely with the selected Caldecott award-winning books. Story maps will be a way for students to visually see elements of the story as they are broken into sections: characters, setting, plot, solution, etc. Story maps will also allow students to reflect on major events that occurred in the story.

Character Webs will be completed on characters from the selected Caldecott award-winning books in order for students to better understand the personality and intentions of a character prior to role-playing them in a reader's theatre setting. Character webs are an

effective way to analyze traits of characters in stories based on their actions and feelings displayed. These type of graphic organizers help students organize information in order to formulate opinions and thoughts on selected characters.

Impromptu will be used in order to promote role-playing after repeated practice with script reading in the classroom and at home for practice. Students will be put in small groups, given an impromptu situation and have to solve a problem. This instance of role-playing in the classroom will be based around literacy and also give students an opportunity to showcase their artistic and theatrical expressions in the classroom in an unconventional way.

Another way we will be intertwining literacy and the arts will be based on the art style from the most current Caldecott award-winning book, *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. The illustrator, Erin Stead, uses an artistic technique for her illustrations, *wood block printing*. The process will be taught using her blog for information and visuals at, <http://blog.erinstead.com/2009/04/here-is-how-i-make-picture-slightly.html>. Students will be given an opportunity to participate in a similar artistic technique using toothpicks and flat styrofoam slabs to imitate the difficulty in carving illustrations.

Throughout the unit, students will be reading and creating **reader's theatre scripts, practicing fluency, collaborating through role-playing and artistic expression** and experimenting with the arts in order to master literacy skills as well as develop an appreciation for Caldecott award-winning books.

This unit will be a beneficial way to promote **cooperative learning, engaging students** in artistic opportunities as well as **integrating role-playing and dramatic play** for an ultimate goal of *increasing reading abilities, promoting literacy development and role-playing* in the classroom with peers in order to create a collaborative and respectful learning environment for all involved.

Classroom Activities

Activity # 1-Reader's Theatre with Officer Buckle and Gloria

Objective: Students will use reader's theatre scripts to promote fluency and ultimately comprehension of reading material.

Materials:

- Caldecott award winning book, Officer Buckle and Gloria
- reader's theatre script
- fluency rubric

Teacher Input:

The teacher will model fluent reading by reading aloud the story, Officer Buckle and Gloria. Teacher will discuss the meaning of a Caldecott award in relation to this book's artistic elements.

Guided Practice:

The teacher will discuss the importance of reading fluently. Fluent readers understand what they are reading because they spend less time sounding out words and decoding text.

Teacher will discuss elements of reader's theatre such as dialogue and characterization and the process of reading with others using a script. Teacher will model with a student the correct and incorrect ways of performing reader's theatre.

Independent Practice:

Students will work with a partner/in small groups to complete reader's theatre of Officer Buckle and Gloria. Students will engage in fluently reading scripts to promote fluency and further their comprehension. Students will use the script provided (See Figure 1). Students will also be encouraged to perform the scenes of Officer Buckle and Gloria in an impromptu setting instead of reading directly from the script to aid in their comprehension.

After practice and mastery of readers theatre with this Caldecott award winning book, students will be assessed using a fluency rubric by Tim Rasinski found at:

http://www.timrasinski.com/presentations/multidimensional_fluency_rubric_4_factors.pdf.

Students can further their comprehension by completing a story map of the story or a character web of either Officer Buckle or Gloria. This extension activity will promote comprehension of the story after fluency has been practiced.

Students will also use their journals as a way of reflecting on the story and activities associated with Officer Buckle and Gloria. Students could also be reflective by adding their own follow-up ending to the story after Officer Buckle and Gloria work together in the end. This would facilitate a great opportunity for comparing and contrasting various alternate endings with the use of graphic organizers.

Activity # 2-What is a *Wild Thing*?

Objective: Students will use artistic expression in order to create their own visual representation of a wild thing after reading, listening and discussing the Caldecott award winning novel, Where the Wild Things Are.

Materials:

- Caldecott award winning book, Where the Wild Things Are
- Create Your Own Wild Things template
- various art supplies (crayons, colored pencils, pencils, erasers, paint, etc)

Teacher Input:

The teacher will model fluent reading and comprehension by reading aloud and discussing the story, Where the Wild Things Are. Teacher will discuss the meaning of a Caldecott award in relation to this book's artistic elements created by Maurice Sendak in 1963. Teacher will discuss how the author/illustrator used people in his life as inspiration for his illustrations.

Guided Practice:

The teacher will discuss the importance of artistic expression in children's books as well as in life. Teacher will discuss the images in the book, Where the Wild Things Are, with

special focus on the *wild things*. Teacher will explain how students will be creating their own visual of a *wild thing* with an attempt to use outside influences from their lives such as the author/illustrator, Maurice Sendak did in his children's novel.

Independent Practice:

Students will create their own visual of a wild thing using their personal artistic expressions and various art supplies. Students will create their own wild thing using the Create Your Own Wild Thing template (See Figure 2). When completed, students will share their interpretations of what a wild thing looks like in their own minds and share that vision with classmates in a *Turn and Talk* situation.

Students will later be paired in groups of 2 in order to compare and contrast their *wild things* in a Venn diagram graphic organizer to determine differences as well as similarities within their artistic expressions of what a *wild thing* looks like. All of the wild things will later be described in a writing activity and published into a class book for additional fluency practice and community building and sharing of artistic expression.

Activity # 3-Using Set Design to Further Comprehension

Objective: Students will use artistic expression in order to create a visual representation involving set design after reading, listening and discussing the Caldecott award winning novel, Where the Wild Things Are.

Materials:

- Caldecott award winning book, Where the Wild Things Are
- *wild thing* materials (clothes, masks, etc)
- various art supplies (crayons, colored pencils, pencils, erasers, paint, etc)
- set design materials for Where the Wild Things Are (costumes, boat, island, etc.)

Teacher Input:

The teacher will model fluent reading and comprehension by reading aloud and discussing the story, Where the Wild Things Are. Teacher will discuss the meaning of a Caldecott award in relation to this book's artistic elements created by Maurice Sendak in

1963. Teacher will discuss how the author/illustrator participated in the set design of the movie depiction of Where the Wild Things Are.

Guided Practice:

The teacher will discuss the importance of set design in relation to artistic expression and interpretations. Teacher will discuss how set design can include costumes as well as scenery. Teacher will facilitate instructions for students as they prepare to perform Where the Wild Things Are after creating the set design and practicing scripts designed from reader's theater practice in the classroom.

Independent Practice:

Students will participate in set design in the following ways: costumes and scenery set up. Students will have previously practiced and participated in reader's theatre for Where the Wild Things Are found at: <http://www.timelessteacherstuff.com/readerstheater/WhereWildThings.html> (See Figure 3). Students will be assigned and instructed to bring in costumes for Where the Wild Things Are. Students will use their own artistic expression in order to create an individual costume for the role they are playing.

Students will also have the opportunity to participate in the set design of the scenery prior to the performance of the story, Where the Wild Things Are. For example, creating a backdrop for the scenery could be designed on a sheet or poster board. A wagon could be decorated and used for Max's private boat.

Students will have the opportunity to utilize their artistic expression just as illustrators do in Caldecott award winning books by participating in the creation and performance of a popular and accredited children's book, Where the Wild Things Are. This will give them the opportunity to intertwine art and literacy in a classroom setting in order to promote fluency, comprehension as well as artistic expression.

Activity # 4-Wood Block Printing

Objective: Students will participate in the artistic expression of wood block printing process just as the 2011 Caldecott award winning illustrator Erin Stead did in the book, A Sick Day for Amos McGee.

Materials:

- 2011 Caldecott award winning book, *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*
- wood block printing art supplies (styrofoam trays, shish-kabob sticks, pencils)
- internet access- <http://blog.erinstead.com/2009/04/here-is-how-i-make-picture-slightly.html>

Teacher Input: The teacher will model fluent reading and comprehension by reading aloud and discussing the story, *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*. Teacher will discuss the meaning of a Caldecott award in relation to this book's artistic elements created by Erin Stead and her unique wood block printing process.

Guided Practice: The teacher will discuss and model the wood block printing process by using Erin Stead's blog, <http://blog.erinstead.com/2009/04/here-is-how-i-make-picture-slightly.html>. This site provides a step-by-step visual of the wood block printing process as well as using artwork from the story.

Independent Practice:

Students will participate in their own wood block printing process by using art supplies in order to create their own artistic illustration of a scene. Students will use this scene and create a story to go along with it. Students will use Styrofoam trays (such as rectangles cut from meat trays or styrofoam plates). Students will plan their artistic design and "carve" into their canvases to imitate the wood block printing process.

This activity will intertwine elements of art and writing just as illustrators and authors do in children's books and focus particularly on the artistic expression and style of Erin Stead, the 2011 Caldecott award winning illustrator.

Notes

(1) Tompkins, Gail E.. *Language arts essentials* . Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall, 2006. Print.

(2) LaBerge, David, and S. Jay Samuels. *Basic processes in reading: perception and comprehension*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum Associates; 1977. Print.

(3) Pikulski, John and Shane Templeton. "Teaching and Developing Vocabulary: Key to Long-Term Reading Success", *Current Research in Reading/Language Arts* (2004).

(4) Bonnie B. Armbruster, "Put Reading First : the Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read : Kindergarten Through Grade 3" (*Jessup, MD: National Institute For Literacy, National Institute Of Child Health And Human Development, U.S. Dept. Of Education, 2001*).

Resources

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

Armbruster, Bonnie. "Put Reading First : the Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read : Kindergarten Through Grade 3" (*Jessup, MD: National Institute For Literacy, National Institute Of Child Health And Human Development, U.S. Dept. Of Education, 2001*).

*This is a great resource for learning how to teach children to read. There is a great amount of research based information as well as strategies and how to help in and out of the classroom.

LaBerge, David, and S. Jay Samuels. *Basic processes in reading: perception and comprehension*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum Associates; 1977. Print.

*This is an informative resource for learning about comprehension and how to help struggling readers.

Pikulski, John and Shane Templeton. "Teaching and Developing Vocabulary: Key to Long-Term Reading Success", *Current Research in Reading/Language Arts* (2004).

*This article gives noteworthy information about why vocabulary instruction is so important in the classroom.

Rathmann, Peggy, Donna Mark, and David Gatti. *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

*This book will be used for Classroom Activity #1.

Sendak, Maurice. *Where the wild things are*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Inc., 1963.

*This book will be used for Classroom Activity #2 and #3.

Stead, Philip Christian, and Erin E. Stead. *A sick day for Amos McGee*. Brookfield, CT: Roaring Brook, 2010.

*This book will be used for Classroom Activity #4.

Reader's theatre. Invercargill, [N.Z.: Essential Resources Educational Publishers, 2007.

*This book gives insight and information about the importance of reader's theatre.

Tompkins, Gail E.. *Language arts essentials* . Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall, 2006. Print.

*This book is a resource used for understanding the tools needed for success in reading.

Trembley, Lo, and David Trembley. *Reader's theatre*. Brea, Calif.: Educational Ministries, Inc., 1994.

*This book gives information on the importance of reader's theatre in the classroom.

Reading List for Students-Caldecott Award Winning Books

Henkes, Kevin. *Kitten's first full moon*. China: Greenwillow Books, 2004.

Jumangi. Hollywood: TriStar Pictures, 1985.

Juster, Norton, and Christopher Raschka. *The hello, goodbye window*. New York: Michael di Capua Books/Hyperion Books for Children, 2005.

Pinkney, Jerry. *The lion & the mouse*. New York: Little, Brown and Co. Books for Young Readers, 2009.

Rathmann, Peggy, Donna Mark, and David Gatti. *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Sendak, Maurice. *Where the wild things are*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Inc., 1963.

Stead, Philip Christian, and Erin E. Stead. *A sick day for Amos McGee*. Brookfield, CT: Roaring Brook, 2010.

Swanson, Susan Marie, and Beth Krommes. *The house in the night*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008.

Yolen, Jane, John Schoenherr, and Nanette Stevenson. *Owl moon*. New York: Philomel Books, 1987.

Chicago formatting by BibMe.org.

List of Materials for Classroom Use

- art supplies (crayons, pencils, colored pencils, paints, markers, etc.)
- A Sick Day for Amos McGee by Philip and Erin Stead
- Caldecott Award winning books for read alouds (see Reading List for Students)
- Create Your Own Wild Thing Template
- fluency rubric
- graphic organizers (Venn diagram)
- internet access
- Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathman, Donna Mark, and David Gatti
- Readers Theatre script for Officer Buckle and Gloria
- Readers Theatre script for Where the Wild Things Are found at:
<http://www.timelessteacherstuff.com/readerstheater/WhereWildThings.html>
- story maps/character webs
- student journals
- visual props for creating set design and wild thing costumes
- Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
- wood blocking materials (styrofoam trays or plates, wooden sticks)

Appendix

Implementing District Standards

My unit would implement various English Language Arts standards in a significant way. The arts-infused unit would incorporate English language arts objectives as well as artistic expression to produce an overall educational and informative unit to improve fluency and comprehension for third grade students. Students would have the opportunity to increase their reading skills in order to develop and apply strategies and skills to read and write. Students would also develop and apply strategies to comprehend text that is read, heard and viewed. Students would be working with Caldecott award winning children's books in order to expand their knowledge of artistic interpretation as well as promoting literacy aspects.

English Language Arts Third Grade Goal 4: The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written and visual texts.

English Language Arts Objective 4.01: Read aloud grade-appropriate text with fluency, comprehension and expression.

Figure 1

Readers Theatre for Officer Buckle and Gloria

Characters (5): Officer Buckle Reader 1 Reader 2 Reader 3 Reader 4

Reader 1: Officer Buckle knew more safety tips than anyone else in Napville.
Reader 2: Every time he thought of a new one, he thumbtacked it to his bulletin board.
Reader 3: Safety Tip #77: NEVER stand on a SWIVEL CHAIR
Reader 4: Officer Buckle shared his safety tips with the students at Napville School.
Reader 1: Nobody every listened.
Reader 2: Sometimes, there was snoring.
Reader 3: Afterward, it was business as usual.
Reader 4: Mrs. Toppel, the principal, took down the welcome banner.
Reader 1: Officer Buckle: NEVER stand on a SWIVEL CHAIR.
Reader 2: But Mrs. Toppel didn't hear him.
Reader 3: Then one day, Napcilles' police department bought a police dog named Gloria.
Reader 4: When it was time for officer Buckle to give the safety speech at the school, Gloria went along.
Reader 1: Officer Buckle: Children, this is Gloria. Gloria obeys my commands. Gloria, SIT!
Reader 2: And Gloria sat.
Reader 3: Officer Buckle gave Safety Tip Number one.
Officer Buckle: KEEP your SHOELACES tied!
Reader 1: The children sat up and stared.
Reader 2: Officer Buckle checked to see if Gloria was sitting at attention.
Reader 3: She was.
Reader 4: Officer Buckle: Safety Tip Number Two: ALWAYS wipe up spills BEFORE someone SLIPS and FALLS.
Reader 1: The children's eyes popped open.
Reader 2: Officer Buckle checked on Gloria again.
Reader 3: Officer Buckle: Good dog.
Reader 4: Officer Buckle thought of a safety tip he has discovered that morning.
Officer Buckle: NEVER leave a THUMB TACK where you might SIT on it.
Reader 4: The audience roared.
Reader 1: Officer Buckle grinned. He said the rest of the tips with plenty of expression.
Reader 2: The children clapped their hands and cheered. Some of them laughed until they cried.
Reader 3: Officer Buckle was surprised. He has never noticed how funny safety tips could be.
Reader 4: After this safety speech, there wasn't a single accident.
Reader 1: The next day, an enormous envelope arrived at the police station.
Reader 2: It was stuffed with thank-you letters form the students at Napville School.
Reader 3: Every letter has a drawing of Gloria on it.
Reader 4: Officer Buckle thought the drawings showed a lot of imagination.
Reader 1: His favorite letter was written on a star-shaped piece of paper. It said: You and Gloria make a good team. Your friend, Claire P.S. I always wear a crash helmet (Safety Tip #7)
Reader 2: Officer Buckle was thumbtacking Claire's letter to his bulletin board when the phones started ringing.
Reader 3: Grade schools, high schools and day-care centers were calling about the safety speech.
Reader 4: Officer Buckle, they said, our students want to hear your safety tips! And please, bring along that police dog.
Reader 1: Officer Buckle told his safety tips to 313 schools.
Reader 2: Everywhere he and Gloria went, children sat up and listened.
Reader 3: After every speech, Officer Buckel took Gloria out for ice cream.

Reader 4: Officer Buckle loved having a buddy.
Reader 1: Then one day, a television news team videotaped Officer Buckle in the state-college auditorium.
Reader 2: When he finished Safety Tip Number Ninety-nine, DO NOT GO SWIMMING DURING ELECTRICAL STORMS!
Reader 3: The students jumped to their feet and applauded.
Reader 4: BRAVO, BRAVO, they cheered.
Reader 1: Officer Buckle bowed again and again.
Reader 2: That night, Officer Buckle watched himself on the 10 o'clock news.
Reader 3: The next day, the principal of Napville School telephoned the police station.
Reader 4: Good morning Officer Buckle! IT's time for our safety speech.
Reader 1: Officer Buckle frowned. I'm not giving any more speeches! Nobody looks at me anyway!
Reader 2: Oh, said Mrs. Toppel. Well, how about Gloria? Could she come?
Reader 3: Someone else from the police station gave Gloria a ride to the school.
Reader 4: Gloria sat on stage looking lonely. Then she fell asleep.
Reader 1: So did the audience.
Reader 2: After Gloria left, Napville School had its biggest accident ever.
Reader 3: It started with a puddle of banana pudding
Reader 4: SPLAT! SPLATTER! SPLOOSH! Everyone slid smack into Mrs. Toppel, who screamed and let go of her hammer.
Reader 1: The next morning a pile of letters arrived at the police station.
Reader 2: Every letter had a drawing of the accident.
Reader 3: Officer Buckle was shocked.
Reader 4: At the bottom of the pile was a note written on a paper star.
Reader 1: Officer Buckle smiled. The note said: Gloria missed you yesterday! Your friend, Claire. P.S.
Reader 2: Don't worry, I was wearing my helmet (Safety Tip #7)
Reader 3: Gloria gave Officer Buckle a big kiss on the nose.
Reader 4: Officer Buckle gave Gloria a nice pat on the back.
Reader 1: Then, Officer Buckle thought of his best safety tip yet...
All: Safety Tip #101: ALWAYS STICK WITH YOUR BUDDY!

Figure 2

Create Your Own *Wild Thing* Template

Use the space below to create your own wild thing. Be creative. Use your imagination!

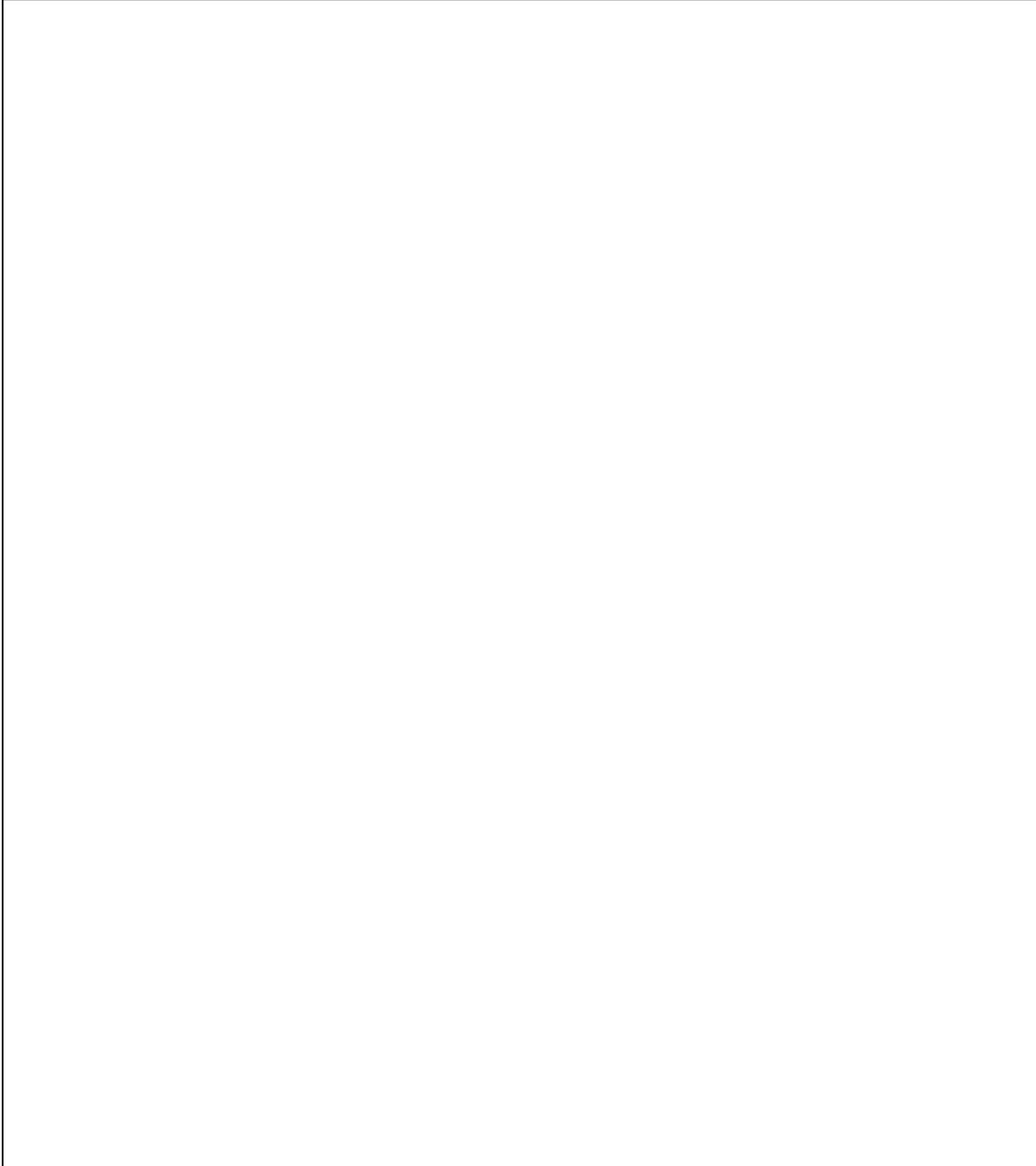
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a wild thing. The box is positioned below the text and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

Figure 3

Reader's Theatre script from:

<http://www.timelessteacherstuff.com/readerstheater/WhereWildThings.html>

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

Characters (6): NARRATOR CHILD 1 CHILD 2 CHILD 3 CHILD 4 MAX

NARRATOR: THE NIGHT MAX WORE HIS WOLF SUIT

CHILD 1: AND MADE MISCHIEF

CHILD 2: OF ONE KIND

CHILD 3: AND ANOTHER.

NARRATOR: HIS MOTHER CALLED HIM

CHILD 4: "WILD THING!"

NARRATOR: AND MAX SAID:

MAX: "I'LL EAT YOU UP!!"

CHILD 1: SO HE WAS SENT TO BED

CHILD 2: WITHOUT EATING ANYTHING.

NARRATOR: THAT VERY NIGHT IN MAX'S ROOM

MAX: A FOREST GREW, AND GREW, AND GREW UNTIL THE CEILING HUNG WITH VINES

CHILD 3: AND THE WALLS BECAME THE WORLD ALL AROUND

CHILD 4: AND AN OCEAN TUMBLED BY

MAX: "WITH A PRIVATE BOAT!"

NARRATOR: FOR MAX. AND HE SAILED OFF THROUGH NIGHT AND DAY

CHILD 1: AND IN AND OUT OF WEEKS CHILD 2: AND ALMOST OVER A YEAR

MAX: TO WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE!

NARRATOR: AND WHEN HE CAME TO THE PLACE WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE THEY

CHILD 3: ROARED THEIR TERRIBLE ROARS! (ALL ROAR)

CHILD 4: AND GNASHED THEIR TERRIBLE TEETH! (ALL GNASH TEETH)

CHILD 1: AND ROLLED THEIR TERRIBLE EYES! (ALL ROLL EYES)

CHILD 2: AND SHOWED THEIR TERRIBLE CLAWS! (ALL SHOW CLAWS)

NARRATOR: TILL MAX SAID:

MAX: "BE STILL!"

CHILD 3: AND TAMED THEM

CHILD 4: WITH THE MAGIC TRICK

MAX: OF STARING INTO ALL THEIR YELLOW EYES

CHILD 1: WITHOUT BLINKING ONCE

NARRATOR: AND THEY WERE FRIGHTENED AND CALLED HIM

ALL: THE MOST WILD THING OF ALL!!

NARRATOR: AND MADE HIM KING OF ALL WILD THINGS.

MAX: "AND NOW, LET THE WILD RUMPUS START!! (PAUSE) NOW, STOP!"

CHILD 3: AND SENT THE WILD THINGS OFF TO BED

CHILD 4: WITHOUT THEIR SUPPER....AND MAX

CHILD 1: THE KING OF ALL WILD THINGS, SAID:

MAX: "I'M LONELY!"

NARRATOR: AND WANTED TO BE WHERE SOMEONE LOVED HIM BEST OF ALL

CHILD 2: THEN, ALL AROUND, FROM FAR AWAY, ACROSS THE WORLD

NARRATOR: HE SMELLED GOOD THINGS TO EAT!! SO HE SAID:

MAX: "I'LL GIVE UP BEING KING OF WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE."

CHILD 3: BUT THE WILD THINGS CRIED

CHILD 4: OH, PLEASE DON'T GO

CHILD 1: WE'LL EAT YOU UP

CHILD 2: WE LOVE YOU SO

NARRATOR: AND MAX SAID:

MAX: "NO!"

CHILD 1: THE WILD THINGS ROARED THEIR TERRIBLE ROARS (ALL ROAR)

CHILD 2: AND GNASHED THEIR TERRIBLE TEETH (ALL SHOW TEETH)

CHILD 3: AND ROLLED THEIR TERRIBLE EYES (ALL ROLL EYES)

CHILD 4: AND SHOWED THEIR TERRIBLE CLAWS (ALL SHOW CLAWS)

NARRATOR: BUT MAX STEPPED INTO HIS PRIVATE BOAT

CHILD 1: AND WAVED GOOD-BYE (MAX WAVES)

CHILD 2: AND SAILED BACK

CHILD 3: ALMOST OVER A YEAR AND IN AND OUT OF WEEKS AND THROUGH A DAY

MAX: AND INTO THE NIGHT OF MY OWN ROOM

CHILD 4: WHERE HE FOUND HIS SUPPER WAITING FOR HIM