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Storytelling Comes Alive:
Preschoolers' Development of Narrative Comprehension and Academic Language
Within a Participatory Oral Storytelling Intervention

By

Marjorie Whiteley Rowe

A dissertation submitted as partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor P. David Pearson, Chair

Professor Lev Michael

Professor Laura Sterponi

Fall 2020

Storytelling Comes Alive: Preschoolers' Development of Narrative Comprehension and Academic Language Within a Participatory Oral Storytelling Intervention

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Marjorie Whiteley Rowe

Abstract

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University of California, Berkeley

Professor P. David Pearson, Chair

Extensive bodies of literature examining child language acquisition and early literacy development indicate that the language and literacy opportunities young children have at home and in school settings, including the nature of their language interactions with adults and their exposure to books and stories, are consequential for mastery of conventional literacy and long-term academic success (Burchinal & Forestieri, 2011; Catts et al., 2001; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Fernald & Weisleder, 2015). Research reports indicating numerous common and distinct benefits to book reading (e.g., Elley, 1989; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Neuman, 1999; Becher, 1985) and storytelling (e.g., Isbell et al., 2004; Trostle & Hicks, 1998) for emergent and beginning readers and writers would suggest that children learning in settings where both activities are implemented would be poised to receive the best of both worlds.

This study investigated the affordances for the development of narrative comprehension and academic language that arise when young children participate in both read aloud and storytelling lessons. I conducted an ethnographic case study of an ongoing arts-integrated storytelling program for preschoolers, *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling*, that was collaboratively implemented by a community arts organization and a Head Start agency in four preschool classrooms at a single Head Start site serving large numbers of emergent bilingual students and children diagnosed with disabilities. Two teaching artists with professional backgrounds in theater and dance, one seasoned and one new to the storytelling program, delivered over a period of several months in two classrooms each 12 participatory storytelling sessions organized into four units that were designed to promote understanding of narrative. I recorded, transcribed, and analyzed storytelling sessions to investigate and compare the repertoire of language-promoting pedagogical tools that each teaching artist used to promote the narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories.

In addition, I served as a participant observer in the four classrooms, a role that allowed me informally observe the typical read aloud practices of the classroom teachers as well as to record, transcribe, and analyze their read aloud lessons for the focal picture books that anchored each storytelling unit. A fifth preschool classroom located at second nearby Head Start site served as a no treatment control to permit me to examine teacher read aloud practices in a setting outside the

influence of the storytelling program. I compared the read aloud practices of the storytelling teachers to each other and to the control teacher to investigate the language-promoting pedagogical tools they used to promote students' control of the narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories during read aloud lessons. Finally, I asked how the affordances of these two learning contexts—storytelling and reading aloud—complemented and contrasted with one another.

Findings indicate that the teaching artists' pedagogical repertoires were more complex and diverse than those used by the classroom teachers for reading aloud due the wider array of activities used within the storytelling program. The classroom contexts into which the storytelling program was implemented, and the roles played by individual classroom teachers were found to be important contributors to how the storytelling sessions were enacted and experienced in each classroom. The two teaching artists overall used a similar repertoire of language-promoting practices, but the more seasoned artist's prior experience working with preschoolers in the storytelling program appeared to assist her in designing and teaching heavily scaffolded lessons that minimized misunderstandings with students whereas the new artists' more relaxed implementation of the storytelling lesson framework and her high expectations for preschool students' capacity for mature reasoning led to communication problems with students somewhat more frequently. They both strongly emphasized building common knowledge and student observation of and performance of acts of storytelling. The performance orientation placed considerable demands on students' cognitive, linguistic, motor, and social capacities, while at the same time offering a highly engaging and often exciting forum in which to build understanding of story. This is an important finding given the scope of extant literature on storytelling; in no other study was the storytelling intervention led by professional teaching artists, and in no other study was fully embodied participation by students so emphasized.

The classroom teachers shared many commonalities in their read aloud practices, including the finding that many of the language-promoting practices under analysis occurred only occasionally and sometimes not at all during their read aloud lessons. A major unexpected finding was the low frequency of read aloud lessons and sometimes circumscribed nature of those lessons in the four storytelling classrooms as the result of broader professional, instructional, and social forces that shaped the context for instruction at this site. In contrast, the control classroom was found have a particularly vibrant and effective program of reading instruction due operating under substantially different professional, instructional, and social forces. Students at this site enjoyed listening to and talking about books and at times engaged in emergent independent and partner reading. This finding supports existing literature on reading aloud, which indicates that children who find listening to and talking about books to be pleasurable activities are more likely to read independently once they learn to read (Bus, 2002; Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011) which can have consequential impacts on their success in school and available life choices, as volume of reading is strongly correlated with general knowledge and reading achievement (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015; Sparks et al., 2014; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW.....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	2
<i>Early Language Acquisition and Socialization</i>	2
<i>Intersubjectivity</i>	5
<i>The Narrative Register & Narrative Comprehension</i>	6
<i>Reading Aloud to Children</i>	7
<i>Storytelling</i>	11
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY	13
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS.....	15
OVERVIEW	15
SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS	16
<i>Preschool Storytelling Program Origin</i>	16
<i>Teaching Artists</i>	17
<i>Principal Site—Stapleton School</i>	17
<i>Control Site—Coleman Center</i>	24
RESEARCHER ROLE.....	26
DATA COLLECTION.....	26
<i>Storytelling Program Design</i>	26
<i>Storytelling Data Sources</i>	27
<i>Read Aloud Lesson Data Sources</i>	27
<i>Classroom Visits</i>	27
DATA ANALYSIS	28
<i>Transcription</i>	28
<i>Coding</i>	29
SUMMARY.....	30
CHAPTER 3: STORYTELLING PROGRAM FINDINGS.....	32
STORYTELLING UNITS AND SESSIONS.....	32
OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS	32
LANGUAGE PRACTICES FINDINGS.....	34
<i>Carolyn</i>	34
<i>Jill</i>	67
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION	115
<i>Summary of Key Findings—Carolyn</i>	115
<i>Summary of Key Findings—Jill</i>	116
<i>Comparative Summary</i>	116
<i>Unexpected Findings</i>	118
CHAPTER 4: CLASSROOM TEACHER READ ALOUD FINDINGS.....	123
INTRODUCTION	123
DIFFERENCES IN FREQUENCY AND NATURE OF READ ALOUD LESSONS ACROSS SITES	125
EXPLANATIONS FOR DIFFERENCES IN FREQUENCY AND NATURE OF READ ALOUD LESSONS.....	126
<i>Available Instructional Time</i>	126
<i>The Creative Curriculum</i>	127
<i>Instructional Priorities and Scheduling Constraints</i>	128
<i>Influence of Administrators Views on Reading Aloud</i>	132
<i>Interactions Between Structural Forces and Teachers’ Proclivities for Reading Aloud</i>	134
<i>Summary of Explanations for Differences in Frequency and Nature of Read Aloud Lessons</i>	137
READ ALOUD FINDINGS FOR THE FOCAL CLASSROOM TEACHERS	138
<i>Phases of the Read Aloud Lesson</i>	139

<i>Degree of Interactive Talk Between Teachers and Students</i>	139
<i>Length of Time</i>	140
<i>Language Promoting Practices</i>	141
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS	157
<i>Differential Contexts for Reading Instruction Across Sites</i>	157
<i>Language Practices for Focal Teachers</i>	158
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	160
INTRODUCTION	160
COMPARISON OF STORYTELLING AND READ ALOUD LESSON FINDINGS	161
UNEXPECTED FINDINGS	163
<i>Differential Contexts for Reading Instruction Across Sites</i>	163
<i>The Impact of Classroom Context on Implementation of Interventions</i>	164
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE	168
<i>General Implications for Reading Aloud and Storytelling</i>	168
<i>Metalanguage of Story</i>	170
<i>Book Selection</i>	170
<i>Adaptation of Storytelling Practices to Classroom Teacher-Led Reading Instruction</i>	171
<i>Continuity of Personnel and Resources for Vulnerable Students</i>	171
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	172
FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS	172
CONCLUSION	173
REFERENCES	174
APPENDIX A: SYNOPSES AND VIDEOS OF FOCAL PICTURE BOOKS	182
APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS	184
APPENDIX C: CODING SCHEMES FOR STORYTELLING AND READ ALOUD LESSON ANALYSIS	186

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Chapter 2

Figure 1: Stapleton School and Coleman Center Preschool Classroom Profiles.....18

Tables

Chapter 2

Table 1: Storytelling Units.....28

Table 2: Numbers and Types of Observations by Classroom.....29

Chapter 4

Table 3: Comparison of Read Aloud Lesson Length for Focal Teachers.....143

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

For many decades, educational scholars and practitioners alike have been asking questions about how early literacy and language capabilities develop in young children and what actions parents, caregivers, teachers, and school systems can take to effectively promote typical development in these critical domains (e.g., Burchinal & Forestieri, 2011; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Snow et al., 1998). Although we have learned a great deal about the cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and cultural pillars supporting early literacy and language development, these efforts are still as relevant as ever, particularly for those children in need of extra attention or special assistance to take on literacy learning.

When children enter formal schooling, they not only continue to learn the language of instruction (or begin to learn it, in the case of emergent bilingual/multilingual students), but also the content and medium privileged in academic discourse (Schleppegrell, 2004). Learning the language of schooling, including when and how to deploy it as speakers, listeners, readers, and writers, comprises a significant portion of the sociocultural knowledge and cognitive skills needed for children to experience success in school.

I had the good fortune to be presented with an opportunity to conduct my dissertation research in conjunction with an authentic preschool language and literacy initiative that serves many poor children, children diagnosed with disabilities, and children learning English as an additional language. These are all children who might well benefit from extra opportunities to engage in language and literacy activities that are designed to provide the cultural and linguistic capital associated with success in school-based early literacy instruction. A community arts organization in New England offered an oral storytelling program called *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling* in several preschool classrooms run by the local Head Start agency. Two experienced teaching artists, one with a professional background in theater and the other in dance, delivered over a period of several months 12 storytelling sessions designed to promote development of conceptual knowledge, vocabulary, story structure, flexible thinking, and imagination. Across the school year, these sessions offered preschool children opportunities to engage with the narrative register and build narrative comprehension, exploring the essential story elements of plot, character, and setting through interactive, arts-integrated storytelling activities.

My own introduction to children's acquisition of the academic register came not from reading the language socialization literature and the psycholinguistics research about formal schooling registers, but rather as an early elementary classroom teacher, reading specialist, and literacy coach. Through my professional experiences, I encountered many instances as a teacher in which something more than the mere acquisition of words was going on for the children with whom I worked.

One memorable example occurred during a conversation with a young boy I will call Sean. He was a Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual first grader who received reading intervention lessons with me at his Title I elementary school. Sean had just finished reading *Billy Can Count* (Giles, 2000) and we were discussing it. In this simple story, a preschool aged child learns to count to four accurately with the assistance of his older brother. Sean commented, "My mom learned me how to count to 10," to which I replied enthusiastically, "Oh, your mom taught you how to count to 10?" He replied, "Yeah, and then she taught me to count to 11." In this exchange, Sean's emerging control of language structure is evident. Although he continued to over-regularize the dominant rule for forming the past tense (-ed), given some "just in time"

support offered by my mature model, he replaced “to learn” with “to teach” in his next utterance, thus shifting closer to conventional usage for the irregular past tense form, “taught.”

I captured another illustration of an adult model lifting a young child’s control of language during my work as a literacy coach in a Catholic school that served predominantly low-income students. While conducting the beginning of school reading assessment with a monolingual, English-speaking first grade student I will call Sarah, she volunteered to me, “If I be bad, my dad calls me pork chob (*sic*). And if my sister bes bad, he calls her pork chob, too.” I told her that this was such an interesting, funny nickname that I had to write it down. Although I scribed Sarah’s utterance accurately for my records, I verbally provided the conventional form of the verb “to be” as I wrote on a scrap of paper, “So, you said, ‘If I am bad, my dad calls me pork chop and if my sister is bad, he calls her pork chop, too?’” Sarah responded, “Yeah, and do you know my second name? If I’m being good, he calls me piglet and if I’m being really good, he calls me Allison” (her middle name). The success of this teaching-learning interaction suggests that my reformulation of the verb “to be” was only slightly more complex than the language Sarah controlled independently, was provided “just in time” at her point of need, and, therefore, may have been perceived by Sarah as serving to enhance the expression of her message. For all of these reasons, I would claim, she appropriated the conventional form into her second utterance, as seen by her use of the contraction “I’m” twice.

When I was a full-time teacher, I often wondered how the outcomes of conversations like the ones I had with Sean and Sarah could be explained. And what could I do as a teacher to create learning conditions to enable such real-time shifts as well as longer-term changes in students’ language capacities? When I entered graduate school, one of the areas of study I naturally gravitated to was child language acquisition and socialization and its relationship to early literacy development. I was particularly interested in investigating under what instructional conditions might adult language models promote young children’s growing control over the narrative register and academic language. So it is not surprising that for my dissertation, I conducted an ethnographic study of the teaching artist, classroom teacher, and student participants in *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling* to examine the affordances for language and early literacy development that arise when children have a deep and rich experience with the academic language of children’s literature, both in the oral and written registers.

Literature Review

Early Language Acquisition and Socialization

The important role of language in undergirding children's future literacy learning and general school achievement has rendered it a major topic in child language acquisition and early literacy research (Burchinal & Forestieri, 2011; Fernald & Weisleder, 2015; Snow et al., 1998). Young children's oral language and early literacy skills significantly impact their experiences learning to read and write, as well as their later academic achievement (e.g., Catts et al., 2001; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Extensive scholarship has focused on variation in parent-child communication and interactional styles due to the importance of child-directed speech in promoting children's language and cognitive skills (e.g., Burchinal & Forestieri, 2011; Weisleder & Fernald, 2013; Hart & Risley, 1995).

Sociolinguistic research has demonstrated that across many cultures, but certainly not all, adults tailor their speech and manner of speaking to their youthful interlocutors (Clark, 2009). Successful communication, after all, entails consideration of one’s audience. In spoken communication, this has been referred to as recipient design, a term coined by Keenan and

Schieffelin (1976), who constructed a framework, building upon the work of Sacks and Schegloff (1974), with which to evaluate young children's communicative competence as speakers in terms of how well they customize utterances for their intended recipient(s). In written expression, the related concept is that of audience awareness (Braig, 1986). In both communication modes, competent speakers and writers take into account the needs of their audiences.

Growth in vocabulary often serves as a proxy for the larger construct of language in studies examining the impact of child-directed speech on language development. Fernald et al. (2013), for example, found that both the quantity and quality of parental language input provided to American English-learning infants were positively related to children's acquisition of vocabulary and their language processing speed, with consequential distinctions amongst socioeconomic status (SES) groups seen starting at 18 months. By the age of 24 months, a 6-month disparity in language processing skills was found between infants from lower- and higher-SES families.

Weisleder and Fernald (2013) studied the impact of child-directed speech on infants from Spanish-speaking, low-SES, American families between the ages of 19 and 24 months, yielding similar findings with regard to the impact of the quantity and quality of child-directed speech upon language acquisition. They collected all-day recordings of adult-infant interactions in the home and found considerable variability in the amount of speech directed at infants in the different families. Infants who heard more child-directed speech from adult caregivers developed larger expressive vocabularies and faster language processing speeds by 24 months of age.

Turning from vocabulary to the syntactic elements of language development, Huttenlocher et al. (2010) found that the syntactic diversity and quantity of parents' speech predicted the structural complexity of their children's later speech. English-speaking families were recruited from a large midwestern metropolitan area and were selected to align with the region's 2000 census data, therefore reflecting a representative degree of educational, economic, and racial diversity. Families were observed interacting naturally in the home for 90 minutes once every 4 months, beginning when the child was aged 14 months and ending at 46 months. Huttenlocher and colleagues found that SES was a moderating factor in the quality and quantity of parents' verbal interactions with their English-learning children. However, there was significant individual variation in parents' language practices not only across but also within SES groups. Recall that substantial variation within a single SES group was also found in the Weisleder and Fernald (2013) study of Spanish-learning infants. The finding that intra-group variability generally exceeds inter-group variability has been replicated in study after study involving human participants across disciplines. Taken together, these studies of child language acquisition situated within diverse social, cultural, and linguistic contexts underscore the substantial influence that caregiver speech has upon children's linguistic development—quite independent of the likely sources of the differences among parents in their proclivity for particular sorts of interactions.

My conversations with former students Sean and Sarah described in the introduction illustrate children composing oral messages under the influence of a teacher's mature input and call to mind Clay's (1998) observation that, "You can hear the construction of grammar going on in every conversation you have with little children" (p. 2). Children search for, notice, and reproduce regularities as they acquire language. As a result, we hear them make plural errors, such as "tooths" and "mans" and irregular verb errors, like "goed" and "eated." Pinker (1999)

suggests that these types of errors offer us a window into the process of constructing the grammar of one's mother tongue, which occurs throughout early childhood:

When a child says it *bleeded* and it *singed*, the fingerprints of learning are all over the sentence. Every bit of every word has been learned, including the past-tense suffix –ed. The very existence of the error comes from a process of learning that is as yet incomplete: the mastery of the irregular forms *bled* and *sang*. (p. 233)

Not only can young children's construction of language be overtly witnessed, but it appears possible for it to be shaped intentionally by knowledgeable teachers. Teachers can increase the likelihood that students will appropriate their more mature adult models when they use language that is only slightly more complex than the child's current constructions (Clay et al., 2007). Sensitive instruction that meets children within their individual zones of proximal development has the capacity to accelerate development (Vygotsky, 1978). Adult provision of linguistic input that arrives at the point of need and, from the child's perspective, serves to enhance the expression of his or her message, appears to increase the likelihood that he or she appropriates the adult model (Van Dyke, 2006; Clay et al., 2007).

Parents, caregivers, and teachers frequently repeat, expand, and extend young children's utterances. Repetitions, in which the adult repeats some or all of the child's utterance, and expansions, which involve restating or rephrasing the child's utterance but "expanding" it with the grammar and vocabulary of a mature speaker, can both be used to confirm what the child has said (if the adult is unsure) and to demonstrate engagement with the child's message. Extensions begin with a repetition or expansion but then the adult augments the conversational thread with one or more new propositions. Like repetitions and expansions, extensions demonstrate engagement with the child's message by affirming what the child said, but also extend or deepen the ideas at hand by adding further layers of meaning. These three practices appear to contribute to and reflect a shared orientation to meaning in communication, may help to sustain conversation between mature and novice speakers, provide adult language models that are personalized to the child's interests and therefore more likely perceived by the child as relevant, and help young children build their vocabularies and expand their control of syntactic constructions (Gallaway & Richards, 1994; Hoff & Naigles, 2002; Snow & Ferguson, 1997; Taumoepeau, 2016).

Novice speakers tend to make three main types of speech "errors" as they work to construct the language(s) spoken by their community: phonological errors, syntactic errors, and semantic/lexical errors. Adult responses to young children's speech errors vary, depending in part on the type of error made. Adults typically provide overt corrections to children's semantic/lexical errors if they involve the mislabeling of an object or a concept. These word choice errors reveal semantic misconceptions, which, depending on the age of the child, adults generally feel compelled to correct, (e.g., the mother who informs her two-year-old child, "That's not a cow, that's a lamb," and "Your food isn't hot. It's warm").

In contrast, parents commonly accept young children's immature articulation and their agrammatical, yet meaningful and pragmatically appropriate utterances (Cazden, 2001; Clay, 1991; Genishi & Dyson, 1984, Lindfors, 2008). During conversation with a novice speaker whose utterances contain phonological or syntactic errors, parents may or may not embed reformulations into their repetitions and expansions. Expansions occur when the mature speaker supplies, either automatically or deliberately, the conventional form in their response. Reflecting a meaning orientation to communication and consideration for children's neophyte status in the

language community, adults usually offer expansions to children without appearing to overtly correct their approximations (Cazden, 2001; Clay, 1991; Genishi & Dyson, 1984).

When an adult offers a repetition in response to a child's utterance containing a phonological or syntactic approximation, the repetition will typically include an embedded expansion. If they are simply repeating the child's utterance, mature speakers are unlikely to re-voice the error and thereby violate linguistic and pragmatic norms (unless they find the child's approximation especially endearing, e.g., "spaghetti" pronounced as "pasketti"). For instance, if a child says, "We *goed* to the park," a parent might respond with an expansion—"Yes, we went to the park"—offering no new propositions, but exposing the child to the mature form (in this case, the irregular past tense of the verb, "to go") and affirming the child's idea. Extensions of a child's utterance containing speech errors may or may not include embedded expansions. For example, when a child says "We *goed* to the park" the parent could readily offer an extension with no expansion—"We had fun at the park, didn't we?"—engaging with the child's idea, but without providing a model of the mature form "went" in their own utterance. Alternatively, when the child says, "We *goed* to the park," the parent might respond with, "Yes, we went to the park and we saw your friend Maria. What did you and Maria do together on the playground?" In this case the parent is offering both an expansion of the child's immature speech (by providing a model of the conventional form "went") and an extension upon their intended message (by adding the additional propositions about the friend Maria), and, again, demonstrating engagement with the child's message.

Having reviewed some of the literature on the impact of child-directed speech during infancy and the preschool years, which suggests that adult speech and interactional styles do indeed influence children's language acquisition, it is important to acknowledge that researchers interested in child language have predominantly chosen to study families who are English-speaking and often middle- or upper-class. This oversampling of advantaged Anglo parents and children as study participants has led to unfounded assumptions about the universal nature of language socialization practices across cultures (e.g., Ochs & Schieffelin, 2009). At the same time, what *is* universal in child language acquisition is that parents, caregivers, and teachers provide language models for young children (Cazden, 1983). Whatever verbal and communicative behaviors are needed in and valued by the culture will be fortified by the language socialization practices of the community's mature speakers, including child-directed speech (if present).

Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity refers to the ability to stretch beyond the confines of an individual's construction of a personal reality and connect to the ideas, thoughts, and experiences of another person. Husserl (1999), founder of phenomenology, is best known for using this term to convey the interpersonal understanding that permits humans to transcend an inherently first-person experience of consciousness. For Husserl, intersubjectivity is precondition of human interaction and communication. However, for the youngest members of the human community, infants, intersubjectivity must be constructed. Trevarthen (1979) found that parents and caregivers help infants to initially develop intersubjectivity through responsive feedback to their behaviors over time within the context of joint attention and that cultivating an orientation toward shared meaning supported language acquisition. For the purpose of my study, treatment of intersubjectivity is framed primarily in terms of the mutual understanding that parents and caregivers seek to cultivate with infants and maintain with older children, including preschool aged children.

Understandably, maintaining mutual understanding during adult-child communication can be challenging, particularly for anyone who is not the parent or primary caregiver, and even more so particularly when children are very young or have special language learning needs, such as emergent bilinguals and children diagnosed with speech delays. Furthermore, even among monolingual, typically developing preschool aged children, their communicative and linguistic repertoires, although already astonishing, are yet under construction. Consequently, responsibility for maintaining intersubjectivity falls primarily to adults as the mature speakers participating in the interaction. This is not to say young children will not initiate efforts to repair mutual understanding. Indeed, even infants communicate to be understood and demonstrate sophisticated socio-pragmatic reasoning. Children as young as 12 months possess meaningful intentions (Lizskowski et al., 2004) and by age 2 they communicate to get their points across, not only to achieve their goals (Shwe & Markman, 1997). Nonetheless, adults tend to feel compelled to be helpful and patient in eliciting young children's meanings when mutual understanding is lost and are generally better equipped to do so.

An adult's level of familiarity with a young child appears to significantly impact the length and quality of their conversations. Familiarity is related to the ease with which adults can extend children's speech in a manner that strengthens understandings of temporality and causation, the conceptual underpinnings of narration. Tizard (1986) reported that British mothers created richer, clearer conversations with their 4-year-old children than the children's preschool teachers, which she attributed to the mothers' greater familiarity with their children. According to Tizard, "Familiarity helps adults interpret little children's meanings and their communications. It also enables them to help children connect together different aspects of their experience" (p. 29). It is this ability to assist young children in stitching together their lived experiences through language, an affordance of parent-child familiarity, that directly influences how children learn to use the narrative register.

The Narrative Register & Narrative Comprehension

Oral storytelling, narration of personal experiences, and listening to narrative text read aloud are three commonplace, yet vital, home and school activities that build children's familiarity with the narrative register in spoken and written language. Furthermore, these activities support children's ability to anticipate story grammar and literary language as listeners and readers, contributing to the development of comprehension for narrative texts (Clay, 1991; Lever & Sénéchal, 2011; Snow, 1983). Unfortunately, practitioners and policy makers often attribute less significance to young children's language and comprehension development than to their development of the code-based enabling skills of early literacy (e.g., letter knowledge, phonemic awareness) (Dickinson et al., 2010).

Chapman conceptualized written genres as "cognitive tools and social actions rather than merely text types," (2006, p. 39). Written genres are channels through which writers express ideas and act upon their worlds and through which readers extract and construct meanings from authors' messages. Narrative is distinguished by its ubiquitous and pervasive use in both the oral and written registers. Bruner (1990; 1996) argued that narrative is the way humans construct their lives and experience the world. Not surprisingly, narrative is traditionally seen as the most appropriate starting point for beginning readers and writers. Pinto et al. (2016) found that the ability of kindergartners to retell an orally presented fictional story predicted the level of structure and coherence present in their written retellings of the same story a year later in first grade. Young children's experiences with oral storytelling, narration, and being read aloud to thus serve as a powerful resource for learning how to read and write.

Parents model and facilitate the construction of narratives for young children. Stoel-Gammon and Cabral (1977) studied Portuguese-learning toddlers' budding ability to report narratives of past events to adults (as cited in Cazden, 1983, p. 7; 2005, p. 2). They found parental familiarity to be a significant facilitator of meaningful communication with the 20- to 24-month-old Brazilian children in their study, but at a more granular level than captured in Tizard's study. They investigated the infants' ability to retell past events in spontaneous conversation with their parents to a third person; some parents had been present during the event in question while others had not. The parents who had first-hand knowledge of their child's experiences asked a series of questions that supported the child in constructing a cohesive narrative. These children were better able to recount the event to a third person than the children whose parents had not been present for the event. The higher level of familiarity on the part of the parents with first-hand knowledge of the event seemed to allow them to better engineer a "meeting of minds," or intersubjectivity, with the child (Cazden, 2005, p. 3).

Scollon (1976) detected a similar practice in middle-class, American parents, which he labeled "vertical constructions," whereby they asked a series of questions to elicit additional information from the child in each utterance, leading to co-constructed narrative retellings of life experiences. Scollon argued that the young child's ability to narrate events is formed in part through the adult's provision of vertical constructions, which appear to mold attention to aspects of chronology and substance that are valued in narration by the dominant Anglo-American culture. Scollon & Scollon (1981) posited that vertical constructions prepare children for success with later literacy tasks in school by scaffolding children into "the information structuring of essayist literacy" (p. 93). In other words, the discourse that is valued in academic settings.

Indeed, during their first years of formal schooling, American children are expected to learn an academic register that hinges in part upon narrative storytelling knowledge and skills. One key thrust of reading instruction in kindergarten to the second grade is learning to determine importance in fiction, which involves understanding the essential story elements of plot, character, and setting. Likewise, during writing instruction in the primary grades children learn to write personal narratives with a cohesive, sequential story grammar.

Reading Aloud to Children

Storybook reading in early childhood classrooms is a fundamental, well-established instructional activity setting for supporting young children's development of oral and written language, and constructing links between the two (Clay, 2004; Snow, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). A large body of literature on parent-child reading in the home and teacher-children reading in preschool indicates that children who frequently listen to adults reading stories aloud accrue a number of linguistic, cognitive, perceptual, and affective benefits, including growth in the syntactic complexity of their utterances (Yoder et al., 1995), understanding of story elements and narrative (Neuman, 1999), literal and inferential comprehension (Becher, 1985), vocabulary knowledge (Elley, 1989; Wasik & Bond, 2001), print awareness (Box & Aldridge, 1993; Justice & Ezell, 2000; Neuman, 1999), letter-sound relationships (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011; Neuman, 1999), and greater enjoyment of and engagement with books and reading (Neuman, 1999; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). Home and school reading environments influence children's engagement with reading and likely their proclivity to read independently once they learn to read (Bus, 2002; Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011). There appears to be a relationship between children's access to reading materials, volume of listening to (and later, reading) books, and their socialization into becoming readers (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011; Neuman, 1999).

When examining read aloud practices between adults and young children, we might start by asking what is actually meant by “reading aloud?” The research conducted on joint book reading between parent-child dyads in the home and teachers and young children in child care and school settings has yielded a number of comparable but not equivalent classifications of practices: dialogic reading (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Whitehurst et al., 1988; Whitehurst et al., 1994) interactive reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006), and shared reading (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011). At its core, shared reading is simply an adult or skilled reader reading a book to or with a child or group of children (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011), which may be paired with a particular interactional repertoire. For instance, some teachers display a performative reading orientation by which children primarily serve as appreciative listeners during the reading but engage students in productive discussion about story language and ideas before and after the reading (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). In other approaches to shared reading, high levels of interaction may be present throughout the reading, with the focus of instruction on print awareness and word recognition, (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011) or, alternatively, on language and narrative comprehension, as in dialogic reading.

Whitehurst, Lonigan and colleagues first developed the dialogic reading model in their 1988 study of parent-child dyads and later expanded their research sites to include preschool settings. Dialogic reading emphasizes oral language development and story comprehension by promoting open-ended questions, child-initiated comments, and adult expansion of children’s utterances via a prescribed repertoire of adult prompts and responses. Interactive reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006) similarly prioritizes text comprehension and language growth, but promotes open discussion of story ideas without a tightly regulated repertoire of teacher moves. In the present study, teacher read aloud lessons were examined through the lenses of interactivity and co-construction of story and word meanings due to the research focus on narrativity and academic language development.

Although frequently underappreciated, many scholars have noted the bi-directional relationship between children’s oral and written language capacities, remarking upon how the two language forms reciprocally influence each other, particularly at the beginning of reading and writing development (e.g., Boudreau & Hedberg, 1999; Dickinson & Snow, 1987). Clay (2001) described the oral language capacity of novice readers and writers as “both a resource [for] and a beneficiary” of their encounters with written language (p. 95). Understanding of this reciprocal relationship is often rather lopsided, with more attention paid to studying and teaching how oral language serves as the foundation for written language. But it is clear that children who are read to regularly are exposed to more varied discourse forms and complex syntax than is typically present in spoken language (Bus et al., 1995), benefiting their command of oral language. Further, they learn to parse, first as listeners and later as readers, the syntactic structures of the clauses and sentences that make up written language (Clay, 2001; Pinker, 1994), essential for being able to read with appropriate prosody and comprehend text (Dickinson et al., 2010; Schreiber, 1980).

Many studies of reading aloud in school and home settings report gains in children’s vocabulary, receptive, and expressive language (e.g., Elley, 1989; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Neuman, 1996). Strickland and Morrow (1989) recounted an example of a kindergartner composing an oral message under the influence of children’s literature. The child had recently heard *Jenny’s Hat* (Keats, 1966) read aloud to her class, a story in which birds flutter and flap around the title character’s hat. Not long after, the girl remarked at recess, “Look, the birds are fluttering and flapping around us” (p. 260). A related example of a child’s oral language

developing under the influence of books was captured in a librarian mother's diary of her daughter's first five years. The child revealed her growing command of the narrative register over time, including while telling a story to her teddy bear at age 4, when she declared, "Kangaroo was born on the 95th of May" (White, 1984, p. 177). Such anecdotes call to mind Clay's (2004) counsel:

Recognize the importance of reading aloud to children. Let children hear text structures that expose them to language beyond their control. Reading aloud to children of any age will sketch for them a landscape of features into which their own language usage may expand. (p. 10)

Children gain some vocabulary merely through listening to books read aloud. Even without parental or teacher explanation, they can learn the meaning of a new word simply through exposure during the course of the reading. The more often the word appears in the text, is embedded into passages that support accurate inference of the word's meaning, and co-occurs with illustrations that represent its meaning, the more likely it will be learned (Elley, 1989). However, many of the words that children may be unfamiliar with in books and stories do not possess these enabling conditions. Beck et al., (2002) identified four types of contexts into which children may find unfamiliar words embedded while reading or listening to text, only one of which, termed "directive," is actually likely to lead to inferring the correct meaning of the word. The other three types of written language contexts (which Beck and her colleagues labeled "misdirective," "nondirective" and "general") either point children in the wrong direction or simply do not provide enough specific information to be of much help. Thus, talking about word meanings with adults (Sénéchal et al., 1995) and encountering and using words multiple times within (Robbins & Ehri, 1994) and beyond books (Wasik & Bond, 2001) help children internalize new words.

A number of studies (e.g., Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Teale & Martinez, 1996) on preschool and early elementary read aloud lessons have reported that teachers' practices tend to cluster into one of several approaches. These holistic categories are generally defined by when interaction between teachers and children is present (before, during, and/or after the reading) and the dominant features of those interactions, which may include discussion of characters and plot events, analysis of vocabulary, encouragement of children's affective responses and personal connections, text-explicit recall questions, and task management. Other researchers took the active step of assigning teachers to various predetermined approaches for intervention studies (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Whitehurst et al., 1988). No matter how the reading aloud approaches were defined and labeled, a common finding among these studies is that the nature of the interactions between teachers and students is what is most consequential for student language and literacy growth. Children whose teachers focused on facilitating joint analytic talk about word meanings and important story ideas demonstrated greater gains in vocabulary knowledge, expressive language, and story comprehension. Children made less progress in these domains when the interactions during read aloud lessons consisted mainly of literal recall questions, chiming in for predictable lines of text, and task management (Dickinson and Smith, 1994; Teale & Martinez, 1996).

Studies have suggested that teachers' book selection, one component of their individual reading aloud practices, is consequential for children's opportunities to develop vocabulary and story comprehension. Regular exposure to books with minimal plot lines and simple, predictable language offers little to enhance children's understanding of story structure (Box & Aldridge, 1993; Dickinson & Smith, 1994). In a study examining the effects of improving low-income

children's access to high quality books, Neuman (1999) reported that preschool children who listened to and discussed such books more frequently were better able to construct a cohesive story from a wordless picture book on a task of narrative competence. Dickinson and colleagues (2014) found that book selection impacted the complexity of syntax and vocabulary children heard in the texts as well as the sophistication of classroom discourse in which they participated.

Related to the issue of which books to read aloud to children is the question of how often to reread those books. Children's degree of familiarity with books influences the amount and nature of their comments and questions (Kaderavek & Justice, 2002) and their story comprehension (Yaden, 1988). Several ethnographic studies of language arts instruction in early childhood classrooms have reported an association between the practice of repeated readings and changes in children's utterances about text (Hickman, 1979; Martinez, 1983; Putnam 1982). Martinez & Roser (1985) specified the nature of changes that may occur as children become increasingly familiar with a particular book. They found that preschool children at home and in school settings talked more and that the child-initiated comment proportion of the overall talk increased as the story became better known via repeated readings over time. Further, the details and ideas children focused on in their utterances appeared to shift across multiple encounters with a text, suggesting what they noticed and became interested in transformed as they internalized more of the books' concepts and language. The benefits of repeated readings suggest that a reading diet that is both broad and deep is important for children's development of story concepts, narrative comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge.

The critical combination of both reading aloud to young children *and* engaging them in interactive, analytic talk about text and language prepares children to build meaning from written texts and classroom discourse, two modes of learning prominently valued in school settings (McKeown & Beck, 2006). When children enter formal schooling, they not only continue to learn the language of instruction (or begin to learn it, in the case of emergent bilingual/multilingual students) but also the content and medium privileged in academic discourse (Schleppegrell, 2004). Academic discourse, sometimes called the "language of schooling," is traditionally characterized as spoken and written language use that is cohesive, lexically explicit, syntactically complex, and decontextualized (Schleppegrell, 2004). Learning the language of schooling, including when and how to deploy it as speakers, listeners, readers, and writers, comprises a significant portion of the sociocultural knowledge and cognitive skills needed for children to experience success in school.

The sociocultural contexts in which literacy acts take place exert considerable influence on the process of learning to read and write. Research across many academic disciplines, populations, and settings has demonstrated persuasively that literacy practices are socially situated activities (e.g., Heath, 1983, Scribner & Cole, 1981, Street, 1984). Young children learning to read and write are developing a repertoire of cognitive and perceptual skills and strategies that shape and are shaped by social and cultural forces through interactions with their families, members of their wider community, and cultural institutions, such as child care centers, preschools and elementary schools.

As such, it should come as no surprise to see sociocultural variation in parent-child literacy interactions, including beliefs about the purposes of reading aloud and other literacy activities, how often parent-child reading occurs, and what sorts of language interactions happen within this activity setting. Sonnenschein and colleagues (1996) found that parents of preschoolers from different sociocultural groups held dissimilar beliefs about the purposes of reading, with some exhibiting an entertainment orientation and others viewing reading as a skill

kit to be mastered, and that these perspectives influenced how parents and their children interacted together during literacy events in the home. Heath (1982; 1983) documented stark contrasts in the frequency and qualitative nature of parent-child book reading practices that occurred in neighboring communities in the American South, associating these variations with fundamental differences in child rearing and language socialization practices across the three groups. In her ethnography she analyzed and compared how children in a predominantly European American professional class community and two working class communities, one African American and the other European American, learned to take meaning from their environments in distinctive ways, including through books and reading. Heath found that these ways of taking meaning were interdependent with how the children learned to talk with their caregivers.

The patterns of language socialization molded children into capable communicators within the contexts of their respective homes and communities, but the language competencies of the children from the two working class communities were not recognized and mobilized in the local elementary schools. Heath's research, along with others who have examined how children from nondominant communities extract and construct meaning from their environments (e.g., Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Michaels, 1981) speak to a need, still extant today, for schools and teachers to acknowledge and operationalize multiple means to participate and succeed in language and literacy events. Advancement of the literacy skills and academic discourse prioritized in school settings need not diminish children's other cultural and linguistic knowledge in the process (Hoff, 2012).

Storytelling

Oral storytelling, which Vaahoranta and colleagues (2019, p. 2) defined as "a form of discourse in which one person imparts content while others listen," is utilized as an instructional vehicle far less often in early childhood classrooms than book reading and consequently has received less research attention. Yet the literature on storytelling suggests this approach to story delivery offers a number of affordances absent or less prominent in reading aloud, including greater interaction, engagement, active listening, and the development of imagination and visualization skills (Ellis, 1997; Myers, 1990; Sobol, 1992).

A number of studies have examined the effects of storytelling compared to story reading on young children's development of oral language and story comprehension. Trostle and Hicks (1998) found that elementary-aged students placed in a storytelling condition had significantly higher scores on tests of expressive target vocabulary and comprehension than their peers who participated in traditional read aloud lessons of the same stories. Lenhart and colleagues (2020) examined story comprehension and receptive knowledge of targeted story vocabulary using short stories with 4- to 6-year-old children. However, they varied the manner of story delivery so that some children participated in a live experience whereas others heard an audio-taped recording of either read aloud or storytelling sessions. Children assigned to the live storytelling condition demonstrated the strongest story comprehension and largest gains in receptive vocabulary of the four groups.

In a 2004 study of preschool children, Isbell et al. found that children assigned to the storytelling condition demonstrated stronger comprehension for key story elements (e.g., setting, characters, end) as captured in story retellings. They noted that children in the story reading condition frequently referenced the illustrations in their retellings, whereas children in the storytelling condition incorporated their individually generated, idiosyncratic mental images into their narratives. However, children in the story reading group spoke more total words and used a

greater variety of words in the story retellings. Isbell and colleagues did not speculate on the cause, but it may be due to greater complexity and length of language structures and diversity of vocabulary found in written language compared to oral language.

Storytelling as an approach to learning about story and the narrative register may be particularly well-suited for children in need of special support in developing their linguistic and communicative competence, such as emergent bilingual students and students with disabilities. Wells (1985) found that approximately 10% of typically developing preschoolers do not enjoy being read to. Kaderavek and Justice (2002), citing Wells' figure, posited that the figure is probably considerably higher for young children diagnosed with language delays. In the Lenhart et al. study (2020), the researchers coded children's behavior during the two live condition sessions and observed that children in the live oral reading group were less restless. They posited that the inherent affordances of live storytelling, which allow for more movement and gesture on the part of the storyteller, and more eye contact between the storyteller and listeners, make it more interactive and engaging as an instructional approach than read aloud lessons. Similarly, Isbell and colleagues (2004) found that the children in their storytelling condition appeared to be more attentive and engaged, as demonstrated by nonverbal behaviors like facial expression and anticipation.

Like in read aloud lessons, children can be positioned solely or primarily as appreciative audience members (Dickinson & Smith, 1994) in storytelling activities. However, some storytelling approaches invite children's active participation. Storytelling as an interactive experience can place substantial demands on children's expressive language, while at the same time creating an engaging environment for the development of narrative language skills (Vaahoranta et al., 2019) and permitting children to leverage all their communicative resources, including prosody, gesture, facial expression, and movement.

Storytelling as a mode of story delivery offers several features that appear to scaffold comprehension and language learning. Storytelling likely places lower demands on children's language comprehension than book reading since the syntax and vocabulary used in oral expression is generally less complex than that found in written language. Storytelling invites, if not requires, more nonverbal communication than occurs in book reading, chiefly gesture and movement on the part of the storyteller (and also on the part of children if they are asked to actively participate), which appears to guide and support young children in maintaining attention (and also on the part of children if they are asked to actively participate). Furthermore, storytelling is an activity setting well suited for the use of artifacts including concrete objects (e.g. props, clothing) and visual aids (e.g., pictures, photographs). Depending on how these supportive aspects of storytelling are deployed by the storyteller, their cumulative effect may be that children, particularly those who require specialized support to access learning opportunities, receive more diverse forms of meaningful input than is typically experienced in read aloud lessons. While listening to text read aloud, and later reading text independently, children are faced with the challenge of interpreting written language that by its very nature is detached from their immediate, concrete life experiences (McKeown & Beck, 2006). Storytelling appears to offer a less abstract and potentially more interactive context to learn about story and narrative than book reading. Nevertheless, research comparing children in storytelling versus story reading conditions, as well as the large body of literature examining the benefits of reading aloud to children, suggest that storytelling and book reading are complementary instructional modes (Isbell et al., 2004; Trostle & Hicks, 1998), both offering valuable contributions to young

children's development of narrativity and strengthening the reciprocal nature of the oral-written language relationship in early literacy.

Summary and Implications for the Present Study

Young children acquire language and are socialized through language at home and in their communities, including school settings (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2009; Heath, 1983). These interwoven processes of development and cultural learning proceed concurrently. Further, for children raised in literate cultures, a third progression—learning about the interrelationships between oral and written language—commences early in life (Clay, 2004; Snow, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Children begin the process of becoming literate long before entering formal schooling (Clay, 1991; Heath, 1982). Extensive bodies of literature examining child language acquisition and early literacy development indicate that the language and literacy opportunities young children have at home and in school settings, including the nature of their language interactions with adults and their exposure to books and stories, are consequential for mastery of conventional literacy and long-term academic success (Burchinal & Forestieri, 2011; Catts et al., 2001; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Fernald & Weisleder, 2015).

Children's first experiences with oral and written language contribute not only to the code-based enabling skills and knowledge (e.g., letter knowledge, phonemic awareness) required in the beginning stages of reading and writing development, but also lay a foundation of conceptual, vocabulary, and syntactic knowledge shown to have enduring impacts on reading comprehension (Dickinson et al., 2010; Schreiber, 1980). Moreover, the linguistic and communicative resources children develop through early language and literacy interactions, as well as their emerging understandings of the reciprocal relationship between oral and written language, will need to be both harnessed and expanded as they enter formal schooling and are socialized into academic discourse (Heath, 1982; Schleppegrell, 2004).

In this study, as have other scholars before me, I set out to investigate the language of narrative and storytelling as it is developed and deployed by adults and children in preschool settings. Like others, I studied language and literacy learning opportunities offered by interactive read aloud and storytelling lessons for a diverse population of learners, including many poor children, children with special needs, and children learning English as an additional language. However, my study differs from others in the literature in a number of important features. The research design used to examine the impacts of storytelling within early childhood have been primarily quasi-experimental intervention studies in which some children are assigned to a traditional book reading condition while others are assigned to a storytelling condition. These studies may have lasted anywhere from one week (Vaahoranta et al., 2019) to several months (Isbell et al., 2004), but it has been the researchers who initiated, implemented, and ended the interventions. Furthermore, the treatments were delivered by the researchers or, occasionally, by student teachers they were supervising in the field (Trostle & Hicks, 1998).

In contrast, the present study probes an existing, authentic preschool language and literacy initiative, *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling*, that is collaboratively implemented by a community arts organization and a Head Start agency. The personnel delivering the storytelling program were professional teaching artists employed by the arts organization. With the exception of a control classroom used for comparison purposes, student participants were not assigned to exclusive conditions, but rather received the storytelling sessions in addition to participating in read aloud lessons taught by classroom teacher(s) as part of their ongoing, customary program of instruction. Research reports indicating numerous common and distinct benefits to book reading (e.g., Elley, 1989; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998;

Neuman, 1999; Becher, 1985) and storytelling (e.g., Isbell et al., 2004; Trostle & Hicks, 1998) for emergent readers and writers would suggest that students in the preschool classrooms I studied were poised to receive the best of both worlds.

A further point of difference from earlier storytelling studies is the degree of action and agency accorded to student participants. The children assigned to storytelling conditions in the studies reviewed were more attentive than their book reading condition peers (Isbell et al., 2004; Lenhart et al., 2020), but fundamentally their role during storytelling was that of appreciative (but passive) listener. Conversely, *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling* teaching artists engaged students in an experiential approach to storytelling, alternating between activities that called for attentive listening and observation with those that invited students to co-construct story enactments and story-related concepts. This participatory model of storytelling places greater demands on students' cognitive, linguistic, social, and motor capacities by asking them to take up a more active, performative stance. The additional challenges that participatory storytelling present to children, particularly those in need of special assistance for cognitive, linguistic, social, and/or motor development, need to be examined against the potential for this experiential approach to create a compelling forum for learning about narrative and the language of story (Vaahoranta et al., 2019). The interactive nature of *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling* suggests that the impact of this approach may well be related to the artists' pedagogical repertoires, including skill in facilitating responsive, meaning-driven language interactions with young children and in providing support for children to leverage all available communicative resources, including gesture and facial expression.

Halliday (2004) viewed language as a mental construction achieved through social interaction and identified a useful framework for understanding how language is mobilized for children's communication and learning. He identified three aspects of children's language development that begin at birth and proceed simultaneously: learning language, learning *through* language, and learning *about* language. All three aspects can be exercised and broadened during storytelling and interactive read aloud lessons; all three are relevant to the development of story comprehension and knowledge of the narrative register. In my study, my goal was to examine how the teaching artists and classroom teachers operationalized beliefs and practices related to Halliday's three aspects of children's language learning by studying their respective pedagogical repertoires for storytelling and reading aloud. I tried to accomplish these goals in the role of an active participant observer over an approximately 6-month period. This research, an ethnographic case study of the artists' and classroom teachers' practices, beliefs, and challenges, is strongly rooted in the complexity of daily life in real preschool classrooms. Taken as a whole, it constitutes a deep description and analysis of the affordances and constraints of a combined storytelling and book reading approach for children's knowledge of story structure and the academic language of narrative that provides some insights for classroom practice. But perhaps the best framing of the study is that it is an attempt to learn something about each aspect of Halliday's triadic conceptualization of language learning—that students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language on their journeys through schooling.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Overview

This ethnographic case study examined the affordances of an oral storytelling program to promote preschool students' development of narrative comprehension and the narrative register. A community arts organization employed two professional teaching artists to deliver an arts-integrated storytelling program to four Head Start¹ preschool classes located at an elementary school, Stapleton School². One teaching artist served the two morning classes while the other worked with the two afternoon classes, both implementing four storytelling units organized around common picture books. The affordances for early literacy skill development and language learning provided by the storytelling program were compared and contrasted with that of the read aloud lessons that were part of the existing program of language arts instruction in each classroom. One morning and one afternoon classroom each served as the focal classrooms that I used to compare the instructional repertoires of the teaching artists while the other two classrooms provided additional observations of storytelling and read aloud lessons. Along with the teaching artists, the primary participants in my study were classroom teachers and students in the four Stapleton classes. In addition, the students and teachers of a preschool class located at a separate Head Start site that did not take part in the storytelling program—Coleman Center—served as a no treatment control classroom in which to observe read aloud instruction in a setting without the benefit of the teaching artists' repertoires.

Given the storytelling program participants and the particular setting of this intervention, and in view of what we know about the influence of adult language models on young children's language acquisition and the development of the narrative register and narrative comprehension, the following questions guided my research:

- What affordances for language learning and early literacy skill development arise when preschool children are immersed in the narrative register and the academic language of children's literature through an arts-integrated oral storytelling program?
 - Specifically, what repertoire of pedagogical tools do the teaching artists use to promote the narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories?
- What affordances for language learning and early literacy skill development arise when preschool children participate in read aloud lessons?
 - Specifically, what repertoire of pedagogical tools do the classroom teachers use to promote the narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories?
 - And how do preschool teachers negotiate read aloud lessons and compare in their pedagogical repertoires across settings participating in the storytelling program and outside of the influence of the storytelling program?
- How do the affordances of these two sets of learning contexts complement and contrast with one another?

¹ Head Start is a federally funded, free of charge school readiness and anti-poverty program administered by the Office of the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in every state. Head Start offers a comprehensive approach to supporting low-income families with young children by facilitating access to educational and social services that promote children's physical and mental health and their social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic development. Most families served must meet very low-income eligibility requirements (up to 100% of the federal poverty level).

² Pseudonyms are used to refer to all schools and individuals.

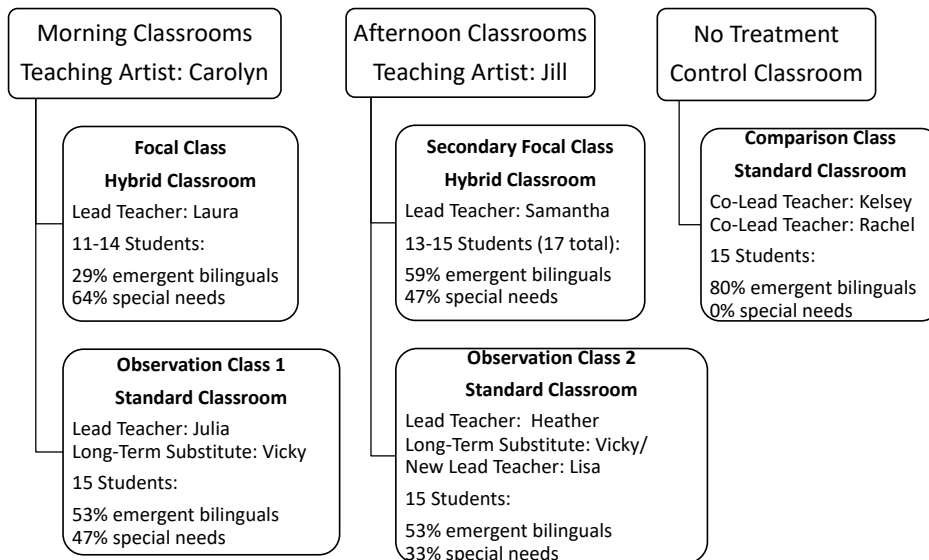
Setting and Participants

I conducted my study in five preschool classes at two Head Start sites located in a semi-urban region in New England. The storytelling program was developed by the community arts organization in collaboration with the Head Start agency and delivered to four participating classrooms at Stapleton School.

My original research design called for three storytelling classrooms (along with one control classroom) but I invited all four Stapleton classrooms to participate because excluding one of the four appeared to be an impolitic decision. However, unforeseen personnel changes in two classrooms, as well as student enrollment fluctuations in another, had long lasting effects and contributed to diverse year-long arcs observed in each of the four classrooms. These distinctive trajectories, in turn, affected each classroom’s interactions and experiences with the storytelling program and the two teaching artists, as well my ability to carry out the study as initially envisioned. Due to these considerable challenges, I decided to focus my analysis of the storytelling initiative as it was implemented in the classrooms of two teachers, Laura and Samantha, (see Figure 1) in order to answer my research questions about the storytelling program and the teaching artists’ repertoires. However, all four Stapleton School classrooms are depicted in Figure 1 (along with the control classroom at Coleman Center) in order to show the organizational structure of the storytelling program’s implementation at this site and because observational data from all four classrooms informed my analysis of the broader context for read aloud instruction that I found at Stapleton.

Figure 1

Stapleton School and Coleman Center Preschool Classroom Profiles



Preschool Storytelling Program Origin

Long before the preschool storytelling program was initiated as a collaboration between the community arts organization and the Head Start agency, the arts organization had been conducting an arts-integrated curriculum development program for kindergarten to eighth grade students and teachers in local schools. This program combined two major strands: workshops

and individualized coaching for classroom teachers on how to integrate the performing arts into conventional academic units of study (e.g., a middle school social studies unit on the Revolutionary War) and direct demonstration of arts-integrated instruction with students.

After working for over a decade in the well-established kindergarten to eighth grade program, one teaching artist, Carolyn, was selected by the arts organization to adapt the model for preschoolers, ultimately yielding the storytelling program investigated in this study, *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling*. While adapting the long-standing program for older students and their teachers to the preschool setting, the arts organization made the decision, in consultation with Head Start administrators, to narrow the scope of the work to direct instruction with students, eliminating the professional development component for classroom teachers. Head Start administrators believed that presenting the storytelling program as periodic enrichment without any explicit expectations for staff to participate in and learn the arts-integrated techniques would garner more acceptance among time-strapped Head Start teachers.

Teaching Artists

The two teaching artists, Carolyn and Jill, each brought significant training, education, and professional experience to their roles.

Carolyn

Carolyn held a master's degree in acting and worked periodically in community theater. She exclusively developed and delivered the storytelling program to Head Start preschool sites for the first three years of its existence. During the fourth year of program implementation, when I was conducting the present study, she took on a new role with the arts organization as a school programs coordinator and consequently no longer had adequate time to serve every Head Start site participating in the storytelling program (approximately eight classrooms across five sites that year). Carolyn decided to continue to serve the two morning preschool classrooms at Stapleton School. Three additional teaching artists were chosen by the arts organization to deliver the program in the remaining classrooms, including Jill.

Jill

Jill held a master's degree in dance. In addition to her role as a teaching artist, Jill served as the artistic director of a small theater, taught dance lessons for children at a local dance studio, and taught movement classes to adults with dementia in a skilled care facility. Although new to working with preschoolers within the storytelling program the year of this study, Jill had served for 16 years within the arts organization's more established arts-integrated curriculum development model for kindergarten to eighth grade students and teachers, similar in tenure to Carolyn. Jill worked with the two afternoon classrooms at Stapleton plus two other Head Start sites that did not participate in this study.

Principal Site—Stapleton School

Stapleton School is located in a small city in New England and serves students in preschool to grade five. The semi-urban area in which the school is located has been a refugee resettlement area for several decades, a facet of community life that contributes substantially to the linguistic and cultural diversity represented by the student body. According to the school's profile on the state department of education website, during the 2018-2019 school year, Stapleton served 486 students, 49% of whom were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Data from 2018-2019 has not yet been published for English learner status, special education services, or racial/ethnic identity, but the data reported for the 2017-2018 school year indicate that 33% of Stapleton students were classified as English learners and 16% received special education

services for diagnosed disabilities. The percent of total student enrollment by race and ethnicity at Stapleton in 2017-2018 was: White, 47%; Black, 22%; Asian, 21%; Hispanic 2%; and Multi-Racial, 7%.

Stapleton School hosts four Head Start preschool classes in collaboration with the local Head Start agency, each with enrollment capped at 15 students. Two are standard Head Start classrooms fully operated and financed by the Head Start agency, while the other two are collaboratively operated and financed by Head Start and the school district's special education office. In the latter two classrooms, 10 of the 15 seats are reserved for children meeting Head Start eligibility requirements, while the other five seats are set aside for children requiring special education services (although there is overlap between the two groups). During fall 2018, through video conference and email communication with administrators at the Head Start agency to consult about the logistics for the proposed study, I was informed about the two operating models. However, I did not understand the implications that followed for potentially substantial changes to take place in student enrollment in the hybrid classrooms over the course of the study and what this could mean for the (in)stability of class dynamics. I discovered only after the study had begun that the school district typically holds open a portion of its special education seats in the hybrid classrooms throughout the fall and winter so that as identified children turn three years old and age out of birth-to-three early intervention services, they can transition into the preschool program and receive their special education services at the school site without delay. Head Start policy, in contrast, dictates that seats allotted to Head Start students be occupied at all times; openings must be filled promptly.

In addition, the staffing models and days of operation vary according to classroom model. Two co-lead Head Start teachers typically helm the standard Head Start classrooms, which run for half-days Monday through Friday, while a lead Head Start teacher works with a school district funded assistant teacher in the two hybrid classrooms, which are open for half-days Monday through Thursday. All classes had 1-2 paraprofessionals who worked primarily with children diagnosed with disabilities.

Despite these important operational differences, the four preschool classes shared a similar social context. The personnel team in each classroom operated within and responded to multiple levels of regulating policy, beginning with the Head Start agency and the school district, and moving outward to state early childhood education and federal Head Start guidelines. The staff shared a common published curriculum and the holistic Head Start model of early childhood education, including an emphasis on outreach to families and promoting health and nutrition. Furthermore, all four classrooms had been participating in the storytelling program since its inception three years prior. Finally, a significant facet of the social context that each class shared was my presence for six months as a participant observer.

Students enrolled in the Stapleton preschool classes were nearly all from very low-income or low-income families, even in the hybrid classrooms, and many were also the children of immigrants and refugees. The most common language spoken by students across all four classrooms (other than English) was Nepali (9), followed by Somali (4). Less common languages, spoken by one or two students, were Arabic, Burmese, French, Karen, Swahili, and Vietnamese. Slightly more than half (53%-59%) of students were emergent bilinguals in three of the four classes. In the fourth class, a hybrid classroom, only 29% of students were learning English as an additional language, but that class had the highest proportion of students who were receiving special education services (64%). The number of students in the other three classrooms who were diagnosed with disabilities fell between one third to nearly one half (33%-47%),

demonstrating that the two standard Head Start classrooms also served substantial numbers of children diagnosed with disabilities (as seen in Figure 1).

Note that Stapleton preschool classrooms served a substantially higher proportion of students eligible for school-provided meals, classified as English learners, and diagnosed with disabilities than the averages reported for all grades, PreK-5. However, these differences are understandable because of the target student populations served by the Head Start agency. The core mission of the Head Start preschool program is to provide educational and social services to poor children and families. Low family income is the chief route by which children become eligible for Head Start, whereas the school at large serves all children living within the school district, regardless of family income. Given the city's status as a refugee resettlement location, it is unsurprising that many poor children whose families meet Head Start income eligibility requirements would also be emergent bilinguals. However, most children who enter preschool at age 3 knowing little to no English, given adequate support, can be expected to proceed down a typical path of childhood secondary language acquisition and will likely cease to be classified as English learners before the end of their elementary school years. Furthermore, when effective intervention services are provided during early childhood for speech and language delays, motor development delays, and learning differences, many children are recovered to a typical trajectory of development. We would expect to see the need for specialized support services to diminish following successful interventions and for only children with the most pervasive developmental and learning challenges to require long-term special education services throughout the elementary grades.

Original Study Design—Stapleton Classroom Conditions

A critical event that had a lasting impact on my study occurred in early December 2018, when the two co-lead teachers in the morning standard classroom were unexpectedly and jointly dismissed for a Head Start policy violation. These sudden personnel changes significantly altered the trajectory of the remainder of the year for both standard classrooms. In the morning classroom, a long-time substitute teacher for the Head Start agency, Vicky, was called in immediately to help stabilize that classroom while the Stapleton Head Start site supervisor, Deborah, searched for a permanent, credentialed lead teacher without success. Meanwhile the co-lead teachers in the afternoon standard classroom, Julia and Heather, were team-teaching for a second year. But in mid-January, Julia, the more experienced of the two teachers, agreed to move into the morning classroom lead teacher position. Vicky was kept on as a long-term substitute for the remainder of the year to support Julia with the morning class. She also began serving as a long-term substitute in the afternoon class with Heather while a search commenced to hire an afternoon lead teacher to replace Julia.

The departure of the two co-teachers in the morning standard classroom changed the course of my study. My original study design called for three Stapleton classroom conditions:

- Full treatment classroom: Carolyn's storytelling sessions observed and video recorded, related classroom teacher read aloud lessons observed and video recorded, an add-on intervention in story retelling and comprehension developed in the tradition of design research, and student assessments of narrative comprehension and storytelling unit vocabulary. (Note: The add-on intervention and accompanying student assessments were later eliminated due to unfavorable classroom conditions; see explanation under Focal Teacher 1—Laura)
- Comparison classroom: Carolyn's storytelling sessions observed and video recorded, related classroom teacher read aloud lessons observed and video recorded, and student

assessments of narrative comprehension and storytelling unit vocabulary (Note: The student assessments were later eliminated due to challenges carrying out the add-on intervention in the Full Treatment classroom)

- Observation classroom: Jill's storytelling sessions observed and video recorded, and related classroom teacher read aloud lessons observed and video recorded

I had intended to focus my study on the two morning classrooms (one standard, the other hybrid) because they were both working with Carolyn, the teaching artist with the most experience delivering the preschool storytelling program. The two Head Start administrators I had been in contact with during the fall while planning the study (Janice, Education Coordinator, and Deborah, Stapleton Site Supervisor) advised that I use the morning standard class for my full treatment condition for two reasons. The classroom is much larger and thus offered a physical layout more conducive to the small group add-on intervention I planned to deliver, and student attendance was more consistent. Deborah approached the co-lead teachers of this classroom and confirmed that they were interested in working with me and willing to offer their classroom as the site of my full treatment study condition, and that, furthermore, the other Stapleton teachers were interested in participating in the study as well.

In late December, Deborah informed me of the recent personnel changes in the morning standard classroom and expressed concerns about whether that class should remain assigned to the full treatment condition. In fact, she was uncertain whether she felt comfortable with that class being a part of the study at all. In mid-January, Deborah re-affirmed that all remaining teachers were still willing to participate in the study and suggested that I speak with the morning hybrid teacher, Laura, to see if she might be open to having her class assigned to the full treatment condition. When I called her a few days later at her office Laura genially agreed to allow her class to serve as my full treatment classroom after I explained what that condition involved and how I hoped to partner with her.

The very next day, I received an email from Deborah explaining that Julia would be assuming the lead teacher role in the morning standard classroom, and as a result, she was now comfortable with me observing the storytelling sessions in that classroom. Additionally, she reported that Julia was willing for her new class to be assigned once again to the full treatment condition. I felt conflicted by this offer, but ultimately decided that I could not withdraw the agreement I reached with Laura the day prior; I worried that to do so might be perceived as manipulative or deceptive, and I did not want to get off on the wrong footing. Consequently, I decided to assign Julia's classroom to my comparison condition and kept Laura's classroom in the full treatment condition.

Originally, I had sought only one of the afternoon classes to be assigned to my third classroom condition, the observation classroom. In this classroom, I planned to observe Jill's storytelling sessions, allowing me to make comparisons between Carolyn and Jill's pedagogical repertoires, and observe that classroom's teacher read aloud lessons of focal picture books, but not deliver an add-on intervention or assess students. However, given that all teachers, including both afternoon teachers, had just re-affirmed their interest in participating in the study, it seemed ill advised to omit one classroom.

Focal Teacher 1—Laura (Morning Hybrid Class)

In the year this study took place, Laura was a new Head Start teacher at Stapleton and teaching preschoolers in a classroom setting for the first time in her career. However, she brought to her new role a rich and varied professional background in early childhood care and education. She began her career as a toddler teacher in child care centers, later ran a family child

care program out of her home, and had most recently served as a child care licensing specialist for the state. Laura held a bachelor's degree and an early childhood teaching license. She came across as warm, upbeat, and patient yet firm in her interactions with students and welcoming and professional in her interactions with family members and colleagues. She appeared to have the greatest interest in language arts instruction of her Stapleton colleagues.

Laura worked closely with an assistant teacher in the classroom, Diane, along with a paraprofessional, Andrea, who mainly supported two of the students diagnosed with disabilities. In addition, the program assistant, Melanie, ran the kitchen and would join the group's activities when her other duties were complete.

Carolyn was the teaching artist assigned to work with Laura's class.

Students. Student enrollment fluctuated across the study time period, as discussed next in Class Arc. The figures I share here and throughout this chapter reflect the entire class make-up at year end. All 14 students in Laura's class were invited to participate in the study. I sent student assent and parent/guardian permission forms home with a cover page introducing myself attached to the classroom's newsletter. I received parental consent for 12 of the 14 students to participate in the study.

The class consisted of four girls and 10 boys. Four members of the class (29%) were learning English as an additional language, the fewest of any Stapleton classroom. However, nine students (64%) were diagnosed with disabilities, the greatest number and percentage of all Stapleton classrooms. Limited overlap existed between these two special populations: two children were classified as both emergent bilinguals and special education students. Three children fell into neither category; they spoke English only and had no diagnosed disabilities.

Class Arc. When I first visited Laura's classroom, there were 12 total students enrolled. Some students attended only 1-2 days, as per their special education service plans or based on parental schedules and child care needs. As a result, just 10-11 children were on the class roster some days of the week. At the start of my study, the group dynamic in Laura's class was relatively stable and functional, despite the class composition including a quite a few students diagnosed with substantial disabilities. But before the end of the year, major changes to student enrollment would cause the class to nearly implode as Laura and her colleagues struggled under the strain of increasing and unrelenting student needs paired with limited support and resources from school district and Head Start agency administrators.

Of the twelve students enrolled in Laura's classroom in January, half had special needs, chiefly autism and developmental delays impacting language, cognition, and motor skills. In addition, two children without identified special needs exhibited major behavioral challenges. Consequently, more than half of the students experienced moderate to significant difficulties participating in whole class, small group, and self-directed activities. They required close monitoring and frequent redirection by Laura and her colleagues: the teaching assistant, Diane, and an aide, Andrea, who supported a couple of students with special needs. Together, this team generally approached students' maladaptive behaviors with a steady resolve accompanied by a good deal of patience and understanding. Despite an unquestionably demanding class configuration, Laura and her colleagues were largely able to manage the challenging behaviors, create a happy and pleasant classroom tone, and achieve a group dynamic that was fairly stable from day to day. At this point, Laura was generally able to implement her daily schedule as planned, including a morning meeting and a brief (5-10 minutes) whole class lesson most days that touched upon some aspect of the current curricular unit.

This status quo continued through February and into March, with the exception of losing one monolingual, typically developing student due to his family's move out of town. But starting in late March and continuing through early June five new students were added to the class roster, primarily filling open special education seats. Four of these students had substantial special needs. The other child, while not diagnosed with a disability, faced profound emotional and behavioral difficulties; he was withdrawn after about two months by his mother who determined he was not ready for the school environment. In addition, three of the five students entered on or shortly after their third birthdays, creating a younger age balance in the class. Moreover, due to their disabilities, these children presented developmentally approximately 12-18 months younger than their chronological ages, and thus required extensive care and supervision. At first, Laura and her colleagues were able to absorb and manage the challenging student additions to the composition of the class, but they received no additional resources or personnel to cope from the Head Start agency or the school district. Over time, it became apparent that the cumulative needs of the new students entering the class were creating a swamping effect on what had been an essentially stable and functional, albeit demanding, class dynamic. Teaching new curriculum concepts basically came to a halt by late spring as even brief whole group instruction, such as their morning meeting routine, became unsustainable. Laura and her colleagues had to devote all their attention to keeping the class from capsizing.

The increasingly chaotic group dynamic undoubtedly affected each student in individual ways, both seen and unseen, but it especially appeared to disrupt the delicate stability Laura and her colleagues had worked throughout the year to achieve with one particular student. This child, a long-standing member of the class with diagnosed disabilities and considerable behavioral challenges, but whom the classroom staff had been able to support up to that point, began to deteriorate in mid-spring. By late spring, he exhibited uncontrolled violent behaviors that led Laura to evacuate the rest of the students from the classroom three times in two weeks. A few members of the school's crisis team (but no administrators) responded to the first two events, but no long-term changes were made. Only on the third occasion did the school district appear to take the severity of the problem seriously, with the school principal and the director of special education personally appearing in the classroom to de-escalate the incident and a paraprofessional re-assigned from another classroom to support the child for the rest of that day. Laura was dismayed about this turn of events and voiced to me that she had been telling administrators for months that this child needed more substantial support. The school district's solution for the remainder of the school year appeared to be to ask the early childhood special educator to essentially cease delivering services to the other students on her morning caseload in order to work with this child closely. With her nearly constant individualized support, he was able to get through the rest of the school year without further breakdowns.

I was unable to deliver my add-on intervention as planned because of the challenges that arose in Laura's classroom. Drawing from the tradition of design research, I had softly piloted a few approaches during my first two months in the classroom, but by the time I was ready to gear up, the class dynamics were deteriorating. I had to give up the goal of systematically implementing an add-on intervention when the class dynamic became increasingly destabilized by the addition of new students. And even before the learning environment began to decline, I confronted the obstacles of having no protected space to teach in within a relatively small classroom as well as less consistent student attendance compared to the other morning class, both reasons given by Head Start administrators when they initially recommended I work with the other morning class as my full treatment classroom. And indeed, students who were working

with me in the early iterations of the small group intervention were easily distracted by noises and sights in the rest of the classroom and were liable to depart at a moment's notice. At the same time, students who I had not selected to be part of a particular small group would become curious about what I was doing and temporarily insert themselves in the group. Both events disrupted instructional momentum and efficacy.

Focal Teacher 2—Samantha (Afternoon Hybrid Class)

Samantha was an experienced Head Start preschool teacher and the senior member of the Head Start team at Stapleton School. She held a master's degree and an early childhood teaching license. A caring, dedicated teacher, Samantha implemented more direct instruction, both whole group and individual, than any of her colleagues. She paired high expectations for her students' academic learning with clear instructional goals. She held and expressed strong opinions and preferences about most aspects of her professional role, ranging from her classroom schedule, to Head Start safety guidelines, to content instruction. At times, she appeared unwilling to accommodate her colleagues and others if doing so meant compromising on her own priorities. This stance impacted Jill's ability to implement the storytelling program in both of her assigned classrooms and, at times, my ability to capture quality recordings as part of the study.

Samantha worked closely with an assistant teacher in the classroom, Diane, along with a paraprofessional, Tammy, who mainly supported one of the students diagnosed with disabilities. The three colleagues appeared to enjoy each other's company quite a bit and had a more relaxed, informal dynamic than that of the personnel teams working with the other three classes. In addition, the program assistant, Melanie, ran the kitchen and would join the group's activities when her other duties were complete.

Jill worked with Samantha's class in the storytelling program.

Students. Student enrollment was nearly static across the study, as discussed further in Class Arc. Daily attendance in Head Start preschool classrooms was capped at 15 students, but Samantha was able to work with 17 total students because approximately a third attended between 1-3 days each week to receive their special education services. Due to a miscommunication with Samantha, only those students who attended on Wednesdays, the day the storytelling sessions occurred, were invited to participate in the study. I sent student assent and parent/guardian permission forms home with a cover page introducing myself attached to the classroom's newsletter. I received parental consent for 12 of the 13 Wednesday students to participate in the study (every other day had 14-15 students on the roster).

The class had three girls and 14 boys, 10 of whom were English learners (59%), the highest proportion at Stapleton (however, this is based on 17 total students). Eight students (47%) were diagnosed with disabilities. Some overlap existed between these two special populations: three children were classified as both emergent bilinguals and special education students. Only two children fell into neither category; they spoke English only and had no diagnosed disabilities.

Class Arc. Samantha taught one of the hybrid classrooms jointly operated by Head Start and the school district. However, unlike Laura, she had a nearly full roster of students at mid-year and did not receive a large number of students with disabilities during the second half of the year. One new student, an English learner diagnosed with autism who was also nonverbal, arrived in April accompanied by a 1:1 aide, altering the class dynamics very little and adding few demands to the responsibilities of Samantha and her colleagues. Samantha's class was by far the most stable of the four Stapleton classrooms: They experienced no personnel changes and the addition of one student, although profoundly disabled, was easily accommodated into existing

classroom routines and systems because of the individual support provided by his aide. As a result, Samantha was able to advance her students' knowledge and skills with academically focused whole group and individual instruction throughout the second half of the year.

By year-end, her students appeared to profit more from the storytelling program than any of the other classes. Some portion of the students' growing ability to take in, work with, and benefit from the arts-integrated literacy and language learning opportunities that Jill offered is admittedly attributable to becoming more familiar and comfortable with Jill over time and typical maturation and developmental processes. However, I credit some of the students' ability to attend to Jill and engage with the storytelling session activities to the consistency and rigor of Samantha's teaching, which, in turn, were partly enabled by the stability of her student roster and personnel team.

I was not able to observe in Samantha's classroom quite as frequently in the other three classrooms. She permitted me to observe and participate two days of the four days that the classroom operated. Samantha elected to have her class participate in a physical education enrichment program sponsored by a local university that brought several undergraduate students into her classroom to lead aerobic exercise on the other two days of the week. She expressed concern about having too many adults in her relatively small classroom on those days for fear it might overwhelm her students. The two standard Head Start classrooms also participated in this physical education enrichment program, but the lead teachers of those classes, Julia and Heather, invited me to visit anytime. However, they also had a much larger classroom space in which students, staff, and visitors could spread out during the undergraduate-led exercises. After the physical education program ended at the conclusion of the university's spring semester, Samantha was open to having me visit on any day.

Site Supervisor

Deborah, the Head Start supervisor for the Stapleton site, incurred a significant injury in March and was out on sick leave for the rest of the year. Deborah was a positive, supportive cheerleader type of educational administrator. She was in tune with the day to day operations of the four classrooms, frequently popping in to visit, touch base with staff, and interact with students. Her leave of absence due to injury presented another challenge faced by the Stapleton site during the time of this study. Each Stapleton classroom was re-assigned to one of four different supervisors from the Head Start agency office. No single supervisor could take on all four classrooms because they each already had full responsibilities supervising the existing sites on their caseloads. This meant that supervisory support was limited and fragmented for the final three months of the year, with no single administrator in possession of the holistic and comprehensive knowledge of the changing needs of the four classrooms that Deborah had once held.

Control Site—Coleman Center

The Coleman Center preschool classroom served as a control site to study "business as usual" read aloud instruction at another Head Start site outside the influence of the storytelling program and teaching artists. Coleman Center did not take part in the storytelling program but is operated by the same Head Start agency and serves a generally similar student and family population. A standard Head Start classroom that ran Monday through Friday for half days, the site is located in a neighboring city to the Stapleton School site at a community center building within a public housing development.

Janice, the Education Coordinator for the Head Start agency, proposed the Coleman Center site as the control classroom for this study. She personally introduced me to Rachel and Kelsey, we all met in person to discuss my research, and they expressed interest in participating.

Kelsey and Rachel were a well-calibrated teaching team who strategically divided their responsibilities according to their personal strengths and interests. They also enjoyed a great deal of autonomy given their stand-alone location that was not part of any broader site or institution. They had a lot of fun with their students and each other while maintaining a high level of professionalism. The classroom climate exuded a warm, family feeling. The non-institutional setting of this classroom, its close proximity to the homes of many students living in the housing development, and Kelsey and Rachel's deeply welcoming attitude all appeared to have a positive influence on family outreach and access.

Co-Teacher—Kelsey

Kelsey was a seasoned Head Start preschool teacher. Although the more senior member of the Coleman team, she had not been teaching for as long as Rachel (who was older). She held a bachelor's degree and an early childhood teaching license. Kelsey took responsibility for most of the extensive operational, logistical, and administrative matters required to manage the classroom. She was, as needed, a no nonsense, firm teacher who at the same time cultivated, with Rachel, a highly stimulating, fun-loving classroom climate.

Co-Teacher—Rachel

Rachel was a veteran preschool teacher who had taught in private child care centers for over fifteen years before being hired to team teach with Kelsey at Coleman. She held a bachelor's degree but not an early childhood license (state regulations stipulated that at least one lead teacher needed to hold a state teaching license, a requirement that was met by Kelsey's credential). Rachel assumed responsibility for nearly all whole group instruction. She ran the morning meeting, taught a daily lesson aligned with their current curricular unit, and conducted nearly all read aloud lessons. Rachel was an extraordinarily enthusiastic and captivating teacher. She was passionate and knowledgeable about language arts instruction, including children's literature and interactive read aloud lessons.

Students. Enrollment was nearly static across the study at 15 students, with one student departing and another entering to fill the empty seat near the end of the school year. All students were invited to participate in the study. I provided student assent and parent/guardian permission forms with a cover page introducing myself to the teachers, which they passed out to parents as they came to pick-up their children at dismissal. I received parental consent for 14 of the 15 students to participate in the study.

Students enrolled at Coleman Center were all from very low-income or low-income families. Most were also the children of immigrants and refugees, and many lived on site within the housing development. The class had seven girls and eight boys, 12 (80%) of whom were emergent bilinguals. The languages spoken by students were Nepali (6), Swahili (3), English (3), Kirundi (2), and Somali (1). However, there were no students diagnosed with disabilities. When I asked Kelsey and Rachel if this was common, they said they typically had 1-2 students each year who received special education services, but this year they just happened to have none. They added that the special education teacher assigned to their site by the school district was resistant to evaluating emergent bilinguals for services, but that they would be working with a different liaison the following year whom they hoped might be more receptive to their concerns.

Class Arc. I observed too infrequently at Coleman Center to conclusively detect any pronounced trajectory, other than that the students appeared to make generally steady progress in learning due to both typical developmental processes as well as the stimulating, consistent classroom environment provided by Kelsey and Rachel. No personnel changes or major fluctuation in student enrollment occurred during the time period of my study.

Researcher Role

I introduced myself to the teaching artists and classroom teachers as a person who had grown up in the state in which the research sites were located. I identified myself as a former first and second grade teacher and elementary reading specialist who had taught in Massachusetts and Virginia before entering graduate school.

I primarily adopted the role of a participant observer in each classroom. On most days, I participated in the same classroom events and activities as the students and staff and wrote my recollections in as much detail as I could recall directly after each visit. In the spirit of ethical research and reciprocity, I lent a hand to the staff whenever possible. There were two regular research activities during which I did not position myself as a participant observer: formal observation of the teaching artists' storytelling sessions and the classroom teachers' read aloud lessons. On these occasions, I sat apart from the class, video recorded the instruction, and took notes in a notebook before rejoining the group's activities as a participant. Normally, my classroom visits entailed spending one full morning or afternoon with a single class. But on days in which storytelling sessions were scheduled, I followed the teaching artists, splitting my time approximately equally between the two morning and/or afternoon classrooms.

Data Collection

I collected three main sources of data in this study: observation and video recordings of teaching artist led storytelling sessions, observation and video recordings of classroom teacher led read aloud lessons, and notes generated from participant observation in each classroom outside of these formal observation events. I begin by describing the design of the storytelling program followed by explanations of each data source.

Storytelling Program Design

The teaching artists taught four storytelling units over a period of approximately six months, with up to a month-long break in between each unit (see Table 1). Each unit centered on a single picture book and consisted of three hour-long sessions that occurred weekly for three consecutive weeks, yielding a total of twelve instructional sessions. The storytelling sessions were planned to last approximately 30-minutes. The other half hour provided the teaching artists flexibility in their capacity to negotiate the vagaries of each classroom's schedule and to allow them to build familiarity with students and staff through observation and interaction by participating in whatever class activities were taking place.

The four focal picture books (see Appendix A for synopses of each title) were collaboratively selected by the teaching artists and lead teachers. Carolyn prepared a list of a dozen possible titles and consulted with teachers at their pre-academic year professional development meetings to solicit their feedback. She and the other artists ultimately choose the unit stories for the year, but their selections were informed by the teachers' preferences. When I asked Carolyn about her selection criteria for picture books, she said that she searched for complex stories with good characters and literary integrity.

The intent of the storytelling units was to invite children to construct deeper understandings of the essential story elements of setting, plot, and character. Storytelling sessions always began with a (somewhat flexible) set of opening routines designed to help

children warm up their bodies and voices in preparation for the core content of the sessions, as well as to establish and reactivate rapport through the implementation of predictable routines. After the opening routines, teaching artists used the core of the sessions to introduce a range of arts-integrated storytelling content and formats. The teaching artists employed interactive oral storytelling methods, exploiting the affordances of the dramatic arts, language, creative movement, song, felt storyboards, and realia to facilitate students’ enactments, retellings, and interpretations of story elements. Sessions reliably ended with a (somewhat flexible) set of closing routines to bring the time and work together to a clear and calming conclusion. Before the first session of each unit, the classroom teachers read aloud the picture book to their students (as many times as they judged to be necessary in theory, but only once in practice) so that the children had a basic level of familiarity with the story prior to working with the teaching artist.

Table 1

Storytelling Units

Unit	Focal Picture Book	Time Period (AM Classes)	Time Period (PM Classes)	Link to Read Aloud Video
1	<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> (Traditional)	Nov. – Dec. ^a 2018	Jan. – Feb. 2019	https://youtu.be/Rm3JsewQIWw
2	<i>The Gruffalo</i> (Donaldson, 1999)	Jan. 2019	Mar. – Apr. 2019	https://youtu.be/T08UQ97vv8g
3	<i>Up, Down, and Around</i> (Ayres, 2007)	Mar. – Apr. 2019	Apr. – May 2019	https://youtu.be/FQYPuJXkVpY
4	<i>We’re Going on a Lion Hunt</i> (Axtell, 1999)	May 2019	May 2019	https://youtu.be/J3Yc72L0pos

^a Carolyn taught Unit 1 to the morning classes prior to the start of this study in January 2019. The arts organization recorded session 1 for internal training purposes, which I later viewed and analyzed.

Storytelling Data Sources

The storytelling program and the teaching artists’ pedagogical repertoires for storytelling were primarily investigated through formal classroom observations, with video recording and note taking, of the storytelling sessions. In addition, I engaged in ongoing, informal communications with the teaching artists, followed by retrospective notetaking to document the conversations in as much detail as I could recall. Prior to beginning the study, I interviewed Carolyn to learn more about the origins and organization of the storytelling program.

Read Aloud Lesson Data Sources

The lead teachers’ read aloud practices and the broader context for language arts instruction in each classroom were examined chiefly through formally observed read aloud lessons of the focal picture books, with video recording and notetaking, as well as informal, participant observation of read aloud lessons for non-focal picture books. In addition, I engaged in ongoing, informal communications with the teachers, followed by retrospective note taking to document the conversations in as much detail as I could recall.

Classroom Visits

The degree of my personal involvement as a participant observer in each classroom depended upon study condition (see Table 2). I spent the greatest amount of time—about 2 mornings in a typical week— with Laura’s class, my primary focal classroom, yielding 40 total visits. I initiated this schedule in alignment with my original intention to implement the add-on intervention and maintained it throughout the time period of the study due, in part, to the increasingly turbulent conditions in that classroom. During the second half of the study, it felt

ethically necessary at times to tilt the balance of participant observation more toward direct participation in an effort to help keep the class afloat.

The other three classrooms received approximately equal numbers of total visits: 22 to Julia’s class, 20 to Heather’s class, and 18 to Samantha’s class. As noted earlier, I was unable to observe in Samantha’s classroom on two of the four days it operated for most of the study. Although it ultimately became the secondary focal classroom in my analysis of the storytelling program and the teaching artists’ pedagogical repertoires, it was slightly harder to gain access to this classroom. Consequently, I made the fewest visits there.

I had the least personal involvement in the control classroom. I scheduled visits approximately once every three to four weeks, yielding six total visits. I served as a participant observer for the bulk of each day, partaking in whatever was going on and lending a hand to the teachers whenever possible. The exception came when I conducted formal observations of the read aloud lessons of whatever book or books the teachers had independently selected for that day. During these formal observations I sat apart from the class, took notes, and video recorded the lesson before rejoining the group’s activities.

Table 2

Numbers and Types of Observations by Classroom

Site	Lead Teacher	Classroom	Total Visits ^a	Storytelling Sessions		Read Aloud Lessons	
				Recorded	Analyzed ^b	Recorded	Analyzed
Stapleton	Laura	Focal	40	8	3	3	1
	Samantha	Secondary	18	12	3	3	1
		Focal					
	Julia	Observation 1	22	7	0	2	0
	Heather	Observation 2	20	11	0	3	0
Coleman	Kelsey & Rachel	Control	6	—		5	1

^a This count includes storytelling session days.

^b Analyzed means fully transcribed and coded, as described in Data Analysis.

Data Analysis

I transcribed select videos of storytelling sessions and read aloud lessons in the focal classrooms and developed coding schemes to analyze the language-promoting teaching-learning interactions that occurred in both instructional contexts. I reviewed notes from my participant observation visits and informal communications with teaching artists and teachers in order to triangulate and augment the patterns found in the analyzed transcripts.

Transcription

Video recordings were transcribed manually. I used discourse analysis transcription conventions (Ochs et al., 1996) to capture a number of key paralinguistic features of spoken communication (see Appendix B). I noted stress, volume, pauses, cut-off or self-interrupted speech, rising and falling intonation, and elongated words or sub-word segments. In addition, conduct, including facial expression, gesture, movement, and vocal tone (e.g., a skeptical tone of voice), were reported alongside utterances within double parentheses. When conduct preceded speech, the conduct is reported first, and vice versa. When conduct was interspersed with speech, the transcript reflects the chronological sequence. Furthermore, concurrent speech and conduct, whether produced by a single speaker or multiple speakers, was noted in the double parentheses.

Whenever possible, I identified students by name when they spoke or acted either singly or with one or more peers. The term “Students” refers to all students present, while “Student” refers to a single student who could not be identified by name. If it appeared likely that a particular student spoke or acted, but I could not be fully confident of that judgment, I placed the child’s name in parentheses (e.g., (Marie)).

As I noted in Chapter 1 and elaborated upon in the earlier descriptions of the participating classrooms (cf., pp. 21-26) this study of an authentic, ongoing early literacy and language initiative is rooted in the complexity of real preschool classrooms. At times, that real-life complexity impacted my ability to obtain clean, comprehensive video recordings of the storytelling sessions (and to a lesser degree, the read aloud lessons). It was challenging to find secure yet unobtrusive positions from which to capture the images and voices of a large number of actors, including the teaching artist, classroom teacher(s), and a dozen or so preschoolers, all within an activity setting in which the central action typically changed location multiples times across a session. Soft spoken children, emergent bilinguals, and students with speech delays were often difficult to understand even with optimal camera positions and angles. In addition, given the number of persons involved in each session, the majority of whom were between the ages of 3-5, and the interactive nature of the storytelling program, it was unsurprising to find that episodes of concurrent and overlapping speech and/or conduct occurred regularly. However, pinpointing the point of overlap and rendering a complete transcription of overlapping speech among the participants proved difficult at times. I endeavored to accurately capture the simultaneity of utterance and behavior, whether within a single speaker or across multiple speakers, yet acknowledge that this aim is rarely fully achieved within the limitations of the two-dimensional medium of print.

Read Aloud Lessons

In the two focal classrooms, video recordings of read aloud lessons of the picture books for storytelling units 2-4 were obtained. I limited my transcription and analysis to the Unit 2 story, *The Gruffalo*. Likewise, I transcribed and analyzed the first read aloud lesson that I recorded in the control classroom (see Table 2).

Storytelling Sessions

The storytelling sessions during units 1-2 for which videos were obtained for both teaching artists in the focal classrooms were transcribed manually (see Table 2). This resulted in six transcriptions (three per teaching artist) available for close analysis: the first session of unit one, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, and the first two sessions of unit two, *The Gruffalo*. I generally took notes with timestamps while viewing the session opening and closing routines since these routines did not contain storytelling instruction or content. However, when interactions occurred during the opening or closing routines that contributed to my understanding of the teaching artists’ pedagogical repertoires, I transcribed those segments in order to engage in a close analysis. The main session content, defined as everything that occurred in the time between the end of the opening routine and the start of the closing routine, was fully transcribed and analyzed using the coding scheme.

Coding

I used an explanatory data analysis (Miles et al.,2014) and constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) approach across the storytelling and read aloud lessons to find substantive patterns in the instructional repertoires of both teaching artists and classroom teachers and to investigate how they related to students’ experiences in activities intended to promote with narrative comprehension and academic language. In recognition of the fact that the

body of literature examining adult-child read aloud practices in early childhood settings far exceeds the extant research on storytelling, I first developed a coding scheme to capture and analyze the language-promoting practices used by teachers during read aloud lessons. The coding scheme was developed using both conceptual (the general framework from the research on interactive read aloud; cf. pp. 7-11 in chapter 1) and empirical (data driven analyses of transcripts of read aloud lessons taught by the three focal classroom teachers) lenses. Next, using the read aloud coding scheme as a general framework and guide, I then devised a coding scheme to capture and analyze the pedagogical practices deployed by the teaching artists during storytelling sessions, again using both conceptual and empirical lenses. Full descriptions of the language practices examined are provided in Chapter 3 and the complete coding schematics for reading aloud and storytelling appear in Appendix C.

Read Aloud Lessons

I started by identifying a major category of pedagogical practices of interest to this study: language-promoting practices. Within this broad set of teacher practices, I generated a subcategory list of adult actions found to be effective in the literature for fostering young children's control over language, including teaching vocabulary and concepts (Dwyer & Harbaugh, 2020; Zucker et al. 2013) extended conversation (Grifenhagen et al., 2017), and the use of gesture, prosody, and artifacts to provide contextual supports for word meaning (Grifenhagen et al., 2017). To this initial list, I added a handful of other practices that I had observed in actual use by the study teachers, such as working to achieve mutual understanding with students whose speech articulation was challenging to understand or whose expression of ideas was difficult to follow (Cazden, 2005).

Beginning with that initial draft, I generated the coding scheme across eight iterations, applying it to lesson transcripts and making revisions until I no longer found new pedagogical practices or subcategories of pedagogical practices requiring documentation. A colleague used my coding scheme to code one storytelling teacher transcript and one control teacher lesson transcript, thereby assisting me in both revising the defining characteristics of teacher practice subcategories as well as improving the accuracy of my count of those practices.

Storytelling Sessions

Beginning with that initial draft, I generated the coding scheme across eleven iterations, applying it to storytelling session transcripts and making revisions until I no longer found new pedagogical practices requiring documentation. Near the end of the development cycle, the colleague used my coding scheme to code two transcripts from the same unit two session (one from each teaching artist). My colleague's feedback and the discussions that ensued as we compared our codes and code counts assisted me in revising the teaching artist practice subcategories. I refined the definitional characteristics of several codes and improved the accuracy of my classification and count of observed practices. During these iterative cycles of application and revision, I made significant revisions to the read aloud coding scheme template that I had used to start the process of developing the storytelling scheme. Due to the complexity and diversity of the teaching artists' pedagogical practices for storytelling activities, three additional salient categories had to be added to the existing read aloud coding scheme—unison speaking, narration, and noticing and naming—and some existing language practice categories were further expanded and refined (see Appendix C for comparison).

Summary

Two teaching artists, six classroom teachers, and 60 preschool students across five classrooms and two Head Start sites participated in this study of an authentic, ongoing early

literacy and language initiative, *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling*. The teaching artists both had a great deal of professional experience and training in the performing arts and as teaching artists working with children and youth in educational settings. The teachers brought a range of years of professional experience in the field and varied levels of interest and expertise in language arts and interactive read aloud instruction to their positions, including their interactions with the storytelling program. The teaching artists and classroom teachers each worked with linguistically, culturally, and developmentally diverse populations of students in their respective roles.

Unexpected and unforeseen personnel and/or student enrollment changes in three of the four Stapleton classrooms altered the original design of my study. With the add-on intervention in the focal classroom eliminated, the central comparison of the storytelling program shifted from the two morning classrooms to the two hybrid classrooms. Despite this change, I maintained my inquiry into the two school-based experiences central to promoting students' understanding of narrative and the academic language of children's literature: the teaching artist delivered storytelling program and the classroom teacher delivered interactive read aloud lessons. I collected and analyzed data from both instructional contexts, leading to meaningful comparisons between the pedagogical repertoires of the teaching artists for storytelling, between the pedagogical repertoires of the classroom teachers for read aloud, and an examination of the common and distinct benefits of the two activity settings.

CHAPTER 3: STORYTELLING PROGRAM FINDINGS

Storytelling Units and Sessions

Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling is an interactive, arts-integrated, and participatory model of oral storytelling. Teaching artists prepared and presented four units across the school year, typically beginning in early- to mid-winter and extending through the spring. Each unit centered around the story of a focal picture book and consisted of three weekly sessions, often followed by a two- to four-week break before the next unit commenced. Typically, classroom teachers were asked to read aloud the focal picture book to their classes prior to the first session of each unit so that students have some working knowledge of the story with which to build upon in the storytelling sessions. The storytelling sessions generally lasted about thirty minutes plus or minus ten minutes, depending upon classroom schedules and student stamina and engagement. Some sessions were concentrated heavily on vocabulary and concept instruction (e.g., an entire session in the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* unit devoted to defining and performing the concept of “wilderness” as the story setting) while others were focused on more traditional elements of oral storytelling like retelling or enacting a story, often from the point of view of a particular character.

Overview of Findings

As noted in the Methods section, the study design afforded me the opportunity to make a number of comparisons among teaching artists and classroom teachers. In this section, I present a comparison of the pedagogical repertoires of the two teaching artists in order to answer one of my research questions:

- What repertoire of pedagogical tools do the teaching artists use to promote a deep engagement with the narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories?

In addition to examining the similarities and differences in pedagogical repertoires, the objective for comparing Carolyn, the veteran teaching artist, to Jill, the new teaching artist, was to ascertain whether the teaching artist initially selected to develop the program was doing something uniquely innovative, or might another experienced teaching artist (but new to the storytelling program) be able to implement the program in a recognizable manner with similar influence on students’ development of narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories.

I limited my analysis to Carolyn and Jill’s work during the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *The Gruffalo* units within the focal classrooms (Laura and Samantha’s classes) for two reasons. First, they taught those units using a common set of lesson plans. During the three years in which she was the sole provider of the preschool storytelling program, Carolyn developed all units (comprised of three weekly sessions), wrote all lesson plans, and created all needed materials. When Jill and two other teaching artists joined Carolyn in year four of program implementation, Carolyn offered to share her lesson outlines and materials with her colleagues to the extent they found that helpful. The *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *The Gruffalo* units were carryovers from previous years. Consequently, Carolyn’s unit overviews, session notes, and materials were already fully prepared. Jill opted to follow Carolyn’s lesson plans for the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *The Gruffalo* units, making mostly minor modifications, and then, feeling confident, developed her own lesson plans for the third and fourth units.

The second reason for limiting my analysis of the teaching artists’ pedagogical repertoires to their work with the focal classrooms during the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*

and *The Gruffalo* units pertains to the idiosyncratic arcs traveled by each classroom community at Stapleton School between mid-year and end-of-year. As reported in the methods chapter, three of the four classrooms at Stapleton School experienced significant changes either to their lead teacher staffing or student enrollment during that period of time, altering the group dynamics and learning environment into which the teaching artists entered and conducted their work with students and staff. The secondary observation classroom (Samantha) alone maintained consistent staffing and a steady group dynamic throughout the study. In contrast, the primary focal classroom (Laura) welcomed several new students with many special needs throughout the spring, contributing to an increasingly de-stabilized group dynamic. However, Carolyn taught units one and two well before those new students joined Laura's class, allowing a fairer comparison between her pedagogical repertoire and that of Jill.

Given their related professional preparation and similar experiences serving as teaching artists within the arts organizations' well-established instructional model for older students, one might expect Carolyn and Jill to utilize similar methods and materials for fostering students' engagement, creativity, and expression within the interactive preschool storytelling sessions. And indeed, as the findings from my close analysis of their pedagogical repertoires will indicate, in many respects, they executed a similar framework of practices across the language and storytelling domains I studied. However, I found important differences in the frequency of their use of certain general teaching moves designed to provide clarity (including previewing and giving directions) and scaffolding to promote learner success. Their approaches differed to implementing a gradual release of responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; McVee et al., 2019), by which teachers foster independent learning by providing high levels of support for new tasks through demonstration then over time increasingly withdraw that support as students demonstrate they can operate autonomously. Carolyn's additional three years of experience working with preschoolers within the storytelling program appeared to help her be more sensitively attuned to the learning and behavioral needs of three- to five-year-old children (including many learning English as an additional language and/or with special needs). Carolyn's deeper knowledge of the student population seemed to contribute to a stronger ability to preempt or quickly intercept many student confusions and diversions, which in turn may have supported her capacity to mobilize her pedagogical repertoire in a more finely tuned and responsive manner than her colleague.

Not only did Carolyn have more experience working with the diverse population of preschool children served by the Head Start agency, she had also taught most of the units for multiple years. Moreover, each time she taught a unit (except for the year of this study) she had worked with 6-8 classrooms, thereby accumulating a great deal of experience with the advancing the overarching instructional goals of the storytelling program as well as attending to the details of implementing the units and all the component activities and elements of each session. The only unit that Carolyn had not taught prior to the year of the study was *We're Going on a Lion Hunt*. However, she taught *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (the original story that *Lion Hunt* is modeled upon) the year before, so even the final unit of the year was not completely novel for her.

A further distinction of note between the two teaching artists pertains to their knowledge of children's language acquisition and effective methods for promoting language growth. During the year prior to the present study, an external consultant hired by the arts organization coached Carolyn in how to embed and exploit oral language growth opportunities in her sessions. In interviews, Carolyn spoke of how the process of being observed and coached over a

period of several months expanded her knowledge of young children's oral language development (an existing, but less prioritized instructional consideration for her previously), equipped her with concrete language-growth promoting techniques, and helped her to gain skill in balancing language learning opportunities with other important learning objectives in the storytelling domain. The professional development in oral language that Carolyn received appears to have equipped her to more thoroughly and intentionally integrate language learning opportunities into her sessions. When Jill and two other teaching artists joined the preschool storytelling program, Carolyn met with them to orient them to the program, share logistical and pedagogical insights she had gained over the previous three years, including attention to methods of enhancing children's language growth, and guided her colleagues in viewing a video recorded session she taught the previous year. Still, the two forms of professional development were not equivalent in duration or intensity regarding attention to oral language, likely contributing to some of the perceived differences in the repertoire of language-enhancing practices between these two artists.

Language Practices Findings

Overall, the teaching artists demonstrated a number of similarities in their methods for promoting children's language development within storytelling sessions, along with some notable differences. In this section I present an analysis of Carolyn's language-promoting practices first, followed by a parallel analysis of Jill's repertoire, and then conclude with a summary of findings and interpretation of the two artists' work within this pedagogical domain. The practices are presented in the order listed. My original aim was to report the findings in order from most to least prevalent practices, but I discovered that Carolyn and Jill did not use each practice with the same frequency. Thus, the current organization of categories represents a rough trajectory of the language-promoting practices that were central to their storytelling work from most to least prevalent.

- Vocabulary and Concept Instruction
- Repetitions, Expansions, and Extensions
- Metalinguage of Story
- Noticing and Naming
- Narration
- Contextual Support
- Unison Speaking
- Intersubjectivity
- Language Anticipation
- Extended Conversation

Carolyn

Vocabulary and Concept Instruction

Carolyn provided substantial explicit instruction in concepts and vocabulary in every unit and across most sessions within each unit. In fact, concept and vocabulary development were the central aims of her work in the first sessions of units one, two, and three, with little attention paid to what would traditionally be considered acts of storytelling (e.g., story retellings and enactments). In these instances, the early emphasis placed on building conceptual and vocabulary knowledge appeared to be intended to lay a foundation for more complex work with character and story development in later sessions within those units.

Explicit instruction was presented by Carolyn in one of three ways: asking students to repeat a word (or occasionally a short phrase) with her or after her, providing information about

word meaning verbally and/or pictorially, or a combination thereof. When deploying repetition as an instructional strategy for vocabulary and concept development, Carolyn modeled speaking the target word or phrase and then fluctuated between asking students to repeat it once versus multiple times. In the case of multiple repetitions, she typically varied her vocal style (i.e., speaking, whispering, and singing), possibly to infuse playfulness into what could otherwise be somewhat dull practice. Carolyn implemented this call and response repetition approach, which I came to refer to as her “echo” technique, frequently and, in sessions with a strong emphasis on developing vocabulary and concept knowledge, often quite systematically.

Carolyn’s second approach to directly teaching vocabulary and concepts occurred through the provision of explicit information about word meaning. She sometimes, but not always, offered definitions explanations of concepts accessible to preschoolers. She often paired spoken information about word meaning with artifacts. The artifacts primarily consisted of visual aids like photographs and color photocopies of illustrations lifted from unit picture books, but sometimes realia appeared (items from everyday life). Realia used as teaching materials ranged from a black top hat serving as a “magic hat” during an introduction to the characters of *The Gruffalo* to a knapsack packed with an apple, a water bottle, and sunscreen for the journey undertaken by the characters in *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt*. These everyday items appeared to be used to provide students with another source of meaningful input during vocabulary and concept instruction.

Thirdly, Carolyn sometimes combined spoken and pictorial information about word meaning with the echo technique’s call and response repetition. A clear example of this integration of instructional strategies is seen with the example of “boulders” in Excerpt 1 below.

Word Selection. Words and ideas targeted for explicit instruction were typically lifted directly from the focal picture book. However, it was not uncommon for Carolyn to introduce a more sophisticated label for a concept directly named within (or closely related to) the language of the focal picture book. For instance, she intentionally referred to the “long grass” named in the text of *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt* as a “meadow” across unit four. Similarly, in the first session of the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* unit, she parlayed the forest setting of the three bears’ home into the concept of “wilderness.” On rare occasions, she provided explicit instruction on concepts not found within (or even related to) the text or illustrations of the focal picture books, but that could be classified as the language of the performing arts. For example, in the second session of unit two, Carolyn explained the concept of “costume,” a term she had used in the first session of that same unit without defining. She transformed herself into the Gruffalo character, aided by the addition of a pair of horns on her head: “I’m going to put on my costume first. A costume is something that helps me look more like the character.” Next she deployed the echo technique, resulting in a handful of students repeating the word “costume” after her. Carolyn concluded her explicit instruction on “costume” when, before tying the horns onto her head, she held them out for all to see and explained, “Today my costume is these little horns. These are the Gruffalo horns” (Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019).

Vocabulary and Concept Instruction for Setting. Shortly before she introduced the concept of “costume,” Carolyn staged the classroom as the setting of *The Gruffalo*. As seen in Excerpt 1, she named and labeled several locations in the classroom using enlarged, laminated color photocopies of illustrations from *The Gruffalo* in preparation for two story enactments portraying an imagined day in the life of a Gruffalo (her solo demonstration first followed by a guided re-enactment with students and staff). In doing so she created four stations to travel to and from while enacting the Gruffalo’s daily routines, three of which—river, leafy trees, and

boulders— are developed in Excerpt 1 (the fourth station, logs, will appear in Excerpt 9). Although the stations Carolyn established are lifted directly from the books’ illustrations, for the purpose of her lesson, she made them much more prominent in the life of the Gruffalo character than is signified in the text.

Excerpt 1

Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019

Students present: 8 of 11

Staff present: Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Aide (Program Assistant was in the classroom, initially attending to other duties, but joined the group near the session’s end)

1 **Carolyn:** In the story, one of the places in the forest ((turns the river picture to face the
2 students, steps forward, and holds it out)) is a river. Everybody say [river.

3 **Vanessa and Olivia:** [River.

4 **Some Students, Laura, and Andrea:** River.

5 **Carolyn:** ((still holding out river picture)) Yeah, this is the river. Now when we pretend
6 today ((walks off the rug)) we’re going to pretend (1.0) that the river (0.8) is right here.

7 ((tapes river picture to a cabinet just off the rug area)) And the Gruffalo is going to wake

8 up (0.5) by the river. (1.5) ((comes back to the rug, begins looking through the laminated

9 pictures for the next one she wants to use)) Now, (0.8) in our story, (0.7) there will also be

10 (1.2) some leafy: (0.7) tree:s. ((holds out picture showing a variety of trees)) Say leafy
11 trees.

12 **Staff and Some Students:** Leafy trees.

13 **Carolyn:** These are trees and they all have leaves on them. ((points out the leaves in the
14 picture)) (0.8) >Now,< (0.8) ((begins walking toward a table on the other side of room))

15 when we pretend today, (0.3) our leafy ↑trees, (1.0) they're all going to be °right over
16 there.° (0.4)

17 **Tyler, Olivia, Connor, and Malik:** ((turn to follow Carolyn and see the spot she is
18 indicating))

19 **Carolyn:** That's where our leafy trees, °way over there.° ((walks back to rug)) And we'll
20 go over there when it is time. ((picks up another laminated picture)) (1.0) In our ↑story,

21 there will also be (0.4) some (0.4) ((holds out a picture of boulders)) boulders, big r:ocks,
22 big heavy rocks called boulders. Everybody say boulders. ((points to boulders picture))

23 **Laura, Andrea, Azalea, and Olivia:** Boulders.

24 **Carolyn:** And our big ↑boulders, (0.8) ((starts walking away from the rug)) they are going
25 to be (0.5) right (0.3) over (1.4) ((tapes the picture down to a piece of furniture)) °here.°

26 ((circles the air in front of her three times with her arm))

Note that while introducing the first three locations—river, leafy trees, and boulders— Carolyn provided students with opportunities to hear her speak each word/phrase four to five times. She systematically employed the echo technique to encourage students to repeat those terms (although she offered just one speaking opportunity per word/phrase). However, despite the scaffolding and predictability embedded into the echo technique, a number of students did not repeat “river” and “leafy trees” and only two repeated “boulders.” I regularly observed variable uptake among students in all four Stapleton preschool classrooms when presented with productive speech tasks by both teaching artists. In general, though, the use of a structured scaffold like the echo technique favored by Carolyn yielded more student participation than less systematic approaches, particularly when students had opportunities to hear *and* speak the words repeatedly.

Although she applied the echo technique systematically to the three target terms (river, leafy trees, and boulders), Carolyn provided varying degrees of explicit instruction for these words/phrases. She gave “river” the least amount of attention. She spoke the word several times in conjunction with presenting a picture of a river as she positioned the river within the wider setting (“In the story, one of the places in the forest is the river”) and explained how this location was relevant to the Gruffalo (“and the Gruffalo is going to wake up by the river”) in the invented story she was preparing to enact. However, beyond her use of the artifact, she never defined or otherwise explicitly developed the concept of “river.” Carolyn provided a similarly low level of explicit instruction for the next term, “leafy trees.” As with “river,” she spoke the phrase multiple times as she positioned “leafy trees” within the story setting (“Now, in our story, there will also be some leafy trees”), but she did not explain how the trees are pertinent to the Gruffalo in her imagined backstory for this character (it turned out that he brushed his teeth each morning with a few leafy branches). However, she came close to explicitly explaining the concepts of trees and leaves, and their relationship to one another, when she stated, “These are trees and they all have leaves on them” while holding up the picture and pointing out the leaves.

Rivers and leafy trees are both concepts that Stapleton students could be predicted to have at least some knowledge of as a result of, if nothing else, ongoing exposure to the natural world in a city with a large river and countless deciduous trees. Of the three setting locations introduced in Excerpt 1, Carolyn provided the most robust treatment for “boulder,” the term that students were the least likely to know well. Just as she had done for “river” and “leafy trees,” she used the word “boulders” several times as she positioned this setting element within the broader story (“In our story, there will also be some boulders”) and showed an illustration of boulders as a visual aid. However, the instruction became significantly more explicit when, using child friendly language and building upon more familiar concepts, she added this definition: “big rocks, big heavy rocks called boulders.”

Cumulatively, all of the steps Carolyn took in session two of *The Gruffalo* unit, as seen in Excerpt 1—multiple opportunities to hear and use words, paired spoken and visual input, and accessible explanations—help young children, particularly emergent bilingual students and students with special needs, develop conceptual knowledge and extend their vocabularies by linking the new to the known (or partially known). Carolyn’s vocabulary and concept instruction during this session appeared to be in service of preparing students to participate in the culminating activity, an imaginative story enactment.

Vocabulary and Concept Instruction for Character. In contrast, Carolyn focused exclusively on introducing the five story characters (Mouse, Fox, Owl, Snake, and Gruffalo) in the first session of *The Gruffalo* unit, without requiring application of that knowledge to traditional storytelling activities (i.e., story retellings and enactments). She taught and reinforced students’ vocabulary and conceptual knowledge of the characters through many opportunities for demonstrated and guided animation of story characters’ physical qualities and by continually pairing visual aids with verbal input. In the course of intensively developing knowledge of the five characters’ physical qualities and learning their names across session one, four students (two students diagnosed with disabilities and two emergent bilingual students) who, at mid-year, were generally quiet during storytelling sessions, initiated speaking about the characters and using the character names. These vocabulary and concept-focused artist-student interactions are conveyed in Excerpts 2-4.

The Gruffalo unit was unusual compared to the other storytelling units in that classroom teachers were instructed to read aloud the picture book to their students *between* sessions one and

two rather than *prior to* session one (as is customary). Carolyn made this request in order to harness and accentuate surprise and fantasy as devices of instructional engagement while introducing students to the book's characters. In the beginning of session one, she pretended she found a magic top hat in the hallway. With the help of her "magic" wand and some "magic" words she and the students generated together, she transformed cards printed with the characters' names into cards displaying pictures of each character (laminated color photocopies lifted from the book's illustrations). Toward the end of session one, Carolyn linked the preceding work with naming and understanding the characters to the book for the first time. She explained to the students that their teacher would read aloud *The Gruffalo* before her next visit the following week and then launched into a brief picture walk through *The Gruffalo* (i.e., previewing the book's illustrations prior to reading it to help children orient to the story). As she paged through the book, Carolyn matched the picture cards introduced earlier in the lesson to each character as they appeared in the illustrations, helping students to make connections. During this activity, Brandon, a student who had been diagnosed with delays in speech and language development (among other special needs), made multiple attempts at speaking the word "snake," refining his articulation over time.

Excerpt 2

Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher and Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Carolyn:** ((turns the page as Tyler kneels and moves closer to her)) In (.) our (.)
- 2 story. Tyler, can you sit back, buddy? (5.0) ((gestures to his rug spot))
- 3 **Brandon:** (Seak!) ((attempt at saying snake))
- 4 **Carolyn:** ((picks up next character picture card from the collection on her lap)) There (.)
- 5 is (.) the (.) s:nake. ((holds snake picture card underneath illustration of Snake in the
- 6 book))
- 7 **Denpo:** Wow, snake.
- 8 **Brandon:** (Seak!) ((attempt at saying snake))
- 9 **Carolyn:** Yeah, that's right, Denpo. Snake. That's right. ((turns the page))
- 10 **Tyler:** ((stands up next to Carolyn))
- 11 **Brandon:** (Seak!) ((attempt at saying snake))
- 12 **Laura:** ((notices that Brandon appears to be looking at the alphabet frieze on the wall,
- 13 which includes a picture of a snake for the letter S. She looks at and points to the S card on
- 14 the wall, looks back to Brandon, nods and smiles, and looks back at the S card))
- 15 **Carolyn:** >And look, look, look, look, look.< Tyler, can you sit down? >Sit, sit, sit, sit,
- 16 sit.<
- 17 **Brandon:** SEE:ake:
- 18 **Carolyn:** ((holds the Gruffalo picture card next to a Gruffalo illustration in the book)) In
- 19 our story, here [(.) is (.) the (.) Gruffalo. Everybody say, Gruffalo.
- 20 **Brandon:** [Snake?
- 21 **Laura:** ((nods to Brandon, smiles and points again to the letter S alphabet card on the
- 22 wall))
- 23 **Laura, Diane, & some Students:** Gruffalo.

Brandon made multiple attempts when his first approximations of "snake" ("seak") appeared not to be understood by others, suggesting some motivation on his part to achieve

mutual understanding with the teaching artist and/or classroom staff. After several attempts, during which time he heard the correct articulation of “snake” modeled twice by Carolyn and once by Denpo, he achieved the mature articulation of snake. Brandon’s speech production journey from “seak” to “see-ake” to “snake” calls to mind Clay’s (1991) observation that young children’s language expands *through* their attempts and errors. The well documented human impetus to achieve meaningful communication arises before infants produce their first recognizable words (e.g., Lizskowski et al., 2004). Children, beginning in infancy, learn to express communicative intents and participate in conversation (Halliday, 2004; Ninio & Snow, 1996). When a young child’s utterance is not initially understood by an interlocutor, for whatever reason, a natural tutoring situation arises (granted, this is more likely to be the case in the context of defined conversation between child and adult, but the general principle holds for the whole group classroom instruction under examination here). The interlocutor’s unsatisfactory reply, whether it be confusion, misinterpretation, or a total lack of response (which Brandon originally received), tends to make the child want to try again, at least for a time. Accordingly, delayed achievement of mutual understanding with a mature speaker is not necessarily a negative outcome for the young child. The frustration of not being understood can compel them to make additional attempts, which may include constructive revisions to their syntactic, lexical, or phonological forms (the latter was seen with Brandon).

Carolyn did not seem to hear Brandon’s phonological approximations or his eventual success with speaking “snake” using recognizable articulation. She was focused on advancing her teaching objectives, namely completing the picture walk and matching the characters introduced via picture cards to their representations within the pages of the book, as well as managing Tyler’s ongoing encroachment into her personal space, which had begun earlier in the session. However, Laura, who did not carry responsibility for leading instruction at that time and happened to be sitting near Brandon, tuned into his speech and soon noticed that he was looking at the alphabet frieze on the classroom wall. Brandon’s reference to the snake on the S letter card in response to re-encountering the snake character during the picture walk of *The Gruffalo* suggests that he was attending to the classroom’s physical environment and that he searched for and used the alphabet frieze as a resource. Further, his actions suggest the potential importance of the repetitious auditory and visual character representations Carolyn provided. As these echoes reverberated across the session, they may have assisted Brandon in refining his speech production for “snake” and crafted learning conditions in which he independently made a link from the new (the character of Snake in *The Gruffalo*) to the known (the familiar snake image on the letter S card).

After the picture walk, Carolyn put down the book and employed the echo technique for a quick review of the characters’ names, in conjunction with the character picture cards. As observed earlier in Excerpt 1, Carolyn’s efforts generated only partial student participation. However, the very next session activity, a simple yes/no quiz Carolyn devised to review character identification, yielded active involvement from a range of students, including two emergent bilinguals, Denpo and Vanessa, (Excerpt 3) and a child diagnosed with special needs, Tyler (Excerpt 4). Carolyn used the picture cards, along with her vocal tone and facial expression, to reinforce students’ knowledge of the character names and likenesses in a playful manner. At times, this activity produced more multifaceted student responses than the simple yes/no answers it was designed to generate.

Excerpt 3

Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher and Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Carolyn:** ↑Yes? ((holds thumb up)) ↓No. ((holds thumb down, then holds up Owl picture
2 card)) Is this is a mouse? ((skeptical vocal tone and facial expression))
3 **Karl and Some Students:** NO.
4 **Laura:** No. ((holds thumb down))
5 **Carolyn:** [No. ((holds thumb down; shakes head))
6 **Some Students:** [No.
7 **Denpo:** No, it's a burse. ((points to the owl card))
8 **Diane:** Bird. ((nods head at Denpo, who is sitting in front of her, and pats his back))
9 **Carolyn:** Yes, that's an- a bird, that's right, Denpo. That's the owl, and the owl is a bird.
10 ((points to Denpo as she speaks)) ↑Yes? ((holds thumb up)) ↓No. ((holds thumb down,
11 then holds up Fox picture card)) [Is this is a snake? ((skeptical tone of voice and facial
12 expression))
13 **Denpo:** [And the owl () (). ((points to Fox card))
14 **Some Students:** [NO.
15 **Laura:** [((shakes head)) That is not a snake.
16 **Carolyn:** No, this is a fox.
17 **Vanessa:** Fox.
18 **Denpo:** (Is) a fox?
19 **Carolyn:** This is- ((holds thumb down, nods, and points to Vanessa)) this is a fox,
20 Vanessa, that's right. You said a fox, yes, good job. This is a fox.

Note how Denpo answered Carolyn's yes/no question with a full sentence, "No, it's a burse" that revealed his partial knowledge of the concept of "owl." He approximated the correct articulation for "bird" in his speech, which the assistant teacher, Diane, understood and affirmed. By repeating Denpo's approximation using mature articulation, Diane may have enabled Carolyn to understand his utterance. Carolyn appeared to be starting to say "Yes, that's an owl," but as she processed Diane's re-voicing of "bird" for Denpo, she interrupted herself and course corrected in order to affirm Denpo's idea: "Yes, that's an- a bird, that's right, Denpo. That's the owl, and the owl is a bird." She linked a class of animals known to Denpo ("bird") to a class member ("owl") for which his understanding was yet emerging.

Continuing on to the next character in the quiz, Carolyn held up the fox picture card and asked skeptically, "Is this a snake?" After several children answered, "No," and Laura declared, "That is not a snake," Carolyn agreed and identified the animal accurately: "No, this is a fox." Vanessa immediately repeated the word "fox," with a confident tone. Although appropriating a single word of another speaker's utterance might look like, at best, a minor accomplishment, for a child still in the beginning stages of acquiring English as an additional language who rarely spoke during units one and two, Vanessa's productive use of "fox" suggests emerging control over that concept and word. In her next utterance, Carolyn positively reinforced Vanessa's contribution ("...this is a fox, Vanessa, that's right. You said a fox, yes, good job") suggesting that she recognized Vanessa's initiation of speaking and her accurate use of one of the character's names as noteworthy.

During the final bend of the quiz, Tyler revealed conceptual knowledge of the Mouse character as well as his internalization of the quiz format. When Carolyn held up the last picture card (Mouse), Tyler responded by performing the quiz for himself.

Excerpt 4

Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher and Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Carolyn:** ((holds up Mouse picture card)) ↑Yes? ((holds thumb up)) ↓No. ((holds thumb
- 2 down. ↑Is this is a Gruffalo? ((skeptical tone of voice and facial expression))
- 3 **Laura & Some Students:** No::.
- 4 **Tyler:** ((holds thumb down))
- 5 **Carolyn:** No, no-
- 6 **Tyler:** It a fox? ↓No. ((moves thumb from up to down))
- 7 **Carolyn:** ((looking down at Tyler who is sitting at her feet)) Yeah, it's not a Gruffalo.

Note that although Tyler did not initially respond with speech to Carolyn's query about the mouse picture card ("Is this is a Gruffalo?") he did display the expected gesture (thumb down). Then, in a moment of self-directed talk, Tyler extended the activity, becoming both the examiner and examinee by generating his own quiz sequence: "It a fox? No." As he spoke, he moved his thumb from the up to the down position, as he had seen Carolyn do. In addition to correctly dismissing first the Gruffalo and then the Fox as possible identities for Mouse, Tyler displayed knowledge of the rules of this verbal game, including exploiting an unstated aspect of flexibility inherent in the quiz structure. Carolyn posed, "Is this a Gruffalo?" but Tyler did not merely repeat her question. When he asked and answered, "It a fox? No," he indicated at least some degree of implicit understanding that the examiner was free to ask about any character except for the character represented on the picture card. Carolyn certainly heard Tyler (who was sitting at her feet) because she looked down at him, but it is unclear whether the purpose of his self-talk registered with her, because she stated, "Yeah, it's not a Gruffalo," thereby closing the loop left open by her question. Her quiz to reinforce students' knowledge of character names and likenesses ended when another student, Karl, then confidently yelled, "It's a mouse!" and Carolyn agreed, "This is a mouse. That is right."

Summary. Carolyn provided extensive instruction on vocabulary and concepts, primarily by asking students to listen to and speak target words and phrases, sometimes offering multiple opportunities to do so. She sometimes offered explanations of word meaning, which were often layered onto an accompanying artifact. Carolyn gave attention to words and concepts lifted directly from the focal stories as well story-related vocabulary, often elevating these terms to more sophisticated language, such as "wilderness" for "forest" and "boulders" for "rocks."

During session one of *The Gruffalo* unit, Carolyn continually crisscrossed the landscape of story characters with students, as seen in Excerpts 2-4. This approach may have served some special populations of students particularly well judging by the positive trends in their productive speech responses over the course of the session. A combination of some or all of the following factors may possibly explain the observed increase in largely child-initiated use of the character names by several emergent bilingual and special needs students: 1) The performative demands of storytelling were reduced to animating individual characters' physical qualities in isolation (rather than, for example, portraying multiple characters as an ensemble, or enacting the full plot from one character's point of view), 2) the language demands were simplified, as four of the five target *concepts* (if not their corresponding lexical *labels*)—snake, fox, mouse, and owl—were likely at least partially familiar to most children in their primary and possibly even secondary languages, and 3) instructional supports for vocabulary and concepts, in the form of artifacts, the

echo technique, and the use of movement to represent and animate the physical qualities of characters, were simultaneously amplified and deepened in comparison to Excerpt 1. The early and sustained focus on building vocabulary and conceptual knowledge may have primed the pump so that between the middle and end of the session one, several students diagnosed with disabilities and emergent bilingual students were speaking more often than was typically seen at that point in the school year.

Repetitions, Expansions, and Extensions

In Chapter 1, within the Early Language Acquisition and Socialization section, I described three feedback routines—repetitions, expansions, and extensions—commonly used by parents and teachers when interacting with young children. Adults repeat children’s utterances (in part or in their entirety) for a variety of purposes, including to demonstrate engagement, to confirm accurate hearing, and to maintain a conversational exchange. If children’s utterances contain immature syntactic constructions and/or phonological approximations, caregivers, as part of their repetition, generally expand children’s utterances into the mature form without appearing to make overt corrections. However, if children’s utterances include semantic/lexical errors that reveal misconceptions, adults often correct those types of errors in a more conspicuous manner. Finally, adults regularly extend children’s utterances by inserting new propositions into their repetitions and expansions, thereby adding further layers of meaning to the conversational exchange. Repetitions, expansions, and extensions appear to contribute to a meaning orientation in communication, sustain conversation between mature and novice speakers, provide adult language models that are contingent upon the needs and interests of children, thereby raising the possibility that children will find the input germane, and help young children learn concepts, words, and syntactic constructions. (Gallaway & Richards, 1994; Hoff & Naigles, 2002; Snow & Ferguson, 1997; Taumoepeau, 2016).

Having revisited repetitions, expansions, and extensions, I turn now to an analysis of how these practices manifested and functioned within Carolyn’s language-enhancing pedagogical repertoires. Analysis of storytelling transcripts indicated that Carolyn provided some repetitions, expansions, and extensions (although mostly the latter) in response to student utterances across sessions. Additionally, student utterances containing speech errors engendered different responses from Carolyn depending on the type of error (phonological, syntactic, or semantic/lexical), as expected. Approximations of phonology and syntax were the most common error types made by students. In keeping with research reports of parents’ responses to their children’s meaningful, yet agrammatical utterances and/or immature articulation, Carolyn generally did not appear to overtly correct students. Sometimes she did not address the child’s error containing utterance in any way, but when she did respond, she sometimes met those errors by offering the mature pronunciation or conventional syntactic construction embedded into classic expansion or extension feedback routines. She did, however, provide overt corrections to students’ semantic/lexical errors, as is typical for adults interacting with young children.

Consistent with her interactions with students, when staff members spoke to the whole group or directly to Carolyn during sessions, she often incorporated their utterances into her instructional language. At times she purely repeated the staff member’s utterance, but more often, as with the students, Carolyn extended their utterances (needless to say, expansions were not observed). Eliciting staff member participation and repeating and extending their ensuing utterances likely enriched the diversity of syntactic constructions, propositions, and vocabulary that students encountered during sessions.

Not only did Carolyn repeat, expand and extend students' speech and repeat and extend staff members' speech, at times she expanded or extended students' nonverbal communication into speech. At the end of session two of unit two, after the collective enactment of the Gruffalo's daily routines, Carolyn asked the class to reflect on what it felt like to enact the role of the Gruffalo. She proceeded to go around the circle and queried each student about their affective experiences. She displayed a large laminated picture of the Gruffalo (lifted from the book's illustrations) as a visual aid while she asked each student whether they liked "being" the Gruffalo. In her interaction with Connor, she first expanded his nonverbal communication by representing his gesture in speech, then provided an extension in response to the reason he gave for not having liked the Gruffalo enactment.

Excerpt 5

Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019

Students present: 8 of 11

Staff present: Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Aide (Program Assistant was in the classroom, initially attending to other duties, but joined the group near the session's end)

- 1 **Carolyn:** ((holds Gruffalo picture out to Connor, and holds a thumb up)) Connor, did you
- 2 like being a Gruffalo or no. ((holds thumb down))
- 3 **Connor:** ((shakes head))
- 4 **Carolyn:** No. Why did you not like it? ((shakes head and holds thumb down))
- 5 **Connor:** Well, maybe if I went back home to my (0.8) mom it might scare her.
- 6 **Carolyn:** Oh, 'cause you don't, so if you went back home to your mom it might scare her.
- 7 So you don't want to be a Gruffalo when you're around your mom so you don't want to
- 8 scare her, °I see that. Yeah,° 'cause you sort of have to have those big cla:ws and those big
- 9 fa:ngs. Yeah, that's so helpful.

Note that Carolyn transformed Connor's nonverbal head shaking into speech ("No"), followed immediately by a follow-up question to encourage him to build on his initial gesture. When asked to elaborate, Connor readily expressed his rationale ("Well, maybe if I went back home to my mom it might scare her"). Carolyn extended upon his opinion at length, starting with a repetition of what he had said, and then by adding further propositions to the interaction, including sheer proximity to his mother that was not limited to the location of "home" —"when you're around your mom"—and specifying some of the ostensibly scarier elements of the Gruffalo's physical appearance (claws and fangs). Additionally, Carolyn explicitly encouraged Connor to communicate nonverbally by displaying the thumbs up/down signal, a gesture she used throughout this reflection activity, and he chose to respond with a different well-known gesture, the head shake. Carolyn use of gesture as a language-promoting practice across storytelling sessions is analyzed in the Contextual Support section. Note also how Carolyn greeted Connor's logic for not having enjoyed the Gruffalo role enactment with full acceptance, despite the unlikelihood (at least from an adult perspective) that a brief episode of pretending to be a fictional character at preschool would 1) have considerable influence on his future conduct at home or that 2) his mother would be scared if she witnessed him enacting the Gruffalo character. Carolyn's interaction with Connor exemplifies her reliably warm and respectful acceptance of a range of student responses to storytelling activities, including unexpected or possibly even disappointing reactions.

Prior to calling on Connor, four of the five persons Carolyn had asked to reflect about their enactment of the Gruffalo role had indicated having positive experiences. Of the five (two staff members and three students), Malik alone had stated he didn't like being the Gruffalo

because it was “so hard.” However, his opinion did not seem to influence his peers. The next two students, Vanessa and Olivia, expressed positive views of the enactment activity. In contrast, Connor’s dislike of the enactment activity, paired with his rationale about frightening his mother, appeared to gain traction among his peers. Every child Carolyn called on thereafter communicated a dislike of enacting the Gruffalo role, including two, Sebastian, and Azalea, who restated Connor’s reason. Further, near the end of this reflection activity, Malik interjected to revise his rationale for disliking the experience, letting Carolyn know that he, too, did not like being the Gruffalo, “because I might scare my mom” (see Excerpt 13). Carolyn acknowledged each student opinion by repeating or expanding what the student had said (in a similar fashion to her interaction with Connor in Excerpt 5) which seemed to convey an affirmation of the legitimacy of their experiences. Further, after responding to Malik’s interjection with a repetition, she synthesized and extended the cumulative student responses by ascribing prosocial motivations to those who worried about frightening their mothers: “A lot of people are loving th-lovin’ on their moms today. And wanna make sure they’re gentle” (Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019).

The final student that Carolyn called upon to share an affective experience with animating the Gruffalo character was Tyler. In the course of their interactions, Carolyn offered an expansion of his initial response with a slight extension tacked on, followed by two expansions of his nonverbal communication into speech.

Excerpt 6

Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019

Students present: 8 of 11

Staff present: Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Aide (Program Assistant was in the classroom, initially attending to other duties, but joined the group near the session’s end)

- 1 **Carolyn:** Tyler, did you like being a Gruffalo ((thumbs up)) or no like? ((thumbs down))
- 2 **Tyler:** I just don't want do anything. ((looking down at floor; unhappy tone))
- 3 **Carolyn:** You just didn't want to do anything today. So, even if I told you you were going
- 4 to be the mouse, would you have been the mouse today?
- 5 **Tyler:** ((looks up at Carolyn and nods))
- 6 **Carolyn:** You might have been a mouse today? But you didn't want to be a Gruffalo
- 7 today?
- 8 **Tyler:** ((very briefly shakes head no))
- 9 **Carolyn:** Yeah, sometimes we feel those ways.

Carolyn responded to Tyler’s reply, “I just don’t want do anything” by expanding it into the mature form with her insertion of the grammatically required “to” between “want” and “do.” She also extended his utterance by adding a proposition regarding temporality—“today”—suggesting or perhaps intentionally promoting a narrative in which Tyler’s self-professed lack of interest in participating in the class re-enactment (which he also made clear during the event itself) was a temporary, rather than permanent, state. Carolyn then probed Tyler’s disinterest further to find out if it was limited to enacting the Gruffalo character. She asked him to consider an alternative reality: what if she had told him to enact the character of Mouse? Tyler responded with a gesture (nodding), indicating that he would have liked being the mouse. Carolyn expanded Tyler’s nonverbal communication into speech, “You might have been a mouse today? But you didn't want to be a Gruffalo today?” to which Tyler again responded with a gesture, this time shaking his head. Carolyn expanded Tyler’s nonverbal communication into an empathetic

statement that affirmed and normalized his dislike of enacting the Gruffalo role: “Yeah, sometimes we feel those ways.”

Overt Corrections. Carolyn’s expansions of students’ utterances offered subtle corrections of their phonological and syntactic approximations. In contrast, Carolyn overtly corrected an emergent bilingual student’s semantic misconception in the first session of unit two. During the opening warm-up routines that preceded the main storytelling session content, Carolyn produced a small bottle of lemon oil, as was her custom. At every session she dabbed a few drops of the lemon scented oil onto her hands and created a “lemon breeze” by inviting the students to rub their hands together with her and then stretch their arms out wide several times. After three cycles of collective hand rubbing and arm stretching, the pleasant lemon scent would spread from Carolyn’s hands across the entire rug area. On this particular day, before she could fully implement the lemon breeze routine, Karl asked, “What’s lemon oil?”, prompting Carolyn to deploy a number of language-promoting practices in her efforts to explain lemon oil, including a few repetitions and extensions that occurred just prior to Excerpt 7. In addition, she demonstrated a compelling example of overt correction made in response to Denpo’s misconception of “lemon.”

Excerpt 7

Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher and Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Carolyn:** ((holds lemon oil bottle out to Denpo)) There is a lemon.
- 2 **Denpo:** ((holds bottom of bottle)) This a, a orange. ((looks up at Carolyn on “orange”))
- 3 **Diane:** ((softly)) [Lemon, lemon. ((pats Denpo on the back))
- 4 **Carolyn:** ((looking at Denpo)) [Lemon. ((continues moving, holds the bottle out to the
- 5 next child)) Yes, it’s like an orange, but it is a lemon.

As she walked around the rug holding out the lemon oil bottle for each child to view in close proximity, Carolyn began to pair the label “lemon” with the lemon image printed on the bottle label (“There’s the lemon.”). By the time she reached Denpo shortly thereafter, she had spoken the word “lemon” four times in a matter of seconds. Upon holding the bottle out for Denpo to inspect, she again stated, “there is a lemon,” while pointing to the lemon image in the label. Nonetheless, Denpo replied, “this a, a orange,” revealing an understandable confusion between the two citrus fruits. Importantly, orange slices were served to Stapleton students on a regular basis as part of the snack menu rotation. Consequently, Denpo was accustomed to seeing and eating oranges, albeit sliced oranges, as well as hearing staff and many of his peers refer to these food items as oranges during snack time.

Demonstrating the adult impetus to correct young children’s semantic misunderstandings (as revealed through their lexical errors), both Diane and Carolyn simultaneously provided explicit corrections to Denpo’s misconception, although he may not have heard Diane say “lemon, lemon,” due to her low volume and position on the floor behind him. Carolyn embedded her correction within an extension of his utterance (“Yes, it’s like an orange, but it is a lemon”). The expansion itself contained a partial repetition of Denpo’s idea, by which she affirmed the reasonableness of his misconception (“Yes, it’s like an orange...”). Furthermore, she expanded the article preceding “orange” from the immature “a” to the conventional “an.”

An additional instance of Carolyn correcting another of Denpo’s misconceptions while still upholding the legitimacy of his attempt can be seen in Excerpt 3 during *The Gruffalo*

character quiz. After realizing that Denpo had referred to the Owl character as a bird using an approximated articulation (“burse”), Carolyn interrupted herself in order to affirm Denpo’s idea: “Yes, that’s an- a bird, that’s right, Denpo. That’s the owl, and the owl is a bird.” Carolyn’s correction here, an example of an extension with an embedded expansion, was more understated than the correction she offered in Excerpt 7, possibly because an owl is a valid class member of the concept “bird.” Consequently, Denpo’s lexical labeling was unlikely to be perceived by Carolyn as semantically erroneous in full, but instead insufficiently precise given the task at hand (learning character names). She twice supplied the mature pronunciation of “bird” without any comment or stress, as is customary when adults speak with novice members of the language community, before swiftly moving on to her next quiz item. Although I could not transcribe Denpo’s next utterance fully due to difficulty understanding his articulation, his next utterance, “And the owl () (),” indicates that he was still pondering the owl-bird conceptual relationship. In addition, he appropriated the term “owl” into his productive vocabulary, at least for the time, suggesting that Carolyn’s extension and semantic correction may have provided just in time input at his point of need that he judged to be relevant.

Summary. Repetitions, expansions, and extensions are common features of communication between adults and young children that likely serve a number of purposes, including demonstrating and contributing to a shared orientation to meaning in communication, helping to sustain conversation between novice and mature speakers, signaling adult engagement with the child’s message, providing adult language models that are personalized to the child’s interests and needs and thus more likely to be perceived by the child as relevant, and building vocabulary and control of syntactic constructions. Parents and teachers tend to inconspicuously expand children’s syntactic and phonological approximations into the conventional forms, but often make overt corrections to lexical approximations that signal semantic misconceptions. Across sessions and activity contexts, Carolyn expanded and extended students’ verbal and nonverbal communication, including occasionally explicitly correcting students’ semantic/lexical errors. These practices constituted important contributions to the mature language model her instructional speech provided for students.

Metalinguage of Story

The metalinguage of story was identified as a significant language practice to analyze within the storytelling sessions in view of Halliday’s (2004) third strand of children’s language learning (they learn *about* language, in addition to learning language and learning through language). I observed the storytelling sessions for teaching artist use of the academic language of story elements (e.g., beginning, middle, end, plot, setting, characters) and storytelling (e.g., once upon a time, they all lived happily ever after). Although some metalinguage of story was present in the teaching artists’ work, they also used related terms from the adjacent class of fantasy and imagination (e.g., pretend, magic) as well as made some indirect references to the metalinguage of story. In recognition of the diversity of metalinguage of story and related language use in the data, I created three divisions within the broader category: the metalinguage of story, metalinguage of fantasy and imagination, and indirect references/allusions to the metalinguage of story. Further, I made the decision to consider the word “story” itself to fall within the metalinguage of story division, as it became apparent through analysis that the teaching artists regularly invoked “the story” to achieve their storytelling and instructional aims.

The metalinguage of story and related terms appeared in Carolyn’s speech in a number of storytelling sessions, including during units one and two. She demonstrated particularly robust use of the language of fantasy and imagination during the first session of unit two. While

exploiting the concept of “magic” as a device to promote student motivation and engagement, she used the word “magic” 30 times, mainly in reference to a collection of enchanted artifacts she had brought with her (a magic hat, a magic cape, and a magic wand). Further, she indirectly taught the concept of “magic words” through the provision of two classic examples: bibbidi-bobbidi-boo (spoken eight times) and hocus pocus (spoken twice).

However, with the exception of the magic-related language in unit two, session one, Carolyn’s principal corpus of terms was small, primarily consisting of “story” and “pretend,” along with a few instances of “character(s)” and “storytellers.” Unexpectedly, Carolyn did not mobilize the formal vocabulary of story elements, like setting, plot, beginning, middle, or end (aside from an occasional use of “character”) in her instruction. However, with the exception of the magic-related language in unit two, session one, Carolyn’s principal corpus of terms was small, primarily consisting of “story” and “pretend,” along with a few instances of “character(s)” and “storytellers.” Unexpectedly, Carolyn did not mobilize the formal vocabulary of story elements, like setting, plot, beginning, middle, or end (aside from an occasional use of “character”) in her instruction. However, during several session moments that appeared ripe for incorporating the metalanguage of story, Carolyn made allusions to story elements (four times to “setting” and once to “beginning”).

Indirect Use. Indirect use refers to allusions made to the academic language of story. This practice occurred most often for the concept of setting, particularly in unit two, session two. Given that little direct use of the metalanguage of story occurred within the teaching artists’ instructional language, I judged indirect use important to capture and analyze.

Setting. One such allusion to setting can be seen at the start of Excerpt 1, when Carolyn informed the students, “In the story, one of the places in the forest is a river.” The remaining three indirect references to setting all occurred during session one of the first unit, a lesson that was entirely focused on developing the concept of “wilderness” as the setting in which the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* takes place. In designing this session, Carolyn exercised her artistic license to 1) make the setting of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* considerably more prominent than it is generally treated in written versions of the tale, and 2) elevate what in books is commonly depicted as a forest or woodland setting to the more majestic “wilderness.” Although she never actually spoke the word “setting,” Carolyn made three indirect references to it, starting at the beginning of this session when she situated Goldilocks in the wilderness: “My friends, we’re thinking about *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. And Goldilocks is in the wilderness in the story. Today we will pretend we are the wilderness” (Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018).

It should be noted that the students had not been read aloud *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* prior to that first session, perhaps due to some oversight or miscommunication. The classroom teacher, Laura, was absent that day, but Diane, the assistant teacher, told Carolyn that Laura would read the story to the class before the next session the following week. Carolyn told me during one of our many conversations before and after sessions that she always brought a copy of the focal picture book with her to the first session in case she needed to quickly read it because the Laura had not yet read it aloud to her class. On this occasion, Carolyn appeared to judge that she could move forward with the session without taking time to read aloud the story with no ill effects. The session activities centered primarily on the concept of wilderness and required little knowledge of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* for students to comprehend and participate.

Carolyn continued the lesson by explicitly developing the concept of wilderness with an array of photographs depicting wilderness and non-wilderness scenes and by establishing three defining attributes of wilderness: rivers, trees, and rocks. Next, she built a visual representation of wilderness using a felt board, a small, square board covered in black felt on which she placed pieces of felt cut to depict a river and trees of various shapes and sizes. In her penultimate step of constructing the story setting on the felt board, she positioned the respective homes of the three bears and Goldilocks within this wilderness tableau (placing two rocks on the felt board constituted her final step).

Excerpt 8

Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Substitute Teacher (Vicky), Assistant Teacher, Aide, and Program Assistant

1 **Carolyn:** Now, in our story today, here, let's move this tree over here, ((moves a tree
2 already on the board to make room for a new tree that has no leaves and a small, yellow
3 door at the bottom)) we have one tree right here. ↑Look, look, look, look, look. This tree
4 has a ↑door ((points to the door)) (1.8) This has no leaves and it has a little door. This is
5 where the bears [live-
6 **Nicholas:** [That's a little leaf. ((his reference is unclear; it could be the gray and red
7 felt house she has in her hand))
8 **Carolyn:** in the story. ↑Look, look, look, look, look. Look at this >↑little house,< right
9 here. ((places the felt house at the bottom of the board, in the opposite corner from the tree
10 with the door)) (1.0) This is where Goldilocks lives (0.2) in our story.

Note that Carolyn made indirect references to setting when she labeled the locations of the homes of the three bears (“This is where the bears live”) and of Goldilocks (“This is where Goldilocks lives in our story”). She exercised her artistic license once again in choosing how to represent the bears’ home. Depicting the bears’ residence as a tree with a door was aligned with Carolyn’s presentation of “wilderness” as the story setting but stands in contrast to the human built house variations commonly seen in the illustrations that accompany written versions of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

Beginning. Carolyn made one final indirect reference to the metalanguage of story during the second session of unit two. After demonstrating a day in the life of the Gruffalo (as she imagined it to be), she initiated a collective guided re-enactment of the Gruffalo’s daily routines by offering the following prompt, “Now, my friends, the Gruffalo starts this story by sleeping” (Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019). With this statement, aside from reminding the students that pretending to sleep was their first step in animating the Gruffalo’s character, Carolyn alluded to the concept of story beginning, an essential component of the narrative chronology and cohesion valued in academic discourse.

Implicit Instruction. Consistent with the indirect references she made to “setting” and “beginning,” Carolyn’s instruction for the metalanguage of story was primarily implicit rather than explicit. Across the three sessions analyzed from units one and two, Carolyn embedded into her instructional language “story” 36 times and “pretend” 19 times (see Excerpt 1 (story and pretend) and Excerpt 8 (story) for examples). Given that “story” and “pretend” are already fairly ubiquitous terms in early childhood settings, it may be unsurprising that Carolyn frequently used, but never offered explicit instruction on, these terms. She may have trusted students’ ability to infer the meaning of such terms through simple exposure within the broader language- and activity-rich learning contexts she facilitated during sessions. Furthermore, Carolyn prioritized

developing concepts and vocabulary specific to each focal picture book across each unit (e.g., wilderness, boulders, leafy trees, fox, mouse, snake, owl, Gruffalo). Her investment of considerable attention and energy into story specific (and story related) vocabulary may have reduced, or been perceived to reduce, time available for more robust instruction on the metalanguage of story.

Explicit Instruction (Nearly). Carolyn came close to providing explicit instruction for “character” during the first session of unit two. After introducing each character in *The Gruffalo* (Fox, Mouse, Snake, Owl, Gruffalo) individually with a picture card, she then reviewed the entire set of characters by laying out all the picture cards in a row on the rug and naming each animal. This instructional sequence began with a moment of *nearly* explicit teaching for the concept of “character,” along with an example of how Carolyn commonly embedded the word “story” into her instruction, when she stated, “Now my friends, I want to show you that you just met the animals, the characters, that will be in our story” (Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019). Note how Carolyn *approached* providing a child-friendly explanation of “character” by relating this term to “animals,” a concept likely to be more familiar to students, and placed both in the larger context of the story. However, the concept of “animals” is not synonymous with “characters,” and Carolyn stopped short of explaining that story characters can take additional forms, chiefly human, or discussing other nuances of what defines a story character.

Summary. To summarize, the metalanguage of story and related terms constituted a salient aspect of Carolyn’s repertoire of language-promoting practices but not in the form that I had initially anticipated. Most of her instruction was implicit and she exposed students to a relatively small corpus of terms. However, she embedded the concepts of “story” and “pretend” across all three sessions analyzed. Further, although she did not work the formal language of story elements into her instruction, other than an occasional use of “character,” she made several indirect references to story elements (“setting” and “beginning”), possibly contributing to conceptual support for students’ budding understanding of story structure.

Noticing and Naming

Noticing and naming (Johnston, 2004) is an instructional technique that harnesses the teachable moment to reinforce strategic action on the part of the learner. Noticing and naming is an important tool in the pedagogical repertoires of teachers, coaches, teaching artists, and other educators because it can help students increase their effective and independent control over any skill or process. As suggested by the name, this tool entails a two-part process: first the teacher observes the student and “catches them in the act” of demonstrating a strategic action. Second, the teacher specifies for the student what it is they are doing that is beneficial to their learning. It is this naming that is vital for helping students to notice for themselves what is going well and to construct increasingly refined understandings of the targets for which they are aiming. As Halliday (1993) observed, “Language is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge” (p. 94). The act of naming serves to heighten students’ attention and awareness, which in turn direct and facilitate knowledge development (Gauvain, 2001).

Importantly, the strategic action demonstrated by the learner need not be entirely effective or successful in order to be productively noticed and named by the teacher. In fact, skillful teachers intentionally attend to partially correct approximations and attempts (Clay, 2005), aware that these actions often represent the leading edge of the learner’s development (Johnston, 2004). Noticing and naming can encourage continued risk taking by weaving a narrative that positions students, individually or collectively, as agentic and capable.

Carolyn demonstrated widespread use of noticing and naming across a range of storytelling session activities. This technique appeared to be pivotal for the advancement of an ongoing, unambiguous narrative she wove across sessions in which the students were positioned as capable storytellers, both as individuals and as a collective. She appeared to deploy the technique for several different purposes, chief among them to make students' aware of their strategic actions and to publicize the success and competence of individual learners to the entire group. When Carolyn invited Olivia to perform her understanding of how a Gruffalo walks for the class in the second session of unit two, Olivia began to move across the rug in a recognizably iconic manner, slowly stomping her feet with her arms extended and her hands shaped like claws. Carolyn described Olivia's movements for the group in a play-by-play fashion: "Ooh, look at that. Look at those big claws coming out. Look at those arms up. Look at those slow steps. Look at those knees" (Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019).

In addition, Carolyn regularly deployed the noticing and naming technique when inviting the entire class of students to simultaneously demonstrate their unique interpretations of discrete components of storytelling activities. For instance, during the first session of the year, she facilitated a collective rehearsal for each natural element of the wilderness tableau she had just created on the felt board—rocks, trees, and rivers—and enthusiastically specified and gestured to a range of features present in student and staff forms, beginning with rocks: "Look at all of these different rocks! Look at this rock with hands out wide. Look at this rock down low to the ground" (Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018). Carolyn's noticing and naming in this context of simultaneous yet singular action positioned students as competent, reinforced their distinctive representations, and likely encouraged students to learn from each other's representations, all of which may have increased the likelihood that such strategic actions would be repeated by either its originator or one or more peers. Furthermore, by habitually honoring diverse enactments, Carolyn promoted flexible thinking and normalized an expectation of multiple representations of concepts.

Carolyn demonstrated deep acceptance of varied student performances during storytelling activities (e.g., diverse ways of pretending to become a rock in the wilderness) as well as skill in harnessing the wide range of student responses to further her instructional goals. Both of these actions were consistent with her artistic impetus to promote flexible thinking and multiple representations and her respectful acceptance of students' ideas and opinions that may have been surprising or discouraging (as exemplified by her response to Connor's negative view of the Gruffalo enactment in Excerpt 5). Returning to the activity of practicing the Gruffalo walk in unit two, no sooner had Carolyn begun to ask students to consider how a Gruffalo might walk than Malik began to rise from the rug. Observing his eagerness, she interrupted herself and exhorted him, "Go. Let's see." Malik proceeded to walk quickly and stiffly across the rug and around the room, his arms rigid at his sides. It is fair to say that nothing in *The Gruffalo's* text or illustrations, the unit content up to that point of session two, or commonly accepted cultural beliefs about monsters would appear to validate Malik's interpretation of how a Gruffalo might walk. Perhaps this is why Laura exclaimed, "Oh!" in a discernibly surprised tone. But Carolyn did not miss a beat and proceeded to publicly name the specific features of his movements with the same level of enthusiasm that she would offer for Olivia's archetypal monster walk just a short time later: "Oh, look at that. Malik! Look at Malik. Arms are straight down. Feet are going very straight" (Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019).

Carolyn even demonstrated an ability to capitalize upon student responses that appeared to be no response at all. For instance, Tyler opted not to perform the movements and acting

required in the collective re-enactment of the Gruffalo's daily routines in the second session of unit two. Upon reaching the third station (logs), all staff and all students except for Tyler pretended to sharpen their "claws" on imaginary logs. Carolyn then asked the students to show their sharp claws, leading to an interaction with Tyler in which she framed his choice of (non) action as legitimate participation.

Excerpt 9

Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019

Students present: 8 of 11

Staff present: Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Aide (Program Assistant was in the classroom, initially attending to other duties, but joined the group near the session's end)

- 1 **Carolyn:** Who has sharp claws? Show me your claws. ↑Ching, ↑ching. ((positions her
- 2 hands to resemble claws))
- 3 **Students:** ((most hold out their claws))
- 4 **Carolyn:** ((pointing at Malik)) Oh, look how sharp those claws are. ((pointing at Olivia))
- 5 Ooh, look at how curvy those claws are. Who has sharp claws? ((bends over next to Tyler,
- 6 who is standing still with hands at his side)) Do you have sharp claws? (0.2) ((asks Tyler))
- 7 **Tyler:** ((no response))
- 8 **Carolyn:** Ooh, look at how straight those claws are right there. ((bends down to point to
- 9 Tyler's left hand, at his side)

Note how Carolyn first explicitly identified successful features of two students' representations (Malik's sharp claws and Olivia's curvy claws) for the group. Then she invited even wider participation by restating her question, "Who has sharp claws?" At this point she focused her attention on Tyler, posing the question to him alone. With his arms motionless at his sides, Tyler stared back at Carolyn, signifying he did not intend to capitulate to her direct appeal. However, as was typical, not only did Carolyn deftly circumvent a potential power struggle with Tyler, she also positioned his (non) action as an agentive, productive contribution to the group's collective act of storytelling.

Noticing and naming must provide the learner (and anyone else in the audience, in the case of group instructional contexts) with specific feedback on their successful (or partially successful) strategic action in order to be deployed most effectively. To a great extent, Carolyn's comments fell closer to the specific rather than the ambiguous end of the instructional feedback continuum. She did offer comments at times that were somewhat vague, but since most of her feedback was fairly precise, the more ambiguous comments often co-occurred amongst more specific ones. For instance, when she praised Olivia's Gruffalo walk (discussed earlier), she primarily named specific features of Olivia's movements and acting (big claws, arms up, and slow steps). However, she concluded her comments by urging the class to, "Look at those knees" leaving it up to students to identify the effective feature(s) upon which to focus their gaze (Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2020).

In summary, noticing and naming is an effective instructional feedback routine by which a teacher specifies wholly successful and as well as partially correct aspects of a learner's strategic actions. The purpose of noticing and naming is to increase the likelihood that the productive conduct will be repeated by raising the novice's awareness of their own actions. Carolyn frequently deployed this practice throughout sessions and across units, demonstrating skill in recognizing and valuing a wide spectrum of student responses to the performance activities within each session. She mainly provided specific praise to students, but occasionally offered ambiguous feedback.

Narration

The narrative register is distinguished by its ubiquitous and pervasive use in both oral and written language. Young children learn to comprehend and construct narratives through a variety of experiences, including listening to narrative texts read aloud, listening to and participating in oral storytelling, and by observing older members of their community narrate personal experiences. In addition, they often receive specific guidance as they work to construct oral narratives of life events from parents, teachers, and other mature speakers, often in the form of questions designed to elicit further details (Scollon, 1976; Stoel-Gammon & Cabral, 1977). Such guided experiences with narration sculpt young children's attention to those aspects of chronology and substance that are valued in the culture (which may differ between home/community and school contexts; Heath, 1983). Early practice with comprehending and constructing narratives serve as both a resource for, as well as are benefitted by, young children's emerging understandings of temporal relationships, which in turn are pivotal for reading comprehension (Kintsch, 1998; Nelson, 1996).

Use of the narrative register was moderately widespread within Carolyn's repertoire of language-promoting teaching moves. I identified three distinct sub-practices of narration used during storytelling sessions: narration of personal actions, narration of personal experiences, and narration of the unit story (or some variation of the unit story). Carolyn regularly narrated her personal actions, most often during the opening routines portion of each session. For instance, after Vicky handed the class over to Carolyn's care during the first session of unit one, she greeted the class and proceeded to narrate each of her preparatory steps: "Hi, friends. I pick up my bag. I come to the circle. I open my bag. I pull out my clipboard. I pull out my drum. I pull out my drumstick" (Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018). This particular variation of narration was one of the language-promoting instructional strategies Carolyn learned from the external consultant hired by the arts organization the year prior. The aim was to support the language comprehension of students (particularly emergent bilinguals and children diagnosed with disabilities) by pairing simple statements with clearly observable actions. Although this practice primarily occurred during the opening routines session phase, it occasionally appeared at operational junctures in the main storytelling content, such as when Carolyn asserted, "I put my board on the table" as she moved her felt board to clear a large floor space so that students and staff could collectively enact the wilderness setting of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018).

While Carolyn's narration of personal actions was observed across most sessions, primarily within the opening routines (although not entirely limited to that session phase), the frequency of the other two types of narration—personal experiences and unit stories—depended upon the substance of the main session activities. Carolyn employed narration of personal experiences when her lessons called for inviting students and staff to participate with her in an imaginary situation completely unrelated to the unit story or any variation thereof. Although I refer to this practice as narration of "personal experiences," the experiences were patently, playfully fictitious. For instance, at the start of the main content of the first session of *The Gruffalo* unit, Carolyn announced to the class, "Now, my friends, we're going to have some magic today" (Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019). Having established a fantastical context for the events to follow, she began to narrate a (pretend) personal experience.

Excerpt 10

Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher and Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

1 **Carolyn:** Now, I, friends, have a story to tell you ((reaches behind to get a hat out of her
2 bag)). And I am going to, pull out a hat. And when I put this hat on, I will pretend that I am
3 someone else. Are you ready?

4 **Student:** °Yeah.° ((whispers))

5 **Carolyn:** Here I go. Here's my costume. ((puts on a black top hat, then clutches her head
6 and changes her voice to a cartoon-like, high-pitched tone)) Boys and girls! I was just
7 walking by, your classroom, and I have to show you what I found. ((reaches into her inner
8 shirt pocket)) You won't believe it! Out the door (0.7) ((points to the door)) I found these
9 words (1.0) ((holds out laminated words and fans them in her hand)) in the hallway.

Note how Carolyn explicitly stated that she had a story to tell in Line 1, heralding the advent of her use of the narrative register in Lines 6-9. Further, she openly signaled to the students that by wearing the hat, she would be pretending to be someone other than herself, resulting in an imaginary narrative. She introduced a term belonging to the language of the performing arts—costume—in Line 5 but did not at that time provide a definition (as she would do in the next session while transforming herself into the Gruffalo character with a pair of horns). In addition to altering her appearance with the addition of the top hat, she altered her voice to unequivocally mark the commencement of her play-acting. Although her narrative was imaginary, by siting the recalled (fictitious) events in close proximity to the students' classroom, Carolyn may have been aiming to make the story feel immediate and exciting in order to foster students' interest in the word cards. Further, Carolyn deployed a classic narrative and storytelling device, building suspense, with remarks in Line 7, “and I have to show you what I found,” and again in Line 8, “You won't believe it!” before revealing the word cards. Finally, Carolyn's narrative provided a model of attention to temporal and causal relationships: she was walking by the classroom (in the past) when she unexpectedly found the word cards (precipitating event); then, as she spoke (in the present) she was able show the students what she had found (outcome).

Carolyn demonstrated the third narration sub-practice—narration of unit stories—when her lessons centered around the classic storytelling activities of retelling and/or enacting the unit story (or some variation thereof). These events mostly occurred in the second and third sessions of each unit, whereas the first sessions of each unit were typically focused on introductory material about a particular aspect of the story, such as setting or character, that would be applied to later sessions. Although she sometimes invited students to co-construct a narrative retelling of story events with her by soliciting their input, Carolyn primarily invited them to participate in the vocal and motor performative aspects of the story enactments while she provided the narration, as can be seen in Excerpt 11, which begins near the start of the group re-enactment of the Gruffalo's daily routines, as imagined by Carolyn.

Excerpt 11

Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019

Students present: 8 of 11

Staff present: Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Aide (Program Assistant was in the classroom, initially attending to other duties, but joined the group near the session's end)

1 **Carolyn:** ((yawns, begins to wake up, pretending she is the Gruffalo)) And now we wake
2 up and stretch. ((stretches her arms))

3 **Laura, Diane, Andrea, Malik, Olivia, Connor, and Azalea:** ((stretch their arms))

- 4 **Carolyn:** Oh, my friends. Are you here to spend the day with me? ((higher pitched voice
5 as the Gruffalo))
6 **Malik:** Yes.
7 **Carolyn:** Oh, I'm so happy that you're here. Stand up with me. And we'll walk over to the
8 leafy trees.
9 **Staff and Students:** ((begin to stand up))

Note the degree to which Carolyn's narration served dual purposes: she often told the story from the Gruffalo's point of view while simultaneously previewing the next activity and/or giving directions to the students. For example, in Lines 7-8 she warmly welcomed the students (in character as the Gruffalo) before asking them to stand up in preparation for the next phase of the re-enactment (toothbrushing at the leafy trees station). However, in some instances, she appeared to be speaking directly from her role as the teaching artist, giving directions that enabled students to perform the Gruffalo's daily routines with her, such as in Lines 1-2 when she announced, "And now we wake up and stretch." After the students and staff pretended to wake up, Carolyn elicited a brief moment of narrative co-construction in Line 4 when she asked, "Oh, my friends. Are you here to spend the day with me?" Malik answered in the affirmative without hesitation. Carolyn may have been content to allow Malik to serve as the spokesperson for the class because she quickly continued on, guiding the students' enactment of the Gruffalo's daily routines with a combination of narration and directions. Carolyn again vocally signaled her assumption of a new character by raising her pitch, as was seen in Excerpt 10, Line 6. In this session, higher pitch seemed an unexpected choice to represent the voice of the Gruffalo, who is portrayed as a large, menacing monster in the book. However, despite that element of incongruence, she undoubtedly marked herself as "becoming" the Gruffalo.

To summarize, Carolyn's use of narration was moderately widespread across sessions. She employed three variations of narration within her language-enhancing practices: narration of personal actions, narration of personal experiences, and narration of the unit story (or some variation thereof). While the simplest form of narration she deployed, narration of personal actions did not appear to hold much power for enriching children's abilities to comprehend and co-construct narratives, that was not its purpose. Rather, it was designed to support the language comprehension of special populations of students by providing accessible input that paired short, simple statements with plainly observable, quotidian behaviors. Understandably, Carolyn mobilized this form of narration largely outside of the main storytelling content.

In her use of the other two forms of narration (narration of personal experiences, and narration of the unit story), Carolyn again revealed her inclination to exercise her artistic license to invent, imagine, and envision. She regularly extended invitations to students and staff to pretend with her in the fanciful spaces she created within, adjacent to, and well beyond the boundaries of each unit story. In addition, through her narration of imaginary personal actions and her retellings and enactments of unit stories, Carolyn demonstrated the sort of narrative storytelling that is valued within the academic discourse of school settings. The temporal and causal relationships embedded into Carolyn's narration of sequenced events represent part of the knowledge novice readers and writers need to comprehend and compose narrative texts during their first years of school.

Contextual Support

Contextual support refers to the repertoire of nonverbal communication strategies that has been found in the literature to improve language comprehension by increasing young children's access to word meanings (Grifenhagen et al., 2017). It is not uncommon for teachers of young

children to spontaneously, instinctually exploit gesture and the prosodic aspects of speech to enhance children's understanding of a word, an utterance, or a line of text during conversation or direct instruction. Educators who are aware of the power of such strategies for increasing access to language, including many who are responsible for the instruction of emergent bilingual students, may deploy them more deliberately. Of the four variations of contextual support I identified, only the first two were present in Carolyn's storytelling sessions in units one and two:

- Prosody matches word meaning
- Gesture matches speech meaning
- Gesture matches text meaning
- Gesture matches character's feelings

However, the principal form of contextual support that Carolyn provided to students, pairing gesture with speech (the second variation), was actually a widespread practice in her repertoire. She used gesture to further illuminate the meaning of her utterances between 15-30 times across each of the three storytelling sessions closely analyzed.

Gestures are iconic movements, typically of the head, hand, or arm, that represent conventionalized meanings accepted within a culture. By their very definition, gestures do not require speech to be understood, but by pairing gesture with speech, teachers can provide two complementary sources of simultaneous input to support young children's language comprehension. Carolyn's gestures fell along a continuum of conventionality. She recurrently used a pair of highly recognizable gestures, thumbs up and thumbs down, to indicate yes/no, agreement/disagreement, or like/dislike, as demonstrated in *The Gruffalo* character quiz in unit two, session one (see Excerpts 3 and 4) and when she asked students to reflect on their affective experiences with enacting the Gruffalo character in unit two, session two (see Excerpts 5 & 6). In addition, Carolyn sometimes nodded and shook her head in conjunction with the thumbs up and thumbs down gestures. An example of Carolyn's pairing of speech with a gesture that was less conventional but still recognizable occurred at the beginning of the first session of unit two when she was crafting a sense of fantasy and magicality, aided by a set of enchanted artifacts and magic words. She began by presenting an iconic magic word—"bibbidi-bobbidi-boo"—and as she spoke, she swept a magic wand (her repurposed drumstick) through the air with a gesture quite reminiscent of the fairy godmother in Disney's *Cinderella*. She then went on to ask student volunteers to generate their own magic words and magic wand gestures pairings.

Carolyn was a highly animated speaker and performer who intentionally used stress, pitch, and juncture to capture the students' attention and convey meaning, although typically not in a manner that could be said to directly reveal the essence of a particular word or phrase. Carolyn deployed the first variation of contextual support, matching prosody to word meaning, primarily in the first session of unit one, and although she used this practice throughout that session, she aligned her prosody to a rather narrow set of simple concepts: "big" and "little." As explained earlier, Carolyn presented three defining attributes—rivers, rocks, and trees—while developing the concept of "wilderness" with students. She created a wilderness tableau on a felt board featuring examples of each attribute made of cut felt and then added the homes of the Three Bears and Goldilocks (see Excerpt 8). Of the five trees she affixed to the board, the first three were wide and tall. Whenever Carolyn spoke of this first group of trees, she playfully called them "big trees" in a deep, booming voice. Furthermore, she often layered onto the prosody a concurrent gesture—arms held out wide with muscles flexed—that signaled strength. When she asked students to repeat "big trees," many participated enthusiastically, perhaps due to pleasure they may have felt in mimicking her deep, booming voice. Of the final two trees that

Carolyn affixed to the board, one was slender while the other was short and squat. She referred to those two as “little trees” in a high-pitched, nasal voice, but did not accompany the prosody with a gesture and never asked students to repeat this phrase after her. Carolyn continued to align her prosody to word meaning straight through to the culminating activity, a collective enactment of “wilderness.” She called on the class to “become” each of the three wilderness attributes and specifically she asked for student volunteers to enact “big trees” and “little trees” with the same meaningful prosody she had used earlier.

The use of gesture to match the meaning of a line of text, the third variation of contextual support, originated in my analysis of the classroom teachers’ read aloud lessons. It was unlikely to occur during storytelling sessions from the outset. By design, the storytelling program placed the responsibility for reading aloud the focal picture book upon classroom teachers so that students would be oriented to the stories prior to the start of each unit (with the exception of *The Gruffalo*, which teachers were directed to read aloud between sessions one and two in order for the teaching artists to accentuate elements of surprise and magic), thereby permitting the teaching artists’ to utilize their limited time and distinctive talents more effectively in the classroom.

The only time Carolyn read aloud a focal picture book occurred during unit three, and she did indeed pair gestures with text. The unit three picture book, *Up, Down, and Around*, was an outlier among the four books selected for that year’s storytelling program. This book about planting and caring for a large vegetable garden has a notably short and predictable text (e.g., “Corn grows up. Carrots grow down. Cucumbers climb around and around”). It has just the barest outline of a plot and no named characters, although a father and two children are depicted in the illustrations. The students had already read this book a couple of weeks prior with Laura, but in the second session of unit three, Carolyn brought in the big book version (a significantly enlarged edition that allows novice readers to have a better view of the illustrations and print) of *Up, Down, and Around* with the aim, it seemed, of renewing and strengthening their knowledge of the book’s language and ideas. As she read, Carolyn systematically paired the repeated directional terms with hand gestures. She ran her fingers across the page in an upward motion for every instance of the word “up,” in a downward motion for every instance of the word “down,” and circled the page with her fingers each time the phrase “around and around” appeared. In addition, Carolyn modified the text as she read aloud, adding multiple repetitions of the directional terms, and matched her prosody to their meanings, thereby creating another instance of prosody layered upon gesture layered upon word meaning, as was seen with her treatment of the phrase “big trees” in unit one, session one. So, instead of simply reading “Corn grows up,” she read “Corn grows up, up, up, up, up, up, up” with a pitch that rose on each iteration of “up,” while her finger simultaneously swept upward across the page.

After demonstrating the combined layers of text, prosody, and gesture on the first set of pages, Carolyn continually invited that students to chorally speak the directional words with her for the remainder of the book, but with little success. Even with the additions of gestures, insertion of extra iterations of directional words, and frequent requests for students to participate, it took Carolyn just over two minutes to read *Up, Down, and Around* (in comparison, reading a title like *The Gruffalo*, a much longer, more semantically and linguistically complex text, required about 10 minutes for the classroom teachers to read aloud). If Carolyn had designed lessons that required her to read the picture books in each unit, I anticipate that I would have observed more occasions when she paired gesture with text. However, retelling and re-enacting

the focal stories (both with and without modifications imagined by the teaching artists) were the priorities of the storytelling program rather than reading the published books.

I did not find any instances of Carolyn providing the fourth variation of contextual support, the use of gesture to match a character's feelings. Like the use of gesture to match text meaning, this variant originated in my analysis of the classroom teachers' read aloud lessons. But even in the read aloud setting, it seldom occurred. Carolyn did, of course, convey characters' emotions and personalities, but these defining qualities were illuminated with a combination of storytelling and performing arts tools that went far beyond gestures in isolation. Carolyn's enactments of character included locomoting and communicating like the character, retelling the story from the character's point of view, and depiction of character traits and physical qualities.

Contextual support is most powerful as a language-promoting practice when it is deployed to help young children construct meanings and use new and partially known vocabulary. Carolyn occasionally implemented contextual supports for less well-known concepts and terms, such as the magical word "bibbidi-bobbidi-boo" and the phrase "around and around," and in those cases might have provided students with access to more robust understandings than they would have been able to construct through speech alone. However, the words Carolyn designated for contextual support tended to be run-of-the-mill terms, like "big," "little," "up," "down," "yes," and "no." These words are well disposed for layering corresponding prosody and gestures upon, in part because they are so common. But even those preschoolers who were diagnosed with communication delays or were learning English as an additional language may well have already known these simple words after several months (in the case of "big" and "little") to nearly a full year of instruction (in the case of "up" and "down"). As a result, the degree of impact made by Carolyn's provision of these contextual supports on students' language comprehension may have been nominal.

Unison Speaking

Unison speaking was a relatively widespread practice in Carolyn's language-promoting repertoire. Prompting repetition can be viewed as a strategy for promoting language acquisition via imitation. Carolyn deployed guided unison speaking primarily in the service of students' vocabulary and conceptual development, facilitated exclusively through what I came to call her "echo technique" routine. The echo technique was previously explicated under Vocabulary and Concept Instruction. Briefly, it took place whenever she introduced a word (or occasionally a short phrase) and then asked students to repeat it. My analysis of instances of unison speaking across the focal sessions indicates that nearly all unison speaking opportunities took place at the single word level. Carolyn rarely created unison speaking opportunities that had the potential to expand students' control of language structures while concurrently building their vocabulary and conceptual knowledge. Occasionally, a short phrase was selected for the echo technique (e.g., leafy trees), but she never deployed unison speaking at the sentence level. Further, I identified two distinct variations of Carolyn's unison speaking practice: 1) students chorally spoke (and sometimes sang and whispered) a word *with* Carolyn (this was more common and will be seen in Excerpt 12 below), or 2) she led students to chorally repeat a word *without* her. Finally, as noted in the Vocabulary and Concept Instruction section, the guided unison speaking opportunities that Carolyn provided across each of the three sessions generally resulted in low student participation.

The second variation of this practice, leading students to speak in unison without her, is clearly illustrated throughout Excerpt 1. In that particular segment of the second session of unit two, Carolyn utilized the echo technique as she introduced several story locations—river, leafy

trees, and boulders—prior to her enactment of the Gruffalo’s daily routines. When Carolyn wanted students to chorally repeat a word *without* her, she would signal this aim by issuing the command, “Everybody say (target word/phrase).” Although she herself used the target vocabulary (river, leafy trees, and boulders) multiple times across Excerpt 1, she asked students to repeat each word/phrase only once. Such single trial learning opportunities may have contributed to the fairly low student uptake she obtained on this occasion. Nonetheless, low student participation was not uncommon in productive speech tasks facilitated by Carolyn under varied conditions, including in the next example.

The first variation of unison speaking, choral speaking with Carolyn, took place less than one minute into the first session of unit one. Prior to introducing any warm-up activities during the opening routines session phase, Carolyn oriented students to the purpose for her visit by stating, “My friends, we are going to think about a story today. Our story is called Goldilocks and the Three Bears” (Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018). She then asked students to chorally repeat with her via the echo technique the focal story’s title (itself an aspect of the story’s vocabulary in a sense).

Excerpt 12

Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Substitute Teacher (Vicky), Assistant Teacher, Aide, and Program Assistant

- 1 **Carolyn:** I say, I go ((points to self)) Goldilocks and the Three Bears, we all say ((draws a
- 2 circle in the air to indicate everyone)) [Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
- 3 **Staff, Olivia, & Connor:** [Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
- 4 **Carolyn:** I say, ((points to herself)) ↑Goldilocks ↑and the ↑Three ↑Bea↓rs. ((sings)) We
- 5 all say, ((draws a circle in the air)) [Goldilocks ↑and the ↑Three ↑Bea↓rs.
- 6 **Staff, Olivia, & Connor:** [Goldilocks ↑and the ↑Three ↑Bea↓rs.
- 7 **Carolyn:** I say, ((holds hands next to her mouth with open palms)), °Goldilocks and the
- 8 Three Bears.° We all say, ((draws a circle in the air)) [°Goldilocks and the Three Bears.°
- 9 **Staff, Olivia, & Connor:** [°Goldilocks and the Three
- 10 Bears.° ((Vicky mimics Carolyn’s hands at her mouth; Olivia and Connor see this and copy
- 11 her movements))

Note that here, unlike in Excerpt 1, Carolyn deployed her full tripart rehearsal strategy of speaking, singing, and whispering the targeted phrase, rather than having students only speak the word once. In addition, observe that she consistently scaffolded the task for students by first demonstrating the phrase and the selected vocal mode. Carolyn used a verbal formula to signal that she wanted students to speak, sing, and whisper *with* her: “I say (target word/phrase). We all say (target word/phrase).” Perhaps in an effort to speak simply, she framed each rehearsal event as a form of speaking (“I say...”) even when she was actually demonstrating singing or whispering. But despite the support of three consecutive, playful guided practice opportunities, only two of 11 students, Olivia and Connor, actively participated in this productive speech task aimed at helping them internalize the title of the focal story. In fairness, the class was hardly one minute into their first experience working with Carolyn during that school year, so the low participation on this particular occasion might be, at least in part, attributed to a lack of rapport between Carolyn and the students and their limited familiarity with the echo task (although the 4- and 5-year-olds, including Olivia and Connor, knew her from the previous year).

Carolyn repeatedly used the echo technique (sometimes with speaking only and sometimes using all three vocal modes) throughout this first session as she introduced the

concept of wilderness and defined its attributes (rocks, rivers, and trees). As the session continued, increasing numbers of students began to join in this call and response participation structure. Ten minutes into the 30-minute session, as she built a wilderness tableau on her felt board attribute by attribute, the majority of students were chorally repeating Carolyn's target words and phrases (e.g., big trees; river). The repetition of the echo technique and Carolyn's use of the felt board to symbolically represent wilderness and its attributes may have provided enough scaffolding for some children in the class to begin participating successfully in the call and response.

Alas, it was quite common for only a small handful of students to participate in these productive speech tasks even much later into the school year, despite the relative regularity with which Carolyn utilized the echo technique across storytelling sessions and the students' ostensibly increasing competency with the task during the first session of unit one. The general trend of limited uptake among students may in part reflect their lack of experience with performing on demand productive speech tasks in the school environment (outside of the storytelling sessions). Call and response style language activities were not common elements of instruction in Stapleton preschool classrooms.

In addition, the fact that a significant portion of students were either classified as emergent bilinguals, diagnosed with communication delays, or fell into both categories, may have contributed to the overall limited uptake. The students who participated most regularly in the group rehearsal of vocabulary tended to be typically developing, monolingual English speakers, like Olivia, who took up Carolyn's call and response task in both Excerpts 1 and 16. She was joined in Excerpt 12 by Connor, a monolingual speaker with a speech delay that impacted the intelligibility of his utterances but had no broader impacts on language or cognition, and in Excerpt 1 by Vanessa, a typically developing emergent bilingual, and Azalea, a typically developing monolingual English speaker. With only a handful of students chiming in when Carolyn deployed the echo technique, the natural, positive peer pressure that often accompanies such activities among young children seemed to be largely absent, possibly allowing those students who preferred to observe to stay comfortably silent.

Intersubjectivity

Speaking with a young child can feel a bit like solving a puzzle at times. When a sense of intersubjectivity (mutual understanding within this analysis) between adult and child occasionally vanished during the storytelling sessions, as well as read aloud lessons, I could sometimes see the proverbial wheels turning in the artist's or teacher's mind as they plainly worked to successfully interpret children's utterances. The inferences adults typically make so rapidly when speaking to each other may slow down markedly under the challenge of constructing shared meaning with a novice speaker. The ease and success of the conversation, that is, how closely adult and child can achieve a "meeting of minds," will depend, at least in part, on the adult's degree of familiarity with a particular child (Tizard, 1986) and level of expertise in communicating with young children in general (Cazden, 2005).

Most likely because of her outsider consultant status, Carolyn was not very familiar with any of the individual preschoolers at Stapleton School; although her level of familiarity grew over the course of each storytelling unit. She recognized and remembered some of the 4- and 5-year-old students who had been enrolled at the site the previous year as 3- and 4-year-olds, but given that she paid hour-long visits to each classroom just 12 days across the school year, her knowledge of the students was fundamentally limited. Stapleton teachers distributed name tags to students at the start of each session; without these visual aids, Carolyn would not have been

able to remember students' names (as evidenced by her requests for help with names from the staff when children sometimes removed their name tags).

Nevertheless, Carolyn did have several years of experience implementing the preschool storytelling program at Stapleton School and a number of other Head Start sites. Her understanding of young children's sensibilities was evident in how she planned and implemented storytelling activities and spoke with students. By and large, she spoke simply with deliberate prosody and offered highly scaffolded learning experiences with systematic demonstration and guided practice. Everything Carolyn did and said, to a great degree, were intentionally oriented toward achieving and maintaining intersubjectivity with students. She provided many opportunities for students to communicate verbally and nonverbally but these opportunities took place within well-defined participation structures. Although suited to her instructional objectives, these participation structures rarely permitted or resulted in Carolyn or the students grappling with the sort of genuine, organic conversation that might tend to yield more misunderstandings between adults and young children. Perhaps as a result of one or more of these factors, I found few occasions of observable problems between Carolyn and the students with reaching intersubjectivity. The handful of examples that I did find suggest that when Carolyn realized she did not understand a student, she acted quickly and successfully to repair the lost meaning. However, the two occasions when she misunderstood students, apparently without the benefit of sufficient awareness of the gaffe, illuminate the challenge and complexity of maintaining intersubjectivity between mature and novice speakers, particularly in a classroom setting during whole class instruction.

I initially conceived of three possible situations of interest regarding problems of intersubjectivity between the preschool children and their teaching artists (as well as classroom teachers) and designed my coding scheme accordingly. These three scenarios were predicated on the assumption that the mature speaker (whether she was a teaching artist or classroom teacher) would be able to perceive when a loss of mutual understanding had occurred. A further assumption, that the adult interlocutor would assume responsibility for repairing the lost meaning, underpinned the first two situations. The third situation accounted for the possibility that the artist (or teacher) might intentionally continue on with the lesson after calculating that the costs (e.g., time, loss of other students' focus) of pursuing mutual understanding might outweigh the potential benefits.

1. the artist realizes she does not understand the child, she initiates meaning repair, the interaction is successful and intersubjectivity is regained;
2. the artist realizes she does not understand the child, she initiates meaning repair, however, the interaction is unsuccessful and intersubjectivity is not regained;
3. the artist appears to realize that she does not understand the child (as suggested by one or more paralinguistic and nonverbal communication features, such as prosody, pausing, and facial expression) but she does not initiate meaning repair, and intersubjectivity is not regained.

In the process of analyzing transcripts, I identified a fourth, unanticipated situation in which the mature speaker thought she understood the student, but in fact misheard the student's utterance and/or prosody, thereby adding a fourth scenario to this compendium:

4. The artist appears to be unaware that she does not understand the child, does not repair meaning, and intersubjectivity is not regained.

There is a parallel possibility for these four scenarios, wherein the artist perceives herself to be misunderstood by the student(s). However, I did not pursue analysis of this counterpart due to

the technical limitations of effectively capturing students' nonverbal reactions to the artists. As the sole videographer, I privileged capturing the artists' speech and conduct and concurrently set and adjusted the video camera angle to capture the faces of as many students as possible. This meant that many children's backs were facing the camera during instructional periods spent at the rug and that during the story enactments that involved locomotion around the classrooms some students' bodies were obscured and their voices muffled. In the proceeding sections, I present examples and analysis of these four identified scenarios of intersubjectivity challenges between the students and Carolyn.

Variation 1—Successful Meaning Repair. To reiterate, my transcript analysis indicated that problems of intersubjectivity occurred infrequently between Carolyn and the students. But when they did take place, the most common manifestation was this first scenario, in which Carolyn realized she did not understand a child, she took steps to repair the meaning, her actions and the ensuing interaction with the child were successful, and intersubjectivity was regained. I found that the two main obstacles to Carolyn's (transitory) inability to understand students were 1) understanding their immature speech production and 2) understanding their ideas (notwithstanding clarity of speech). In the first excerpt below, lifted from the end of the second session of unit two, as students were sharing their affective responses to enacting the Gruffalo character and his daily routines, a loss of mutual understanding occurred when Carolyn was initially unable to comprehend Malik due to his speech delay. Like Carolyn, I was unable to hear Malik clearly and thus could not transcribe his first utterance with certainty.

Excerpt 13

Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019

Students present: 8 of 11

Staff present: Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Aide (Program Assistant was in the classroom, initially attending to other duties, but joined the group near the session's end)

- 1 **Malik:** (And) (also) (I) (don't) (like) (Gruffalo).
- 2 **Carolyn:** ((turns to face Malik and moves closer to him)) What Malik?
- 3 **Malik:** I don't want to Gruffalo.
- 4 **Carolyn:** You don't want to be the Gruffalo?
- 5 **Malik:** Because: I might scare my mom.

Note how Carolyn's expression of confusion ("What Malik?") and interest in hearing his idea (as demonstrated by her eye gaze and increased physical proximity) appeared to prompt Malik to express his message again. He spoke with considerably greater vocal clarity on his second attempt. Consistent with Brandon's multiple attempts to produce a recognizable version of the word "snake" in Excerpt 2, Malik's initial receipt of an unsatisfactory response from his adult interlocutor seemed to spur him on to make constructive revisions to his speech production in order to get his point across. Carolyn responded in Line 4 by repeating Malik's utterance in the form of a question, possibly to confirm his idea, to elicit more information from him, and/or to extend the conversation. She expanded his statement, providing a mature speech model with the grammatically required verb and article ("You don't want to *be the* Gruffalo?"). Malik's response in Line 5 suggests that he may have misinterpreted her question, perhaps thinking she asked, "*Why* don't you want to be the Gruffalo?" Alternatively, he may have been simply eager to share his newfound rationale for his displeasure with enacting the Gruffalo role (likely appropriated from Connor; see Excerpt 5).

The next excerpt, which took place shortly after Excerpt 10, demonstrates an instance when Carolyn faced the task of repairing mutual understanding for a reason unrelated to speech

articulation. To reiterate, early in the first session of Unit 2, Carolyn established a fantastical context for the activities to follow by declaring, “Now friends, we’re going to have some magic today.” (Unit 2, Session 1, January 16, 2019). As seen in Excerpt 10, she narrated a fictitious personal experience about having found *The Gruffalo* character word cards in the hallway. Next, she pulled from her bag a black top hat (slated to become her “magic hat”) and asserted that she had just found this item right outside the classroom as well. She proceeded to query staff and students whether the hat belonged to them: “No” was the unstated but expected answer to this question. Both Laura and Diane rejected ownership of the hat, assisting Carolyn’s apparent wish to amplify the mysterious origins of the hat. Carolyn posed the question to Denpo next, but he declined to suspend reality.

Excerpt 14

Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher and Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Carolyn:** Is this your hat? ((points to Denpo))
- 2 **Denpo:** Yeah.
- 3 **Laura and Carolyn:** ((chuckle))
- 4 **Carolyn:** [Oh, you think that is your hat.
- 5 **Denpo:** ((points to Carolyn)) [That you, that's you.
- 6 **Carolyn:** It doesn't, (0.2) you think it's my hat? ((points to herself))
- 7 **Denpo:** Yeah.

This interaction between Carolyn and Denpo unfolded in two acts. At first, Denpo claimed that the hat belonged to him, possibly surprising Carolyn, as suggested by the stress she placed on the words “you” and “is” in her response (another example of her use of expansions) in Line 4. Whether Denpo had initially misunderstood Carolyn’s question in Line 1 or had sincerely reconsidered the hat’s ownership (perhaps upon hearing Laura and Carolyn chuckle), his utterance in Line 5 marked the second bend in the interaction. With his statement, “That you, that’s you,” Denpo simultaneously offered a revised interpretation of the hat’s ownership and publicly rebuffed Carolyn’s playful attempts to infuse a sense of magicity into the session. Further, he demonstrated expanding linguistic and communicative competence. His utterance provides a clear example of an emergent bilingual child in the act constructing the grammar of his second language. In his second attempt to express his idea, he added the required verb “to be”, yielding the contraction “that’s” and thus shifting closer to the conventional structure of his intended idea, “That’s your hat.” In addition, Denpo deployed gesture (pointing to Carolyn) and a paralinguistic cue (applying stress on the second “you”) to get his point across.

Carolyn did not initially understand his message in Line 5, probably in part due to their overlapping speech, in part due to his revised interpretation of the hat’s ownership, and in part because his construction was agrammatical. The combination of these factors appeared to have slowed Carolyn’s processing of his meaning. She seemed to be headed in a different direction as she started to respond, saying, “It doesn’t,” but then paused briefly before expressing her realization that Denpo was stating that the hat belonged to her. Carolyn, a skillful communicator with young children, including those learning English as an additional language, was able to unwrap from an unconventional syntactical package the essence of Denpo’s message, possibly aided by the stress he placed on “you” and his use of pointing. Denpo confirmed the success of her repair to their mutual understanding in Line 7.

Variation 2—Unsuccessful Meaning Repair. This scenario is similar to the first variation in that the artist realized she does not understand the child and although she initiated steps to repair meaning, those actions were unsuccessful and intersubjectivity is not regained. Interestingly, this situation was never observed during Carolyn’s interactions with the preschool students. Across the three storytelling sessions closely analyzed, she either made successful attempts to regain mutual understanding, as illustrated by Excerpts 13 and 14, or did not endeavor to repair lost meaning in the first place, as will be seen in the next two variations.

Variation 3—Meaning Repair Not Enacted. In this scenario, the artist appeared to realize that she did not understand the child (as suggested by one or more paralinguistic and nonverbal communication features, such as prosody, pausing, and facial expression) but she did not make an attempt to repair meaning, and intersubjectivity was not regained. To reiterate, I included this variation in my coding scheme to account for the possibility that an artist (or a teacher reading aloud) might intentionally continue on with the lesson after calculating that the costs (e.g., time, loss of other students’ focus) of seeking shared meaning might outweigh the potential benefits. However, the sole instance that fell into this third category was actually a rather ambiguous case of bi-directional confusion between Carolyn and Connor in which Connor’s speech delay was a precipitating factor.

During the first session of unit one, after Carolyn had introduced the concept of wilderness and defined and illustrated its attributes with her felt board, she prepared an open space for the students and staff to “become” rocks, rivers, and trees and thereby collectively enact the wilderness setting that she ascribed to *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. As she narrated to the class her efforts to clear enough floor space for the wilderness enactment, Connor made a comment that indicated his misapprehension of her actions, which Carolyn then further misinterpreted due to his speech production. Although she appeared to find his idea puzzling (as evidenced by her use of pausing, pitch, and stress), she did not opt to ask him to clarify his utterance, but instead fashioned his utterance into her existing plan.

Excerpt 15

Unit 1, Session 1, Nov. 28, 2018

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Substitute Teacher (Vicky), Assistant Teacher, Aide, and Program Assistant

- 1 **Carolyn:** So, my friends, look, look, look! ((puts the felt board off to the side)) (1.5) Our
- 2 wilderness today is going to be oh, here let me clear a little space (1.5) ((picks up clipboard
- 3 and chime from the floor and puts them on the light table)) where we can make our
- 4 wilderness. (1.0) Our wilderness is gonna be ↑right over here. [Let me clear this up.
- 5 **Connor:** [On the wight table!
- 6 ((pronounces /l/ as /w/ due to speech delay))
- 7 **Carolyn:** On the, (1.0) on the ↑white (0.5) floor is where our wilderness will be. Now we
- 8 can't do that unless I put my drum and my board on the table.
- 9 **Connor:** ((turns to Vicky sitting behind him)) Oh, I am () we don't have the drum.

The light table that Connor referred to and upon which Carolyn placed her instructional materials was a piece of classroom furniture that served as a popular location for students to play with Magna-Tiles® (magnetized, plastic building tiles) during choice time. The sides and legs were made of wood, but it had white, translucent tabletop which enabled the lights underneath the surface, when electrified, to shine through and illuminate the Magna-Tiles® as if they were stained glass. Every member of Connor’s classroom community, staff and students alike, referred to this piece of furniture as the “light” table, never the “white” table. That knowledge, in

conjunction with an awareness of Connor's substitution of /w/ for /l/, leaves me confident that Connor said "light" table.

When Carolyn announced in Line 4, "Our wilderness is gonna be right over here," she had already placed her clipboard and chime on the light table and was en route to retrieve her bag and drum off the floor. As she walked and spoke, she pointed her arms down and out to mark the floor space she was creating for the wilderness enactment. Connor seemed to not perceive Carolyn's gestures toward the floor space she was emptying of objects and instead interpreted her decision to place some of her instructional materials on the light table as meaning that the wilderness would be located atop the light table, as suggested by his spontaneous declaration in Line 5, "On the wight (*sic*) table!"

Carolyn's response to Connor in Line 7 suggested that she did not understand his idea on multiple levels. First, she was not able to accurately auditorily process his immature pronunciation of "light." Carolyn surely possessed some level of awareness of Connor's unambiguous speech delay due to its prominent influence upon his speech production. Furthermore, he was an active and eager participant in storytelling sessions (and all whole class instruction, for that matter), so she heard him speak more often than many of his peers. But whether she had the opportunity to analyze the particular patterns of his speech, including taking note of his systematic substitution of /w/ for /l/, was doubtful given how little time she spent with him and the storytelling facilitation demands placed on her memory and attention capacities.

Second, she may not have understood that Connor was referring to the very table that she was using spontaneously to store her instructional materials. There was, in fact, no table in the classroom fully white in color and, in the midst of her hasty clean-up, she may not have detected that the table she was using had a white surface. Moreover, she may not have been particularly familiar with light tables, which, unlike water/sand tables, are not yet standard-issue preschool classroom activity centers. Third, and most important, she appeared not to have realized that Connor seemingly extrapolated from the relocation of her clipboard and chime to the light table a marking of the future site of their collective wilderness.

Perhaps as a first step in orienting herself to Connor's assertion, Carolyn began to repeat his statement, "On the," then signaled her confusion as she paused for a full second to think. She resumed her utterance, repeating Connor's statement through its first three words, "On the white," then paused again briefly before exchanging "table" for "floor," raising her pitch for word "white" and placing stress on both "white" and "floor." While the floor tiles beneath Carolyn's feet were primarily a shade of grayish-white, the tiles in center of the space were a conspicuous light brown color, which perhaps contributed to her half second hesitation in declaring that the resultant wilderness enactment would be positioned on the *white* floor.

In seeking to resolve her own confusion (and perhaps also to dispel potential confusion among students), she appeared to walk a fine line between affirming the aspect of Connor's remark that she understood to be (semi) accurate ("white") while correcting his mistaken inference about the location. Having firmly re-established the tiled floor as the site of the wilderness enactment, in Line 8 Carolyn continued to remove objects to create even more open space, thereby moving beyond the moment of mutual misunderstanding without querying Connor about what his reference to the "white table" had meant. For his part, Connor appeared unperturbed by the correction he received from Carolyn and perhaps fully unaware of the misunderstanding that has passed between he and Carolyn, as he sunnily commented on the removal of the drum to Vicky.

To summarize, Carolyn did not recognize that Connor’s speech delay had impacted his pronunciation of “light,” and thus, at the level of pure auditory processing in communication, she thought she had understood his utterance (although she clearly found it puzzling, as evidenced by her pausing, pitch, and stress). Carolyn’s difficulty comprehending Connor’s intended meaning was not solely due to his speech delay, though, but at least as much the result of her (understandably) limited familiarity with his patterns of speech and the classroom’s physical environment and choice time routines. Consequently, instead of working from the origin point of lost meaning (because she was unaware it had been lost), she sought to build a meaningful bridge between what she understood Connor to have said (“white table”) and her planned location for the group’s upcoming enactment of the wilderness setting of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

Variation 4—Adult Unaware of Lost Meaning. Excerpt 16 illustrates the fourth type of challenge to intersubjectivity, in which the mature speaker appears to believe she has accurately heard the novice speaker’s utterance(s), but her response suggests that she has, in fact, not understood the child. This particular excerpt is a continuation of Excerpt 6, in which Carolyn was probing Tyler about his affective experience with the Gruffalo enactment activity that had just transpired. Excerpt 16 begins with Carolyn affirming Tyler’s affective response after listening to him express that he did not like being the Gruffalo but would have pretended to be a mouse (see Excerpt 6 for the full interaction between Carolyn and Tyler). Tyler was seated directly to the left of Carolyn and Malik was sitting to Tyler’s left.

Excerpt 16

Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019

Students present: 8 of 11

Staff present: Teacher, Assistant Teacher, and Aide (Program Assistant was in the classroom, initially attending to other duties, but joined the group near the session’s end)

- 1 **Carolyn:** Yeah, [sometimes we feel those ways.
- 2 **Malik:** [but I didn't want to be a (mouse) today either.
- 3 **Carolyn:** I don't know. That's a good question, Malik. (0.8) My friends. ((sings)) Name
- 4 tag, name tag, where's your name tag? Name tag, name tag, where's your name tag?

At nearly the same moment that Carolyn began to affirm Tyler’s emotions, Malik interjected to differentiate himself from Tyler’s stated willingness to enact the mouse character. In Line 2, he stated that not only did he not want to enact the Gruffalo character, neither did he did want to become a mouse, thereby distinguishing his opinion from Tyler’s. (Recall that Malik had expressed displeasure with enacting the Gruffalo role twice, first giving the reason that it was “so hard” and then later adding his agreement with Connor’s concern about scaring his mother, as seen in Excerpts 5 and 13, respectively. He appeared to refer back to those two earlier reasons via his use of the word, “either”). Carolyn heard Malik speaking over her and switched her eye gaze from Tyler to Malik as she finished her response to Tyler. Her incongruous response, “I don't know. That's a good question, Malik,” suggested that she likely did not understand his utterance or perceive the falling pitch at the end of his statement.

Still, the very next move made by Carolyn, in which she transitioned the class from the reflection activity to the “nametag song” (a closing routine), inserts some ambiguity to the nature of her interaction with Malik. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the possibility that she heard Malik accurately but consciously decided to truncate their interaction in order to hasten the end of the storytelling session, which she concluded one minute later. However, Carolyn was such a sincere, conscientious person and teaching artist that I hesitate to interpret her response as deliberately dismissive. If Carolyn had heard Malik accurately, she could have provided a

response that acknowledged his intended meaning in the same amount of time or less, while still drawing the reflection activity to a close (e.g., “Okay. That’s fine, Malik.”).

No one in the room interceded to correct Carolyn’s conspicuous misunderstanding. Few children and staff member’s faces could be seen due to the camera angle, so examining their facial expressions as an indicator of their degree of awareness about the loss of mutual understanding between Carolyn and Malik was, unfortunately, unavailable to my analysis. Malik looked down at his name tag well before Carolyn began singing the nametag song and said nothing. The sole staff member whose face was visible was Margaret, but her expression betrayed no indication that she found Carolyn’s response to Malik peculiar. In fairness to the staff present, Carolyn initiated the nametag song so quickly after speaking to Malik that they may have felt there was not a pragmatically acceptable opening in which to correct Carolyn’s misunderstanding. And only if staff members were paying close attention to Carolyn and Malik’s brief interaction would they even have been able to discern this problem of intersubjectivity and then have been faced with the task of weighing up whether to intervene.

Summary. Reaching and maintaining intersubjectivity falls within the realm of language-promoting practices because all of the storytelling program’s instructional objectives rest upon the co-construction of meaning and mutual understanding between teaching artists and students. I identified four likely scenarios under which problems with intersubjectivity between artist and student(s) might manifest: successful repair to meaning, unsuccessful repair to meaning, repair deliberately not attempted, and repair inadvertently not attempted. However, in the course of my transcript analysis, I found that these variations of problems with intersubjectivity were not always well-defined with clear boundaries, as illustrated by Excerpts 15 and 16 (variations 3 and 4). Note that I limited my examination of intersubjectivity to mutual understanding and shared meaning. I did not specifically analyze turn-taking as the interactional infrastructure of intersubjectivity (Schegloff et al. 1974) because conversational turn-taking was often obscured and complicated by simultaneous action and speech by multiple actors, particularly within, but not limited to, participatory acts of storytelling.

Carolyn rarely faced observable problems of intersubjectivity, conceivably due to a combination of her general expertise as a teaching artist, her specific experiences over the previous three years delivering the storytelling program to Head Start preschoolers, and her design of the storytelling sessions, which featured tremendously scaffolded learning experiences with systematic demonstration, guided practice, and well-defined participation structures for students. My analysis suggests that on the rare occasion when Carolyn was aware of losing intersubjectivity with a student, she sought to repair meaning and was successful in doing so, as shown in Excerpts 13 and 14. However, there were also sporadic instances in which she did not understand students’ ideas, yet due to an apparently partial (in the case of Excerpt 15) or total (in the case of Excerpt 16) lack of awareness of the rupture, Carolyn did not attempt to repair meaning, and intersubjectivity remained lost.

Language Anticipation

Language anticipation as a language-promoting practice originated in my analysis of the classroom teachers’ read aloud lessons. Language anticipation refers to a person’s ability, by parsing spoken or written language, to anticipate the next word or phrase that someone might say, or the next word or phrase that might appear in a text they are listening to or reading. Language anticipation is a skill that early childhood classroom teachers often foster during instruction. While speaking or reading, teachers will indicate through gesture, prosody, pausing, or a combination thereof, frequently just before the end of a clause or sentence, that they wish for

students to orally supply the next word or phrase. This works particularly well during read aloud lessons with books that children have become familiar with through repeated readings and even on the first reading of predictable books (texts with moderately to highly structured language patterns; *Up, Down, and Around* is especially predictable but all four focal picture books contain predictable stretches of text).

Carolyn did not seek to deliberately develop language anticipation in her storytelling sessions, as I saw the classroom teachers do intermittently during their read aloud lessons. However, on one occasion, her use of the echo technique to promote vocabulary and concept development through unison speaking unintentionally cultivated language anticipation. The students did not, for the most part, observably anticipate their next lines during the call and response echo technique interactions. They waited to receive specific directions from Carolyn on what and when to repeat (if they participated at all). In Line 3 of Excerpt 1, however, Vanessa and Olivia demonstrated language anticipation when they chorally spoke the word “river” *with* Carolyn rather than waiting to repeat the word after her, as she had intended for them to do. Their ability to anticipate the word “river” suggests, to some extent, the degree to which they had internalized the echo technique, Carolyn’s favored approach to vocabulary instruction.

Extended Conversation

Extended conversation is a practice, like contextual support, that has been found in the literature to be effective in fostering young children’s control over language (Grifenhagen et al., 2017). In essence, it is an interaction between an adult and young child in which a dialogue is sustained on one single topic and in which both interlocutors take several turns in the give and take of genuine conversation. How many turns constitute an “extended conversation” varies across studies; for instance, Grifenhagen et al. (2017) required 5 total turns between child and adult during informal conversations that took place during free play time in preschool classrooms. Given the more formal, structured instructional settings of storytelling and read aloud lessons, I set the bar at three turns each between adult and child, for a total of six turns required to constitute extended conversation on a single topic.

Extended conversations did not take place in any of Carolyn’s sessions. The storytelling program, as designed and delivered by Carolyn, provided students with highly scaffolded instructional experiences full of diverse opportunities to extend their control of language and to communicate verbally and nonverbally. However, these opportunities nearly always took place within well-defined participation structures, such as individual and collective guided practice exercises and the call and response pattern of the echo technique. For better or worse, the participation structures deployed by Carolyn left few openings for extended conversation of any sort, whether planned or in response to students’ spontaneous utterances. I posited earlier that one beneficial consequence of the robustly structured sessions is that they may have contributed to the low occurrence of problems with intersubjectivity during Carolyn’s storytelling sessions. Conversely, the absence of opportunities for students to engage in extended conversations about story, within a storytelling program, might be considered unfavorable. Students’ direct participation in sustained discussions of story, if present, could have offered an additional, complementary pathway to constructing the narrative comprehension promoted by the performative aspects of retelling and enacting stories privileged in the storytelling program.

Jill

The reader can expect to find interpretative comparisons with Carolyn throughout the presentation of the findings for Jill. Having already traveled the same pedagogical territory with Carolyn, one could argue that it would be odd to present findings for Jill’s instructional practices

in isolation from the preceding presentation of the findings for Carolyn. In the course of analyzing Jill's repertoire within a particular category of practices, I applied a judgement of opportunity criterion to comparing Jill and Carolyn's practices. I adopted a strategy of highlighting comparisons at the most relevant points of opportunity, where it made the most sense in terms of the differences and similarities between Jill and Carolyn. I wanted to highlight the comparisons using an opportunistic rather than systematic approach in an effort to make the relationships and contrasts as salient for the reader as possible.

Vocabulary and Concept Instruction

Like Carolyn, Jill provided explicit instruction in concepts and vocabulary within every unit and across most sessions by using the echo technique, providing verbal and visual (via artifacts) information about concepts, or some combination thereof. While teaching from Carolyn's lesson outlines in units one and two, Jill taught most of the same lexical and conceptual items as Carolyn. As the year progressed and her comfort with delivering the storytelling program grew, Jill largely planned units three and four independently. Notably, when writing her own lesson plans, she did not design any sessions exclusively focused on vocabulary and concept instruction, as Carolyn had done to establish the "wilderness" setting at the start of unit one and to introduce the cast of characters in *The Gruffalo* at the beginning of unit two.

Still, vocabulary and concept development remained a significant thread across Jill's later, independently written sessions. For instance, she provided explicit concept instruction about vegetables and their attributes during unit three, session two. Expanding upon the gardening theme of *Up, Down, and Around*, Jill asked students to classify the real vegetables she brought into the classroom using contrasting attributes (e.g., smooth tomatoes/rough broccoli; long green beans/short potatoes) and then to enact each vegetable and its salient attributes through movement and dance. She carried this pattern of developing concepts via labeled attributes forward into the fourth and final unit. For example, in unit four, session two, Jill established attributes of each of the natural settings portrayed in *We're Going on A Lion Hunt* (e.g., the lake was soft and smooth; the swamp was sticky) and facilitated a collective dance in which students embodied the settings and their attributes.

Like Carolyn, Jill exercised three means for providing explicit instruction in vocabulary and concepts: call and response repetition of words and phrases, direct verbal or artifact-driven explanations, or some combination thereof. She deployed Carolyn's echo technique to give students opportunities to hear and repeat target words and phrases, sometimes eliciting multiple repetitions of the same word or phrase through playful use of varied vocal modes (i.e., speaking, whispering, and singing). However, Jill implemented the echo technique less systematically and pervasively than Carolyn, which meant her students generally had fewer opportunities to use, and sometimes also to hear, the target words. Outside of her use of the echo technique, Jill only occasionally provided explicit instruction in vocabulary and concepts by offering child-friendly definitions and explanations of words, but she made extensive use of artifacts to deepen students' understanding of target vocabulary and concepts. She often displayed illustrations that she had lifted from the focal picture books and photographic examples of the target concepts (e.g., wilderness; buffalo); these were largely the same visual aids seen in Carolyn's sessions. Jill's use of realia was generally aligned with Carolyn during units one and two, as well. The only divergence observed in the use of artifacts was the addition of two large cut paper letters, B and G, that Jill displayed on the board and pointed to multiple times as she distinguished buffaloes from Gruffaloes at the beginning of unit two, session one. Jill also used the books themselves as

artifacts more than Carolyn. She often held them up, pointed to front cover features, and opened the books to salient pages while teaching, particularly in the case of *The Gruffalo*.

Word Selection. The words Jill targeted for instruction generally came directly from the texts, from the illustrations, or were related to one or both, as in the case of the concept of “wilderness.” Other than substituting “wilderness” for woods or forest in the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* unit, she did not introduce more complex labels for textual language. Whereas Carolyn elevated book vocabulary from time to time, such as advancing the “long grass” in *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt* to a “meadow,” and the “rocks” in *The Gruffalo* to “boulders,” Jill did not alter story language for purposes of vocabulary instruction. However, in units three and four, as discussed earlier, Jill placed an emphasis on developing concepts present in the focal picture books (such as carrots, broccoli, and green beans in unit three and lake, swamp, and cave in unit four) through a variety of means, including artifacts, enactments, and dance, but also in part by assigning and labeling attributes that were not present in the text (e.g., rough, smooth, long, and short.)

And like Carolyn, Jill occasionally provided explicit instruction on concepts that were not taken from the focal picture books or even related to the story, but that would be considered part of the language of the performing arts. In unit four, session two, Jill introduced the concepts of “unison” and “canon” in dance. She explained what each term meant in an accessible manner and got students to repeat the words multiple times using the echo technique. Then she facilitated a retelling of the story of *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt* through dance and directed students to perform some movements in unison and some in a canon.

Vocabulary and Concept Instruction for Setting. Jill taught the concept of “wilderness” as the setting of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* with similar overall methods and materials to Carolyn, but in a different sequence leading up to their common culminating activity, a group enactment of “wilderness”. Carolyn introduced the wilderness using through tri-part echo technique and explicitly linked it to the story setting of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* right at the beginning of the session. She displayed and discussed photographs of several different wilderness landscapes, led the students through an example/non-example quiz about wilderness, and finally constructed a wilderness tableau on her felt board. Jill approached the task from a different angle: without referencing *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, she began to build a wilderness scene on her felt board (in fact, she would not connect the concept of wilderness to the setting of the focal story until after conducting the example/non-example wilderness quiz nearly 10 minutes into the session). As Jill added each natural element to the board (trees, rocks, and river), she deployed the echo technique, asking students to playfully speak, sing and whisper these words. At least half the students could be heard repeating the words. Jill then gestured to the completed tableau on the board and defined it as the wilderness (“This is called wilderness... When there's trees, and rivers, and rocks, it's the wilderness,” Unit 1, Session 1, Jan. 30, 2019). She attempted to engage students in the tri-part echo technique for “wilderness,” but, perhaps due to its novelty and length, this time no students repeated the word after her.

Jill next presented several photographs of wilderness scenes and asked students to name what they saw in these images. Several students, including Jeff, identified trees, the most prominent natural element, which Jill affirmed with simple repetitions. A few students, including Simon, declared they saw water in the image. Jill again repeated their observations but did not deliberately connect the very general term “water” to the particular body of water represented on her felt board (river). And in fact, during the next session activity, the example/non-example

wilderness quiz, she adopted this verbiage and referred to what appeared to be either a lake or a river in one photograph as “water.” This decision appeared to lay the foundation for two noteworthy interjections from Simon, who happened to be sitting next to Samantha and was leaning into her body. As the quiz continued, Jill displayed the next photograph, a picture of a kitchen selected to serve as a non-example of “wilderness.”

Excerpt 17

Unit 1, Session 1, Jan. 30, 2019

Students present: 6 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom, but mainly attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** ((holds up picture of a kitchen)) Is this wilderness?
- 2 **Most Students:** [No.
- 3 **Ram:** [Yes.
- 4 **Samantha:** [No:.
- 5 **Jill:** [No. Do we see tree:s?
- 6 **Samantha and Most Students:** No.
- 7 **Jill:** No:.. Do we see water-river?
- 8 **Samantha and Most Students:** No.
- 9 **Jill:** N[o:.. Do we see-
- 10 **Simon:** [IN SINK! IN SINK! ((sits up, leans forward, and points to the photograph))
- 11 **Samantha:** In the sink, in the sink, yes. ((nods at Simon))
- 12 **Simon:** ((relaxes back into Samantha))
- 13 **Jill:** Yeah. So, wilderness ((thumbs up))? Wilderness ((thumbs down)). No? ((holds her
- 14 hand in the thumbs down position and shakes it several times))
- 15 **Samantha and Jeff:** No. ((shaking thumbs down))
- 16 **Tristan and Ram:** ((shaking thumbs down))
- 17 **Jill:** [No:.. Okay. (4.0) ((turns around to pick up another example of wilderness))
- 18 **Simon:** [YEAH, YEAH, YEAH! ((holding thumb up))

Note how Jill, upon witnessing some minor disagreement among students over whether the kitchen image qualified as wilderness, began to take students through her attribute checklist. Everyone agreed that the kitchen was absent of trees, but as Jill moved to the next wilderness attribute, she may have realized that if she applied her newly adopted label, “water,” to the image currently under analysis, that could be potentially misleading since running water is present in kitchens. Seemingly in an attempt to circumvent confusion on the part of students, she course-corrected mid-quiz by creating a hybrid label, “water-river.” But Simon, who had repeatedly named water as the natural feature he noticed in Jill’s first photographic example of wilderness, vigorously challenged the general consensus by pointing out that there was indeed water in the sink.

Simon was a monolingual English speaker diagnosed with a speech delay. He frequently spoke at a high volume and with a tonal quality that was difficult to listen to and understand; had Samantha not revoiced and expanded his exclamation, “IN SINK, IN SINK!,” I would not have known what he said. Jill likely also benefited from Samantha’s intervention, especially considering this was her first day working with the class. Although she may well not have understood Simon initially, after hearing Samantha’s expansion, she did not respond directly to Simon’s counter argument. Her next statement, “Yeah,” might have been a brief acknowledgement of his point or agreement with Samantha’s expansion, or both. Regardless, Jill

moved on without substantially addressing Simon’s challenge, even as he continued to loudly assert that the kitchen counted as wilderness.

Carolyn and Jill both offered child-friendly but fairly incomplete definitions of the concept of “wilderness.” However, Carolyn offered a somewhat more expansive explanation anchored in the two photographs she originally held up as examples as wilderness. Carolyn first defined wilderness in accordance with the features in the initial photograph she displayed, stating, “This is Wilderness. Look! Look, look, look. There are trees, there are logs, there are leaves on the floor. There is sunlight. Trees and logs and sunlight coming through.” For the second photograph, she offered, “More wilderness. Look, look, look. This wilderness has mountains, rocks, a river, more bushes.” (Unit 1, Session 1, November 28, 2018). Perhaps in part due to her slightly broader definition of wilderness, which included eight distinct natural elements as attributes. She also implied the multiple nature of wilderness by starting her description of the second image with “More wilderness” but then going on to attributes not present in the first wilderness image. Perhaps in part for these reasons, no students in Laura’s class questioned how Carolyn classified the same set of photographic examples and non-examples of wilderness (including the kitchen image).

Jill limited her definition of wilderness to the three natural elements she had assembled into a tableau on her felt board—trees, rocks, and a river—and never offered a more nuanced definition of wilderness, even when she encountered Simon’s obvious misconception (which itself may have been due in part to a rule-bound misapplication of her narrow definition). Rather than publicly refining her definition to explain that no human handiwork is found in the wilderness, or that the presence of one of the three criteria was insufficient for a location to count as wilderness, or other possible reasons she might have offered to clarify to Simon (and his peers) why a kitchen does not qualify as wilderness, Jill opted not to directly address Simon’s misconception and moved forward with her lesson. In the discussion of the next photograph, a positive example of wilderness, Jill and Simon’s interactions were more harmonious.

Excerpt 18

Unit 1, Session 1, Jan. 30, 2019

Students present: 6 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom, but mainly attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** ((holds up a photograph of a wilderness scene with mountains, rocks, trees, and a
- 2 stream)) This wilderness? (*sic*) ((alternating between thumbs up and thumbs down))
- 3 **Simon:** Yeah. ((holds thumb up))
- 4 **Jill:** Thumbs up? ((holding her thumb up))
- 5 **Samantha:** How do you know? ((to Simon))
- 6 **Jill:** Wilderness.
- 7 **Jeff:** [I see tree! ((points to the picture))
- 8 **Jill:** [How do you-
- 9 **Simon:** [(My) brain (did) it. ((looking at Samantha, points to his head))
- 10 **Samantha:** ((looks at Jill)) Your brain did it. ((laughs))
- 11 **Jill:** Your brain knew it? ((points to her head))
- 12 **Simon:** Yeah.
- 13 **Jill:** What did your eyes see? You’ve got a good brain.
- 14 **Jeff:** I [see-
- 15 **Simon:** [() () () () () ((pointing to the picture, shouting unintelligibly))

- 16 **Jeff:** I see tree. ((pointing to the picture))
17 **Jill:** ((looking at Jeff)) Tree:s and river:. Goo:d. ((turns around to pick up the next
18 photograph)) All right.
19 **Simon:** THAT A ROCK! ((possibly pointing to the picture Jill just put on the ground
20 behind her))

Note how Samantha continued to be an active participant in this session, probing Simon's rationale for asserting that this latest picture qualified as wilderness and revoicing another of his utterances that was difficult to understand. Jill appeared to appropriate Samantha's query ("How do you-"), before interrupting herself in order to listen to Simon's response. She seemed to repeat Samantha's revoicing of Simon's reason as well, though with a slight modification to the verb ("Your brain knew it"). Jill was more receptive to addressing Simon's input for this positive pictorial example of wilderness, possibly because his opinion helped to advance her instructional goal of cleanly distinguishing wilderness from non-wilderness. She began to probe Simon's rationale further in her own way, asking, "What did your eyes see?," hoping, perhaps, that he would name the trees, rocks, or river (really, a stream) in the picture. But she didn't wait to hear his answer before complimenting him on his "good brain," and turning her attention to Jeff, whose easily discernible statement identifying trees as an attribute of wilderness in the picture (the same natural element he had pointed out earlier in the first image Jill) stood out over Simon's unintelligible shouting. Without the benefit of Samantha revoicing this penultimate statement from Simon, I cannot be certain what Simon was trying to point out in the photograph. However, his next utterance, "THAT A ROCK," may suggest that, like Brandon in Carolyn's unit two, session one (see Excerpt 2), he was motivated to attempt to produce a more recognizable version of his message in the face of lack of acknowledgement from his interlocutors.

Vocabulary and Concept Instruction for Character. The first session of the second unit had two central instructional objectives: to co-construct an atmosphere of fantasy into which "magic" words are introduced and then parlayed into deep exposure to the names and salient physical features of the characters in *The Gruffalo*. Jill used the echo technique, like Carolyn, to teach the concept of magic words and was quite successful in eliciting students' repetition of the four magic words she invented and demonstrated. However, Jill did not deploy the echo technique to facilitate students' learning about the characters in *The Gruffalo*, arguably a set of concepts more central to the story than the magic words used to fashion a sense of fantasy at the start of the session. Although Jill innately used the characters' names—mouse, fox, owl, snake, and Gruffalo—multiple times across the session as she introduced the word and picture cards and guided students to collectively perform each character, she never asked students to speak the characters' names, whereas that practice was widespread throughout Carolyn's instruction of the same session.

Summary. When Jill's instructional repertoire is compared to Carolyn, her overall ability to scaffold instruction for vocabulary and concepts was less robust, but it was still a significant aspect of her storytelling practices. The chief difference I found is that Jill provided fewer opportunities for students to hear and use the target words, the result of her less methodical implementation of the call and response echo technique. Aside from that important distinction, Jill shared a number of similarities with Carolyn, including working with largely the same set of target words and mobilizing similar or identical artifacts to create fast access routes to concepts. However, her instruction was sometimes hampered by the challenge of composing definitions

and explanations that were both meaningful for preschoolers yet accurate and her occasional willingness to overlook student misconceptions.

Repetitions, Expansions, & Extensions

Jill utilized the classic adult feedback routines of repetitions, expansions, and extensions in a mostly comparable fashion to Carolyn, though somewhat less frequently overall. She affirmed students' meanings with repetitions slightly more often than expansions and extensions. Like Carolyn, she expanded both verbal and nonverbal communication, thus providing a mature language model in response to students' approximated speech and unvoiced messages. However, though both she and Carolyn passed over opportunities to expand students' immature constructions into conventional usage at times, Jill did this a bit more often. Jill, like Carolyn, responded to students' approximations differently according to type of speech error, offering subtle corrections to phonological and syntactic approximations embedded into expansions and extensions, while offering more overt corrections to semantic/lexical errors that revealed misconceptions.

The key difference I found was not so much a distinction between Jill and Carolyn's repertoires but more a reflection of the differing classroom environments in which they worked, and, in particular, the different roles played by each classroom's lead teacher. Samantha's significant participation during units one and two influenced Jill's sessions in a number of ways, including her use of repetitions, expansions, and extensions, which appeared to bolster Jill's inclination at times to repeat and extend student utterances. Samantha's contributions to the lessons were largely supportive of the storytelling activities but sometimes her input seemed designed to steer lessons in directions misaligned with Jill's instructional goals.

Repetitions. A compelling example of the instructional push and pull that arose when Samantha took an active pedagogical role can be seen in Excerpt 19 below, taken from the first session of *The Gruffalo* unit. At this point in the lesson, Jill had nearly finished using her "magic" hat to generate the picture cards for each character. The word and picture cards for mouse, fox, owl, and snake were paired and placed in a row on the rug. Jill reminded the class that the last word card was Gruffalo and asked everyone to repeat "Gruffalo" with her (about half did). Samantha inserted herself into the instructional sequence by posing questions to students, seemingly in an effort to activate collective knowledge about the Gruffalo character before his image was revealed by Jill. Samantha's contributions to the lessons were largely supportive of Jill's instructional goals, such as when she revoiced student utterances that were difficult to hear or understand. But at times, Jill confronted balancing Samantha's contributions and instructional agenda against her own. Repeating Samantha's utterances (which themselves were sometimes repetitions or expansion of student utterances) may have been one of the ways she tried to manage these conflicts.

At this point in the lesson, Jill had nearly finished using her "magic" hat to generate the picture cards for each character. The word and picture cards for mouse, fox, owl, and snake were paired and placed in a row on the rug. Jill reminded the class that the last word card was Gruffalo and asked everyone to repeat "Gruffalo" with her (about half did).

Excerpt 19

Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019

Students present: 12 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

1 **Samantha:** What's a Gruffalo? ((looking at Omar, confused facial expression))

2 **Jill:** What is a Gruffalo?
3 **Omar:** [Um:,
4 **Hunter:** [() () () ()].
5 **Jill:** I don't think there's a Gruffalo in here. ((holds out the hat so that students can see to
6 the empty bottom))
7 **Samantha:** Simon, have you ever seen a Gruffalo?
8 **Simon:** Yeah!
9 **Samantha:** What is it?
10 **Simon:** In FOOD! ((brings one hand up to his mouth, as if eating))
11 **Samantha:** It's in food? ((incredulous tone))
12 **Simon:** Yeah.
13 **Jill:** It's in food? ((curious tone))
14 **Simon:** Yeah.
15 **Samantha:** We must eat Gruffalo.
16 **Jill:** Uh! We'd better find out what it looks like. I'm going to try the wor:d, ready? ((picks
17 up Gruffalo word card, places it in the hat))
18 **Samantha:** Gruffalo burgers tonight!
19 **Diane:** ((laughs))

Samantha's initial question, "What's a Gruffalo?" appeared to be designed to prompt students to consider their prior knowledge of Gruffaloes (or lack thereof). Up to this point in the session, other than establishing a collective agreement that the Gruffalo was an animal rather than a person, Jill had not intentionally taken steps to develop students' concept of the Gruffalo. Recall that the class had not yet heard Samantha read aloud *The Gruffalo* to them (although the older 4-year-olds—Omar, Kyle, and Jeff—might have remembered it from their work with Carolyn the previous school year). Note how Jill responded to Samantha's contributions by aligning some of her instructional agenda to Samantha's interests, in the form of repetitions. First, she appropriated Samantha's opening question, suggesting to the students that she, too, was curious to find out about the Gruffalo and wondered what they thought it might be. However, Jill then returned to her central pedagogical objective for that segment of the session: introducing students to character names and likenesses in a fantastical manner by using her hat as a vehicle for the "magical" transformation of word cards to picture cards.

But after Jill stated, "I don't think there's a Gruffalo in here," referring to the vacant hat she held up for students to inspect, Samantha redirected the instructional focus back to uncovering students' prior knowledge about the Gruffalo character. She posed her next question directly to Simon, who, although he had been staring intently into the hat, immediately turned around to face Samantha and declared confidently that he had seen a Gruffalo. Samantha's follow-up question, "What is it?" prompted Simon to assert, "in food." Importantly, Simon had repeatedly shouted "FOOD" during the earlier discussion of character word cards that had resulted in the group, guided by Jill, classifying the Gruffalo as an animal. Jill had not addressed Simon's proposition at that time, possibly because she could not understand what he was saying or perhaps because "food" did not fit into her expectations for how students would interpret the Gruffalo. It is possible that Samantha did not hear Simon's original assertions that the Gruffalo was food either because she had been focused on redirecting another student's behavior at the same time. Thus, Samantha may have been genuinely surprised as she exclaimed incredulously, "It's in food?" Because she repeated Samantha's question, which was itself an expansion of Simon's utterance, Jill thereby both repeated Simon's idea and once again merged her

pedagogical objectives with Samantha's. However, from that juncture point, the two adults' input to students diverged yet again. Jill continued to pursue her instructional goal of using the hat to magically reveal the picture card for each character while Samantha dropped her earlier goal of developing the concept of the Gruffalo by activating students' prior knowledge and instead branched off into a humorous tangent about eating Gruffalo burgers that seemed designed to reach her adult audience more than her students.

Although Samantha was, compared to her peers, an unusually involved teacher during storytelling sessions, I should note that as the year progressed, Samantha sometimes left Jill to teach large portions of the sessions on her own. She seemed to increasingly view the visits Jill paid to her classroom as opportunities to provide individualized teaching to students diagnosed with disabilities and complete other teaching duties. Furthermore, she tolerated her assistant teacher and aide's sporadic absences from the rug area during storytelling sessions. Predictably, without their teacher or any other staff members sitting with them and monitoring their participation and behavior, many students capitalized on the chance to speak loudly and move about freely. Jill allowed this commotion to a certain degree and re-directed students' behavior as best she could when it seemed to reach a critical point. She persevered and conducted her lessons, but they were more chaotic than those sessions when she had the support of Samantha and other staff members through their physical co-presence. Jill never asked Samantha to remain with her class to my knowledge, but I twice observed her talking to Samantha after sessions during which she had been largely left to fend for herself. Jill asked, somewhat indirectly, how Samantha thought she was doing with managing the class. On both occasions, Samantha professed great confidence in Jill's teaching ability and said that she thought the sessions had gone well.

Expansions and Extensions. In the second session of the Gruffalo unit, Jill, like Carolyn, used a small set of animal horns tied onto a shoelace to transform herself into the Gruffalo. Carolyn capitalized on the introduction of this artifact to explicitly teach the concept of "costume" and straightforwardly stated that the horns were her costume. In comparison, Jill placed the artifact in a small fabric pouch and asked the students to predict its contents, informing the class as she held up the pouch, "And then I have something that's going to help me turn into the Gruffalo. Who wants to guess what could be in here?" (Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2019). This question, which sounded unconstrained, or open-ended, to many students, actually had a constrained, or closed, set of possible answers (namely, the three physical characteristics that the students had learned about and practiced portraying earlier in that session: horns, claws, and teeth). The mismatch between the open construction of the question and the limited set of correct answers and the absence of scaffolding to narrow the scope of prediction task both appeared to contribute to a protracted teaching-learning interaction, an analysis of which can be found in the Intersubjectivity section. At the end of this exchange with students, when Jill was at last pulling the horns from the pouch, she offered an extension that helped to guide students to recognize this artifact as representing a major component of the Gruffalo's physical traits. She also affirmed a student's correct inference using repetition.

Excerpt 20

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** What part is this of the Gruffalo? ((slowly pulls two horns out from the pouch that are
- 2 attached to a brown shoelace))

3 **Omar:** Um.
 4 **Jeff:** The T[EETH!
 5 **Omar:** [Teeth!
 6 **Jill:** Oh my gosh, it could be the teeth. (1.0) It could be the teeth.
 7 **Omar:** Cause that look-
 8 **Artist:** It could be the teeth. ((holds the horns up to her mouth)) It could also be:, (0.5)
 9 ((lifts the horns on top of her head))
 10 **Omar:** The [horns!
 11 **Kyle:** [Horns.
 12 **Jill:** The HOR:::NS! Huh! ((gasps))
 13 **Omar:** These are the horns.
 14 **Jill:** I feel myself turning into the Gruffalo. You all helped me learn how to move like the
 15 Gruffalo and now, I'm getting the Gruffalo horns. (3.5) ((ties the horns onto her head))

Note how Jill extended Jeff's two-word utterance in Line 4 and Omar's single word exclamation in Line 5 into a more complex sentence, "Oh my gosh, it could be the teeth." In doing so, she affirmed their interpretations of the horns as teeth but simultaneously infused a degree of uncertainty into the task of determining which physical feature of the Gruffalo the artifact in her hands represented. She reinforced that uncertainty by repeating the conditional marker, "could," twice more. Jill held the horns up to her mouth to show students what they would look like if they were meant to serve as the Gruffalo's teeth, then lifted them up to her head as she prompted students to complete the sentence, "It could also be..." Once perched atop Jill's head, Omar and Kyle readily recognized the horns. Jill repeated Omar's utterance with great excitement, confirming the accuracy of his and Kyle's interpretation, before beginning the process of "becoming" the Gruffalo under the influence of her new garb.

Jill continued transforming into the Gruffalo character by adding two other salient physical characteristics: his teeth and his claws. She held up her copy of *The Gruffalo* and asked the class, "Am I looking like the Gruffalo? Can you see my horns?" (Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019). Omar, Kyle, and Tristan verbally agreed. Then, observably referencing the front cover as the authority on the Gruffalo's appearance, she stuck out her jaw, bared her teeth, and formed a claw shape with her free hand and asked the students if they could see her teeth and claws (Kyle claimed he could not see her claws, but Omar agreed that he could, and Jill continued on). Glancing at the book again, she asked, "What else do I need?" (Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019). Although Jill constructed this prompt as another unconstrained question, she likely had in mind a constrained set desired responses: the remaining Gruffalo physical characteristics that were named explicitly in the text and visible in the illustration of the Gruffalo on the front cover of the book, such as his "terrible tusks," the "poisonous wart" on his nose, or the "purple prickles" on his back. Kyle suggested that Jill needed some sugar to be the Gruffalo, demonstrating his interpretation of Jill's question as unconstrained. In a brief interaction with Kyle, Jill demonstrated adept acceptance of an unexpected student response and a capacity to productively incorporate it into her instruction.

Excerpt 21

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

1 **Jill:** Yeah? ((looks at the back cover)) What else do I need to have?
 2 **Omar:** Um:. (0.5)

3 **Kyle:** Sugar!

4 **Jill:** ((speaking in a deep voice with her teeth protruding)) Sugar. I'm gonna put some
5 sugar right in my pocket. ((pretends to pick up three piles of sugar and put them beside
6 her)) You're right. Gruffaloes really love sugar. How'd you know that? Very smart.

Note how Jill initially repeated Kyle's assertion and then, without missing a beat, crafted an extension of his proposition that provided a rationale for the function of sugar in the Gruffalo's identity: "You're right. Gruffaloes really love sugar." Sugar is, unlike the aforementioned horns, claws, and teeth, not a physical characteristic. Moreover, there is no basis in *The Gruffalo* or in any of the storytelling activities up to that point in the unit to warrant claiming sugar as an attribute of this character. But instead of questioning or correcting Kyle's assertion, Jill playfully adopted and extended it, exercising her artistic license to extemporaneously assign a new character trait to the Gruffalo: possession of a sweet tooth. Jill and Carolyn's flexible thinking and acceptance of a range of student responses (observed in Carolyn's teaching to an even greater degree) may have been a product of a combination of the affordances of the oral storytelling environment (wherein most activities were inspired by, but not yoked to, the focal picture books), their professional training as performing artists, and their long years of experience as consultants teaching in arts-integrated classroom contexts.

Jill expanded students' nonverbal communication into speech at a similar frequency as Carolyn. Like Carolyn, Jill encouraged students to use gesture to communicate at times, such as with the thumbs up/thumbs down signs seen in Excerpts 17 and 18. I found six instances of Jill expanding students' nonverbal gestures in the first session of unit two (the same number made by Carolyn when she taught that session), but none in the other two sessions closely analyzed. Two expansions of nonverbal communication into speech took place while Jill was encouraging the participation of two of the youngest children in the class, Rosie and Tristan, both typically developing, monolingual English speakers and fairly shy. Rosie, nearly 4 years old and one of only three girls in the class, rarely spoke in group instruction but participated capably in most storytelling performance-based activities. Tristan, the second youngest child in the class at 3-and-a-half years old, often appeared eager to join in session activities and could produce reasonable approximations of performance-based activities when guided by the examples of Jill and/or that of his peers, but appeared unsure of what to do and hesitant to speak when called on to perform individually.

At the beginning of this session, Jill worked to develop the concepts of Gruffalo and buffalo by differentiating the initial consonant sounds in the two words (/b/ versus /g/) and quizzing the students with photographs of buffaloes and illustrations of the Gruffalo. Next, she invited several volunteers, one at a time, to enact their choice of either a buffalo or a Gruffalo, followed by opportunities for the rest of the students to imitate their peer's performance. This activity, like many in the storytelling program, appeared designed to foster flexible thinking by creating a forum for multiple representations of the same concept as well as to structure the process of moving from individual student demonstrations to whole group rehearsals, all in preparation for some culminating event (in this case, enacting the Gruffalo's daily routines). Under Carolyn's vision for this robust form of scaffolding, individual student performances were framed by specific and positive feedback meant to encourage the performer as well as publicize that student's competence to the class (discussed further within the Noticing and Naming section).

Omar was selected by Jill to go first. He initially performed the Gruffalo character by baring his teeth and kneeling, but then he stood up and held his hands atop his head as if they

were horns. Jill asked him to stay in his spot, and as he sat back down on the rug, he released the horn gesture. However, Jill expanded Omar's nonverbal communication into speech as she responded, "Yeah, thank you. I like-were these your horns?" while mirroring his horn gesture and kneeling position (Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2019). When Rosie was called upon next, she stood up and walked toward Jill, who had a buffalo photograph and *The Gruffalo* on the rug in front of her. Jill asked, "Which one do you want to be?" Rosie pointed to the buffalo, and Jill expanded Rosie's pointing gesture into speech by announcing to the class, "She wants to be a buffalo." (Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2020). Next up was Tristan, who received explicit encouragement from Jill to use nonverbal communication, "Tristan, come on up. Point to what you want to be." Like Rosie, Tristan pointed to the buffalo picture, and Jill expanded his gesture into speech: "A buffalo!" After Rosie and Tristan made their selections, Jill requested of each, "Show us your buffalo" (Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2020). Rosie performed a buffalo by briefly crawling on her hands and knees, but Tristan simply returned to his rug spot despite encouragement and helpful suggestions from Jill.

At times, Jill overlooked opportunities to enrich children's language experiences by responding with more mature constructions of their intended messages. For instance, at the end of Excerpt 18 when Jeff said, "I see tree," Jill provided an extension, replying, "Trees and river. Good." Although her response provided a model of the plural construction of "tree," she stopped short of embedding "trees" into a sentence similar to Jeff's utterance, such as, "Yes, you see trees," or "I see trees, too, and I see a river." Jill was already transitioning to the next example in her set of wilderness/non-wilderness photographs when Simon asserted, "That a rock!," which may in part explain why she declined to respond to him all together. Still, she might have acknowledged his statement and chosen to offer a model of the obligatory verb "to be" by agreeing, "Yes, that's a rock," before fully moving on to presenting the next picture.

Overt Corrections. As seen with Carolyn, Jill offered overt corrections to children when their semantic/lexical errors revealed misconceptions. A good illustration of this dimension of Jill's use of language feedback routines occurred just after Tristan ended his turn without enacting the buffalo. Like Rosie and Tristan, the next volunteer, Ethan, indicated his choice by pointing to the buffalo photograph. However, this time Jill turned the task of voicing his selection over to the whole class, providing students with another opportunity to recognize and identify the buffalo, which in turn led to uncovering one student's confusion between buffaloes and cows.

Excerpt 22

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** [Ethan, ((points to Ethan)) what are you going to be, a buffalo or a gruffalo ((points
- 2 to the picture and the book)) (1.0) Which one?
- 3 **Nilar:** [((raises hand, then lowers it))
- 4 **Ethan:** ((points to the buffalo))
- 5 **Jill:** ((points to the buffalo)) This one? What's this g-, what's this called everybody?
- 6 ((holds up buffalo picture))
- 7 **Omar:** A [BUFFALO!
- 8 **Ahmad:** [Cow.
- 9 **Jill:** A [buffalo.;
- 10 **Rosie:** [buffalo

- 11 **Ahmad:** [A cow:
12 **Jill:** [That’s right, everybody. It kind of looks like a cow, but it’s a buffalo.
13 **Omar:** ((nods head))
14 **Nilar:** ((holds hands on her head as if they are horns)
15 **Jill:** E- ((turns to look at Nilar)) And it has horns, that’s right. Can you show us, Ethan,
16 how does your buffalo go. (1.0)

Ahmad, a monolingual English speaker diagnosed with disabilities and the youngest member of the class, twice revealed his confusion between cows and buffaloes. Jill’s overt correction to Ahmad’s misconception was similarly constructed to Carolyn’s correction of Denpo’s lemon/orange confusion in Excerpt 7. In an extension of Ahmad’s second response, “A cow,” Jill acknowledged the somewhat similar physical resemblance between a cow and buffalo but asserted unambiguously that the animal in the photograph was indeed a buffalo. Note also how Jill expanded into speech Nilar’s nonverbal expression of one of the most prominent physical attributes of buffaloes. She appeared to be starting to call on Ethan (“E-”) to begin enacting his version of a buffalo, but then saw Nilar’s horn gesture in her peripheral vision, turned to her, and agreed, “And it has horns, that’s right.” Jill did not capitalize on the opportunity afforded by Nilar’s gesture to further clarify Ahmad’s misconception by explicitly stating that cows do not have horns (and thus the animal in the photograph could not be a cow). This observable distinction between the two animals, one could argue, was somewhat implied by the use of the word “and” in her expansion, but students may not have picked up on that subtle contrast.

The remainder of Jill’s corrections to children’s misconceptions were more subtle, by varying degrees. For instance, in the first session of unit three, *Up, Down, and Around*, she produced three toy insects made of plastic—a fly, a grasshopper, and an ant—and asked students to identify them. Ram shouted, “Spider!” twice when Jill held up the plastic ant, to which she replied “An ant. It’s a little ant and he crawls” (Unit 3, Session 1, April 10, 2019). However, she was looking at the plastic ant as she spoke, and thus gave the impression that she was sharing factual information for the benefit of the whole class more than she was directly correcting Ram. Another example of a somewhat understated correction took place during the first session of unit two, when Jill asked the class whether *The Gruffalo* character names (mouse, fox, owl, snake, and Gruffalo) printed on word cards were classified as animals or people, Omar asserted that they were people. Jill quickly responded, “People? Are people fox? (*sic*). Although her words alone did not necessarily carry a message of correction, the speed with which she replied and the interrogative sentence form implied that she disagreed with Omar’s assertion, and thus her utterance served as a form of correction. This episode is further analyzed in Excerpt 31 within the Contextual Support section.

In contrast to Kyle’s surprising suggestion of sugar in Excerpt 21, Jill did not warmly accept and extend the unexpected response she received from Omar. But Omar’s claim that animals are people was patently false and thus exemplified the type of conceptual error made by children that adults generally feel obligated to correct. Facilitating the construction of accurate world knowledge fell within the scope of her role as a teaching artist guiding receptive young minds, including many emergent bilingual students. Furthermore, Omar’s response, if not corrected, would have thwarted Jill’s instructional objective to classify the characters in *The Gruffalo* as animals. But Kyle’s “sugar” suggestion, although notably unsupported by any evidence in the picture book or storytelling sessions, did not directly undermine Jill’s assumption of the Gruffalo’s character, in part because she had already donned the core elements of the

Gruffalo physical identity kit: horns, teeth, and claws. Interestingly, Simon's claim in Excerpt 17 that the mere presence of running water qualified kitchens as wilderness spaces represents the same type of misconception as Omar's: blatantly wrong, and in direct opposition to Jill's pedagogical aim at the time (developing the concept of wilderness). And yet she did not offer a correction to Simon or refine her definition of wilderness for the benefit of the class. Consequently, although Jill typically addressed students' misconceptions by providing corrections in the form of extensions that ranged from fully explicit to somewhat more understated, it appears that she may not have felt obligated to counter all inaccuracies presented by students. Her variable approach to encounters with student misconceptions is further discussed in the Intersubjectivity section.

Summary. Jill's feedback routines repertoire primarily consisted of repetitions and extensions of students' utterances. When a student utterance contained an immature construction, she generally chose to respond with an extension that, while demonstrating an orientation to shared meaning in communication and signaling her engagement with the child's message, did not address the speech error by providing the mature model. When Jill did offer expansions, they tended to sequentially follow a preceding expansion made by Samantha, suggesting that her inclination to use this particular feedback routine may have been influenced by Samantha's example. Jill did, however, expand students' nonverbal communication into speech independently and typically made corrections to students' semantic/lexical errors that ranged from fully explicit to somewhat more understated. Collectively, these practices helped to form a corpus of instructional speech that provided students with a responsive and mature language model.

Metalinguage of Story

The metalinguage of story (e.g., setting, characters, plot, beginning, middle, end), while present, featured even less prominently in Jill's language-promoting practices than in those of Carolyn. A notable exception for both colleagues was the infusion of the language of fantasy and imagination into their deliveries of the first session of unit two. In Jill's implementation of this session, she invoked magic regularly, labelling a large collection of ordinary artifacts as magical (e.g., magic hat, magic cape, magic wand, magic words) and recruiting these objects into many representations of magic within repeated invitations to pretend made to students and staff members. As part of her efforts to co-construct a strong sense of fantasy and make believe with students and staff, she used the term "magic" as a descriptor of her enchanted objects as well as a stand-alone proposition a total of 27 times across the session. She also referred to the Gruffalo as a "magical creature" and later, a "mystical creature."

Jill created four "magic" words and paired each one with a different gesture using her "magic" wand. Neither the words nor gestures were conventionally recognizable as invoking magic (unlike Carolyn's initial use of "bibbidi-bobbodi-boo" accompanied by a familiar rendition of Cinderella's fairy godmother's wand gesture). In fact, most of the magic words were ineffable combinations identifiable English phonemes and human vocalizations that cannot be fully captured by transcription. Despite the originality of the magic words and gestures she introduced, when asked by Jill to repeat them, most students did, and many even approximated her magic wand gestures without being explicitly directed to do so.

Jill's mobilization of the metalinguage of story was much less pervasive in the other two sessions closely analyzed, but this was also the case for Carolyn. And Jill, like Carolyn, exercised a small principal corpus of story words—story, pretend, setting, and character—of which the latter two were spoken only once each. Jill made more indirect references than direct

references to metalanguage of story and on the few occasions when she marshalled the formal metalanguage of story, she did not offer explicit instruction to develop the concepts, perhaps trusting in students' abilities to understand such terms by embedding them in a meaningful context. The second session of unit two demonstrated a more representative sample of Jill's use of the metalanguage of story: she directly referred to "setting" once, made four additional indirect references to setting, and directly used "pretend" three times. Relative to Jill, Carolyn used substantially more metalanguage of story when she taught that same session. She directly used "story" nine times, "storytellers" twice, and "character" once, made one indirect reference each to setting and beginning, and directly used "pretend" eleven times.

Direct Use. Direct use refers to teaching artists' use of words and phrases known to be a part of the metalanguage of story. This corpus includes the vocabulary of story elements, like setting, plot, character, beginning, middle, and end, as well as the term story itself. Traditional storytelling phrases such as "once upon a time" and "and they lived happily ever after" are also a part of the metalanguage of story. For the purpose of this study, the metalanguage of fantasy and imagination (e.g., pretend, magic, hocus pocus) was considered to fall within the larger umbrella of metalanguage of story due to its prominence in the first session of unit two, session one, and due to the generally broad use of the term "pretend."

Setting. Jill's direct use of "setting" occurred immediately after she adopted and extended Kyle's suggestion of sugar as the missing element needed to complete her transformation into the Gruffalo in Excerpt 21. Jill announced her plans to stage the classroom as the Gruffalo's forest home in advance of taping up the illustrations of river, trees, logs, and rocks that she used to establish stations for the upcoming enactments of the Gruffalo's daily routines. But Omar received the news that Jill would convert his classroom into the setting of *The Gruffalo* as unwelcome.

Excerpt 23

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** Okay. Let's see, (2.0) ((looks in her bag, appears to read her lesson plan outline))
- 2 gruffalo::, The problem with a Gruffalo (1.5) is that (0.3) ((turns to look at class)) he's not
- 3 a buffalo. And sometimes he feels kind of lonely. ((sad tone)) (3.0) ((turns to get a folder
- 4 out of bag, then turns back to face the class)) We are going to turn this classroom into the
- 5 setting of where the Gruffalo lives. ((begins pulling *The Gruffalo* illustrations out of the
- 6 folder))
- 7 **Omar:** What?! But, [(0.5) [no. ((smiling and shaking his head))
- 8 **Jill:** [Yeah:? ((taking pictures out of folder))
- 9 **Omar:** [We want to (save) it like it is.
- 10 **Jill:** [Watch this. (4.0) ((gathers tape and the illustrations; not looking at Omar))

Note that Jill shifted from the rehearsal of the Gruffalo's physical traits (e.g., horns, teeth, and claws) that preceded this excerpt and is analyzed between Excerpts 20 and 21 to briefly referring to her earlier work with the class on distinguishing buffaloes from Gruffaloes to then offering some insight into the Gruffalo's (imagined) emotional state ("And sometimes he feels kind of lonely."). Then, in a bit of a non sequitur, she moved the focus away from character analysis altogether to the construction of a physical environment that would enable her planned enactment of a day in the life of the Gruffalo. At this juncture in the session, Jill explicitly spoke of "setting" to frame what she intended to be the effect of posting the illustrations of trees, logs,

rocks, and a river around the classroom. She did not explain the concept of setting; however, each of her four subsequent indirect references to setting during the enactment of the *Gruffalo*'s routines implicitly reinforced the notion that where the *Gruffalo* lives is the setting of the story. She was quickly met by an unexpected response, though, from Omar ("What?! But, no"). Jill countered with an exhortation that he watch what she was about to do next and then proceeded to silently gather her materials and then depart from the rug area without addressing his concern. The entire time Jill was taping up the illustrations and pronouncing the location of the stations around the room, Omar continued to make comments of protest, which she either ignored or did not hear.

Although Omar made it clear that he did not want to see his classroom altered, how well he understood Jill's intention is uncertain. Upon first analysis it appears he interpreted her statement literally, as young children tend to do, and found it cause for alarm. That is a reasonable interpretation worthy of consideration. At the same time, Omar's true degree of concern is up for debate. As he responded, "What?! But, no" he was smiling and appeared to be in high spirits, as was common for him. In addition, Omar built a record across sessions one and two in *The Gruffalo* unit of making perplexing statements that did not seem to compute with his general level of world knowledge and overall good control of language. Recall from the Overt Corrections section discussion that when Jill asked the class in session one whether the characters she had just introduced on word cards were animals or people, he confidently asserted, "People!" In some of these instances, he received instruction or interventions from Jill and/or Samantha aimed at correcting his misconceptions, and yet he continued to make such statements, rendering his obstinacy fairly impenetrable. Not long after Omar classified the characters as people (instead of animals), Jill pulled the picture card for Fox out of her magic hat. Omar declared, "It not a fox, it's a horse," prompting Samantha to look at him with a combination of displeasure and bewilderment. Kyle, Ahmad, Samantha, and Jill each stated in quick succession that the animal on the card was indeed a fox, and yet Omar re-issued his dissent: "That not a fox." (Unit 2, Session 1, March 20, 2019). However, by the very end of that session, as shown in Excerpt 24, he had acquiesced and demonstrated recognition of the fox character as one of the animals in the story.

Although an emergent bilingual student, Omar was a quick-thinking, highly sociable and jovial conversationalist. As one of the oldest members of the class (he would turn 5-years-old in June) Omar demonstrated a range of knowledge both in and out of storytelling sessions that typically was age appropriate and sometimes even surpassed developmental expectations. A compelling example of his ability to connect his diverse knowledge to novel (or relatively novel) experiences occurred at the end of second session of *The Gruffalo* unit as Jill was leading her favorite closing activity, a movement routine built from the song, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Toward the end, she referred to each child as a star and asked all the "stars" to "twinkle up" on their toes and then "twinkle down" to the floor again. As his classmates descended to the rug, Omar narrated the action: "The shooting stars falling." (Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2019).

The Omar who could spontaneously compose a lyrical description of his classmates as shooting stars falling to the earth is hard to reconcile with the Omar who, in the first session of this same unit, confused a fox for a horse and classified a group of animals as people. The dissonance between these contrasting performances obliges me to consider the possibility that, from time to time, Omar may have intentionally disagreed with the expected consensus on factual matters because he enjoyed doing so. Given his jovial demeanor, perhaps Omar viewed such acts as opportunities for good, silly fun. And if this was true in part or whole, and if Jill

interpreted his occasional resistance to accepting common knowledge as manipulation, she might have started to view Omar's interruptions as an impediment to her instructional objectives that were best ignored (reminiscent of the approach she took with Simon in Excerpt 17 and at the end of Excerpt 18). However, by choosing to ignore Omar in Excerpt 23, Jill closed off an opportunity to investigate whether he truly believed his classroom would be permanently altered (in which case she could have assuaged his worry, and that of any students who had interpreted her statement literally) and to talk further about the concept of setting.

Character. Jill deployed the term "character" just once, during the first session of unit two. Recall that the session's focus was an introduction to the characters of *The Gruffalo*, carried out playfully using the language of fantasy (and magic in particular). The session was ripe for use of the term "character," but Jill spoke it only once, near the very end of the session, and almost as an aside. After she finished the closing routines and had just handed the direction of the class back to Samantha, she glanced behind her and saw her copy of the book *The Gruffalo*, which she had not used up until that point. She appeared to remember an element of the lesson she had forgotten to implement earlier: making an explicit link between the book and the five characters she had introduced and developed with the students. Jill exclaimed, "Oh, you know what I forgot! I'm wondering if all of that had to do with this next book you're going to read" and held up *The Gruffalo* (Unit 2, Session 1, March 20, 2019). As Jill spoke, Samantha quickly stated that she had not yet read the book, appearing to misinterpret Jill's purpose for bringing up the book at the last possible moment. Samantha then attempted to discharge Jill from the helm of the class by requesting the students all to thank her, which they did. But Jill had one final point to make: explicitly linking the book to the character names and pictures the students had worked with over the course of the session.

Excerpt 24

Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019

Students present: 12 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** Thank you, you guys. ((still holding up the book)) So when your t-, when Miss
- 2 Samantha reads this to you-
- 3 **Samantha:** No, up on your bottoms. ((speaking to Simon, Nilar, and Kyle, who are lying
- 4 on their stomachs, looking at Jill))
- 5 **Jill:** ((points to Gruffalo on cover)) You're going to be looking for, oh look! I see the
- 6 mouse. ((points to the mouse on cover)) I see the Gruffalo. What other animals that we did
- 7 today are you going to [see in this story?
- 8 **Omar:** [FOX!
- 9 **Kyle:** Snake.
- 10 **Omar:** Snake.
- 11 **Jill:** Maybe the fox, maybe a snake. Maybe the owl ((flaps her arms slowly once)). Yeah?
- 12 So be looking for those characters in the book. Bye for now, I'll see you soon.

Note how in Line 6 Jill still referred to the characters as animals, as she had done up to that point in the lesson (although they were now situated "in the story"). But then in Line 12, she replaced the term "animals" with "characters." Although the semantic link she constructed between animals and characters was loose, some children may have inferred correctly that the "other animals" they had enacted earlier were the same entities as the "characters in the book." Jill seemed to vacillate between a desire to directly name the characters not depicted on the cover

illustration (the fox, snake, and owl) and wanting to have students discover those characters for themselves during the read aloud, as indicated by her use of a marker for tentativeness, “maybe.” In her final turn speaking with the class, Jill charged the students with the task of searching for the five characters in the book during their upcoming read aloud lesson with Samantha. And, in fact, Samantha harkened back to this directive as she was preparing to read the book by asking her students to name all of the animals that had come out of Jill’s magic hat. Samantha then summarized their purpose for reading, using similar language as Jill: “So, we’re going to see those characters in this story” (Read Aloud, March 25, 2019).

Indirect Use. Indirect use refers to allusions made to the official terms of story metalanguage. For both Jill and Carolyn, this practice happened most often for the concept of setting, particularly in unit two, session two. In speaking about the forest setting of *The Gruffalo*, they each that indirectly referred to the concept of setting, offering comments like, “because he lives by himself in the woods” (Jill, March 27, 2019) and “One of the places in the forest is a river” (Carolyn, January 23, 2019). Given that little direct use of the metalanguage of story occurred within the teaching artists’ instructional language, I judged indirect use important to capture and analyze.

Setting. An example of Jill’s indirect use of the metalanguage of story happened during the first session of the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* unit. The overarching objective of this session was to develop the concept of wilderness as the story setting. Yet, besides making a single allusion to setting, Jill did not use any other metalanguage of story during this session. Shortly after the quiz of wilderness examples and non-examples examined in Excerpts 17 and 18, Jill made the first and only link to the story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* using an indirect reference to setting. She held up the copy of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* that she had brought with her (written and illustrated by James Marshall) and stated, “So, when you guys read the book, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, it takes place in the wilderness” (Unit 1, Session 1, Jan. 30, 2019). It is important to point out that when Jill said, “So, when you guys read the book, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, it takes place in the wilderness” (Unit 1, Session 1, Jan. 30, 2019), she used the past tense of the word “read.” She was referring to what she presumed to be the students’ recent experience of listening to Samantha read aloud *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Jill alluded to setting with the phrase, “it takes place in the wilderness,” and layered gesture and artifacts onto her speech to further elucidate her point. She simultaneously circled the front cover of the book with her hand while speaking, “it takes place.” As she continued with, “in the wilderness,” she circled the felt board on which she had earlier built a wilderness scene using felt trees, rocks, and a river.

Given that the entire session was devoted to constructing “wilderness” as the setting for the story, it came as a surprise that Jill did not use the term “setting” outright or make any additional allusions to setting. However, in this particular session, Jill was fairly aligned with Carolyn in the degree to which she recruited the metalanguage of story into her instructional language. Carolyn made just two indirect references to setting when she taught that same session.

Summary. The metalanguage of story and related terms, although periodically present, generally played a minor role in Jill’s repertoire of language-promoting practices, and to an even lesser degree than Carolyn. Other than single uses of “character” and “setting,” she did not work the formal language of story elements into her instruction, and like Carolyn, she exposed students to a relatively small corpus of terms. Further, Jill’s instruction for “character” and “setting” was implicit; however, similar to Carolyn, she made several indirect references to

“setting” which, combined with the formal use of that word may have contributed to students’ construction of tacit understandings about this story element.

Noticing and Naming

The naming and noticing technique of exploiting teachable moments to help learners recognize what they are doing well was a moderately widespread element in Jill’s repertoire of language practices, and similar to Carolyn, Jill generally demonstrated acceptance of a wide range of student attempts and approximations. But in addition to mobilizing this teaching strategy somewhat less frequently than Carolyn, Jill deployed it in a qualitatively different manner in that a fair amount of the feedback she provided to children about the aspects of their actions that she wanted to highlight was vague rather than specific. And although the specific feedback to students that she did provide was usually of her own construction, as with her use of repetitions, expansion, and extensions, the level of precision with which she named and noticed students’ strategic and partially correct actions appeared to be influenced at times by Samantha’s active involvement in the storytelling sessions.

Vague Naming. An example of vague feedback given by Jill occurred near the end of the first session of *The Gruffalo* unit. Jill had introduced all the characters in the story (mouse, fox, owl, snake, and Gruffalo), first with word cards, then with picture cards, and lastly by giving students opportunities to collectively perform their understandings of each animal. When she reached the final character, the Gruffalo, Jill provided extra scaffolding prior to the group enactment, conceivably because the Gruffalo, as a novel invention by the author of *The Gruffalo* was less familiar than the other characters, all known animals. She reminded the students of the Gruffalo’s prominent physical characteristics (e.g., his horns, teeth, and claws), and invited them to perform each feature in turn (Can you show me your horns? Can you show me your teeth?, etc.) garnering extensive student participation in these rehearsal experiences. Jill then shifted from this review of several of the Gruffalo’s key physical traits to asking the class about the Gruffalo’s stature. An interaction ensued in which she highlighted the Gruffalo enactments of Samantha and one student.

Excerpt 25

Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019

Students present: 12 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** AND does he, is he SMALL ((holds hands fairly close together)) or big? ((holds
- 2 hands somewhat farther apart))
- 3 **Omar:** BIG!
- 4 **Samantha:** ((stretches arms out wide, while still holding claw gesture and jutting out her
- 5 chin and baring her teeth))
- 6 **Rosie:** ((stretches arms wide, but without claw gesture or baring teeth))
- 7 **Jill:** Big, he’s gonna stand up, ooh, Miss Samantha’s got a good Gruffalo going, ((points
- 8 to Samantha, then begins scanning the class to see who else she can acknowledge))
- 9 **Simon:** ((looks at Samantha, then kneels, with arms outstretched and begins growling
- 10 again with increasing volume))
- 11 **Jill:** Rosie’s got a good one, Ethan’s got- Simon, shh, ((places finger to her lips))

Note that Jill used Samantha’s contribution to the Gruffalo rehearsal as a teaching example, calling students’ attention to her skillful performance. Her praise for Samantha, though, was rather vague: “Miss Samantha’s got a good Gruffalo going.” What constituted a “good”

Gruffalo, though, remained unspecified, leaving unfinished the bridge built by language between experience and knowledge (Halliday, 1993). Meanwhile, as Jill observably scanned the class, searching for more examples among the students that she could highlight, Rosie had already noticed Samantha's performance and mimicked her outstretched arms. This caught Jill's attention, but she named Rosie's approximation of the Gruffalo's large size with the same indistinct feedback: "Rosie's got a good one." Ethan noticed Samantha's outstretched arms after hearing Jill praise her performance and he imitated Samantha's wide apart arms, as well. Rosie and Ethan were the only students who tried to approximate Samantha's outstretched arms, which was certainly the most noticeable feature of her performance. Neither student attempted to imitate her claw gesture or bared teeth, but perhaps they might have tried if they had heard Jill describe each salient aspect of Samantha's performance.

Jill appeared to be on the verge of saying, "Ethan's got a good one," but she interrupted herself to redirect Simon, whose menacing impersonation of the Gruffalo featured loud growling, making it difficult for everyone to hear. Simon had begun growling earlier when Jill asked students to show her their Gruffalo teeth, but was not so loud that he disrupted the lesson at that point. After quieting Simon, Jill decided that the rehearsal phase was over and the time had come to transition into a group enactment of the Gruffalo. Placing the Gruffalo picture card in her hat and waving her magic wand above it, she executed a magical phrase and declared everyone to be a Gruffalo ("Mappety, mockety, muffalo, I turn you into a Gruffalo!"). Students stood up and began to walk around, many with their arms extended, some holding their hands in a claw position, and a few taking large steps. As Jill observed this collective action, she called attention to the aspects of students' performances she wanted to highlight. This time, her feedback was more specific: "I see your teeth, I see your claws, I see your horns, I see how big you are." Yet part of this naming was aspirational; no students were observed baring their teeth or making horn gestures either before or after Jill appreciated the presence of these Gruffalo traits in their "midst." More robust scaffolding from Jill, such as by offering more precise naming and noticing of Samantha's successful integration of the four targeted Gruffalo characteristics (teeth, claws, horns, and size) prior the collective enactment may have been helpful to facilitate students' ability to holistically perform the Gruffalo character.

As discussed in the Repetition, Expansions, and Extensions section, Jill launched the second session of unit two by distinguishing buffaloes and Gruffaloes both phonologically (by contrasting initial sounds; /b/ versus /g/) and graphically (by contrasting depictions of the Gruffalo and buffaloes). She then invited several students to demonstrate an embodiment of either a buffalo or a Gruffalo for the class. However, she provided minimal scaffolding to prepare students to be successful with this task, telling them only, "You show me, raise a quiet hand, and we're gonna try to see if you are a buffalo or a Gruffalo" (Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019). She may have assumed that students would know how to perform the two creatures from the earlier effort spent distinguishing them, and thus did not need specific guidance on how to perform a buffalo or Gruffalo. Though Jill did not always publicly acknowledge the prominent features of students' buffalo and Gruffalo approximations (some more accurate than others), Samantha offered acknowledgement of their successes.

Excerpt 26

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

1 **Jill:** Okay, you guys. You show me, raise a quiet hand,

2 **Omar:** ((hand shoots up))
3 **Jeff & Ahmad:** ((both begin to raise hands, but then stop as Artist continues speaking))
4 **Jill:** and we're gonna try to see if ((touches buffalo photograph) you are a buffalo or a
5 Gruffalo. ((points to Gruffalo on book cover))
6 **Omar:** ((switches hands, raises the new hand a bit higher))
7 **Jill:** You can say it, too, when you do it. Go Omar. ((points to Omar))
8 **Omar:** Um..
9 **Jill:** What are you?
10 **Omar:** I'm a Gruffalo.
11 **Jill:** Ooh, show us your Gruffalo!
12 **Omar:** ((kneels and bares his teeth))
13 **Jill:** Ooh! I like it. [Everybody, let's be Omar's gruffalo with him.
14 **Samantha:** [Showing his teeth! ((smiles and nods at Omar, then looks at Jill)
15 **Omar:** ((makes a horn gesture atop his head and stands up; still baring his teeth))
16 **Jill:** Can you stay right in your spot?
17 **Omar:** ((sits back down))
18 **Jill:** Yeah, thank you. I like- were these your horns? ((kneels and holds hands atop her
19 head to look like horns))
20 **Omar:** ((makes the horn gesture again))
21 **Jill:** Can we all make Omar's Gruffalo?
22 **Tristan, Rosie, Ahmad, Ethan, & Nilar:** ((make horn gesture))
23 **Jill:** ((holds up book)) He was a /g/ Gruffalo. Good job.

Despite receiving little direction from Jill about what was expected, Omar was notably successful at enacting the Gruffalo. First, he was able to name his temporary identity when prompted and second, he demonstrated two salient features of the Gruffalo's physique, teeth and horns, that Jill had taught the class during session one the previous week. Jill indicated her pleasure with Omar's enactment with vague praise ("Ooh, I like it") and moved to have his classmates imitate his portrayal without specifying what about Omar's performance she liked. Samantha was also delighted with Omar's performance but, in contrast to Jill, she named Omar's teeth as the exact cause of her pleasure ("Showing his teeth!"). Samantha appeared to make this statement spontaneously, without specifically directing it to Jill, but as she spoke, she briefly looked at Jill to see her reaction before turning back to Omar. Jill may not have fully heard what Samantha said due to their overlapping speech, though, and due to the camera angle, I could not tell whether Jill noticed Samantha's passing gaze.

Omar continued to build his enactment of the Gruffalo by making a gesture for horns with his hands atop his head and simultaneously rising from a kneeling to standing position. Jill, it seemed, was concerned that he was leaving his rug spot and asked him to sit back down; Omar eliminated the horns gesture and bared teeth when he complied with her request. At that point, Jill acknowledged Omar's enactment of the Gruffalo's horn in the form of a question ("were these your horns?") and by mimicking his performance but without naming specifically how he used his body to signify horns. Omar responded by resuming the horn gesture from a seated position. But even without specifying how Omar held his hands a top his head to represent horns, (and perhaps in part because they had already rehearsed the horns gesture during session one), Jill was able to enlist the participation of about half the class when she asked them to "make Omar's Gruffalo."

While Omar had the previous week's session to inform his skillful enactment of the Gruffalo, the next volunteer, Rosie, elected to perform a buffalo but without the benefit of any demonstration from Jill or guided rehearsal. To reiterate, it appeared that Jill presumed that the preceding activity, in which she displayed images of buffaloes and the Gruffalo and quizzed students on their identities, would serve as adequate input to guide individual performances of the two creatures. Perhaps as a result, and likely also due in part to her shy personality, Rosie briefly enacted a rather subdued buffalo. When Jill appeared not to realize that Rosie regarded her initial foray into the center of the rug as her buffalo performance, Samantha publicly noticed and named a feature of Rosie's enactment.

Excerpt 27

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** What would you like to be?
- 2 **Rosie:** ((stands up, walks toward Jill))
- 3 **Jill:** Uh! Which one do you want to be?
- 4 **Rosie:** () ((points to the buffalo picture))
- 5 **Jill:** Huuh! ((gasping as if excited)) She wants to be a buffalo. Show us your buffalo.
- 6 **Rosie:** ((turns around, drops to her knees, briefly crawls, then returns to her spot))
- 7 **Jill:** Ooh! ((leans forward on her knees, partially mimicking Rosie)) How does it go,
- 8 Rosie? Can you go back to your spot and show us how your buffalo goes?
- 9 **Rosie:** ((kneels with arms in front of her, touching the floor with her palms))
- 10 **Samantha:** On her knees,
- 11 **Jill:** Ooh, on the knees. Just like this everybody. Can we be with Rosie's buffalo?
- 12 **Ethan:** ((kneels and leans forward, mimicking Rosie and artist))
- 13 **Rosie:** ((sits back on bottom))
- 14 **Jill:** She changed it. She went back to sitting. ((sits back on her bottom))

After selecting the buffalo as her choice, Rosie briefly crawled in the center of the rug before returning to her rug spot. Jill seemed not to fully recognize that this fleeting interlude was, in fact, Rosie's buffalo performance. She did, however, indicate some appreciation for Rosie's performance because she enthusiastically said "Ooh" and leaned forward on her own knees, partially mirroring Rosie's body position. Continuing to demonstrate concern that students remain at their rug spots, Jill asked Rosie, "Can you go back to your spot and show us how your buffalo goes?" Rosie faced away from Jill as she retreated back to her rug spot, but as she rotated and looked at Jill again, she appeared to mimic Jill's body position (kneeling with her arms at her sides and her palms resting flat on the ground, which, in turn was a partial imitation of Rosie's initial buffalo enactment).

When Samantha offered the observation, "on her knees" she did not look at Jill or Rosie (she was, at the time, trying to keep a highly restless Binsa sitting on her lap), but from her tone it appeared that she may have been directing this comment to Jill. From Samantha's perspective, it may have seemed problematic that Jill did not acknowledge Rosie's original performance at the center of the rug and had yet to recognize Rosie's current enactment. Even if Samantha's naming of Rosie's buffalo performance was directed to the group in general, Jill picked up on this input, as indicated by her revoicing of Samantha's comment and decision to proceed to the collective enactment portion of the activity. Only one student, Ethan, participated in the enactment as Rosie herself returned to a seated position. Jill's tone suggested that she may have

felt a bit resigned and eager to move on when she observed of Rosie's behavior, "She changed it. She went back to sitting." She quickly solicited a new volunteer.

Teachers cannot point out what students are doing well and publicize their successes if they do not first recognize the strategic and partially correct aspects of students' accomplishments. If Jill did not perceive Rosie's initial performance, that lack of recognition, in turn, would prevent her from being able to call attention to its salient features. Whether Jill did not understand that Rosie was enacting her personal version of a buffalo when she briefly crawled, was hoping to see more distinctly recognizable buffalo body positions and behaviors, desired a longer, more sustained enactment from Rosie, or some combination thereof, cannot be determined. However, into this void of teacher feedback and recognition, Samantha entered to perform the work of noticing and naming. Samantha's identification of Rosie's kneeling position seemed to influence Jill in the moment, as she quickly repeated Samantha's comment and ceased trying to get Rosie to perform her buffalo differently. Samantha's influence may have extended to an encounter Jill had just a minute later with another student, Ethan. Ethan offered a much more limited approximation of a buffalo than Rosie's, in which he rubbed his forehead and then held his hand motionless on his forehead, and yet Jill demonstrated speedy, warm acceptance of his attempt by mirroring his body position with a hand on her forehead and offering this comment: "Ooh, ooh. Look at Ethan's buffalo. Can we make it also? Just like Ethan." Notice, though, that despite readily recognizing Ethan's performance, Jill did not describe his actions, omitting the critical "naming" step of the noticing and naming pedagogical strategy.

Specific Naming. Jill went on to not notice and name several students' strategic actions without any further involvement from Samantha in the next activity. After several students mimicked Ethan's buffalo enactment, Jill declared that she would become the Gruffalo but needed the students' help to think about how the Gruffalo moves. She invited students to share how they thought a Gruffalo might move, and this time, she identified specific features in nearly every student's performance in addition to continuing to mirror their movements with her own body. When Binsa stomped her foot twice, Jill both imitated and named her actions, "Ooh, stamp the feet. Binsa, Binsa stamps her foot." Rosie followed suit and lightly stomped her foot, prompting Jill to observe, "And Rosie stamps her foot." Ethan took a turn next, demonstrating a brief crawl into the center of the rug that was reminiscent of Rosie's buffalo enactment. Jill acknowledged and named the relative height of his movement, "Ooh, down like this. Ahhh!," while producing a more animalistic looking crawl than that of Ethan. She then extended his contribution to include upright movement, perhaps to better align with the portrayal of this character as a bipedal creature in *The Gruffalo*, adding, "Might be down, then maybe comes up, then maybe goes down again." As Jill said, "maybe comes up," she stood up and took a few steps, before honoring Ethan's intention by returning a crouched position.

Jill selected Omar as the next and final volunteer; he demonstrated running across the rug to a corner where no one was sitting and then back to his rug spot, slightly overshooting his position due to speed. Jill named the speed of his movement and offered appreciation for his attention to safety, while again exhibiting concern that he stay at his spot, "Ooh, maybe he's fast sometimes! Thank you for showing me safely. Can you sit back down again?" She offered further description of Omar's enactment of the Gruffalo's movement as she demonstrated a more theatrical, precise version of Omar's run, "Okay. Watch me, I'm gonna try. Run really fast, then turn around, then back to your spot." In and through her interactions with Binsa, Ethan, and Omar, Jill co-constructed with students an inclusive understanding of how the Gruffalo moves that was enriched by her identification and naming of specific salient features visible within each

volunteer's enactment and which demonstrated acceptance of multiple representations of a single concept. In addition, as seen in her responses to Ethan and Omar, she sometimes used her mature motor control and stronger capacity for spatial planning to provide more refined models of possible Gruffalo movements.

Summary. Jill deployed the naming and noticing technique in a moderately widespread manner and was generally accepting of divergent student responses and attempts within storytelling activities. However, some of the feedback she offered was rather vague, and it was absent altogether at times from activities that appeared to be designed (under Carolyn's vision) for teacher input to propel the lesson forward, and with it, students' learning. However, Jill did at times appear to be positively influenced by Samantha's modeling of naming students' strategic actions. Jill called on student volunteers to demonstrate an enactment, commented upon it, and then invited the rest of the class to imitate the students' performances many times. Within the two-part equation of noticing and naming, Jill nearly always signaled her acknowledgement of students' approximations by mirroring their performances with her body and with some sort of accompanying comment, but that comment could fall anywhere along the ambiguous-precise continuum, often landing closer to the vague end of the spectrum. This tendency distinguished Jill from her colleague, Carolyn, who nearly always provided specific feedback to students, especially when noticing and naming was one of the core intended pedagogical features of the activity.

Narration

Jill employed narration at all levels identified in the coding scheme —narration of personal actions, narration of personal experiences, and narration of the unit story (or variation of the unit story)— across units and session activities. Like Carolyn, her use of the narrative register was moderately widespread, and the forms of narration she used varied based on session content and format. Although Carolyn began most sessions by briefly narrating her personal actions as she transitioned from the role of classroom guest to teacher in charge and physically moved to assume the central spot on the rug, Jill narrated her personal actions in this manner less often. Sessions generally began with Jill greeting the students and launching into opening routines. However, the practice of narrating personal actions was observed occasionally, such as at the juncture between the end of the opening routines and the start of the main content during the first session of the *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* unit.

Excerpt 28

Unit 1, Session 1, Jan. 30, 2019

Students present: 6 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom, but mainly attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** Okay, watch me with your eyes. ((points to her eyes)) Watch me with your eyes. Ooh,
- 2 Miss Jill's getting her felt board, ((reaches behind and pulls out felt board, which she
- 3 displays in front of her body facing the class)) Miss Jill's getting her felt pieces.
- 4 **Jeff:** () () () ((looking at the felt pieces she has placed beside her; tone is disagreeable
- 5 or critical))
- 6 **Jill:** Miss Jill is making, what is this? ((places brown tree trunk at the top of the
- 7 felt board)) Let's see-
- 8 **Jeff:** Tree!
- 9 **Ram:** Tree!
- 10 **Jill:** -what this is. A tree! Nice job! ((adds green treetop))

Note how Jill used the narrative register to mark her actions in the transition from an opening routine to the launch of the core storytelling content for that session. The narration of personal actions served a managerial purpose by allowing her to “hold the floor” during a time that could be otherwise easily overtaken by a vocal student. This practice also served to improve the accessibility of input, particularly for emergent bilinguals and children with language delays, by pairing visible actions with verbal explanations. Moreover, it increased the transparency of her actions and intentions and demonstrated to students how everyday tasks and events can be narrated. Note also how Jill referred to herself in the third person, not an uncommon practice among teachers, and adopted the “Miss” honorific that was the naming custom for staff members in Stapleton classrooms. Jill’s narration of her personal actions ended when she decided mid-sentence not to tell students she was making a tree and instead to ask them to deduce the image she was assembling on the board from her felt pieces (“Miss Jill is making, what is this?”). Jeff inferred that it was a tree from only the first felt piece representing a tree trunk on the board and Ram soon repeated Jeff’s idea. Jill affirmed their idea with an expansion of their one-word utterances that included the requisite article “a.”

Jill narrated a personal experience only once, when it was called for by the lesson outline for the first session of the second unit. She shared a fictitious account, similar to Carolyn’s, of having recently discovered the hat and word cards she would go on to use to introduce the character in *The Gruffalo*, but her version went on for some time as she intermingled bits of the story with the introduction of artifacts. And prior to narrating the fictitious origin story of the hat and word cards, Jill had already used the narrative register several times in her efforts to invoke a sense of magic and fantasy with the students. In her first words after concluding the opening routines, she alerted students to expect an upcoming story, “I have a story to tell you guys. It has to do with magic. But before we start, I have a magic wand. We’re gonna practice some magic words to make a magic potion” (Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019). She co-constructed a sense of magic and fantasy with students by providing several demonstrations of invented magic words (e.g., shoo-wah, dot-dot-duh) that she paired with magic wand movements, followed by guiding each student to generate a personal magic word and magic wand movement.

After the final student’s turn, Jill returned to advancing her story: “So today is our magic day. And you won’t believe what happened to me. I was walking down the hall, just outside the door, and I came upon, this hat. And I’m wondering if it’s a magic hat? Let’s all do a magic word and see... if it turns into a magic hat.” (Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019). Jill kicked off her narrative by trying to hook in her listeners with a confident claim: “You won’t believe what happened to me.” As she employed the turn of phrase, “came upon this hat,” she pulled a black hat out of her bag of materials. Although she appeared to be inviting the class to employ a magic word with her to imbue the hat with magic, she did not provide any scaffolding to prepare the students to join with her. She performed another invented magic word (La-la-la-la-loo), waved her wand, then gasped and began to theatrically pull out of the hat what appeared to be a long, silky purple scarf. Omar shouted excitedly, “It’s a cape!” Jill affirmed and extended his interpretation, “It’s a magic cape,” and tied the cape around her neck. Reinforcing the atmosphere of magicality, she insinuated that wearing the cape was generating magical powers before re-launching her fictitious personal story.

Excerpt 29

Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019

Students present: 12 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** I'm feeling the magic, starting to come. ((picks up her wand, stretches out her hands,
2 wiggles her fingers, and then picks the hat back up)) I was walking down the hall.,
3 ((reaches hand into hat))
4 **Omar:** You look like, you have a cape like [(1.5) Superhero Ryan. ((reference to a cartoon
5 character))
6 **Jill:** [And I came upon this hat, ((still moving her
7 hand around inside the hat, really stretching out the moment of reveal)) And it was very
8 confusing, because there were some? (2.0) words in this hat. And I don't know where they
9 came from. I'm just getting them organized here.
10 **Omar:** Let me see, let me see.
11 **Jill:** I'm about to show and everyone who is watching me with their eyes right now, very
12 closely. Oh my gosh ((pulls out the word cards)). There was this hat on the floor, out in the
13 hall, and there was ((slowly reads as she lays out word cards on floor)) Snake::? Owl::?
14 Mouse::? Fox::? and Gruffalo? Preschoolers, what do you think it means, these words and
15 this hat just out in the hallway?
16 **Omar:** Uh, ((raises his hand))
17 **Jill:** Omar, thank you for your quiet hand.
18 **Omar:** I'll see. I'll count them.
19 **Jill:** Count them, let's count them. Ready? ((speaking to the group))

Note that Jill moved in and out of the narrative register as she introduced the word cards. She again signaled she was telling a story by shifting from the present tense to the past tense and repeating her earlier opening line ("I was walking down the hall"). She also used the same turn of phrase, "came upon," as before, thereby exposing students twice to a snippet of storytelling language found in both oral and written narratives. Having already established that the hat was magical, she now introduced the word cards by name, but without explaining their context or purpose. Jill attended to managerial matters for an interval, but returned to the narrative register one final time as she laid the word cards on the floor one at a time: "There was this hat on the floor, out in the hall, and there was Snake, Owl, Mouse, Fox and Gruffalo." She then posed an open-ended question worded so broadly that it is difficult to ascertain what sorts of connections she hoped students would draw between the names of the characters and the hat that held the cards. Some students may not have understood her question, including Omar, who responded by volunteering to count the word cards. However, Jill again demonstrated openness to a range of student responses by welcoming his suggestion, repeating it, and inviting the class to count the word cards with she and Omar.

Story enactments and retellings offered numerous opportunities for Jill to infuse narration of the unit story (or some variation thereof) into lesson activities and segments, thereby creating many occasions for students to observe and participate in models of narration that embedded attention to the temporal and causal relationships of story, thereby supporting students' future reading comprehension. A clear example of narration used to facilitate a variation on the unit story occurred in the second session of unit two when Jill narrated and enacted a day in the life of the Gruffalo. It was unsurprising to find that Jill's version of the Gruffalo's tale, along with her physical enactment of the Gruffalo's routines, was quite similar to Carolyn's. Recall that, in developing this storytelling unit, Carolyn had exercised her artistic license to envisage the Gruffalo's daily routines from dawn to dusk. Although none of the daily routines took place in

The Gruffalo, Carolyn lifted the locations where they occurred—river, leafy trees, logs, and rocks—directly from the book’s illustrations, and Jill followed suit.

After posting illustrations of these natural elements to mark the stations around the classroom for the enactment, Jill returned to rug area to drop off her roll of tape and reiterate the analysis of the Gruffalo’s mental state that she had shared with the class right before she began establishing the stations (see Excerpt 23). She reinforced the Gruffalo’s loneliness, again linking his sadness to his status as a non-buffalo, but this time also to his woodland habitat via an indirect reference to setting: “But remember, remember what I said about the, is the Gruffalo kind of sad that he’s not a buffalo? Because he lives by himself in the woods.” (Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019) Having refreshed this imaginary backstory for the Gruffalo, she walked to the first station and signaled the beginning of her enactment.

Excerpt 30

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** And here is the day (0.5) in the woods (0.5) for the Gruffalo. ((puts the tape down,
- 2 then walks back over to the first river station))
- 3 **Jeff:** (He) (could) (sleep) () () ()?
- 4 **Jill:** Sleeping by::, so watch me. ((crouches down)) Watch the day, in the woods, of the
- 5 Gruffalo. ((points to river picture)) Sleeping by the river. ((begins to snore, then lies
- 6 down)) (7.0)
- 7 **Omar:** It look like () ()!
- 8 **(Tristan):** Yeah.
- 9 **Jill:** ((awakes, stretches, yawns)) Ooooh! ((uses a deep voice as Gruffalo)) Time to wake
- 10 up.
- 11 **Omar:** [And it look like () ().
- 12 **Jill:** [Be: in the woods. ((crouches with her arms touching the floor in an animal-like
- 13 pose)) I’m gonna go: (1.0) ((turns to face class with her teeth bared)) brush my teeth.
- 14 ((back to her regular voice)) I need to find some (1.5) trees and branches to brush my teeth
- 15 ((pretends to brush her teeth)). (2.0)

Note that Jill twice announced the start of her performance as the Gruffalo, and hence her narration of his story (first in Line 1 and again in Lines 4-5), as she tried to gain the students’ undivided attention. She continued to work to maintain their attention by snoring during what could otherwise be a silent, subtle opening act of sleep. Omar appeared to make an observation about Jill’s performance, with which another student, likely Tristan, agreed. Jill then “woke up” as the Gruffalo and commenced her narration of this variation on the unit story, beginning in Lines 9-10 and continuing in Lines 12-14. The information she conveyed about the temporal and causal relationships between sleeping, waking, and embarking upon one’s first activities of the day was, although largely implicit within her performance, was accessible given students’ own life experiences with the daily cycle of sleep-wake-activity. With this narration and enactment, Jill told the story of *The Gruffalo* from the Gruffalo’s perspective as opposed to that of the main character in the book, Mouse, a move aligned with her efforts to portray the Gruffalo as a sympathetic character (i.e., sad, lives by himself in the woods). Note also how she spoke in the present tense, lending an air of immediacy to her performance. Jill’s embedded communication about temporal and causal relationships, her assumption of an alternative point of view, and her integration of the present tense offered a model of narration for students. In combination with her

theatrical embodiment of the Gruffalo character, these choices created conditions under which students could learn about composing narratives, if only implicitly. Students gained direct practice in narrating the Gruffalo’s actions later during the collective enactment of his daily routines, which is described within Unison Speaking (see Excerpt 33).

In sum, Jill used all three variations of narration practices, but she was not inclined to narrate her personal actions with the same frequency as Carolyn, who employed this technique for infusing language into what would otherwise be wordless, quotidian behaviors. The degree and frequency of the other two variations, narration of personal experiences and narration of unit stories, primarily depended on the session design and instructional objectives. Unsurprisingly, sessions that centered on the traditional storytelling acts of retelling and enactment provided students with the most exposure to listening to and practicing the narrative register within the context of children’s literature. A lesson such as unit two, session two created ample opportunities for Jill to demonstrate and involve students in narrating of the unit story variation vis-à-vis their enactment of the Gruffalo’s daily routines.

Contextual Support

Contextual supports (nonverbal communication strategies that enhance young children’s access to word meanings, Grifenhagen et al., 2017) appeared infrequently as part of Jill’s repertoire of language-promoting pedagogical practices. Of the four variations of contextual support I identified—prosody matches word meaning, gesture matches speech meaning, gesture matches text meaning, gesture matches character’s feelings—only one, matching gesture to speech meaning, was present in the closely analyzed sessions of units one and two. She used this technique considerably less often than Carolyn, but like her colleague, Jill’s gestures fell across a continuum of conventionality. For instance, while narrating a day in the life of the Gruffalo character in the second session of unit two (see Excerpt 30), Jill pretended to brush her teeth with a highly recognizable gesture. Holding her right hand out at a close distance and pretending to hold a toothbrush in between her thumb and pointer finger, she swung her hand back and forth three times in front of her mouth while speaking the phrase, “brush my teeth” (Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019). Jill used other iconic gestures, but not always to illustrate their most common meanings. In the first session of the second unit, while working to develop collective knowledge about the characters in *The Gruffalo*, she asked students to classify the character word cards she had just removed from her magic hat as either animals or people. After receiving an unexpected response of “people” from Omar (as was described in the Overt Corrections and Metalinguage sections), she deployed the thumbs up/thumbs down gesture, but not in the traditional manner.

Excerpt 31

Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019

Students present: 12 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** Are these words animals or people?
- 2 **Ram:** ((raises hand)) ()
- 3 **Omar:** People!
- 4 **Jill:** People? Are people fox? (*sic*) ((points to fox word card with her wand))
- 5 **Simon:** No.
- 6 **Jill:** Is that an animal [or a person?
- 7 **Simon:** [YES!
- 8 **Jill:** Animal, ((thumbs up)) animal, ((thumbs up)) or person ((thumbs down))?

Although the thumbs up/thumbs down gesture is typically used to signify the yes/no or agree/disagree dichotomy, here Jill applied it to an animal versus people debate. No one would argue that these gestures connote the concepts of animals or people. But notice how she assigned the thumbs up gesture to the correct answer, “animals,” whereas she matched the thumbs down gesture with “people,” thereby maintaining the positive and negative polarity of the gestures while flexibly pairing them with new meanings.

Jill used several less conventional gestures near the end of that same session when she was preparing the students to enact the final character, the Gruffalo. She held up the Gruffalo picture card and told the students, “It might be, it might be like a magical creature. Let’s see, what does he have on his head?” (Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019). She proceeded to guide students to identify the Gruffalo’s top three salient physical traits—his horns, his claws, and his teeth—and to rehearse each one before inviting them to integrate all three in their Gruffalo enactments. To signify horns, she held one hand atop her head (her other hand was occupied with the picture card); nearly all students soon mimicked this gesture. As for claws, she held her hands out with fingers spread apart and slightly bent, and again, most students quickly imitated this gesture. Both of these gestures, although not specifically iconic, appeared to be readily understood in context by the students. Jill’s final question to prepare the students for their Gruffalo enactments involved the use of a pair of established gestures to connote size, which can be seen in Excerpt 25. She asked, “AND does he, is he SMALL or big?” holding her hands out about shoulder width apart for “small,” before expanding that distance as she spoke the word “big” (Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019). The contrast between the width of her two hand positions was relatively minor, but there was still a noticeable difference that mapped onto the meaning of the words “small” and “big.”

Jill did not mobilize prosody as a tool to support students’ access to word meaning during units one and two under close analysis, another difference between the two teaching artists (however, she did strategically employ prosody to illuminate the meanings of words in the text of the unit three focal picture book, which is discussed below). Jill was a highly expressive, animated speaker who used pitch, juncture, and stress to communicate effectively, engage students, and convey general meaning. However, she did not deploy these prosodic elements of speech to illuminate the meaning of specific words (which I had occasionally observed in Carolyn’s sessions). Returning to the previous example of her use of gesture to connote the size of the Gruffalo, Jill’s prosody in this case actually worked against the meaning of the key vocabulary, “small” and “big.” She spoke the word “small,” loudly and with emphasis, whereas she spoke the word “big,” with considerably less volume and stress. If Jill wanted to use prosody to support access to word meaning in this interaction, she would have needed to do just the opposite. Nonetheless, students likely already had some understanding of such common vocabulary as “big” and “small” at that point in the school year, so her use of prosody in either direction may not have made much of a difference in their language comprehension.

Jill’s use of prosody may not have directly enhanced students’ access to word meaning, but it did not usually contradict those meanings, either (unlike with the “small” and “big” episode). During her enactment of the Gruffalo’s daily routines in the second session of unit two, after pretending to vigorously brush her teeth with tree branches at the trees station, Jill threw her imaginary tree branch off to the side and announced, “Squeaky clean!” (Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019). She spoke in a high pitched, cheerful tone, and with a slight smile on her face, all of which provided positive connotations, but could not convey full the meaning of the phrase “squeaky clean.” Although students probably had at least some understanding of the

word “clean,” (after all, cleaning up materials at the end of choice time and washing their hands before meals were two daily classroom routines), without some existing familiarity with this two-word expression, they may not have been able to appreciate how Jill’s prosody accentuated the meaning of this phrase.

The third contextual support practice—matching the meaning of text with gesture—was not expected to occur during storytelling sessions because of the limited use of the focal picture books in this instructional context. Recall that the arts organization requested that classroom teachers read the books to their students prior to the start of each unit (with the exception of *The Gruffalo*, which was meant to be read between sessions one and two to exploit the elements of surprise and fantasy in the design of session one) so that the teaching artists could devote their time and talents to what they did best. Although Jill displayed, pointed to, and visually referenced the focal picture books for units one and two, she never read them aloud. This was unsurprising since she was working from the lesson outlines that Carolyn had prepared (which did include this event). Furthermore, *The Gruffalo* and most traditional versions of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* are fairly long stories. Reading aloud either tale could have easily consumed 10 minutes of the approximately 30-minute storytelling sessions.

Interestingly, when Jill began planning her own lessons for units three and four, she incorporated reading aloud three times: in sessions two and three of unit three and session one of unit four. *Up, Down, and Around*, as noted earlier, consists of a short, simple text with patterned language structures that takes just a few minutes to read aloud. The text of *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt* also features highly patterned, predictable language structures, and though it is longer than *Up, Down, and Around*, it is still a relatively brief picture book when compared to *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *The Gruffalo*. The relative brevity of the focal picture books for the last two units of the school year may have influenced Jill’s inclination to incorporate reading aloud into some of these final sessions. In addition, the texts of *Up, Down, and Around* and *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt* both lent themselves to the use of gesture and indeed, Jill paired gesture with text to enhance students’ access to word meaning and support their language comprehension during each read aloud event.

Jill read *Up, Down, and Around* in full during session two but only a short excerpt for a particular purpose during session three. She demonstrated hand gestures for the key words (up, down, around) both times and further layered on matching prosody to these word meanings. In the second session, reading from a big book (enlarged) version of *Up, Down, and Around*, she read the title and introduced three hand gestures: “So my friends, this book is called, Up, Down, and Around.” As she spoke the word “up” with a rising pitch, she pointed to the word “Up” in the title with her pointer finger and moved quickly up along the surface of the book cover. For the word “Down,” she lowered her pitch considerably and moved her pointer finger down across the book cover. Finally, she pointed to “Around” in the title, then departed from the surface of the book cover to circle the air in front of the book with her pointer finger twice while cycling through high to low pitches with her voice. After this demonstration, Jill gave the students a guided practice opportunity to learn the three gestures and pair them with the words. Nearly all the students mimicked her gestures as she led them through each one, and many spoke the directional words concurrently with Jill.

As she displayed the big book, Jill briefly attempted to activate prior knowledge about vegetable gardens by asking students what grows in a garden. But when the first response she received was “garden” from Jeff (which she warmly affirmed), she quickly supplied her desired answer, stating, “Vegetables grow in a garden” (Unit 3, Session 2, April 17, 2019). She deployed

the echo technique, requesting students to speak, whisper, and sing “vegetables,” which a handful appeared to participate in, and then began to read the book. With the exception of taking the time to redirect loud, unintelligible interruptions from Ram on the penultimate page, Jill read the text straight through with no extratextual talk. Employing the prosodic elements of speech to further enhance access to word meaning, she spoke each iteration of the word “up” with a rising pitch, lowered her pitch considerably for the word “down,” and stretched out the word “around” while cycling from higher to lower pitches with her voice. Each time she approached one of the directional words (up, down, or around), a few students, unbidden, chimed in with her (an act Carolyn tried repeatedly to get her students to do, with little success), and several performed the hand gestures along with Jill. The patterned text, along with the scaffolding Jill provided before the reading via rehearsal of target words and gestures, appeared to support some children to correctly anticipate the next word(s) in a stretch of written language. This capacity may have been further enhanced by an intact textual rhythm that was not overly disrupted with extratextual talk.

Jill used similar hand and arm gestures to indicate the meaning of “up,” “down,” and “around” while reading aloud *Up, Down, and Around* in the third session. However, she was not as systematic about deploying gestures because her primary purposes in rereading a portion of the book was to introduce genuine vegetables into the lesson. In the book, vegetables are classified according to whether they grow up from the earth, downward in soil, or have vines or stems that grow around and around. Jill began reading on the third page and stopped after she had introduced one type of each vegetable: broccoli (for “up”), potatoes (for “down”) and green beans (for “around”). She used variations of the gestures she had introduced in the previous session while reading aloud, but each time she had to pause to get a vegetable out of her materials bag, she ceased to accompany the reading of the text with hand gestures. Revisiting *Up, Down, and Around* for a specific purpose meant there was no need or obligation to reread the entire book. She read the text only as far as necessary for the last vegetable, green beans, to appear, before she shifted into the next activity, embodying the three vegetables through movement and dance.

Jill read aloud the full text of *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt* during Unit four, session one, pairing hand and arm gestures for several key words that appeared repeatedly due to the patterned language structures in the text (coincidentally, another set of directional words), “over,” “under,” and “through.” Similar to session two of *Up, Down, and Around*, a handful of students spontaneously joined her in producing these hand gestures each time, unbidden. When she requested everyone to stick their arms straight out to represent the phrase, “go through it,” nearly all participated.

The fourth and final contextual support practice, matching gesture to portray the feelings of character, originated from my analysis of the classroom teachers’ read aloud lessons, where it seldom appeared. It was not present in Jill’s language-promoting practices. But, like Carolyn, she regularly represented the emotions and traits of characters through her story enactments and retellings using a much broader repertoire than sheer gesture. Drawing upon the traditions of the performing arts and storytelling, Jill used movement, dance, and acting, paired with speech, to expand students’ understanding of character.

To summarize, Jill’s provision of contextual supports to assist students in accessing word meanings played a fairly limited role in her repertoire of language-promoting pedagogical practices. From time to time, she employed gestures that matched the meanings of words in her speech, ranging from iconic (e.g., size comparisons for big and small) to less conventional, but

recognizable gestures (e.g., claws, tooth brushing) to far less conventional and only recognizable in context gestures (e.g., horns). Some of these words were probably already a part of students' receptive vocabularies, such as "big" and "small." However, others were less common and may have been unfamiliar, or at least not fully known, to many, like "horns" and "claws," suggesting that the layering of gesture onto speech may have had a greater impact on students' language comprehension in these instances. Jill did not mobilize prosody to enhance access to word meanings during the storytelling sessions under close analysis, but this practice was observed during unit three when she manipulated the prosodic elements of speech to connote the meanings of the words "up," "down," and "around." Although Jill used gesture and prosody to match word meanings less frequently than Carolyn, her use of gesture to match the meanings of words in text exceeded that of Carolyn because she chose to read aloud either in part or in full the focal picture books for units three and four a total of three times. She thus had (and took) more opportunities to pair gesture with text, which allowed her to scaffold students' understanding of less common positional words like "over," "under," and "through," and "around."

Unison Speaking

Unison speaking was a moderately widespread practice in Jill's repertoire for scaffolding students' language development within storytelling activities. Jill deployed guided unison speaking from time to time, both with and without the "echo" technique, but often without it. Though she used unison speaking less frequently and systematically than Carolyn, Jill invited unison speaking for a somewhat broader range of purposes: not only to teach vocabulary and concepts, but also to express story events. In a further difference, Jill sometimes implemented unison speaking for sentences in addition to single words. This practice had the potential to expand students' control of language structures while concurrently building vocabulary and conceptual knowledge and understanding of story. The same two variations of unison speaking practices occurred in sessions taught by Jill as those taught by Carolyn: 1) most commonly, students chorally spoke (and sometimes sang, chanted and/or whispered) a word or short sentence *with* Jill, and 2) she sometimes led students to chorally repeat a word or a sentence *without* her. Finally, the guided unison speaking opportunities that she provided across each of the three sessions garnered variable levels of student participation but, on balance, Jill enjoyed better student uptake for these productive speech tasks than Carolyn.

As was already noted in the Vocabulary and Concept Development and Narration sections, Jill demonstrated use of the second variation of unison speaking, leading students to repeat after her, at the word level as she introduced the concept of "magic words." Near the beginning of the first session of unit two, she produced her drumstick, declared it to be a magic wand, and said, "We're gonna practice some magic words, to make a magic potion. Yeah? So I'm gonna practice my magic word, and you say it after me. Ready? Shhhoo-wah! (Unit 2, Session 1, March 20, 2019) Jill asked the students to repeat four magic words she had invented, starting with "shhhoo-wah." The majority of students were able to repeat the magic words, or some rendition thereof, and several paired these utterances with approximations of her magic wand gestures without explicitly being directed to do so. Jill tried to maintain the same level of choral repetition as each student then took their own turn to generate a new magic word and wand gesture, but student participation in unison speaking fell off considerably when she was no longer the central figure producing the utterances to be repeated.

However, when Jill asked students to generate their own magic words and accompanying gestures (after first tapping the classroom teacher, Samantha, to generate another example of a word and gesture pair), student participation in unison speaking fell off considerably when she

was no longer the central figure producing the utterances to be repeated. Only a handful of students repeated their peers' magic words, and even fewer appeared to mimic their gestures.

In addition to single words, Jill led students to repeat whole sentences after her example during opening routines and collective story enactments. In contrast, most unison speaking opportunities provided by Carolyn took place at the single word level, with a few instances of application to two-word phrases (e.g., leafy trees). This was an important distinction between Jill and Carolyn's unison speaking practices and may have reflected their differing expectations for students' receptive and expressive language capabilities. Guided oral rehearsal of full sentences, like other efforts to deepen young children's control over language may extend the range of language structures they hear and speak, helping to advance not only productive speech capabilities but also listening comprehension for texts and future reading comprehension.

This practice mainly occurred as part of an opening routine that Jill used in most sessions as a warm-up activity called "I touch my nose; I touch my toes." As an opening routine, this activity did not contain any storytelling content, but since it provided many opportunities for students to orally rehearse full sentences, it is worthy of note. As with the magic words example, Jill explicitly directed students to repeat after her. At the beginning of the first session of the first unit, she told the class, "I'm gonna go first and you're gonna go after me. Ready? I touch my nose!" (Unit 1, Session 1, January 30, 2019) Jill placed her hands on her nose, and some students copied her movement, but only Samantha repeated "I touch my nose." Jill reiterated the instructions, telling students, "Yeah, you say it, too," before moving to the next pairing of movement and speech, "I touch my toes," (Unit 1, Session 1, January 30, 2019). Again, some students copied Jill's movement (leaning forward across extended legs with outstretched arms), but only Samantha repeated her utterance. The sentences, "I touch my nose. I touch my toes," served a type of "chorus" in this opening routine, reappearing about five times and firmly anchoring the activity as Jill introduced other sentence and movement pairings. Unsurprisingly, few students repeated those sentences that occurred only once and served as the "verses" of the activity (including "I reach my arms way up high" and "I turn my head all about") though most students did continue to mimic Jill's accompanying movements for these single-use utterances. But as students became more familiar with the cyclical "I touch my nose. I touch my toes," refrain, and with the continued support of Samantha's modeling, many joined in the later repetitions.

During the second session of unit two, Jill made recurrent use of both variations of unison speaking at the sentence level. Recall that the culminating activity of this session was a collective enactment of a day in the life of the Gruffalo. Jill facilitated guided practice with each of the Gruffalo's daily routines (i.e., sleeping by the river, brushing his teeth, sharpening his claws, and weightlifting rocks) prior to asking students to perform these actions in an integrated manner during the enactment. For the final routine, weightlifting rocks, Jill wanted students to chorally speak two utterances with her, "lift them up" and "put them down." She began by asking students to simply repeat the first phrase after her and succeeded at getting several children to do so. But the next step in the guided practice, layering a motor component to this speech element, appeared to be challenging for students.

Excerpt 32

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

1 **Jill:** Can you say lift them up?

2 **Samantha, Tristan, (Rosie), & (Ahmad):** Lift them up.
3 **Jill:** Let's say lift them up like we're trying to do it and it's really heavy, ready? ((bends her torso toward the ground from a seated position; strained facial expression))
4 **Samantha:** Oh:: ((groaning))
5 **Jill:** ((slowly straightens up while raising her arms)) [LIFT:: THEM:: UP:::
6 **Samantha & Diane:** ((slowly lift their arms)) [Lift: them: up:.
7 **Students (except Ram and Kyle):** ((slowly lift their arms with Jill))
8 **Tristan:** ((stands up as he lifts, then jumps and tosses his "rock" into the air as Jill says UP:::))
9 **Samantha:** Oh:: ((groaning))
10 **Jill:** Huuh! ((a relieved sounding groan)) Then we're gonna say, put: them: down:. Ready?
11 Put: them: down::: ((lowers her arms slowly)) Huh. ((relieved groan))
12 **Samantha, Diane, & Students (except Ram and Kyle):** ((lower their arms with Jill))
13 **Omar:** Yeah, it's so heavy.

Note that although only three students (plus Samantha) repeated "lift them up," in Line 2 when asked to do so by Jill, she garnered participation on this occasion from some of the less vocal members in the class. Rosie and Ahmad rarely spoke during sessions and Tristan, although a generally eager participant, sometimes found the storytelling performance tasks challenging, including the spoken language portions. But on this occasion, he readily rattled off the target sentence, and may have been particularly engaged, as suggested by his theatrical lifting of a rock in Line 9. However, no students repeated the sentence, "lift them up," when Jill asked students to coordinate arm movements with the existing speech component of the task. It appeared that students may have been directing all their attention to the act of pretending to lift (and later lower) the imaginary rocks. But less than five minutes later, when the class arrived at the rocks station during the collective enactment of the Gruffalo's daily routines, Jill tried again. This time she asked students to chorally speak with her at the word and sentence levels as she led them in a slightly different weightlifting routine than the one they had rehearsed earlier.

Excerpt 33

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

1 **Jeff:** ((lifts his arms up above his head and groans in anticipation of the rock lifting))
2 **Jill:** ((points to Jeff)) You're right. Spread out. ((spreads her arms across the air above the students twice)) There is rocks everywhere, [you guys. (*sic*)
3 **Samantha:** [Oh, here we go, time to lift.
4 **Students:** ((overlapping light chatter; not much spreading out occurring))
5 **Jill:** Heavy, heavy rocks. We're gonna lift them up. ((squats down))
6 **Most Students:** ((squat or bend over))
7 **Artist:** We're gonna say heavy, ready? [Hea::vy:. ((slowly stands and lifts arms to head))
8 **Teacher & Most Students:** [Hea:vy. ((lift arms over their heads))
9 **Omar:** ((keeps arms extended over his head after the second lift)) I'm (strong).
10 **Jill:** We're gonna count to three, ready? [One::, and [Two:: and [Three:. ((lifts arms from head level to above the head three times))
11 **Samantha, Diane, & Students:** [One::, [Two::, [Three:. ((lift arms from head level to above the head three times))
12 **Jill:** Ahh! Put it down. Say [put it down:.n. ((slowly lowers arms and bends to the ground))

16 **Samantha & Students:** [put it dow::n. ((slowly lower arms and bend to the ground))

Note that at this juncture in the session, many students concurrently spoke and performed the motions with Jill, suggesting that they were now better able to orchestrate unison speaking opportunities with the movement components of this storytelling activity. Students simply may have needed more practice with integrating the demands of performing this imaginative enactment of the Gruffalo's day, and now, at nearly the end of the enactment, they were fully limber. The positive impact of that multiple opportunities to practice the same skill had on students' uptake of storytelling activities was a general trend in my analysis of Jill's work with Samantha's class. Another possible explanation for the difference in student participation in unison speaking from Excerpts 32 to 33 is that the guided practice in isolation that Jill facilitated prior to the enactment might not have been as captivating or satisfying of an experience to partake in compared to this engrossing full-scale enactment. Or perhaps the explanation lies in some combination of these two factors. Whichever the case, the majority of the students demonstrated that, within this teaching-learning context, they could indeed integrate both the motor and language performative aspects of a fairly complex story enactment.

A further example of choral speaking at the word level, which may have been more serendipitous than intentional on Jill's part, occurred at the start of the second session of *The Gruffalo* unit. Recall that an element of the Gruffalo's character development invented by Carolyn was that he felt sad, in part because he was sometimes confused for a buffalo. Carolyn and Jill each launched this particular session by displaying pictures of the Gruffalo and several buffaloes while contrasting the initial phonemes in their names (e.g., /b/ b/ /b/ buffalo) in an effort to distinguish the two creatures for and with students. Worthy of note, only Jill opted to incorporate print awareness instruction into phonemic awareness as she taught this activity. She introduced and taped up on the board two large hand drawn and colored construction paper cut-outs for the letters B and G. She initially pointed to these B and G cut-outs as she orally segmented the beginning phonemes in the buffalo and Gruffalo, thereby promoting the development of letter-sound links for students. As the activity continued, though, she shifted from pointing to the letters to pointing to the front cover of *The Gruffalo* and buffalo photographs she had brought as she discriminated between the two names. By this point in the lesson, the students had heard Jill say some variation of "/b/ /b/ /b/ buffalo is not a /g/ /g/ /g/ Gruffalo" (and vice versa) multiple times. Without any overt direction from Jill, two students (possibly Omar and another who could not be identified) each independently repeated the word "buffalo" and "Gruffalo," after Jill had finished speaking those words respectively. However, Jill's final repetition of the phrase, "/b/ /b/ /b/ buffalo is not a /g/ /g/ /g/ Gruffalo" yielded a brief segment of choral speaking at the end of this activity.

Excerpt 34

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** /b/ /b/ /b/ buffa[lo:: ((taps the Buffalo picture for each /b/))
- 2 **(Omar):** [Buffalo.
- 3 **Jill:** is not a ((taps the Gruffalo picture for each /g/)) /g/ /g/ /g/ Gruffalo::.
- 4 **Student:** Gruffalo.
- 5 **Jill:** Right? (0.5) No it's ↑not! ((turns to take a new Buffalo picture out of her bag))
- 6 **(Omar):** Buffa[lo.
- 7 **Jill:** [No it's ↑not! ((holds up the second Buffalo picture)) /b/ /b/ /b/ buffalo::,

- 8 **Omar:** No.
9 **Jill:** is not a., (0.8)
10 **Omar:** Gruffalo!
11 **Jill:** ((points to front cover of book)) /g/ /g/ /g/ [Gruffalo:.
12 **Samantha & Some Students:** [Gruffalo.

Note in the final line how Samantha and several students anticipated that the word “Gruffalo,” would follow the triple repetition of /g/ and were able to join in speaking this word chorally with Jill without being explicitly prompted to do so. Carolyn was able to garner student repetitions of the words buffalo and Gruffalo more consistently than Jill when she taught this activity as a result of her systematic use of the more directive echo technique (e.g., “I say Gruffalo, we all say Gruffalo”). While Jill offered less guidance designed to elicit unison speaking in her instruction here, perhaps because she was not intentionally trying to induce this type of language interaction, some students appeared to recognize the formulaic construction of Jill’s utterances and were able to complete the sentence independently in the final line. In addition, the earlier active participation of Omar and another student, particularly in Lines 2 and 4, may have hinted at an opening for communal repetition, possibly contributing to that brief episode of choral speaking.

In sum, Jill cultivated unison speaking less often than Carolyn, but she mobilized this practice at both the word and sentence levels of language. The sentences she asked students to speak were generally short and simple; however, that low level of complexity may have reflected awareness on Jill’s part of the language learning needs of the diverse student population with which she was working. Moreover, she used unison speaking for a broader range of instructional purposes than Carolyn: not only to practice vocabulary but also, at times, to engage students fully in the performative demands of acts of storytelling, potentially advancing their understandings of story and narrative. Jill experienced challenges with garnering student participation in unison speaking, but relatively less than Carolyn faced. Laura and Samantha’s class rosters contained different proportions of students diagnosed with disabilities and/or who were learning English as an additional language, but still sizeable numbers of both special populations. And yet, at times, Jill succeeded in eliciting widespread participation in her unison speaking opportunities from a broad swath of students. And on those occasions when only a handful of students (or fewer) participated, some were monolingual, typically developing students (e.g., Rosie, Tristan), but not all (e.g., Ahmad, Omar). In addition to Jill’s skill in eliciting student participation, Samantha’s practice of delivering a daily, academically oriented whole class lesson may have played a role in the moderate difference in how the two classes responded to invitations to speak in unison from their respective teaching artists. Sheer greater exposure to structured listening and performance tasks implemented in a large group setting may have primed Samantha’s students to be relatively more receptive to the range of unison speaking opportunities presented by Jill.

Intersubjectivity

On the whole, Jill largely understood and appeared to be understood by the students with whom she worked. However, there were some notable moments of confusion, sometimes prolonged, during her sessions; more so than seen in Carolyn’s sessions. At times, Jill appeared to overestimate her students’ world knowledge and their developmental capacity for mature reasoning. As noted in the Methods chapter, the year this study took place was Jill’s first year of delivering the storytelling program for the arts organization and, further, she had not previously worked professionally with preschoolers. A further challenge faced by Jill, as has been noted,

was determining how to negotiate the ongoing process of building shared meaning and common knowledge with a class in which one of its most vocal members, Omar, declined to ratify collective reality on a fairly regular basis. Lastly, Jill, because of her outsider consultant status and because this was her first year working in the storytelling program, had not worked with any of the individual preschoolers at Stapleton School at the beginning of the first unit; Carolyn, by contrast, had at least vague memories of the returning 4- and 5-year-olds. Jill's level of familiarity grew over the course of each storytelling unit. Collectively, these contextual factors appear to constitute the bulk of the explanation for the difference between Jill and Carolyn in both degree and frequency of lost shared meaning with the students they taught.

Samantha, as discussed earlier, played an active role in storytelling instruction through her frequent modeling of the speech and actions Jill worked to elicit from students. She further influenced storytelling sessions through her proclivity to serve, at times, as a mediator between students' ideas and Jill's capacity to understand and appreciate those ideas. She voiced difficulty to hear student utterances (see Excerpts 17 and 18), and she noticed and named student performances that Jill appeared not to recognize (see Excerpts 26 and 27). Samantha "translated" the preschooler speech and thought for Jill in some of the examples of intersubjectivity problems that follow here, as well. If Samantha had not acted to negotiate the gap between student intelligibility and intentions and Jill's expectations, it is possible that Jill may have experienced more problems with maintaining intersubjectivity.

In the following sections, four scenarios of intersubjectivity challenges between the students and Jill are presented and analyzed:

1. the artist realizes she does not understand the child, she initiates meaning repair, the interaction is successful and intersubjectivity is regained;
2. the artist realizes she does not understand the child, she initiates meaning repair, however, the interaction is unsuccessful and intersubjectivity is not regained;
3. the artist appears to realize that she does not understand the child (as suggested by one or more paralinguistic and nonverbal communication features, such as prosody, pausing, and facial expression) but she does not initiate meaning repair, and intersubjectivity is not regained.
4. The artist appears to be unaware that she does not understand the child, does not repair meaning, and intersubjectivity is not regained.

Variation 1—Successful Meaning Repair. Jill navigated two largely satisfactory resolutions to difficulties achieving intersubjectivity. Neither episode provided a fully conclusive resolution, but Jill was more successful than unsuccessful in these attempts to repair lost meaning. The first resolution occurred during session one of unit two as Jill was working to establish that the word cards she had pulled out of her "magic hat" represented animal names. As can be seen in Excerpt 31 under Contextual Support, when Jill asked the class whether this collection of words were animals or people, Omar quickly answered "people." Whether Omar was genuinely confused, accidentally shouted the last word he had heard Jill say, or was intentionally countering the expected answer is difficult to say. Whichever the case, Jill took a number of steps to correct his apparent misconception. Looking at Omar, she asked, "People? Are people fox?" (*sic*). Simon immediately responded, "No," but she did not accept Simon's answer as decisive. Perhaps because she desired a wider student consensus to counter Omar's statement, or because she wanted to hear an acknowledgment directly from Omar, Jill continued to pursue the correct classification of fox, now broadening her audience to the entire class. Excerpt 35 begins just before the end of Excerpt 31 to provide continuity.

Excerpt 35

Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019

Students present: 12 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** Is that an animal [or a person?
- 2 **Simon:** [YES!
- 3 **Jill:** Anim[al, ((thumbs up)) animal, ((thumbs up)) or person ((thumbs down))?
- 4 **Omar:** [Um:, FOX!
- 5 **Jill:** [Animal? ((thumbs up))
- 6 **Some Students:** [Animal!
- 7 **1-2 Students:** [Person!
- 8 **Jill:** ((points to Mouse word card with wand)) MOUSE.
- 9 **Some Students:** Mouse.
- 10 **Jill:** Is that an animal or a person?
- 11 **Some Students:** ((overlapping speech, but most say “animal”))
- 12 **Jill:** It’s an animal! ((points to Owl word card with wand)) OWL:. (0.5) Is-
- 13 **Omar:** I would say it’s an animal.
- 14 **Jill:** It’s an animal. Who agrees? ((thumbs up)) Animal? ((looking around the group))
- 15 **Some Students:** Yeah.
- 16 **Jill:** ((thumbs up)) Animal? Yeah? ((points to snake word card)) Snake. Animal? ((thumbs up, smiles and nods emphatically))
- 17 **Some Students:** Animal!
- 18 **Jill:** Yeah.

Note that when in response to her question, “Is that an animal or a person?” Omar replied, “Um, fox!” suggesting that either he was genuinely confused or reticent to supply the answer Jill sought, while ruling out the possibility that he accidentally repeated a word from Jill’s question. At nearly the same time, an overlapping chorus of student voices could be heard with most shouting “person” but at least one (not Omar) shouting “animals.” Rather than clarifying and re-affirming collective knowledge about the concepts of “animals” and “people,” this instructional interaction appeared, up to this point, to have muddied the waters. Unexpectedly Jill now faced two or more students asserting that foxes are people. In response to the increase in confusion, she broke down the classification task to the individual word level to (re)establish that each name represented an animal. Beginning with the word “mouse,” moving onto “owl,” and ending with “snake,” Jill, continued, as discussed in Excerpt 31, to pair the thumbs up gesture, typically used to convey “yes” or “I agree,” with her desired student response (animal). She dropped the alternative response (person) altogether from her queries and layered on more nonverbal communication, such as nodding, making her position clear. With this influential combination of nonverbal and verbal communication, Jill garnered increasing consensus among students that each word represented a type of animal. Even Omar asserted independently that an owl is an animal. After “snake,” Jill appeared to be satisfied that she had adequately (re)established that the assembled word cards referred to animals. She did not revisit the original conceptual question that had precipitated this instructional detour, “Are these words animals or people?” leaving the initial loss of shared meaning successfully repaired on balance, but not quite fully resolved.

Jill navigated a loss of mutual understanding during the second session of the Gruffalo unit with Ram, an emergent bilingual in an earlier stage of learning English than many of his peers. However, questions about Ram’s intended meaning lingered even after Jill reached a successful resolution to their intersubjectivity problem. Of note, this episode serves as another example of how the instructionally active stance adopted by Samantha had the power to influence the moment to moment trajectories of storytelling sessions. Samantha’s inclination to elicit and clarify students’ meanings proved useful to Jill’s efforts to maintain intersubjectivity on more than one occasion, including here. In this interaction, Jill had just finished rehearsing the Gruffalo’s tooth brushing and claw scratching habits with the students and shifted to the final Gruffalo routine, weightlifting with rocks. Right after the interaction with Ram below, Jill guided the class to lift and lower imaginary rocks while speaking “lift them up” and “put them down” (as seen in Excerpt 32) in preparation for their collective enactment of the Gruffalo’s daily routines.

Excerpt 36

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** OK, then he's gonna get to the rocks. Who remembers what he does with the rocks?
- 2 Ram do you remember what he does?
- 3 **Samantha:** ((leans down next to Ram sitting beside her)) How does he get strong?
- 4 **Jill:** How does he get strong with the muscles? ((makes fists with her hands and lifts her
- 5 arms up above head, then lowers her arms, as if weightlifting))
- 6 **Ram:** () (strong). ((flexes his arms and poses with arms curled above his shoulders))
- 7 **Jill:** Ohh: ((groaning as if straining)), he goes, he gets so strong with the muscles.
- 8 ((pretends to weightlift)) How does he do it, what does he do with the rocks [to get strong?
- 9 **Samantha:** [What does he
- 10 do with the [rocks?
- 11 **Ram:** [No, he's a gecko! (1.0)
- 12 **Jill:** ((purses her lips slightly, nods slightly, looks like she’s trying to understand)) Hmm?
- 13 **Samantha:** He's a gecko?
- 14 **Ram:** He’s a, he’s a gecko ((makes flexed arm pose again)) (he’s) (strong) gecko.
- 15 **Samantha:** He’s strong?
- 16 **Jill:** He’s strong like a gecko? (0.5) Okay. ((turns her head to look at the class

Jill did not often call on Ram, likely because it was more challenging to communicate with him than some other students due to his status as an emergent bilingual in the earlier stages of learning English. On this occasion, she seemed to call on Ram at the start of this segment for no particular reason other than that her eyes happened rest on him as she asked the class, “Who remembers what he does with the rocks?” The rarity of Ram being put on the spot to answer a question from Jill might explain in part why Samantha quickly entered the interaction in Line 3 to introduce the concept of strength, which she seemed to view as a helpful hint for answering Jill’s question. Jill adopted Samantha’s prompt, asking “How does he get strong with the muscles?” as she pretended to weight lift heavy rocks over her head. In Line 6, Ram’s likely appropriation of the word “strong” and demonstration of a flexed muscles pose, suggested that he attended to the concept of strength introduced by Samantha and endorsed by Jill, but not seem to connect either to the Gruffalo’s habit of weightlifting rocks. Perhaps as a result, Jill refined her question (which was followed shortly by a similar question from Samantha) to link the

Gruffalo's strength to the rocks, "How does he do it, what does he do with the rocks to get strong?"

Outwardly apropos of nothing, Ram asserted that the Gruffalo was a gecko. Jill seemed not to know what to make of this comment and offered a tentative, "Hmm?" in response while looking at Ram expectantly. While Jill prompted Ram to further explain his thinking mostly nonverbally, Samantha repeated his utterance in the form of a question, "He's a gecko?" This seemed to lead Ram to again assert that the Gruffalo was a gecko but this time he extended his initial utterance by linking it to the earlier concept of strength: "(he's) (strong) gecko." However, his second performance of the static flexed arm pose suggested that he still, despite Jill's weightlifting demonstrations in Lines 4-5 and 7-8, did not understand that the Gruffalo lifted the rocks to get strong.

The episode concluded with Jill asking, "He's strong like a gecko?" by which she affirmed Ram's last utterance ("(he's) (strong) gecko"), expanded it to be grammatical, and molded it to suit her instructional objectives as well as stay true to the essence of *The Gruffalo*. Under her formulation, the Gruffalo was not a strong gecko, he was strong *like* a gecko. Of course, this conclusion in itself is rather implausible, as the Gruffalo is depicted in the book's illustrations to be approximately the size and shape of a black bear and is described as a frightening monster, and thus would presumably be stronger than a small lizard. However, after a slight pause, Jill said, "OK," and began to turn her head, signaling both her acceptance of Ram's interpretation and, I think, a desire to move on to a student who could articulate that the Gruffalo was lifting the rocks. Although one of the immediate problems of intersubjectivity was resolved in that Jill, with some involvement from Samantha, comprehended that Ram thought the Gruffalo was a strong gecko, Jill never found out why Ram thought the Gruffalo was a gecko or that geckos are strong. Thus, the larger question of how he arrived at this interpretation and what he really meant by his assertion remained. Nonetheless, given his English language fluency at that time, whether Jill or Samantha could have succeeded at extracting additional insight or information from Ram is debatable, rendering Jill's decision to proceed with the lesson sensible.

Variation 2—Unsuccessful Meaning Repair. Jill had several interactions with students involving a loss of shared meaning in which she was unable to bring about a satisfactory conclusion (meaning that she understood and was able to repair or at least come to terms with the misunderstanding). A portion of these episodes involved Omar, who, as I have noted elsewhere, seemed to contest Jill's attempts to obtain his endorsement of collective reality (perhaps, judging from his ebullient mood, because he viewed this stance as playful). I won't analyze such interactions further here, as there was little Jill could do to remedy intersubjectivity problems with an interlocutor who appeared to intentionally violate pragmatic expectations for interpersonal communication. However, some of the episodes appeared to have been caused in part by Jill's high expectations for preschoolers' cognitive development and her inclination to ask constrained questions to bring about important session events. When a teacher has a specific response in mind, questioning can be a roundabout and lengthy route by which to guide a group of students to arrive to particular constrained response. In contrast, I observed none such interactions during Carolyn's sessions, which I attribute, in part, to her strongly scaffolded instruction and well-honed sensitivity to preschoolers' learning needs. A further difference between Carolyn and Jill's sessions was Samantha's at times influential participation. In addition to "translating" preschooler speech and thinking for Jill's benefit in some sessions, she

occasionally spoke to Jill directly about students' confusions in an effort, it seemed, to help Jill better align her mature reasoning about the idea of the language in question to that of the novice.

Before I present a thorough analysis of one episode when Jill's beliefs about the reasoning capacities of the preschoolers with whom she worked led to unsuccessful attempts at repairing mutual understanding, I want to take pains to emphasize that Jill's high expectations for preschoolers' cognitive development were well-matched to the learning needs of the largely 4- and 5-year-old preschoolers in the other afternoon classroom at Stapleton School. This class of mostly older students who were taught by lead teacher Heather were generally quite receptive to Jill's teaching style. Heather's students appeared to deeply enjoy and profit from her instruction, enabling Jill to complete her full lesson plans and to offer more linguistically and cognitively complex extensions to the basic activities she used with Samantha's class.

Jill engaged in a prolonged teaching-learning interaction, first mentioned in conjunction with Excerpt 20 in the Expansions and Extensions section, that revealed a mismatch between her expectations for students' thinking and how some students actually interpreted the event at hand. This episode took place during the second session of *The Gruffalo* unit as she was preparing to transform herself into the Gruffalo and demonstrate his suite of daily routines. Perhaps to evoke a sense of curiosity or anticipation, rather than simply explain that she had a pair of horns she would use as a costume to "become" the Gruffalo, as Carolyn had done, Jill held up a small fabric pouch and asked students to predict what might be inside. A period of confusion ensued.

Note that I have presented a significant portion of the episode here, but the full transcript for this event goes on for nearly two pages (the conclusion can be seen in Excerpt 20, however). I selected this portion for Excerpt 37 because it shows Jill grappling with a range of problems in reaching intersubjectivity with students, her strategies for repairing (or attempting to repair) lost meaning, and Samantha's efforts to help both Jill and students to work through their respective misunderstandings.

Excerpt 37

Unit 2, Session 2, Mar. 27, 2019

Students present: 11 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide was in the classroom attending to other duties)

- 1 **Jill:** And then I have something that's going to help me, ((holds up a fabric pouch that is
- 2 the size of a standard letter envelope)) tur:n into the Gruffalo. ((holds up *The Gruffalo*))
- 3 Who wants to guess ((holds out pouch)) what could be in here?
- 4 **Omar, Kyle, & Nilar:** ((raise hands))
- 5 **Jill:** Nilar, what do you think is in here? ((points to the pouch))
- 6 **Jeff:** The [Gruffalo?
- 7 **Nilar:** [() ()
- 8 **Jill:** What do you think? ((leans in close to hear Nilar better)) (1.0) Say it again? (1.5)
- 9 What maybe is in here that's going to help me [look-
- 10 **Jeff:** [That's a Gruffalo!
- 11 **Jill:** What is in here that [maybe is gonna help-
- 12 **Omar:** [That's a [Gruffalo!
- 13 **Jeff:** [Gruffalo!
- 14 **Jill:** What, what part of the Gruffalo ((circles the Gruffalo on the front cover with her
- 15 finger)) (0.5) is gonna be in here? ((holds out pouch))
- 16 **Omar:** Gruffalo!
- 17 **Samantha:** (They) think the whole Gruffalo is in there.

18 **Jill:** The whole Gruffalo is in here, you think?
19 **Tristan:** Yeah.
20 **Omar & Ahmad:** Yeah.
21 **Jill:** Should we take a look and [see:?
22 **Omar:** [A big gruffalo!
23 **Jeff:** Yeah.
24 **Jill:** Oh, my [goodness!
25 **Samantha:** [You think a big Gruffalo is in there? ((looking at Omar; skeptical
26 expression))
27 **Student:** Yes.
28 **Jill:** A big one?
29 **Several Students:** Yeah.
30 **Samantha:** Big or small?
31 **Omar:** Big!
32 **Jill:** Is this a, this is big? ((points to the pouch and circles it twice))
33 **Several Students:** Yeah.
34 **Jill:** How's a big ((hold arms out)) Gruffalo fit in this? ((points to pouch, circles it again))
35 **Omar:** I don't know!
36 **Jeff:** ((shakes head))
37 **Jill:** Maybe he shrinks!

An invitation to predict the contents of the pouch took a turn into unexpected territory for Jill as first Jeff and then Omar vigorously predicted the Gruffalo to be inside. It may be that students such as Omar and Jeff did not understand what Jill meant in the beginning when she said, "I have something that's going to *help me turn into the Gruffalo*" (italics added for emphasis). It is a fairly complex sentence for emergent bilinguals to follow; Jeff and Omar's initial predictions may have formed from a misinterpretation of this initial premise. Or perhaps they understood the sentence but interpreted what could help Jill "turn into" the Gruffalo to be the Gruffalo himself. After all, nothing in Jill's word choice overtly signaled that she planned to make use of a prop or costume, and she offered no other scaffolding to frame the prediction task.

Note how Jill first tried to redirect students' attention to the size of the content of the pouch by placing stress on the word "in" as she said in Line 11, "What is in here that maybe is gonna help." She was not yet aware that several students thought an entire Gruffalo could fit inside her pouch. When the tactic of (indirectly) emphasizing that the size of the pouch failed, she reminded the students in Line 14 that they were meant to be considering parts of the Gruffalo only. However, she never verbally specified *body* parts nor did she indicate with her finger any particular physical characteristics of interest when she circled the image of the Gruffalo on the front cover of the book as a reference. In the face of Omar again exclaiming "Gruffalo," Samantha spoke directly to Jill to point out that students thought the entire Gruffalo was inside the pouch. Jill reformulated Samantha's statement into a question for everyone in Line 18, "The whole Gruffalo is in here, you think?" Two additional students, Tristan and Ahmad, then indicated that they agreed with Omar and Jeff. At that juncture, Jill appeared ready to terminate the prediction activity and go straight to revealing the contents of the pouch, asking, "Should we take a look and see?" However, before she could finish speaking, Omar augmented his original prediction by adding that he thought it was a "big" Gruffalo.

Jill's tone shifted to amusement as she exclaimed, "Oh my goodness!" suggesting some acceptance now on her part of the students' unexpected predictions of the pouch contents.

Samantha, in contrast, now found Omar's prediction of a large Gruffalo contained inside the pouch objectionable and pushed back twice, asking in Lines 25 and 30 whether he really meant what he said. Omar, however, did not relent and some of his classmates joined him in agreement. Still sounding amused in Line 32, Jill redirected students' attention to the size of the pouch when she asked, "Is this a, this is big?" Upon hearing several students reply "Yeah," Jill sounded incredulous as she asked, "How's a big Gruffalo fit in this?," circling the pouch with her free hand again to draw attention to its size. Omar and Jeff both admitted, in speech and in gesture, respectively, that they didn't know how the Gruffalo could fit into the pouch. This was not necessarily a sign that they retracted their predictions, only that they couldn't fully justify them (not an uncommon predicament for young children). However, Omar and Jeff did not make any further assertions about the size of the Gruffalo, perhaps finding Jill's suggestion that the Gruffalo might have shrunk appealing. This final comment from Jill suggested that she may have been better aligning her views to Omar and Jeff's perspectives by offering a magical pathway by which the full-sized Gruffalo could have fit into the pouch.

The remainder of the interaction between Jill and the students from the end of this excerpt and the beginning of Excerpt 20 centered on Jill preparing to open the pouch and building anticipation for this revelation. She twice stressed to students that the pouch contained a *part* of the Gruffalo and again gestured to the front cover of *The Gruffalo*. The extended episode excerpted here resolved successfully in Excerpt 20 after Jill unveiled the horns and began lifting them to her head. Only then were Omar and Kyle able to deduce that the hidden object was the Gruffalo's horns. Jill was not able to facilitate students' ability to make reasonable predictions about the contents of the pouch at any earlier point.

Beyond the challenge inherent in using an unconstrained question to shepherd a group of students to arrive at a pre-ordained destination, trying to determine the causes of why students and Jill had trouble understanding each other in this exchange generates even more questions. In the first bend in the interaction, when Jeff and Omar asserted that the pouch contained the Gruffalo, did they, as emergent bilinguals, misunderstand the premise of Jill's opening statement, "I have something that's going to help me turn into the Gruffalo"? Did they expect to see a Gruffalo figurine of some sort, a two-dimensional Gruffalo image lifted from the books' illustrations, or perhaps something else exit the pouch? In the second, size-oriented bend in the interaction, when Omar predicted a "big Gruffalo" was inside the pouch, did Omar and the students who verbally agreed with him during Jill's ensuing questioning misunderstand the relative size of the Gruffalo, as depicted in the book? What did a "big" Gruffalo actually mean to them? And when several students declared the modestly-sized pouch to be "big," did that reveal yet unfinished development of their conceptual knowledge of size, that they were presently unwilling to change their minds in the face of newly underscored (though already perceptually available) information about the size of the pouch, or could they simply have been swept up in the excitement of the moment and have answered impulsively? It is difficult to reach any firm conclusions with so many potential factors, but the exchange does reinforce the potential hazards of using very open-ended and unconstrained questions to reach constrained answers. The episode also illustrates how challenging it can be at times for adults, even experienced teachers, to view learning tasks from the perspectives of young novices, particularly if the parties have limited familiarity with each other.

Variation 3—Meaning Repair Not Enacted. Another difference between Jill and Carolyn in how they handled problems of intersubjectivity was that Jill occasionally allowed students' misconceptions to hang in the air without clarifying or discrediting them. To be fair,

Carolyn faced far fewer of these instances, but she always addressed head on those misconceptions with which she was aware, such as Denpo's orange-lemon confusion in Excerpt 7. Even in the case of Connor's misunderstanding in Excerpt 15 about how the light table was going to be used, Carolyn nevertheless briefly addressed the misconception that, due to his speech delay, she *thought* he had.

Jill exposed a number of misconceptions, too. For instance, she matter-of-factly countered Ahmad's cow-buffalo confusion in Excerpt 22 and strongly pushed back against Omar's claim that foxes are classified as people, as discussed in both Excerpts 31 and 35. However, she allowed some misconceptions to stand with little to no acknowledgement that students had aired them and did not make efforts to counteract them. Recall Jill's response to Simon's identification of the presence of water in the kitchen picture that was meant to serve as a non-wilderness example during session one of the first unit. As seen in Excerpt 17, Simon forcefully proclaimed his belief that the kitchen counted as "wilderness" due to the running water in the sink, yet Jill did not address Simon or revise her existing definition of wilderness to accommodate his critique. She reiterated that the kitchen is not a wilderness, several students and Samantha agreed with her, and then she proceeded to her next picture example of wilderness.

Another example of Jill overlooking a misconception was presented in Excerpt 23. During the second session of unit two, Jill's announcement that she planned to turn the classroom into the setting of *The Gruffalo* was met by protest from Omar: "What? But, no," (Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2019). Other than telling Omar to watch her set up the stations around the classroom, Jill did not acknowledge his repeated utterances and she never addressed his apparent worry about his familiar classroom changing. As she moved around the room taping up pictures of the river, trees, logs, and rocks from *The Gruffalo*, Omar seemed to persevere about this concern, continuing to make comments such as, "But I do like the classroom." (Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2019). Jill appeared to ignore him (although she may not have heard some of what he said when she was farthest from the rug area or when she was speaking to the class) and continued with her instructional objective of verbally labeling and physically marking each station (e.g., "And then we're going to pretend there's logs. Just like in the woods. Where the Gruffalo lives, you guys," Unit 2, Session 2, March 27, 2019).

The authenticity of Omar's worry about his classroom becoming the setting of *The Gruffalo* was discussed at length after Excerpt 23. The salient point to re-consider here is that Jill did not inquire about the root of Omar's protest, and thus lost intersubjectivity with him. Jill had no way of knowing for certain whether he truly believed his classroom would be permanently altered, or temporarily, but still unsatisfactorily, changed, or was just kidding around (as he often seemed comfortable doing). In addition, Jill did not take the opportunity to assuage the obvious concerns of a young child's literal interpretation (whether real or not). I could imagine her cutting off such a misconception with a brief reassurance such as, "We're just going to pretend for a little bit that the classroom is becoming the forest where the Gruffalo lives. It will still be your classroom. Don't worry."

To summarize, Jill generally corrected students' misconceptions, but appeared to feel under no obligation to counter all inaccuracies presented by students. This was a notable departure from the culture bearer role most adults seem to adopt instinctively, particularly those in caregiving and teaching positions, causing them to typically intervene to correct children's semantic misunderstandings. Perhaps because she was a visiting teaching artist, Jill did not feel the same weight of responsibility that a classroom teacher or parent might assume; or perhaps she did not feel authorized to assume such authority. She may have also felt strong pressure to

move forward with her lesson at these junctures. She was operating under difficult time constraints due to the storytelling program schedule for the afternoon classrooms. The schedule arranged by the arts organization was at its core problematic due to overlap with students' lunchtime and a corresponding unwillingness on Samantha's part to modify her classroom schedule to accommodate her colleague, Heather, and Heather's class so that Jill could alternate which classroom she began teaching in on storytelling days.

But the most prominent explanations I found for Jill's choices lay in whose misconceptions she overlooked and the relative complexity of those misconceptions. Simon and Omar were the only two children whose misconceptions were overlooked in the sessions I analyzed. To be sure, Jill sometimes addressed some of Simon and Omar's misconceptions, but they were fairly well-bounded (e.g. foxes are animals, not people). Simon and Omar were the most vocal students in the class and tenacious in expressing their views, views which were sometimes unexpected by Jill and perhaps more complex than she felt were worth the time to disentangle (e.g., discounting kitchens from the concept of wilderness would have required clarifying and likely revising her definition of wilderness). Further, Simon spoke with a tone of voice and often at such a high volume that his speech was objectively hard to listen to and comprehend. The challenge of tuning into Simon's speech may well have influenced Jill's tendency to sometimes ignore his contributions to their lessons. Omar's speech, in contrast, was reasonably easy to understand, but his periodic reluctance to accept common knowledge may have disposed Jill to be less amenable to entertaining all of his contributions.

The difficulty with Jill's tactic of selectively addressing Simon and Omar's misconceptions (even if, in the case of Omar, some were likely not fully genuine), is that the other children in the class were exposed to the inaccuracies that these two brought to the conversation. Even if they did not initially share the same misunderstandings, when an authority figure does not counter such inaccuracies, it opens the possibility that they may infer their classmate to be correct. Granted, not every misconception that young children hear their peers express can possibly be corrected by caregivers or teachers, and adults have the prerogative to choose which conceptual problems to address and when to do so. However, when students express misconceptions in a public manner during whole class instruction, teachers must weigh the costs of overlooking these inaccuracies (silence can imply agreement) against the benefits of moving on to more important activities in the lesson. Interestingly, Samantha continued to take up the role of mediator for understanding between Jill and students in this context. In both instances discussed above, Samantha spoke directly to Omar and Simon to mollify their concerns when their misconceptions appeared to be ignored by Jill. However, Samantha never addressed the entire class to rectify Simon and Omar's respective inaccuracies, perhaps out of respect for Jill's choice to proceed with the lessons.

Variation 4—Adult Unaware of Lost Meaning. This variation of a problem with maintaining intersubjectivity was not observed in Jill's sessions.

Summary. By and large, Jill was successful in reaching and maintaining intersubjectivity with her students. But she encountered more vexing obstacles to this underpinning of teaching-learning than Carolyn. Further, when problems arose, she had more difficulties resolving them and resuming meaningful communication with students. Contributing factors appear to have been her inexperience working with preschoolers and within the storytelling program, her high expectations for preschoolers' cognitive development and reasoning skills, a propensity to ask unconstrained questions to arrive at highly particular constrained answers rather than through explanation, a somewhat variable approach to tackling student misconceptions and, finally, the

tendency of one student to violate the constraints of common knowledge. The teacher with whom Jill worked, Samantha, played an active role in many of the storytelling sessions; her contributions to the sessions often seemed to benefit Jill's understanding of students' speech and thought, and thus supported her instructional objectives.

Language Anticipation

To reiterate, the inclusion of language anticipation as a language-promoting practice arose from my analysis of the classroom teachers' read aloud lessons. Language anticipation, the ability to predict the next word or phrase that will be spoken by an interlocutor or appear in a text, requires the capacity to parse spoken and written language. Thus, fostering language anticipation contributes to students' listening comprehension and future reading comprehension for text. Although I occasionally observed the classroom teachers promote their students' language anticipation during read aloud lessons, this practice was a seldom seen in Jill's instructional repertoire for storytelling. Unlike Carolyn, who was not observed intentionally promoting language anticipation at any point, I found two instances in Jill's teaching. One instance can be seen at the end of Excerpt 32, in Line 11, when Omar anticipated that the conclusion of Jill's sentence “/b/ /b/ /b/ buffalo is not a...” would be the word “Gruffalo.” His completion of her utterance was meaningful and grammatical, but not wholly accurate, as he omitted the segmentation of the initial phoneme, /g/, prior to “Gruffalo.” Note, though, how Jill stretched out the sounds in the words “buffalo” and “a” in Lines 8 and 10, respectively, likely to build suspense and promote students' active listening, but also possibly to invite students to speak the next word or phrase with her.

The only other instance I found of Jill eliciting language anticipation occurred later in that same session and can be seen in Excerpt 20. It was the culmination of a lengthy exchange between Jill and the students (see Excerpt 37) during which she endeavored to have students predict what item that could help her transform into the Gruffalo might be inside a fabric pouch. In Line 9 of Excerpt 20, she acknowledged the viability of Jeff and Omar's prediction of teeth (“It could be the teeth”) and held the horns up to her mouth, but then introduced the possibility of another item by saying, “It could also be.” Jill lingered briefly on the sound of long /e/ in “be,” and employed intonation that suggested she was not yet finished speaking, both classic markers used by teachers to indicate that they wish for students to supply the next word or phrase. Further, she then paused for half of a second as she lifted the Gruffalo horns from her mouth to her head, long enough for Omar and Kyle to solve the mystery of the pouch's contents and exclaim in overlapping speech, “The horns!” and “Horns!” respectively.

Aided by her use of prosody and pausing as well as the movement and position of the artifact against her body, Omar and Kyle successfully anticipated what Jill was on the precipice of stating. Jill then confirmed their concurring inferences by loudly and excitedly repeating Omar's utterance. Having grappled with how to guide students to make predictions about the contents of her pouch that she judged reasonable, she now appeared delighted that a few students had finally discovered the true identity of this long-awaited artifact. Interestingly, Omar, upon hearing Jill verify the accuracy of his interpretation, independently expanded his original proposition (“The horns”) into a slightly longer, more structurally complex sentence (“These are the horns”).

Extended Conversation

Extended conversations, in which an adult and child sustain talk on a single topic across several reciprocal turns, were highly uncommon in Jill's sessions: I observed only one instance (although Carolyn, in comparison, had no extended conversations). As discussed earlier, most of

the storytelling program activities designed by Carolyn (and implemented by Jill in a somewhat more relaxed style) placed students into defined participation structures. Students were regularly afforded opportunities to participate in the sessions through verbal and nonverbal communication modes. But even within Jill’s somewhat looser implementation of storytelling activities, there was still little time and space for extended conversation on any story-related topics, whether intentional or in response to students’ spontaneous contributions to the lessons. When Jill invited students to contribute verbally, the input being sought was primarily constrained in nature, such as yes/no questions, (like in the beginning of Excerpt 17 when she asked, “Is this wilderness?”) and questions with only a handful of possible responses, (such as when she asked students at the end of Excerpt 24, “What other animals that we did today are you going to see in this story?”). In Excerpt 36, Jill posed several constrained questions to Ram, including “How does he get strong with the muscles?” Their interaction could be argued to qualify as an extended conversation, though that interpretation is complicated by the fact that Ram’s responses were sometimes directed to Samantha rather than Jill. And in most cases, even when students were presented with an unconstrained question, or at least a question that could be perceived as unconstrained (as Kyle seemed to interpret Jill’s query in Excerpt 21, “What else do I need to have?”) these exchanges were brief, usually lasting just one turn each before Jill moved on to the next student or her next instructional move.

An activity that stood out for offering less constrained verbal response options occurred in the first session of *The Gruffalo* unit was the guided practice in generating magic words. The objective was for each student to create a personal magic word with an accompanying magic wand movement after observing Jill and Samantha demonstrate. Perhaps in part because Jill did not directly explain the concept of a magic word to students, and each of her four demonstrations were novel combinations of vocalizations and permissible English syllables (shoo-wah, dot-dot-duh, loo-loo-loo-luh, and sh::oo), the students produced a range of wholly original, yet untranscribable vocalizations (except for Omar, who offered “Paw Patrol”—the title of a popular children’s cartoon—for his magic word). This activity generated unique contributions from each student, fostered flexible thinking, and engaged students in imaginative, creative play. At the same time, it was tightly structured: Jill called on one child after another, leaving no openings to facilitate or entertain an extended conversation about magic words.

However, I did observe one extended conversation between Jill and Omar near the beginning of the first session of *The Gruffalo* unit. As Jill invoked the magical powers of her assembled enchanted artifacts, Omar seemed prepared to accept her fantastical premise that she could transform the mouse word card into a mouse. But an extended conversation ensued after she pulled out the mouse picture card from her hat and he rejected the character’s identity.

Excerpt 38

Unit 2, Session 1, Mar. 20, 2019

Students present: 12 of 12

Staff present: Teacher & Assistant Teacher (Aide and Program Assistant were in the classroom attending to other duties)

1 **Jill:** My friends, I think that this is a magic hat. ((picks up hat, taps with wand)) We know
2 this is a magic wand ((holds out wand)). I'm wearing my magic cape ((points to her cape
3 with wand)). What do you think, if I put one of these words, in my magic hat and said
4 some magic word, do you think a mouse could come out of this hat?

5 **Omar:** Yeah.

6 **Jill:** If I put the mouse word in? Do you want to try?

7 **Omar:** Yeah.
8 **Jill:** Okay. (2.0) The mouse word: (1.0) is gonna go: (0.5) in (0.2) the hat. ((picks up word
9 card)) Here we go, °I don't know what's gonna happen!° (2.0) ((places card in hat))
10 Tickety-dockety-dock! ((waves magic wand above her head)) (2.0)
11 **Omar:** What is it? What is it?
12 **Jill:** ((peers into the hat, then looks utterly shocked)).
13 **Student:** ((laughs at Jill))
14 **Jill:** Here comes:: (1.0) ((looking in hat, reaching for mouse card)) the:: (1.5) ↑mouse!
15 ((pulls out mouse card, holds it out, then rotates it around circle so all students can see))
16 **Omar:** Mouse? That's [a mouse?
17 **Hunter:** [Mouse?
18 **Jill:** That's a mouse!
19 **Omar:** No, it's not.
20 **Jill:** It goes with the word, [mouse. ((places card in middle of rug, closer to Omar))
21 **Omar:** [That a fox. That's a fox.
22 **Jill:** Really? Should we try a fox next and see if it looks different?
23 **Several Students:** Yeah!

Although on the surface it appears that Jill and Omar had an extended conversation in Lines 1-11, she was actually addressing the entire class during that time. Omar happened to be the only student who responded to her questions, and she accepted his input when it buttressed her intended actions. But when Omar shouted out, “What is it? What is it?,” Jill disregarded his interruption and continued on with her theatrical performance.

Their extended conversation began in Line 16 when Omar responded to a declaration Jill made to the entire class (“Here comes the mouse!”) by questioning its veracity: “Mouse? That’s a mouse?” Jill, probably not anticipating sustained resistance from Omar, replied by simply transforming Omar’s question into an exclamatory statement (“That’s a mouse!”). The animal on the picture card she held out toward Omar was easily recognizable as a mouse, even from the increased distance from the rug that the video camera recording the session was located. Yet, Omar openly denied the identity of the mouse (“No, it’s not”). Jill’s counter argument was to draw an unspecified link (possibly temporal or semantic) between the mouse word card that she had placed in the hat first and the mouse picture card she had pulled out moments later: “It goes with the word, mouse.” Her surprise was audible (“Really?”) upon hearing Omar’s unexpected claim that the mouse was actually a fox (another of the animals Jill had recently introduced on a word card). Jill quickly proposed an idea to resolve what appeared to be Omar’s confusion and their extended conversation ended when several other students endorsed Jill’s plan to transform the fox word card into a picture card and then compare the appearances of the mouse and fox.

Omar’s initial incredulity in Line 16 could be interpreted a number of plausible ways (e.g., he had expected to see a live or toy mouse emerge from the hat; he simply couldn’t see the picture card well enough at first). However, nothing he said thereafter supported those initially plausible interpretations. By the time he asserted that the mouse was actually a fox, the genuineness of his purported confusion was called into question, which Jill voiced with her comment, “Really?” This episode represents good example of breakdown in mutual understanding.

Moreover, as discussed in the Metalanguage for Story section, Omar went on to assert that the fox picture card that Jill pulled out of her hat next showed a horse. And even after hearing Jill, Samantha, and two classmates assert that the animal on that second picture card was

a fox, Omar reiterated his disagreement, stating one final time, “That not a fox.” The chance that Omar, a child who possessed age-appropriate world knowledge, would credibly confuse first a mouse for a fox and then a fox for a horse, animals of dissimilar sizes, shapes, and hues, seems low. Another possible explanation, which I argued in the Metalanguage for Story section, is that Omar took pleasure from occasionally disrupting and departing from conventional knowledge and the expected group consensus.

To summarize, extended conversation was a truly rare occurrence during Jill’s storytelling sessions for a number of different reasons, including the design of session activities, the participation structures that those activities tended to offer students, and the types of questions favored by Jill. In addition, she tended to value gaining input from multiple children rather than deeper input from just a few. Although extended conversation hardly ever occurred in Jill sessions and never occurred in Carolyn’s sessions, in Carolyn’s robustly structured lessons, it appeared that one advantage to the systematic implementation of guided practice opportunities was that it may have reduced problems with maintaining mutual understanding. However, that was not the case for Jill: although she had only one extended conversation, she experienced more occasions where mutual understanding with students collapsed. As noted earlier, Jill took a more relaxed approach overall to implementing Carolyn’s unit one and two lesson plans, likely due in part to her personal teaching style, but possibly also owing to her lack of previous experience working with preschoolers. Jill’s less scaffolded teaching approach appeared to generate more problems with achieving and maintaining intersubjectivity with her students.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

At the bird’s eye view level, Carolyn and Jill demonstrated a largely common set of pedagogical practices to promote and engage students in the narrative register and the academic language of children’s literature through acts of oral storytelling and related activities. A close analysis of each of the ten language practices under investigation revealed some individual differences in implementation and emphasis that appeared to be potentially consequential for students’ language and narrative learning opportunities within the storytelling program. I start by summarizing the key findings for Carolyn and Jill separately, followed by a summary comparing the two in which I synthesize the most salient differences and similarities found in my analysis. I finish with a presentation of unexpected findings about the influence of broad differences in the classroom contexts in which the teaching artists operated and a fairly minor but relevant practice whereby both teaching artists appeared to simplify their instructional language at times to meet the perceived language comprehension capacities of students. Although neither was part of my original data analysis scheme for language practices, both struck me as important to capture and report to help answer my research questions about how teaching artists’ pedagogical practices afford students opportunities to learn about narrative and storytelling.

Summary of Key Findings—Carolyn

Carolyn was both a seasoned teaching artist and experienced designer and teacher of the preschool storytelling program. She offered a highly systematic and structured approach to instruction, while remaining warm and flexible in her interactions with students. Carolyn’s general pedagogical skill set manifested in all aspects of her storytelling instruction, including her mobilization of the language-promoting practices investigated in this study.

The most prominent and pervasive aspects of Carolyn’s repertoire for language enrichment were the strong emphasis she placed on instruction for focal story related vocabulary and concepts (often via a call and response approach that she favored that I named the “echo technique”), her systematic acknowledgement of student attempts by noticing and naming their

successes and partially correct approximations; and her frequent pairing of gesture with speech as a form of contextual support for students' access to word meanings. Notably, Carolyn rarely had an observable problem with maintaining intersubjectivity with students, but when she did, she always pursued a resolution. She was successful in re-establishing intersubjectivity in all cases in which she appeared to have adequate knowledge and awareness of the problem.

Summary of Key Findings—Jill

Jill was a seasoned teaching artist working in the preschool storytelling program for the first time. She offered a somewhat relaxed approach to instruction, often initiating activities without much framing of the task or provision of scaffolds along the way. Jill's general pedagogical skill set manifested in all aspects of her storytelling instruction, including her mobilization of the language-promoting practices investigated in this study. Broadly speaking, Jill used these practices somewhat less frequently and methodically than Carolyn. However, her use of unison speaking was notably flexible in content and nature. She occasionally invited students to speak chorally with her and repeat after her not only individual words as part of vocabulary instruction, but also full sentences within acts of storytelling. By providing such opportunities, Jill gave students firsthand experiences with narration within the context of children's literature.

Overall, though, Jill's teaching style seemed to be a mismatch with the developmental needs of Samantha's class (although notably that was not the case in her work with the other afternoon class with largely older students) and appeared to create a number of problems with maintaining intersubjectivity with students. Sometimes Jill recognized students' departure from her expectations and learning objectives and responded by offering more scaffolding to recover the student(s) to mutual understanding. But in some instances, though she tried, she was unable to provide the support that students needed, and, in a few cases, she chose not to address student misconceptions.

Comparative Summary

Carolyn and Jill's professional skills and their deployment of language-promoting practices were similar in many ways. Both were highly charismatic and entertaining performers. Observing them perform everything from the smallest demonstration of a discrete movement to the fullest enactments of story and character was uniformly delightful. They were personable with students and staff, sensitive in many ways to their respective classroom contexts, patient with and understanding of maladaptive student behaviors, and tolerant of all kinds of classroom commotion and disruptions.

Jill and Carolyn viewed the focal picture books as a common and fertile point of departure for storytelling experiences. In their views, the full range of storytelling possibilities were not contained within the covers of any given book. They operated from a stance of artistic license that endowed them with the latitude to draw inspiration from the focal picture books, but not be yoked to them. This sense of freedom yielded the construction of many alternative versions of the unit stories. In fact, no session presented a fully conventional rendition of the focal story; there was always at least some variation from the printed page.

One of the biggest surprises of the study was Jill and Carolyn's infrequent use of the metalanguage of story and the absence of explicit instruction for these concepts. A few terms, such as setting and character, cropped up from time to time in their instructional language, and related terms, like story and pretend, made somewhat more frequent appearances. Indirect references, in which Carolyn and Jill made allusions to story grammar concepts, took place occasionally as well. But overall, students gained little exposure to the formal language of story

and narrative in the storytelling program. In contrast, Carolyn paid a great deal of attention (and to a lesser extent, so did Jill) to explicitly teaching concepts related to specific focal stories (e.g., wilderness, boulders, river). Story vocabulary was unquestionably an intentional part of their planning and instruction for every single session, and yet vocabulary *about* story appeared to be a largely unconscious (and often wholly absent) part of their storytelling repertoires.

Analyzing the storytelling program in view of Halliday's (2004) three aspects of children's language learning indicates that students were *learning language*, including vocabulary and phrases explicitly taught by Carolyn and Jill, and were learning how to enact stories and characters *through* language, but that they had few opportunities to learn *about* the language of story and narrative within this program. Given how effectively Carolyn, and at times Jill, seized upon teachable moments in their execution of the naming and noticing practice, I could imagine that a similarly intentional harnessing of the moments ripe for teaching the metalanguage of story, moments that were embedded into every session, could make a powerful contribution to children's knowledge of story elements and deepen their capacity for narrative comprehension. On the other hand, the instructional setting of interactive read aloud may be a better, or at least as suitable, platform for the academic language of story to emerge. If instruction for the metalanguage of story was even a part of Jill and Carolyn's consciences, they may have reasonably presumed that students were gaining exposure to this aspect of literacy instruction from their classroom teachers.

Another of the surprises I found was that opportunities for extended conversations about any topic, let alone the focal stories or narrative in general, were nearly absent from sessions. Carolyn and Jill offered students fairly well-defined participation structures that suited the pace of the sessions and the purposes of the storytelling activities. I came to realize that the storytelling program was simply not designed to provide a forum for deep discussion of the meaning of stories. In their instruction, Jill and Carolyn placed emphasis on building collective knowledge, observation of demonstrations, and active participation in acts of storytelling, but not conversation. Their performative approach to storytelling placed substantial demands on students' communicative, motor, and social capacities in pursuit of an immersive storytelling experience; students rose to these challenges on many occasions.

Carolyn and Jill each used the common adult feedback routines of repetition, expansions, and extensions, practices that constituted important contributions to the mature language models they provided in their instruction. This trio of feedback routines demonstrated their abilities to tune into and build upon students' ideas, while offering typically subtle corrections to students' speech errors. However, they both overlooked opportunities to expand students' immature speech into conventional forms, prompting me to wonder how often the expansions they did provide were serendipitous versus deliberate. I also observed Jill and Carolyn overtly correct students' semantic errors that were revealed through lexical choices, underscoring how adult responses to children's language approximations tend to vary by the type of mistake (semantic, phonological or syntactic) present in the immature speech.

Jill and Carolyn's deployment of language-promoting practices was different in a number of ways, as well. Generally speaking, Jill employed the same practices as Carolyn but less frequently and with less precision. A few practices stand out as deserving more attention to the distinctions between Jill and Carolyn. As noted, Jill's willingness to leave some student misconceptions unchallenged and allow known problems of intersubjectivity to persist distinguished her from Carolyn, who, in contrast, pursued all student misconceptions of which she was aware. Carolyn's students presented her with fewer misconceptions to tackle, though,

likely in part the result of her strongly scaffolded instruction. Jill, like Carolyn, provided overt corrections when students revealed narrowly bounded misconceptions at the word level, such as cow/buffalo, but when the nature of the misunderstanding was more extensive, such as what constitutes a wilderness setting, she demonstrated an inconsistent approach to reconciling such problems. By contrast, Jill's implementation of sentence-level unison speaking within acts of storytelling suggested an understanding of the power and purposes of guided rehearsal for children's language development and comprehensive storytelling participation, that perhaps surpassed that of Carolyn, who used unison speaking primarily at the word level.

Unexpected Findings

Classroom Context and the Role of the Lead Teachers

The respective classroom contexts in which Carolyn and Jill operated, including the students, the personnel team, and in particular, the lead teacher, all influenced the storytelling instruction that they delivered.

Laura. An experienced, observant, and astute teacher, Laura was always a physically co-present and active participant in Carolyn's sessions. Whenever Carolyn offered open invitations to the whole class, whether that was to repeat a word, imitate a movement, or enact a character, Laura always accepted the invitations, thereby offering a model of participation for her students. In addition, she sometimes demonstrated, at Carolyn's request, a piece of an activity prior to Carolyn inviting the students to give it a try. Laura occasionally contributed to sessions by offering additional ideas, but they were always in harmony with Carolyn's instructional goals. She intervened with student behaviors when necessary to protect Carolyn's ability to conduct her instruction. Laura did not insert herself into the lead teaching role at any point; rather, she deferred to Carolyn's judgment when it came to pedagogical decisions and storytelling content. Although not as assertive by nature as Samantha, I believe she would have stepped in to assist with communication between Carolyn and students if she had observed difficulties in this area. However, Carolyn's instruction was so well structured, Laura likely sensed no need to exert influence on the storytelling sessions (beyond what she already did as an active participant and model for her students).

In addition, Laura established an expectation that her colleagues, assistant teacher Diane and aide Andrea, would also remain physically co-present during the sessions unless responding to a student need took them away from the group temporarily. A strong adult to child ratio at the rug during sessions allowed for prompt redirection of non-productive student behaviors and supported the students' ability to focus and participate in general. As a result, Carolyn's teaching was in part enabled by a quieter, less chaotic classroom context than Jill experienced.

Laura's class. There were some strong personalities present among Laura's class, but they did not have the same degree of impact on Carolyn's teaching as Omar and Simon had on Jill's teaching in Samantha's class. One of Laura's students, Karl, was at times, disruptive to storytelling sessions. Karl was a bit similar to Omar and Simon in that he had a vibrant personality, possessed world knowledge that was age appropriate or greater, and often made connections in a flash. He was notably impulsive and could be quite loud. However, he never contested collective reality, like Omar, and he spoke English fluently with a typical tonal quality, so, unlike Simon, his utterances were easily understood. Aside from managing Karl's outbursts (with the classroom staff's assistance), Carolyn's greatest challenge among Laura's students was trying to elicit participation from Tyler, a child who strongly favored self-directed activities and had difficulty pretending. Tyler often, but not always, refused to speak or move as encouraged by Carolyn. Sometimes he even walked away from the group to remove himself from the

storytelling activities. However, Tyler's choice not to cooperate was never as disruptive to Carolyn's teaching as Omar's was to Jill's.

Samantha. A self-assured teacher in possession of clear learning goals for her students, Samantha contributed to the instructional rigor and scaffolding of storytelling sessions via her active participation in the first two units. Similar to Laura, whenever Jill offered open invitations to the whole class, whether that was to repeat a word, imitate a movement, or enact a character, Samantha always accepted the invitations, thereby offering a model of participation for her students. In addition, she sometimes demonstrated, at Jill's request, a piece of an activity prior to Jill inviting the students to give it a try. Moreover, Samantha influenced Jill's instruction by inserting her perspective and knowledge into sessions more assertively than observed with Laura. She brought her familiarity with her students into sessions in response to what she may have perceived as aspects of Jill's pedagogical repertoire that were misaligned to students' learning needs. Samantha regularly revoiced (and sometimes extended) student comments that were difficult to hear or understand, in part for Jill's benefit. And Samantha's contributions may have had what appeared to be their intended effect, as Jill offered repetitions and expansions of student utterances several times after hearing Samantha repeat or expand them first. Similarly, Samantha was observed noticing and naming student behaviors not only with her student audience in mind, but also, it appeared, Jill.

Despite Samantha feeling the need to intervene a fair bit in Jill's sessions in units one and two, her participation in sessions dropped off during the third and fourth units. At times she remained physically co-present throughout entire sessions, but for others she left Jill alone to teach and manage her students for extended periods of time while she worked with individual students diagnosed with disabilities. Samantha appeared to have made the appraisal that Jill and her students were now familiar enough with each other that she could leave her students in Jill's hands and all would be well. Jill did a remarkable job of harnessing the students' energies given the lack of classroom teacher support in addressing un-productive behaviors; however, unsurprisingly, her instruction was not as focused and powerful as it might have been under less chaotic circumstances. After one of the unit three session when Jill had been left alone with the students for a stretch of time, I heard Samantha tell Jill how much she liked her teaching and particularly the infusion of dance into her approach. Samantha also commented to me later that she was happy by the changes Jill had brought to her classroom and the storytelling program. She said she liked Carolyn and thought she did a great job, but she was ready for something fresh and new.

The personnel team in Samantha's classroom, which consisted her assistant teacher, Diane, and the aide assigned to one of her students, Tammy, had a well-established informal group dynamic. Even before Samantha began to leave the rug during Jill's sessions, Diane and Tammy were already physically co-present with the class for only portions of sessions, and not only to attend to individual student needs. Diane and Tammy seemed to view the storytelling time as an opportunity for a bit of a break, which Samantha tolerated. So, when Samantha began to spend part of the storytelling sessions working with individual students, Jill was truly alone in managing the class for stretches of time. Further, even during units one and two, Jill had less staff support for her teaching than Carolyn enjoyed in Laura's classroom due to Diane and Tammy's habit of being elsewhere for at least part of her sessions.

Samantha's class. As noted, Samantha's class included two self-confident and vocal students, Omar and Simon, who were especially challenging for Jill to work with in a productive manner at times. On a fairly regular basis, Omar seemed to enjoy contesting Jill's efforts to build

and draw upon common knowledge to advance her instructional goals. Simon, in contrast, was well grounded in collective reality but his speaking voice was very loud and, due to a speech delay, hard to understand. He contributed some perspectives and ideas, at times in opposition to Jill's goals for the lesson, that Jill chose not to address.

Summary. Carolyn's structured teaching style and Jill's more relaxed teaching style shaped and were shaped by the wider classroom contexts in which they found themselves delivering the storytelling program. Both were veteran teaching artists, but only Carolyn had the benefit of several years of experience delivering the storytelling program and working with preschoolers at Stapleton School. The knowledge she gained from her prior experiences in combination with her existing pedagogical orientation and skill set appeared to equip her to calibrate her instruction for the developmental needs of her students. Jill had only recently embarked on the journey of becoming familiar with the storytelling program and Stapleton students and staff when I observed the lessons analyzed in this chapter. She encountered obstacles, some internal and others external, to calibrating her own teaching in relationship to the developmental needs of the students with which she worked in the particular class and during the particular time period examined here. And yet, both artists were fundamentally successful in implementing an arts-integrated, immersive approach to storytelling in Head Start preschool classrooms with diverse populations of students. Each in their own way found means to facilitate preschool students' participation in complex acts of storytelling (often enabled, in part, by the lead teachers' implicit and explicit support for this endeavor). Carolyn and Jill's implementation of the storytelling program's design placed substantial demands on students' cognitive, motor, and social capacities while offering in each classroom a forum for engaging deeply in the performance of characters and narratives that many students found compelling.

Teaching Artists' Simplification of Instructional Language

A related, but unexpected finding was the discovery that both teaching artists, but particularly Carolyn, occasionally simplified their instructional language. This finding did not fit within the language practice categories of my data analysis scheme, but one of the affordances of qualitative research is discerning patterns one had not sought to study. Although nearly all of Carolyn and Jill's speech demonstrated the linguistic and communicative competence expected of a mature speaker, providing a rich model for students of spoken English deployed in a storytelling context, there were some notable occasions in which they appeared to intentionally simplify their own language. These simplifications appeared to be motivated by a desire to better match what they perceived to be the language comprehension limitations of the entire class in some instances and particular students in others. However, in doing so, they breached expectations for mature speakers' control of language structure.

For instance, in the first session of unit two, during collective guided practice with enacting the character of Mouse in *The Gruffalo*, Carolyn initially used the correct plural form for "mouse" when she noticed and named Azalea and Olivia's enactment: "We have two mice here. Two small hands." However, just a few moments later, she twice substituted "mouse" for "mice." Looking at a small group of children pretending to be mice, she declared, "Oh look, there they go, there they go. There go the mouse." Soon thereafter, in ending the activity, Carolyn shared this observation with the class, "Oh, my goodness. Do you know what I saw? I saw some mouse with teeny hands." (Unit 2, Session 1, Jan. 16, 2019). In both instances, she seemed to deliberately avoid the syntactically required irregular plural noun. Although it is possible that Carolyn said "mouse" accidentally, to make this mistake twice within a short time

period and to not self-correct on either occasion (as is customary when mature speakers make accidental speech errors of which they are aware) would be unusual.

Interestingly, Jill simplified her speech at that very juncture in the same session, although just once. Equipped with her magic wand, magic hat, and a magic word, she pretended to cast a spell to transform into mice those students who had volunteered for guided practice with enacting the character of Mouse. Jill placed the “mouse” word card into her magic hat, circled the air above the hat with her wand and pronounced, “Bibbidi, bobbidi, mou-, bouse! I turn you into a mouse, mouse, mouse, mouse.” She pointed her wand at each child who had raised their hand to volunteer as she repeated the word “mouse,” and then, looking around, asked, “Any other mice? Any other mouses?” (Unit 2, Session 1, March 20, 2019). Jill’s use of “mouses” after having just used the correct form, “mice,” suggests that the error was a deliberate choice.

Carolyn and Jill appeared to have been operating under the belief that using an irregular plural noun such as “mice” would make their instruction less comprehensible to students. Carolyn dealt with this apparent concern by substituting the singular noun “mouse” for several utterances in which she referred to two or more children pretending to be mice. Jill, on the other hand, handled her concern by overregularizing the singular noun, as do many preschool-aged children, to produce the immature plural form, “mouses.”

Jill made other speech errors in the course of her instruction, but none of these other episodes appeared to reflect deliberate simplifications of language designed to meet students’ perceived language comprehension abilities. The other instances can be seen in Excerpt 18, Line 2 (“This wilderness?”), Excerpt 31, Line 4 (“People? Are people fox?,”) and in Excerpt 33, Line 3 (“There is rocks everywhere, you guys”). The first example appeared to be nothing more than a quickly constructed, casual shorthand for “Is this wilderness?” In the second example, “Are people fox?,” I believe she was surprised by Omar’s classification of animals as people and she accidentally blurted out this agrammatical sentence when what she meant to say was, “Are foxes people?” Finally, in the third example, we see a lack of agreement between the singular verb “is” and plural noun “rocks,” but this sort of mismatch happens from time to time even among mature speakers as they compose utterances on the run.

In contrast, I heard Carolyn make numerous speech errors during the second session of unit two, all of which appeared to be deliberate simplifications of her instructional language. During the ending reflection activity, in which Carolyn called upon students individually to share their affective experiences with enacting the Gruffalo character, she first posed the reflection question in a fully conventional form, “Do you like being a Gruffalo? Or do you not like being a Gruffalo?” But thereafter, her formulation of the question changed for each child she queried, and with each new alternative version generated, she breached syntactic expectations for a mature speaker. Importantly, her simplest constructions were directed to those students who were learning English as an additional language or diagnosed with disabilities. For instance, speaking an emergent bilingual student, she asked, “Vanessa, did you like? Or don’t like?” Speaking to a student diagnosed with disabilities, she asked, “Tyler, did you like being a Gruffalo or no like? But even the questions she posed to typically developing, monolingual students fell somewhat outside the range of expected constructions, such as, “Olivia, did you like it or did not like it?” (Unit 2, Session 2, Jan. 23, 2019).

Given that the simplest question versions were reserved for special populations of students, it seems possible that Carolyn may have varied her modifications at least in part based on her perception of the language comprehension capacities of particular students. Another possible explanation for the significant variation in question forms is that Carolyn may have

acted upon a pragmatic desire to avoid asking the same question repeatedly. However, if that was her main concern, Carolyn could easily have constructed several different versions of her question that satisfied syntactic requirements, given the agility of English syntax.

The question of when and why teachers of young children deliberately simplify their language is not one I have examined prior to now, but I suspect it is more widespread in early childhood education settings than the storytelling sessions I analyzed here would suggest. It makes sense that Jill, who held high expectations for her students' reasoning and language comprehension capacities, would make hardly any intentional simplifications to her speech, whereas Carolyn, who appeared highly cognizant of diverse communication and learning needs of her students, might feel the need to engage in this practice more frequently.

I take as a given that child-directed speech and, in the case of this study, instructional language crafted for preschoolers, needs to be reasonably accessible and comprehensible to children. However, adults and young children alike have many paralinguistic and socio-pragmatic tools at their disposal, such as joint attention, eye gaze, prosody, and gesture to support meaningful communication between mature and novice speakers. Furthermore, the complexities of English syntax, including its irregularities, need not be withheld from young children (Clay, 2001). As Pinker (1999) reminds us, children search for, notice, and reproduce regularities as they acquire language. But they inevitably do sort out the irregularities over time through ongoing exposure to diverse forms, general maturation, and the self-tutoring experiences of unsuccessful and partially successful attempts at communication. When adults do not attempt to shield them from linguistic complexities, children are better positioned to grapple with variation as they construct their language(s).

Although atypical of Carolyn and Jill's speech as a whole, these instances of simplified language are noteworthy because one of the stated aims of the storytelling program is to promote early literacy skills and knowledge, and by way of doing so, prepare students to begin taking on the academic discourse valued in school settings. This discourse tradition, as noted in Chapter 1, is characterized by spoken and written language use that is cohesive, lexically explicit, syntactically complex, and decontextualized (Schleppegrell, 2004). Undoubtedly, extensive encounters with the diverse complexity of conventional English syntax in oral and written forms contribute to children's increasing facility with academic discourse and their reading comprehension throughout formal schooling (Dickinson et al., 2010; Schreiber, 1980)

CHAPTER 4: CLASSROOM TEACHER READ ALOUD FINDINGS

Introduction

The interactive read aloud practices of the lead teachers in the two focal Stapleton classrooms (Laura and Samantha) and those of the Coleman control classroom teacher (Rachel), were investigated in order to 1) compare teacher read aloud repertoires within and across study sites and 2) compare the affordances of this long-standing staple of classroom reading instruction and parent-child interactions to the affordances of the storytelling program in promoting students' development of narrative comprehension and the academic language of story. This analysis speaks directly to the question of whether the presence of the storytelling emphasis was associated with any differences, perhaps even carry-over, from storytelling emphases to the more commonplace read aloud practices. This analysis of read aloud lessons at the Stapleton and Coleman sites helped to answer three questions:

- What affordances for language learning and early literacy skill development arise when preschool children participate in read aloud lessons?
 - Specifically, what repertoire of pedagogical tools do the classroom teachers use to promote the narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories?
 - And how do preschool teachers negotiate read aloud lessons and compare in their pedagogical repertoires across settings participating in the storytelling program and outside of the influence of the storytelling program?

Laura, Samantha, and Rachel's read aloud lessons were observed, video recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for a set of language-promoting practices (a set similar to, but less extensive than the set that was analyzed for the broader pedagogical repertoires demonstrated by the teaching artists in Chapter 3).

I examine and describe here a number of important aspects of the broader context of classroom teachers' read aloud practices, including how frequently read aloud lessons occurred, the role of books and stories in the classrooms, and teachers' selection of texts for read aloud lessons. Notably, I include in this discussion my formal and informal observations of daily instruction conducted in each of the four Stapleton classrooms: not only with Laura and Samantha's classes but also with the two other classes that were led by teachers Julia and Heather. Julia and Heather's classes were each included in early iterations of my research design but as a result of the many personnel shifts at Stapleton over the course of the study, they ultimately became less central to the study. However, the information I gleaned from observations carried out in their classrooms informed my knowledge of the general state of read aloud instruction at Stapleton. It is important for the reader to understand that the assertions I make about forces shaping the broader context for read aloud instruction at Stapleton draw upon my knowledge of all four classroom teachers' read aloud practices: Laura, Samantha, Julia, and Heather. In Chapter 5, the reader will learn more about Julia and Heather, their students, and how their students interacted with the storytelling program.

Teachers' enacted theories of reading aloud were directly observed in two ways over the course of the study: formal observation of focal storytelling picture books for units 2-4 (due to scheduling and communication challenges, I was unable to observe the read aloud lessons for unit 1) and informal observation of everyday read aloud lessons. Formal observation entailed sitting apart from the class, taking notes, and capturing the lesson with a video camera before rejoining the class as a participant observer for the remainder of the classroom visit. Outside of

the days with scheduled formal observations of the storytelling teachers, I informally observed all other read aloud lessons that happened to take place while I was enacting the role of participant observer during classroom visits. During these informal observations, I sat with the class and participated in the lesson. I documented these read aloud lessons by taking photographs of the books used and writing about them in as much detail as I could recall directly after the visit.

The observations of control teachers (Rachel and Kelsey) at Coleman Center were scheduled and carried out in a somewhat different manner. Since these teachers did not participate in the storytelling program, there were no focal picture books with which to anchor observations. Rather, I scheduled visits approximately once every three to four weeks and served as a participant observer for the bulk of each day except for conducting formal observations of the near daily read aloud lessons (of whatever book or books the teachers had independently selected for that day). During the formal observations I sat apart from the class, took notes, and video recorded the lesson before rejoining the group's activities. The only exception was my initial visit to Coleman Center, when I joined the class for a read aloud lesson and wrote my recollections afterwards. Outside of that first visit, I did not conduct informal observations of the Coleman Center teachers' read aloud practices.

The two types of direct observations—formal and informal—were augmented by information gathered during informal conversation with teachers about their beliefs, values, and challenges faced with regard to read aloud instruction. These conversations varied in length between one minute and sixty minutes, depending on the teachers' availability and receptivity, and took place before, during, and after preschool class sessions. No formal interviews were conducted with teachers. Additionally, the provision and display of books and book related artifacts and their use by teachers and children in the classroom were documented with notes and photographs. Taken together, the direct observations, personal conversations, and environmental and material supports for beginning reading contribute here to a comprehensive description of the overall language arts learning context in each classroom.

A major unexpected finding of my study is that read aloud lessons were relatively uncommon in the Stapleton classrooms overall. Although this practice varied somewhat by teacher, in none of the four classrooms was reading aloud institutionalized as an essential part of the daily schedule, as is common and recommended for preschool classrooms (McKeown & Beck, 2006; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). By contrast, I found a rich, robust read aloud practice and overall program of instruction for language arts implemented in the control classroom. Coleman Center students had the opportunity to listen to at least one and sometimes two books being read aloud nearly every day. Although I had sought a no treatment control classroom that would provide a "business as usual" comparison of a classroom operating outside the influence of the storytelling program, what I found instead was a strong if not exemplary model of read aloud instruction. In order to help further orient readers to each classroom's idiosyncratic and dynamic learning environments, I devote the first part of this chapter to an analysis of the contextual factors that appear to have contributed to these unexpected findings.

With this grounding in the broader social, institutional, and material contexts of each classroom established, I then present an analysis of three of the read aloud lessons I formally observed during the course of this study: one each from the two focal teachers, Laura and Samantha, plus one from the control teacher, Rachel. Note, as discussed in Chapter 2, Rachel assumed responsibility for nearly all whole group instruction while her co-teacher Kelsey took care of all operational and administrative matters and supported individual students in the

classroom; thus, analysis of the read aloud program at Coleman will focus on Rachel's instructional practices. I begin this part of the chapter by framing the wider context in which these formally observed lessons took place. First, I briefly explain the three phases of a traditional interactive read aloud lesson—before, during, and after reading—to illuminate the overall architecture of the lessons under examination. Then, I compare the lessons on several dimensions: the lesson length (overall and by phase), group size, and salient attributes of individual students. Lastly, I turn my attention to an analysis and interpretation of the particular pedagogical repertoires demonstrated by Laura, Samantha and Rachel during their respective lessons.

Differences in Frequency and Nature of Read Aloud Lessons Across Sites

There was a substantial difference in the frequency of read aloud lessons at the two sites. The teachers at Stapleton School conducted read aloud lessons less often than the control teachers at Coleman Center. On average, read aloud lessons occurred approximately twice a week in classrooms at the storytelling site. By contrast, in the control classroom, read aloud lessons were a daily, and very often twice daily, event.

Moreover, book reading was at times truncated or otherwise modified during read aloud lessons in Stapleton classrooms, meaning that students sometimes did not have the opportunity to listen to stories being read aloud in full. As discussed further in the explanations section that follows, Stapleton teachers sometimes incorporated visual aids and activities into the reading event that supplemented the meaning in the story and provided students artifacts to touch and manipulate.

I extrapolated the frequency of read aloud lessons from several data sources obtained during my formal and informal observation of these lessons all five classrooms, as described in the introduction. In addition, I documented in my notes the occasions when, either in the course of instruction or during informal conversations with me, teachers referred to having read aloud a book on a recent day.

My research focus was on whole class read aloud experiences. Consequently, I did not systematically collect data on the frequency or nature of teachers' intentional or opportunistic reading with individual students or small groups of students during free play time; however, that activity was very seldom observed. Reading aloud nearly always took place in a whole group setting, as was true of nearly all planned instruction I observed. Planned small group or individual instruction of any kind was rarely seen during the daily hour-long free play period. Classroom teachers were typically occupied during free play with a combination of the following tasks: setting up the materials for (and sometimes facilitating) free play centers/activities (e.g., play-doh, arts & crafts), monitoring and observing the classroom, responding to behavioral concerns and managing conflicts between students, maintaining classroom safety, including conducting frequent head counts to assure all students were visible or otherwise accounted for, taking photographs of students in action and documenting the achievement of learning objectives on a smartphone application, and opportunistically speaking and working with children as they interacted with materials and peers. Samantha proved to be a noteworthy exception: she typically provided some individual instruction at least once a week (or delegated her assistant teacher, Diane, to do so). Most commonly, during free play, she pulled one or two students at a time to work on unit-related worksheets she had created. Samantha always incorporated scaffolded name writing practice into these worksheet tasks.

Explanations for Differences in Frequency and Nature of Read Aloud Lessons

A number of factors appear to have contributed to the wide variation in frequency of reading aloud at the two sites and may have impacted the nature of teachers' read aloud practices more broadly as well. These factors include the length of the instructional day, the affordances and constraints of the preschool curriculum, the value placed on read aloud lessons by Head Start and school district administrators, the teachers' own understandings of the purposes and value of reading aloud, rival instructional and classroom management goals, and the individual and collective language, learning, and behavioral needs of students.

Available Instructional Time

The Coleman Center control site held a four-hour class session whereas the Stapleton School storytelling site provided three-and-a-half-hour class sessions. Consequently, it would appear that Coleman Center teachers were afforded the advantage of an extra half hour of instructional time. On the other hand, control classroom students were served two full meals, breakfast and lunch, whereas Stapleton School students were served a snack and one meal (breakfast if they attended a morning class session and lunch if they attended an afternoon class session). Meals were scheduled for approximately thirty minutes while snack periods lasted closer to fifteen minutes. Thus, on paper, the amount of available instructional time appeared to be fairly similar at the two sites, with the Coleman Center teachers benefiting from approximately fifteen additional minutes.

However, Stapleton teachers had even less instructional time due to that site's logistical arrangements for student arrival and dismissal. The majority of students were bussed to and from the school site, while the rest were dropped off and picked up by a family member. Regardless of mode of transport, all students were met and released by their teachers outside of the school entrance in the drop-off and loading area. As a result, Stapleton teachers spent the beginning and end of the class day walking students to and from the school entrance, getting them off the bus and putting them on, as well as, for a handful of students in each class, receiving them from and dismissing them to their family members. Leading a line of ten to fifteen preschoolers across a school campus twice daily is not a quick affair. These logistical arrangements consumed at minimum 10 minutes both at the beginning and end of every class session—a consistent loss of 20 minutes per day.

By contrast, Coleman teachers gained a further advantage in conserving instructional time due to their site's location in a community-based setting. All students walked or were driven to the site and then dropped off directly in the classroom by a parent or other family member. As such, control students enjoyed both an unhurried start to the day, steadily convening during an opening round of free play prior to their breakfast, as well as a gradual ending to the session, as families retrieved their children at the end of lunch until all had departed. No time was lost lining students up and walking with them to and from an outside location for bussing and parent pick-up. Further, during winter months, parents dropping off and picking up their children were responsible for helping them shed and don cold weather apparel. Thus, both on paper, and in actuality, Coleman teachers had at least thirty extra minutes of instructional time at their disposal. Furthermore, as noted earlier in the profiles of the five classrooms in Chapter 2, Laura and Samantha's hybrid classrooms were in session Monday through Thursday, whereas the three standard classrooms operated Monday through Friday, providing those teachers with an additional day of instruction each week.

The Creative Curriculum

The curriculum implemented at all sites operated by the Head Start agency appeared to influence frequency and nature of read aloud lesson practices. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool® is a commercial, interdisciplinary, project-based early childhood curriculum designed to promote learning across four major domains: language, cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development. The Creative Curriculum student learning objectives are aligned with Head Start's Early Learning Outcomes Framework and student assessment system, and as such, the program guides teachers' lesson planning, instruction, and assessment.³

Creative Curriculum, as it is commonly known, organizes a year of preschool curriculum into six core units of study, or themes: Beginning the Year, Balls, Buildings, Clothes, Trees, and Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. During the period of my study, I observed teachers implement the buildings, clothing, and recycling units. The final unit of the year in many classrooms was the trees unit, which teachers modified and broadened to include plants, gardening, and composting. In addition, a number of optional units are available to be purchased separately, including a music unit I observed in use in both Samantha's classroom and at Coleman. The units last approximately six weeks and include a kit with a teacher's guide, a core read aloud library, and book discussion cards. An essential question, referred to as an "investigation," organizes and guides each week of instruction, such as "What are the features of clothes?" The teacher's guide provides instructional plans for several whole class gatherings each day, including a lesson to advance the investigation, a read aloud lesson, and a closing reflection and review period. In addition, small group lessons and instructional plans related to the unit's theme for literacy, mathematics, and eleven "interest areas" (art, blocks, toys and games, library, outdoors, technology, dramatic play, music and movement, sand and water, cooking, and discovery) are included.

Creative Curriculum recommends repeated readings of core library books; its book discussion cards provide plans for each book to be read aloud three times for different purposes within the span of a week or two. With fiction books, the first reading is designed to focus on key story elements, such as character analysis or identifying the problem in the story, while in the second reading, the teacher is meant to demonstrate thinking aloud, offering comments and questions as she or he reads. Finally, the third reading culminates with the teacher providing opportunities for students to reconstruct the story, guided by the illustrations and prompts such as, "What is happening here?" (Teaching Strategies, 2017). Additionally, the book discussion cards offer guidance on how to support students' vocabulary development, including a list of target words with child-friendly definitions, and suggestions for how to use the texts to promote social-emotional learning.

I seldom observed the Creative Curriculum core texts read aloud more than once, and rarely in any recognizable way for the distinct instructional purposes outlined in the teacher guide. Stapleton School teachers reported to me that they felt, given the large numbers of emergent bilingual and special needs students they taught, that many of the Creative Curriculum core library books were poorly matched with their children's interest and developmental levels. They were concerned about the length of the books and how this related to challenges in holding students' attention, as well as the language complexity, particularly with the informational texts

³ What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), a division of the U.S. Department of Education, issued a report on the fourth edition of the Creative Curriculum, published in 2002. After a review of eligible studies, the WWC found the program had no discernible effects on oral language, print knowledge, phonological processing, or math for preschool children (What Works Clearinghouse, 2013).

written to accompany the units. Storytelling teachers often supplemented the unit libraries with other books that they felt were more accessible to their students. For example, they selected two books from the popular Pete the Cat series to support the clothing unit: *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes* (Litwin, 2008) and *Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons* (Litwin, 2012). These books offer simple plots with predictable, patterned refrains.

Although storytelling teachers generally read aloud most of the books included in the core read aloud library units, suggesting that they found something of value in these texts, they often modified the lesson outline for the first reading (which was often the only reading). For instance, when Stapleton teachers felt a book's written language was too complex and/or lengthy for their students to follow, they might alternate between reading the printed text and describing the illustrations in conversational language, as I observed Laura do with *Caps for Sale* (Slobodkina, 1940) during the clothing unit. At other times, it appeared that Stapleton teachers thought that the informational texts written for the units were not the most effective vehicles for building collective knowledge on a given subject. In these situations, storytelling teachers might decide to read just the first couple of pages and then transition into a concrete activity to build similar knowledge, which is what I observed Laura do with the book, *Sam Helps Recycle* (Stamper, 2010). In this book, a dog helps his family accurately sort materials for recycling instead of discarding them in the garbage. In her lesson, Laura read briefly from the beginning of the *Sam Helps Recycle*, then used the text as a jumping off point for a discussion about what can be thrown in the garbage versus what can be recycled and a whole class sorting activity with recyclable materials.

Like the Stapleton School teachers, the Coleman Center teachers supplemented the Creative Curriculum read aloud libraries with additional books to support unit themes. Furthermore, and significantly, Rachel frequently read and re-read books that were not linked to any particular unit but rather were books judged to be worthwhile informational and fiction texts to share with students for a range of instructional and aesthetic purposes. For instance, Kelsey and Rachel maintained a classroom science corner in which something living was growing during most of the year, including butterflies and plants. In the spring, when the class was growing and studying tadpoles in the science corner, Rachel selected the informational book *From Tadpole to Frog* (Pfeffer, 1994) for a read aloud lesson to build collective knowledge about the frog life cycle.

Creative Curriculum program literature explains that the informational books were written to align with unit content objectives and the remainder of the book collection was built around the goals of advancing unit themes through fictional stories (such as *Caps for Sale* in the clothing unit) and of exposing children to a range of genres, including classic read aloud favorites, traditional literature from around the globe, and concept books (e.g., numbers, colors, alphabet) (Teaching Strategies, 2016). *Hush!* fell into this latter category. I had to scrutinize the Creative Curriculum literature in order to uncover the logic of the program's book collection and how the curriculum designers assigned books to units. That busy preschool teachers were unaware of or confused by that logic is understandable, and perhaps, although not voiced by Stapleton teachers, further diminished their interest in using the Creative Curriculum book collection.

Instructional Priorities and Scheduling Constraints

Teachers sometimes spoke about, or revealed through their practices, how rival instructional priorities and scheduling constraints influenced the quantity of read aloud experiences they provided to their students.

Instructional Priorities

I remember an occasion in which Samantha disclosed to me the reason why she did not conduct read aloud lessons every day. As was common on days when I was engaged in participant observation in both Laura and Samantha's classes (which were held in the same classroom), I spent the thirty-minute transition between the morning and afternoon sessions in the room quickly eating my lunch, chatting with and observing any staff who happened to pop in and out, including the lead teachers, as well as helping with set up when useful.

On this day, Laura had just left the room after chatting briefly with Samantha, leaving Samantha to busily set up the classroom for her students. While I waited for the afternoon session to begin, I spoke informally to Samantha while she completed such tasks as setting the tables for lunch and preparing her easel at the rug area. As we talked, the topic of reading aloud arose. Samantha shared that a staff member in the classroom had expressed that she wished that Samantha would read aloud every day. However, Samantha asserted that there were other important lessons and activities she needed to provide to her students and that she could not afford the time to read every day without short-changing those other instructional goals. I decided to offer what I thought would be an open-ended comment that might lead to further reflection on and explanation of her read aloud practices, and thus replied, "Well, every choice you make to do something is always a choice not to do something else." Samantha responded "Exactly!" in a satisfied tone and quickly moved onto another pressing task, thereby ending the conversation.

Samantha seemed to be fairly knowledgeable about language arts instruction, and was clearly supportive of the storytelling program, as indicated in Chapter 3 by her active participation during storytelling sessions in units one and two. However, her selection of a particular version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to read aloud to her class prior to Jill's first visit to her classroom, an analysis of which I relay next, seemed to reflect the somewhat lower status that reading aloud and children's literature held among her instructional priorities.

During the first session of unit one, Jill tried to make a link between the concept of wilderness and the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* by saying to Samantha's class, "So, when you guys read the book, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, it takes place in the wilderness" (Unit 1, Session 1, Jan. 30, 2019). Note that Jill used the past tense of the word "read." She was referring to what she presumed to be a recent class experience of listening to Samantha read aloud *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* that they could now draw upon during the storytelling session. But as Jill spoke, I watched Samantha silently laugh and then turn to look knowingly at her assistant teacher, Diane. In an opportune conversation I had later with Samantha, she volunteered that she had been unable to find a satisfactory traditional version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to use for a read aloud lesson with the class before Jill's first visit. When she could not locate a straightforward account in the school's library or her own collection of children's literature, she decided to read aloud a one-page version from a fairy tale anthology, *Once Upon a Time, the End (Asleep in 60 Seconds)* (Kloske, 2005) on a day, unfortunately, when most children happened to be absent from the class due to illnesses. Not only was the one-page version Samantha selected highly abbreviated, it presented a clever, humorous interpretation of the classic tale (e.g., the story begins "There were some bears; it doesn't matter how many. There was a bunch") without the affordances for language anticipation and listening comprehension of the classic refrains found in traditional versions (e.g., "someone's been eating my porridge" and "it was just right."). My analysis of the text and illustrations determined that understanding the traditional account is a prerequisite to comprehending the abbreviated plot and enjoying its

humorous tone. However, at no point during my conversation with Samantha, during which she showed me the selection she read from *Once Upon a Time, the End (Asleep in 60 Seconds)*, did she indicate an awareness of the limitations of this version or report compensating for them in her read aloud lesson.

Jill could not have known that the prior knowledge she assumed she could link to for students (however fleetingly) had been developed minimally, if at all, by Samantha's text selection, and only for those children who were present at school on that day. Certainly, some students were likely already familiar with *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* given how common the story is in American culture. However, with half of the class made up of emergent bilingual students raised in immigrant and refugee families from non-Western cultural, linguistic, and folklore traditions, it could not be presumed that all students possessed working knowledge of this tale.

Samantha's inability to easily access a high-quality traditional edition of this tale constrained her choice of read aloud materials and appeared to contribute to her selection of a version of the story that was ill positioned to prepare students to comprehend and engage in the unit one storytelling sessions. I can attest to the challenge of locating a straightforward account of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. After my conversation with Samantha, I visited a public library with a fairly well-stocked children's department to search for such a book and could find nothing suitable. Among the five books available, three were humorous riffs off the original tale that, like the abbreviated version read aloud by Samantha, presupposed existing knowledge of the basic story. The two other examples contained sophisticated, literary language accompanied by ornate illustrations that, although possibly suitable for lap reading with an individual child able to view the illustrations satisfactorily, would probably not be accessible to a general preschool class, much less a class with many students enrolled who were emergent bilinguals and children diagnosed with a range of developmental and communicative disabilities.

Recall that the arts organization requested classroom teachers to read aloud the focal picture books from each storytelling unit to both support students' story comprehension and participation in sessions and to best utilize the time and talents of the teaching artists. Typically, this directive required teachers to obtain these books independently (if not already in their children's literature collections) but did not ask them to apply judgements of literary quality and comprehensibility because only one edition of each title exists (e.g., *The Gruffalo*; *We're Going on a Lion Hunt*). However, the case of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, a story that, like many popular fairy tales, is retold in dozens of published editions, offers a stark contrast. The arts organization did not provide guidance to teachers about text selection for this unit, perhaps underestimating the level of expertise required to make astute evaluations of such a well-known and beloved tale. An alternative course of action might have been to provide teachers with a list of 3-4 recommended titles that do not presuppose prior knowledge of the story but capture the essence of the plot and offer reasonably accessible language and illustrations. Or, if funding allowed, the organization might have purchased a suitable title for each participating classroom to ensure a common foundation to build upon for all students, teachers, and teaching artists.

Scheduling Constraints

A common lament among teachers when planning instruction for any group of students at any developmental level is, "there is not enough time!" Head Start teachers are no different in this respect. They work within many federal Head Start and state early childhood education requirements that govern key aspects of their daily schedules. For instance, Head Start policy requires that children receive thirty minutes of gross motor development time each day. For

much of the year, this requirement is met by children playing freely for the last half hour of each session at the playground. However, for a few months in the winter when the Stapleton and Coleman playgrounds were iced over, instead of holding “indoor recess,” as elementary teachers would be expected to do, the preschool teachers were obligated to take their students on slow walks around the snowy, slushy, and/or icy perimeters of their respective campuses. And if the temperature dropped below a certain threshold designated unsafe for outdoor activity, some Stapleton preschool classes walked in slow loops through the school corridors while others did movement activities guided by audio or video recordings. The regulation that seemed to have the greatest impact on teachers’ daily schedules and, therefore, on instructional planning, was a state early childhood policy requiring preschoolers to receive an uninterrupted hour of daily free play. The teachers were in agreement about the importance of this policy, believing strongly in the power of play for children’s holistic development, and protected the full hour.

A scheduling concern shared by all Stapleton teachers to varying degrees was the requirement to accomplish the planned Creative Curriculum unit content each week. Their daily schedules held many common features, including the hour of uninterrupted free play and a whole class meeting that took place after students finished their breakfast (morning classes) or lunch (afternoon classes). Class meetings generally began with a greeting, often followed by some singing or movement activities, then moved into a focused lesson, and ended with the introduction of classroom choices for free play and student selection of an initial free play choice. The focused lesson, lasting 10-15 minutes in most classrooms, was usually the only period of direct large group instruction that occurred each day. Creative Curriculum provides daily plans for exploring the unit theme via the “investigation” of the week during the class meeting time and also calls for a read aloud lesson each day. Stapleton teachers seemed to be in agreement that, in consideration of their students’ abilities to sustain mental focus, one period of 10-15 minutes of focused instruction per day was all that they could manage. Occasionally they taught the investigation activity and read a book during the class meeting, usually finding a way to abbreviate one or both in order to keep the total class meeting length within the allotted time frame, in consideration of their students’ attention spans. But more often than not, they advanced the unit theme one step at a time each day, either by conducting an investigation activity or through a read aloud lesson.

At the Coleman Center classroom, although 80 percent of students were emergent bilinguals who fell across a wide spectrum of secondary language acquisition, most were well beyond the earliest stages of acquiring English. Further, no students were diagnosed with disabilities and only a few appeared to demonstrate perceptible behavioral, emotional, or cognitive challenges. Which is not to say that Rachel and Kelsey had no need to assist students in adopting pro-social behaviors or intentionally scaffold development of language, skills, and knowledge—far from it. However, the overall level of behavioral and learning needs present in their class was undeniably less acute than in Stapleton classes, and perhaps as a result, the challenges they experienced with classroom management did not appear to adversely impact their read aloud practices.

Thus, with the benefit of a somewhat longer instructional day and a less taxing array of student needs to be met, Rachel and Kelsey reached a different conclusion about how often they could gather their class together for focused whole group instruction. Rachel conducted longer morning meetings than Stapleton teachers, replete with many of the academic instructional routines typically seen in kindergarten and grade one (e.g., calendar, weather, and counting) and, as stated earlier, she generally provided two read aloud lessons each day. But even Rachel and

Kelsey grappled somewhat with how to balance language arts instruction and reading aloud with attention to other disciplinary learning. During one of my last visits, Rachel taught a Creative Curriculum mathematics lesson in a time slot that was normally reserved for a read aloud lesson. Although I only observed this variation to their typical schedule once, given that I made just five full-day visits to Coleman Center, it is likely that Rachel and Kelsey decided to advance students' knowledge and skills in mathematics and other disciplines in lieu of a second read aloud lesson on other occasions, too.

Influence of Administrators Views on Reading Aloud

Overall, the teachers at Stapleton School encountered and navigated several layers of competing pressures and interests from Head Start and school district administrators regarding the importance and purposes of reading aloud to their students, whereas the teachers at Coleman Center experienced support from Head Start administrators for their daily read aloud routine and lively instructional practices. Furthermore, as a stand-alone site located in the community, Coleman Center largely operated outside the scope of daily, meaningful influence from the Head Start agency or its respective school district.

The Stapleton school district's early childhood coordinator for special education indicated a desire for every read aloud lesson to be accompanied by visual aids and/or other artifacts in order to support students' listening comprehension and to encourage concrete interaction during read aloud lessons. This directive was supported by the Stapleton Head Start site supervisor, Deborah. Consequently, over a number of years, the early childhood special educator, Hazel, (who served all preschool classes at Stapleton School) created a set of extension activities for many of the core texts taught each year in the Creative Curriculum units for each classroom to use. Most commonly, Hazel made story-themed felt board sets consisting of story-related pieces cut from felt which teachers used to demonstrate story elements and sequencing. Felt board sets are simple, versatile materials that can be developed for just about any book, making them attractive visual aids to support access to written language, especially when a colleague incurs the time burden to produce them. For example, a set to accompany a read aloud lesson for *The Three Little Pigs* would likely include the following felt objects: three pigs, a straw house, a wooden house, a brick house, a cauldron, and a wolf. The colorful felt pieces stuck well to felt boards (small boards—approximately 2'x 3'—covered in black or white felt) and could be easily manipulated and reused. As a result, these materials afforded teachers the opportunity to depict story action by inviting children up to the felt board to add, remove, or relocate the objects.

From time to time, a teacher might display and demonstrate working with extension materials herself but not invite students to manipulate them during the read aloud, perhaps suggesting a belief that the mere presence of concrete materials could be sufficient to promote student engagement and construction of meaning. But more typically, teachers read aloud a portion of the book and then stopped and asked for volunteers to come up to the felt board (or other materials) to represent the story action just read aloud, repeating this cycle until the end of the book. At times, though, teachers read little to none of the printed story while using the felt board sets (or other materials) to re-enact stories with students. On these occasions, supplemental materials originally created for the purpose of increasing comprehensible access to written language in effect diminished the centrality of the core task: extracting and constructing meaning from text through interactive talk.

It is conceivable that the special education early childhood coordinator's directive to Stapleton School teachers to accompany read aloud lessons with concrete activities or visual aids

had the unintended effect of reducing the frequency and variety of books students heard read aloud. The time burden of creating or finding concrete activities to accompany every read aloud would be unsustainable unless the number of books read aloud were significantly reduced, and even then, books would need to be selected and materials created well in advance given the magnitude of Head Start teachers' professional responsibilities. Perhaps it was in recognition of this problem that Hazel volunteered, or was delegated, to produce many of the visual aids and other story-extending materials used by the classroom teachers.

To be sure, teachers did not strictly abide by the visual aid directive, including when they read aloud the picture books that corresponded to the storytelling program. And occasionally teachers made spur-of-the-moment decisions to read aloud books as a time filler or due to schedule irregularities. For example, Laura spontaneously read aloud *Blue Hat, Green Hat* (Boynton, 1982), a clothing unit supplemental book, to her students while they sat finishing their snacks after she learned that the outside temperature was too cold to take her class outside for gross motor time, the next (and final) period of each session. Still, as Stapleton teachers grew accustomed over the years to planning for and conducting read aloud lessons in conjunction with visual aids, several unintended consequences may have unfolded. It is possible that the influence of working with colleagues who had adopted these same practices (or, for newer staff members, being socialized into adopting them after they were hired) may have amplified their confidence in the instructional efficacy of visual aids while simultaneously altering understandings of the instructional purposes and possibilities of reading aloud to children. As discussed earlier, the extension activities often claimed a level of instructional importance equivalent to, and sometimes even surpassing, the texts they accompanied. The push to incorporate concrete activities into their reading aloud practices may have decreased Stapleton teachers' proclivity to engage in read aloud lessons, and thus, could explain, in part, the difference in frequency of reading aloud with their Coleman Center counterparts.

The pressure to use visual aids extended even to the storytelling artists via the input they received from Stapleton teachers over the years. Carolyn mentioned several times that teachers gave very positive feedback when she incorporated visual aids into her storytelling sessions, indicating that they felt these artifacts were important for scaffolding children's participation and learning. She reported that teachers sometimes requested that she develop such materials for more sessions. As a result, Carolyn and Jill created visual aid sets (typically felt board sets or sets of laminated photographs/enlarged color copies of book illustrations) for at least one, and often two, of the three sessions per unit. The time burden required to produce these materials was one of the reasons Carolyn expressed for recycling at least one storytelling unit from year to year.

Coleman teachers, on the other hand, did not face equivalent administrative pressures to offer visual aids and concrete activities to accompany their read aloud lessons. First, the Coleman Center is located in a community-based setting in a neighboring city and thus is a part of a different school system with its own special education office. At the time of my study, there happened to be no children with special needs enrolled. But during a typical year Rachel and Kelsey served a few students with identified disabilities, thereby necessitating some degree of collaboration between them and school district service providers. They reported minimal, if any, influence on their instruction and curriculum from the school district.

Second, Rachel and Kelsey received strong support for their read aloud practices from their direct supervisor as well as the Head Start agency's education coordinator, a senior level administrator. The education coordinator, Janice, had identified the Coleman Center site as a

feasible control classroom for the study based on my need for a site not participating in the storytelling program, but serving a similar population of children and families and located in the vicinity of Stapleton School. She later arranged for and accompanied me on my initial visit to Coleman Center to personally introduce me to Kelsey and Rachel. We caught the tail end of that day's session, joining the class for a read aloud of *The Mitten* (Brett, 1989) and lunchtime. During what was clearly a repeated reading, Rachel and Kelsey facilitated a collective story enactment of *The Mitten*. Kelsey held out a large quilt (serving as a mitten) while Rachel read aloud. Together, they invited students up one by one to pretend to be animals taking shelter in the "mitten." After the class session had ended and Janice and I were walking to our cars, I expressed pleasure with the lively and engaging classroom learning environment I had observed. Janice responded, "Now you can see why I brought you here." She went on to explain that when she and her fellow administrators made yearly decisions about which sites to provide the storytelling program to (given that funding and teaching artist personnel capacity did not permit full implementation across all sites operated by the agency), they felt confident that storytelling enrichment was not needed at Coleman Center.

Given the significantly different professional, institutional, and social contexts in which Rachel and Kelsey worked, it is perhaps unsurprising that they tended not to heavily augment read aloud lessons with artifacts. The adoption of more traditional interactive read aloud practices, in which the text is placed at the center of the instructional experience, likely reflected to some degree the absence of any pressure to incorporate corresponding visual aids and hands-on activities. Furthermore, these pedagogical practices may also suggest an implicit belief by Rachel that books are a type of artifact in and of themselves, and as such, afford many resources for meaning making, interaction, and engagement.

Interactions Between Structural Forces and Teachers' Proclivities for Reading Aloud

The frequency of read aloud lessons in preschool classrooms at Stapleton School and Coleman Center appears to be the product of a dynamic interaction between the associated structural forces (i.e., instructional time, the curriculum, administrators' views, and other instructional and classroom management priorities), teachers' responses to those forces, and their personal proclivities for reading aloud. The particular combination and influence of each element embedded into these interactions varied by teacher and site but yielded a limited range of outcomes in terms of how frequently children participated in read aloud lessons: daily lessons at Coleman Center and about two per week at Stapleton School. An examination of the interactions involved for the three focal teachers follows, concluding with an in-depth analysis of the exceptional case of Rachel, who possessed skill and zeal for reading aloud and taught in a context supportive of her read aloud practices.

Laura

Laura had a high interest in and good knowledge of read aloud practices. At the beginning of the study, she reported strongly positive experiences with, and substantial knowledge of, reading aloud, children's literature, and early literacy instruction. Laura demonstrated intention about supporting students' early literacy development by furnishing the classroom space she referred to as the "reading and writing area" (as opposed to the "library" or "book corner") with a comfortable child-sized couch and chair; a whiteboard easel with dry erase markers; paper, markers, crayons, stickers, and envelopes for drawing and writing; and a rotating range of books displayed in a bookcase and on a small table, including books that supported the current unit of study that she often checked out from her hometown library. She had some advantages in her favor that initially supported her read aloud practices. Although she was new

to Stapleton that year, she was an experienced early childhood education professional and thus held the status of a seasoned teacher. She also seemed to be, as a new employee, either less aware or less under the influence of the early childhood special education coordinator and Head Start supervisor's directives. Collectively, these features seemed to provide sufficient supports for Laura to overcome structural forces working against her read aloud practices. Laura initially conducted read aloud lessons as often as, if not more than, her Stapleton School colleagues, with noticeable relish and skill, and she incorporated visual aids and extension activities into her instruction less frequently than some of the other teachers at the beginning of the study (although this practice increased as the study continued).

Laura maintained her read aloud practices until her class's group dynamic began to progressively deteriorate under the strain of several new students entering the classroom with high levels of need for behavioral and learning support. This devolution of the class had an impact on Laura's instruction of all sorts, including read aloud practices. During the final quarter of the school year, as her students' behavioral and emotional needs became increasingly acute, she conducted fewer and fewer read aloud lessons. In fact, towards the end of the year her morning circles often consisted only of a greeting, and perhaps the briefest of lessons from the current curriculum unit (although she often skipped that as well), before transitioning her students directly into their free play period.

Samantha

Samantha was an experienced preschool teacher with notably strong instructional goals for her students overall. She delivered engaging read aloud lessons in which many of her students participated actively. However, as noted earlier, she experienced tension among many competing and worthwhile instructional priorities and felt she could not afford to read aloud every day. She was friends with the school district's early childhood special education coordinator, who would often drop by Samantha's classroom to chat with her in between the morning and afternoon sessions. It seems possible that her views on reading aloud were somewhat influenced by her close relationship with this colleague. Samantha seemed to place at least as much, and possibly more, value on instruction for some of the code-based enabling skills of early literacy. She made time every week to provide individualized instruction to students in name writing and letter formation. And towards the end of the year, she taught a series of whole class lessons designed to promote handwriting skills and future readiness for the Handwriting Without Tears® handwriting program that her students would encounter in kindergarten classrooms at Stapleton.

Rachel

Rachel's daily practice of reading aloud to her class was facilitated by the combination of her personal proclivity to engage in read aloud lessons and the enabling structural forces at her site described earlier. An experienced preschool teacher, she demonstrated a strong commitment and disposition to prioritizing reading aloud and language arts instruction generally. Rachel expressed high regard for children's literature and had developed a large personal book collection over time. After her students had all gone home for the day, she often took the time to point out new books displayed in the classroom bookcase, enthusiastically sharing with me how she had used a book in a lesson or how much her class had enjoyed a particular book. Rachel's knowledge of and interest in children's literature and reading was evident in her lively daily read aloud lessons.

Like her counterparts at Stapleton School, Rachel read aloud many of the books included in the Creative Curriculum program, plus supplemented with titles she found to advance unit

themes. But she stood out from her peers by regularly exposing her students to books unrelated to unit content, but that offered, in her view, substantial literary, social, or informational merit. For instance, Rachel read to her class *The Day the Crayons Quit* (Daywalt, 2013) and *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* (Shaw, 1947) several times across the school year. Neither book aligned with any curriculum unit, but each offered appealing illustrations, predictable text structures, and many instructional opportunities for language development, text comprehension, and print knowledge. Both became class favorites, according to Rachel.

Indeed, Rachel reread numerous titles across the year, both Creative Curriculum aligned and otherwise, suggesting an understanding on her part about the power of familiarity to promote children's affective attachment to books and stories as well as facilitate their language and comprehension development. Another way Rachel and Kelsey encouraged their students to enjoy books and reading was by exposing their class to different adult readers and new books. They arranged for such opportunities by inviting two United Way volunteers, both retired teachers, to read aloud to the class weekly: one visited twice a week and the other once per week. I often observed one of the volunteers read to the class on the day of the week that I most often made my visits. The presence of volunteer readers in the classroom twice a week multiplied students' exposure to other models of fluent, engaged adult readers, and expanded the variety of books they encountered. Some weeks the volunteers used books that Rachel and Kelsey supplied but other times they selected and brought their own books for reading aloud, often leaving the book for the class to borrow for a period of time, or sometimes even presenting a new book to the class as gift.

One way to assess students' attitudes about books and reading across classrooms is to consider how they interacted with books when left to their own devices. During the free play periods in all five classrooms, the most popular activities were those that allowed students to manipulate and create (e.g., the water table, arts and crafts, blocks, and Legos). Stapleton and Coleman students occasionally visited their classroom libraries during free play and selected books to look at alone or with a peer, but unless an adult came along and read with them, they rarely sustained this activity for very long.

What really distinguished the students in the control classroom from the storytelling classrooms was how they interacted with books during an end of day routine unique to their classroom. When lunch was over but some students had not yet been picked up, Kelsey and Rachel often directed the children to choose a book, take it to the rug, and read while one of them interacted with families arriving to retrieve their children and the other finished cleaning up from the meal. The level of independence students demonstrated in selecting books and engaging in acts of reading was striking. Nearly all were thoroughly engrossed in their books while they waited to be picked up. Mostly, they "read" by themselves, but it was common to see children beckon their friends to come look at interesting pages, huddling together temporarily to talk and laugh about their books. These behaviors suggest that control classroom students viewed reading as a meaning-making activity that could be conducted either individually or collectively, and that they found it pleasurable in both variations. The shared reading literature suggests that children who are frequently read aloud to demonstrate greater enjoyment of and engagement with books and reading (Neuman, 1999; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). The discussions of text that Rachel facilitated during daily read aloud lessons with the entire class may have helped students internalize ways of interacting with and around books, including the sharing of personal reactions to and interpretations of text with fellow readers. No equivalent routine took place in

the Stapleton classrooms due, in part, to their dismissal procedure of all students being met by a caregiver or put on a bus at the school entrance.

Summary of Explanations for Differences in Frequency and Nature of Read Aloud Lessons

Coleman control teachers conducted one to two read aloud lessons per day, while Stapleton storytelling teachers taught an average of two read aloud lessons per week. Five main factors appeared to be the primary contributors to the observed differences in frequency and nature of read aloud lessons across classrooms and sites: available instructional time, the curriculum, competing instructional and management priorities, the influence of administrators' views on reading aloud, and the interactions between teachers' personal proclivities with regard to read aloud practices and their individual responses to the structural forces.

Available Instructional Time

Stapleton teachers had, at minimum, thirty minutes fewer per day with which to deliver all curricular elements, direct instruction, and required schedule components (e.g., meals, free play, and gross motor development time) than Coleman teachers. Moreover, Laura and Samantha each had one fewer day per week to accomplish these goals because the two Head Start-school district hybrid classrooms operated only Monday through Thursday.

Curriculum

All teachers were required to use *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* (Teaching Strategies, 2017), an interdisciplinary unit-based program of instruction. The program's detailed lesson plans call for two types of whole class gatherings each day: lessons designed to advance the unit theme through series of guided inquiry questions called "investigations," and daily read aloud lessons using books from the program's core library (some of which are aligned to the unit theme). In light of available instructional time and scheduling constraints, and due to concerns about some students' limited attention spans and disruptive behaviors, Stapleton teachers typically provided one 10 to 15-minute period of direct instruction per day during their class meetings. At times, they managed to teach both the Creative Curriculum investigation and the read aloud lesson during this single stretch (often with modifications to one or both in order to economize time), but more often they alternated between the two activity types. In contrast, the Coleman teachers had fewer concerns about their students' learning and behavioral needs and more available instructional time. Together, these two conditions buoyed their decision to intersperse periods of teacher-led and student-directed activities across the day, resulting in two to three large group gatherings per day and fewer compromises required to balance advancing language arts instruction with other disciplinary objectives.

Competing Instructional Priorities

Related to the instructional affordances and constraints manifest in the Creative Curriculum program were the teachers' own instructional priorities. They all felt some degree of pressure, whether externally or internally imposed, to implement the adopted curriculum plus meet daily scheduling requirements handed down by federal and state policy makers. Stapleton teachers had considerably more children with special needs enrolled in their classrooms than the Coleman site. Concerns about successfully capturing and maintaining students' attention and an implicit desire to reduce the stress that managing disruptive student behaviors placed upon them and other students appeared to contribute to Stapleton teachers' decision to teach less than daily read aloud lessons.

Administrator Views on Reading Aloud

Stapleton teachers contended with the influence of a school district special education early childhood coordinator, whose stated desire, which was largely supported by the Head Start

site supervisor, was for every read aloud lesson to be accompanied by visual aids and/or other artifacts in order to support students' listening comprehension and to encourage hands-on interactions. This directive may have had the unintended consequence of reducing the frequency of read aloud lessons at Stapleton due to the considerable investment of time required to prepare concrete materials to accompany the books. The school district's early childhood special educator provided substantial collegial support to Stapleton preschool teachers by producing materials, often felt board sets, for use in conjunction with many of the Creative Curriculum unit-aligned books. However, it is possible that this directive limited the amount and variety of books that Stapleton teachers shared with their classes, as well as may have influenced how teachers viewed and used the books themselves as artifacts.

Coleman Center teachers, on the other hand, did not encounter any administrative obstacles to teaching read aloud lessons. Rachel and Kelsey had the full support of their direct supervisor to conduct daily read aloud lessons and received recognition from a senior level Head Start administrator, Janice, for providing high quality language arts instruction (which, in fact, disqualified them for participation in the storytelling program, according to Janice).

Interactions Between Structural Forces and Teachers' Proclivities for Reading Aloud

Teachers' personal proclivities for reading aloud shaped and were shaped by the structural forces impacting read aloud practices at each site. Samantha, Laura, and Rachel demonstrated differing degrees of individual interest in and motivation for reading aloud (moderate, high, and extraordinary, respectively) that interacted with the contextual factors at each site that exerted influence on their read aloud practices. These interactions appeared to yield a moderate emphasis and amount of read aloud lessons in the overall program of instruction in Samantha and Laura's classrooms compared to a high emphasis and amount of read aloud lessons in the overall program of instruction in Rachel and Kelsey's classroom.

Read Aloud Findings for the Focal Classroom Teachers

Having framed and described the overall context for read aloud instruction at the two study sites, I now turn to an analysis and interpretation of three individual read aloud lessons taught by Laura, Samantha, and Rachel. I analyzed and compared Laura and Samantha's read aloud lessons for *The Gruffalo* with Rachel's read aloud lesson for *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* (Garriel, 2004) (see Appendix A for synopsis). I chose to analyze *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* because it was, like *The Gruffalo* for Laura and Samantha, the first read aloud lesson I formally observed Rachel teach. This title, a variation of *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*, is a more highly patterned text with a less complex plot than *The Gruffalo*. In hindsight, I think a fairer comparison of read aloud practices would have been enabled by selecting one of Rachel's later lessons that involved a title closer in story structure, length, and complexity to *The Gruffalo*. Still, many fruitful comparisons were still possible within the contrastive analysis I present here.

The patterns I found within and across the focal teachers' pedagogical repertoires fell into two facets of their practice: lesson length and the trends that emerged for the language-promoting practices described below. Before presenting an analysis of these facets of the read aloud lessons, I offer a brief description of the three phases of the traditional read aloud lesson—before reading, during reading, and after reading—followed by some contextual information about class size on the days of observation and how the particular group of students assembled for each lesson appeared to contribute to observed levels of teacher-student interaction.

Phases of the Read Aloud Lesson

As represented in research and reports of best practice for reading aloud to children, traditional interactive read aloud lessons have a common structure consisting of three main instructional phases: before the reading, during the reading, and after the reading (Holdaway, 1979; Mason et al., 1989). The three phases, although fairly distinct in pedagogical goals and substance, work in concert to impress upon students that readers think about the text before they read, while they read, and after they read.

Before reading the text, teachers typically take steps to prepare students to successfully comprehend while listening. These actions may include, but are not limited to, reading the title and author and illustrator's names; discussing the cover illustration; introducing the story by offering key themes and/or the essence of the plot; activating students' prior knowledge about the book subject matter; previewing key vocabulary terms, setting one or more purposes for active listening; making, or asking students to make, a prediction; and building suspense or otherwise promoting student engagement with the book.

During the reading, teachers aim to strike a balance between reading the text and talking about the text, including commenting on the written language and illustrations, facilitating student understanding by posing comprehension questions and explaining unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts, and inviting students' own comments and questions.

After teachers have finished reading aloud a text, many of the pedagogical practices present in the before and during reading phases might re-appear (e.g., vocabulary and concept development). In addition, they might draw attention to the original purpose(s) set for that reading, ask students how their prior knowledge was confirmed or challenged by the book, or invite students to share personal connections and affective responses to the book. Often, teachers discuss the story ending with students in order to promote synthesis of the theme or main ideas and to promote inferential comprehension.

Degree of Interactive Talk Between Teachers and Students

Research on reading aloud indicates that what matters most for children's language and literacy development is not merely the activity of reading aloud and the presence of co-occurring talk but rather *talk about text of an interactive nature* (McKeown & Beck, 2006; Zucker et al., 2013). In light of this finding in the read aloud literature, I share here my global assessment of the degree of interactive talk present in these three read aloud lessons. I observed that the number of students present in each classroom along with the individual personalities and communicative capabilities of those students appeared to influence the degree of interactivity between students and teachers in each read aloud lesson, with differential effects particular for more reserved students.

A notable feature of Laura's read aloud lesson for *The Gruffalo* is that circumstances prompted her to convert it from a planned episode of whole group instruction, intended to provide exposure to the book for the entire class, to a de facto small group lesson. First, only five of 11 enrolled students were in attendance that day. The preschool bus had broken down that morning, preventing several children from getting to school, and a few students remained at home due to illnesses. Second, at the appointed time of the lesson, two of the five students present were unavailable to participate due to being pulled for individual sessions with special education providers. As a result, just three children had the opportunity to gather with Laura for this read aloud lesson. She performed a highly expressive reading of the text and utilized several of the language-promoting practices noted in the literature (analyzed further below). An early emergent bilingual student responded substantially at times, the student with significant special

needs responded infrequently, and the third student, also an early emergent bilingual, sat quietly throughout. Laura generally greeted her students' infrequent verbal and nonverbal participation with great enthusiasm but was unable to provoke any consistent interaction with her pedagogical repertoire until she reached the end of the book. At that point, a monolingual English-speaking child returned from speech therapy. Although he had missed most of the read aloud, he remembered the story from last year's storytelling program. He soon engaged in an extended conversation with Laura about his affective response to the book.

Several students were not present when Samantha read *The Gruffalo*, either—four absent and two pulled for speech therapy—but the remaining nine still felt like a class rather than a small group. Seven of the nine were emergent bilingual students, and of the two monolingual English speakers, one had been diagnosed with a speech delay. Nonetheless, the lesson had an energetic dynamism, including a large number of verbal comments and questions, contributed mainly by four students. Samantha generally tolerated stretches of loud, overlapping student talk and was quick to acknowledge those students who initiated speaking, even, at times, when they interrupted her. She did not attempt to elicit wider participation from the quieter students.

In the control classroom, ten of fifteen students were present on the day Rachel read aloud *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* (Garriel, 2004); the five absent were presumably ill. Of those present, eight were emergent bilingual students. Similar to the classroom context for Samantha's reading of *The Gruffalo*, there was an air of vitality in this lesson. And like Samantha, Rachel tolerated a fair amount of overlapping student talk, tended to respond to students who initiated comments and questions, and did not attempt to elicit wider participation from the quieter students.

These two divergent classroom dynamics (Laura's classroom vs. Samantha and Rachel's classrooms) provided different affordances and constraints to the more outwardly passive students. In Laura's classroom, students who tended to participate less in whole group instruction happened to be the only students present that day (until the very end of the lesson). As such, although they did not interact with the teacher or book very often, they received all available "airtime" and strongly positive reinforcement for their efforts from Laura. But in the other two classrooms, students who were less vocal were permitted few openings in which to interact with the book and teacher due to the dominance of their more confident peers. At the same time, because these lessons took place in larger groups comprising a wider range of student personalities and capabilities, quieter students had opportunities to learn from the language models provided by their more dominant peers and from observing those classmates interact with teachers and books.

Length of Time

Laura and Samantha's read aloud lessons for *The Gruffalo* were similar in total length, between 12-13 minutes. Further, the amount of time the two teachers spent actually reading the text to their classes was nearly identical. Where they differed was in the time devoted to introducing the book before the reading compared to discussing the book after the reading. Neither teacher devoted much absolute time during the lesson outside of the reading of the text, but relative to each other, they differed markedly in their time allocations to different phases of the read aloud lesson. Laura launched into reading the book after a brief 22-second effort to activate her students' prior knowledge about the book's namesake character, while Samantha spent about two minutes activating her students' prior knowledge by systematically reviewing the names of each animal (i.e., mouse, fox, owl, snake, and Gruffalo) that Carolyn had introduced the previous week during the first session of *The Gruffalo* unit. In contrast, after

reading, Laura apportioned about 1.5 minutes to a discussion of the story (chiefly an extended conversation with one student about his affective response to the story), while Samantha’s after reading phase lasted about 30 seconds. Although it was unclear whether Samantha had a plan for the after reading phase of the lesson, if she had one, it likely got derailed by two students and an aide loudly returning to the room from speech therapy. This ill-timed event distracted most of the other students and in turn may have diverted Samantha from her instructional goals, because she quickly ended the lesson.

The text of *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* is itself shorter in length than that of *The Gruffalo*, so it is unsurprising that Rachel’s lesson was briefer (just over 8 minutes) than Laura and Samantha’s lessons. The relative division of time Rachel allocated to the three phases of reading aloud was similar to that of Samantha’s lesson: approximately 1.5 minutes before the reading, 6 minutes actually reading the text, and 30 seconds after the reading. Like Samantha, Rachel spent time before reading activating students’ prior knowledge about pertinent subject matter. Specifically, she used students’ existing understanding of violins from their music unit as a stepping stone to begin building the concept of a new musical instrument, the cello. Furthermore, she stimulated relevant literary knowledge of a similarly structured book with which students were all highly familiar (i.e., *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*) to promote anticipation of the overarching construction of this new text. In her brief after reading phase of the lesson, Rachel highlighted the starkly contrasting final fates of the respective protagonists in *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* versus *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*.

Table 3

Comparison of Read Aloud Lesson Length for Focal Teachers

Teacher	Book title	Students Present	Observation Date	Total time ^a	Time by phase ^a		
					Before	During	After
Laura	The Gruffalo	3 of 11	January 22, 2019	12:32	00:22	10:25	01:33
Samantha	The Gruffalo	9 of 14	March 25, 2019	13:01	02:04	10:27	00:29
Rachel	I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello	10 of 15	March 26, 2019	8:02	01:33	06:04	00:25

^a(min:s).

Language Promoting Practices

The focal teachers’ read aloud lesson transcripts were analyzed for practices known to promote children’s language growth (e.g., Clay, 2001; Cazden, 2005; Grifenhagen et al., 2017) in order to understand how their pedagogical repertoires for language development compared and contrasted interpersonally and across settings. Language-promoting practices were identified conceptually (through review of the research literature and reports of best practice) as well as empirically (data-driven analysis of read aloud lesson transcripts). These practices are the same ones used to analyze the teaching artists’ pedagogical repertoires during the storytelling episodes studied in Chapter 3 (with the exception of unison speaking, narration, and noticing and naming, all of which were unique to the storytelling sessions):

- offering contextual supports for word and text meaning (i.e., prosody, gesture, artifacts),
- repeating, expanding, and extending children’s utterances,
- instruction on vocabulary and concepts,
- facilitating the anticipation of written language,
- taking steps to repair intersubjectivity when it is lost

- holding extended conversations with students, and
- using story metalanguage (e.g., character, plot, setting, beginning, end),

Analysis of these language-promoting practices is presented roughly in order of most to least prevalent. Contextual supports (in particular, gesture matched to text meaning), repetitions, expansions, and extensions of student utterances, and some instruction for vocabulary and concepts were observed in all three lessons. The remainder of the identified language-promoting practices were generally utilized just a few times by one or two teachers (i.e., promoting anticipation of written language, repairing intersubjectivity, holding extended conversations with students, and using the metalanguage of story).

The reader will find an analysis and interpretation of Laura, Samantha, and Rachel's language-promoting practices presented in a unified manner rather than the separate organizational structure I employed for the teaching artists' findings. A more integrated approach is justified because of how much is already known about effective practices for reading aloud in preschool. Interactive read aloud in early childhood education settings is one of the most studied topics in all of early and elementary literacy research. The read aloud aspects of this study are, thus, complementary to the focal subject matter (the storytelling program and work of the teaching artists).

Contextual Support

Contextual supports were the most widespread language practice observed in read aloud lessons. As discussed in Chapter 3, an assortment of nonverbal and paralinguistic communication practices has been found to improve language comprehension by increasing young children's access to word meanings (Grifenhagen et al., 2017). I identified five variations of contextual support as pertinent to reading aloud:

- Prosody matches word meaning
- Gesture matches speech meaning
- Gesture matches text meaning
- Gesture matches character's feelings
- Artifacts (e.g. realia, pictures, visual aid)

Early childhood educators can often be seen spontaneously offering some of these contextual supports while teaching read aloud lessons. Teachers who are aware of the effectiveness of these strategies for enhancing children's comprehension at the word and phrase levels of language, including those who work with students with special language learning needs, may be inclined to use them more systematically.

Contextual support as a whole was the most common language-promoting practice chiefly due to the frequency with which teachers used gesture to illuminate and accentuate text meaning: seven times in Rachel's lesson, 10 times Samantha's lesson, and 38 times Laura's lesson. Recall that Laura read aloud *The Gruffalo* to two emergent bilinguals and one student diagnosed with disabilities (including communication delays). Laura's substantially higher use of gesture than her peers suggested she was aware of her audience's specialized language learning needs and was working hard to provide them with comprehensible input.

Examples of Laura's thorough contextual support via gesture included an iconic hand wave paired with the word "goodbye" in the line, "Goodbye little mouse, and away Snake slid;" a less iconic, but still highly recognizable, formation of her hand into a claw-like shape for the word "claws" several times; repeatedly cupping her ear with her hand each time the word "hear" appeared (such as "I hear some paws on the path ahead") and the negative implication of a head shake layered onto the line, "There's no such thing as a Gruffalo." Samantha, interestingly, used

many of the same gestures in the same spots, including for “claws” and the head shake for “There’s no such thing as a Gruffalo.” She also held out a hand with her fingers spread apart to indicate surprise for “Oh!” when Mouse met the Gruffalo, a less conventional gesture than some of the others she shared in common with Laura, but still recognizable, especially in conjunction with her startled facial expression. Like Laura and Samantha, Rachel used a head shake, but for another of its purposes: to indicate a lack of knowledge when paired with the line, “I don’t know why he swallowed the cello.” Rachel twice used the fairly conventional gesture of holding her thumb and forefinger together to indicate smallness of size in conjunction for the lines, “that wee little bell,” and “The teeniest, tiniest, petite cascabel,” and the less iconic but still recognizable in context gesture of pretending to play a flute for the line, “I know a shy fellow who swallowed a flute.”

Of the remaining contextual support practices, most were used fairly sparingly or not at all. Prosody matched to word meaning use was consistently low, seen just once or twice in each lesson. Laura and Samantha both elongated the /s/ in the word “hiss” while reading, “I hear a hiss in the grass ahead,” thereby using the built-in affordances of this onomatopoeic word to help students predict the next character to appear in the book (Snake). In addition to using the hand gesture to connote the small size of the cascabel as described above, Rachel concurrently spoke “wee little bell” and “tiniest” in a high-pitched, small voice, thereby layering prosody onto gesture onto word meanings.

Slightly more variation between teachers was seen for the strategy of matching gesture to speech meaning. Rachel used this strategy to increase student access to word meaning only once, Laura used it three times, and Samantha used it five times. Shared in common, though, among the three teachers, was the placement of this form of contextual support: it nearly always took place before and after reading, whereas gesture use during reading was almost exclusively targeted to informing the meaning of text. Spoken language, and certainly that which is constructed for teaching preschoolers, is generally simpler than the written language found in children’s literature. Thus, it follows that fewer instances of gesture matching speech than gesture matching text would be seen; the teachers, who were crafting their instructional language to be comprehensible to students, would anticipate students needing less contextual support during the before and after reading phases of the lesson. They mostly layered gestures onto their speech to enhance the meaning of concepts: for Rachel, the large size of a cello; for Laura, the Gruffalo’s physical traits; and for Samantha, the movement pathways of the characters (i.e., slithering for Snake, wings flapping for Owl). However, Samantha also used gesture for concepts that students might be expected to understand already, such as pointing to her eyes for “we have to keep our eyes on the pictures...” and holding up one finger for “raise your hand if you remember one animal that came out of her magic hat?” suggesting that the purpose of her gesture in those instances may have been more oriented toward classroom management than concept instruction.

The storytelling teachers parted ways from the control teacher in their use of gesture to elucidate a character’s feelings. Laura and Samantha did this occasionally (twice and three times respectively), while Rachel did not. But these instructional choices appear to be aligned, at least in part, with the disparate natures of the two titles. In *The Gruffalo*, the five characters and their emotions were prominent drivers of the plot, whereas in *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* (a less complex story with a more highly patterned text), there was only one character, the “shy fellow,” whose emotions, while present to some degree in the text and illustrations, were far less central to understanding the story.

None of the teachers used artifacts to increase access to word meanings. The books appeared to serve as types of artifact unto themselves, with the affordances of text and illustrations paired together and opportunities for meaning making they engendered evident in both the extratextual talk by teachers and comments and questions from students. Further, most of the words and phrases for which Laura and Samantha chose to offer contextual support for could not easily be represented by an artifact, such as “goodbye,” “hear,” and “no such thing.” However, the representations of instruments provided by the illustrations of *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* were rather whimsical. Judging by how often Rachel felt a need to teach about the music instruments as they appeared in the book (she explained verbally or with a gesture for nearly each one), it may have been helpful for student comprehension to display a photograph of each instrument as it was introduced in the text or perhaps before beginning to read.

In summary, contextual supports were the most widespread language practices in the teachers’ read aloud repertoires for promoting meaning making and understanding. However, aside from the primary strategy—gesture matched to text meaning—most other variations of contextual support were observed infrequently, if at all. Laura demonstrated sensitivity to the particular language learning needs of her audience, as well as persistent efforts to connect with and elicit interaction from her students, by deploying gesture matched to text meaning an extraordinary 38 times in the course of her lesson. Her peers, Rachel and Samantha, also taught many students learning English as an additional language, and, in Samantha’s case, diagnosed with disabilities, but the groups of students present for their respective lessons represented a broader continuum of linguistic and cognitive development. Like Laura, Rachel and Samantha used gesture matched to text meaning more than any other contextual support strategy, but much less often. Since their students regularly made comments and asked questions throughout the lesson, they likely did not feel the same sense of urgency to augment the meaning in the text with gestural support.

Repetitions, Expansions, and Extensions

Teacher use of the feedback routines of repetitions, expansions, and extensions was somewhat common overall in the read aloud lessons analyzed. These strategies, typically used by adults to promote a meaning-orientation and to provide mature language models during communication with young children, were seen 19 times in Samantha’s lesson, about twice as often as her peers. Laura utilized these feedback routines only eight times. However, because the three students she taught for most of the lesson spoke fairly infrequently, she had fewer student responses than Samantha to potentially apply these strategies to in order to affirm and extend student messages. Thus, Laura and Samantha’s relative use of these feedback routines was more similar than the absolute counts would suggest. Rachel used repetitions, expansions, and extensions nine times during her lesson, perhaps reflecting, in part, the shorter time length of her lesson, but also, it seemed, relatively less emphasis on these feedback routines in her read aloud repertoire than her peers.

At times it was challenging to try to determine if the teachers were repeating, expanding, or extending student utterances because the students, particularly some of the emergent bilingual students, could be difficult to hear and understand. For instance, after Samantha opened *The Gruffalo* and was showing the front end pages, which depict a path with three Gruffalo footprints running through a forest, Nilar shouted unintelligibly, “() () () ()!” while pointing to some feature of the illustration. Samantha appeared to be trying to figure out what Nilar had said as she carefully scanned the illustration before turning back to Nilar to say, “Oh, you see the footprint!”

(to which Nilar nodded). Samantha's response appeared to be either an expansion or an extension, but since I was unable to capture any of Nilar's speech in my transcription, I cannot be certain.

Repetitions. When teachers used repetition only (by which I mean excluding those episodes of expansion or extension with built-in repetition), they generally reserved this practice for common knowledge building exchanges within the classic Initiate-Respond-Evaluation (IRE) participation structure seen frequently in classroom discourse. They initiated the exchanges by posing constrained questions, typically received one- to two-word responses from students, then re-voiced and affirmed as correct via repetition. Each teacher had at least one episode of this type of use of repetition. For instance, after finishing reading, Laura asked her students about an important shift in perspective that occurred for the Gruffalo over the course of the story: "And then who did Gruffalo end up being afraid of?" She affirmed Malik's answer, "Mouse" with an enthusiastic repetition, "MOUSE! YEAH!"

The other main use I sometimes observed teachers use repetition for was to help them determine whether they had understood a student. Sometimes they would repeat the child's utterance in the form of a question if they weren't sure they had heard a student correctly. For instance, when Samantha asked her class why they thought the Gruffalo had tusks one student, Arjun, said "cheese" (she did not realize he was still answering an earlier question she had posed about what mice eat), she repeated his statement in the form of a question, "CHEESE?" to verify that she had understood him.

Expansions and Extensions. The majority of teachers' use of feedback routines fell under expansions and extensions. Expansions, in which the adult models the mature form in response to the child's approximation must, by definition, include some degree of repetition, whereas extensions, by which the adult layers a new idea onto the child's message, may or may not include built-in repetition. Two consecutive expansions of varying lengths were observed near the end of Rachel's lesson. After the protagonist in her book had ingested multiple musical instruments, Rachel commented on his increasingly distended abdomen. This led a student to suddenly share his interpretation of the abdomen's shape; Rachel and Kelsey both responded with expansions of his message in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

- 1 **Rachel:** Look at the shape of his belly now. I've never seen anybody have a shape of a
- 2 belly like that in my life! ((holds the book out so students can see the illustration better))
- 3 **Mason:** T-REX!
- 4 **Kelsey:** A T-Rex. ((laughs to herself))
- 5 **Rachel:** Ah, it does look like a T-Rex. ((looking at Mason))

Note how the first expansion from Kelsey simply adds the requisite article to Mason's idea ("A T-Rex"), but her re-voicing of what could have sounded like an abrupt and nonsensical pronouncement from Mason may have supported Rachel's subsequent expansion of his message into the more complete proposition seen in Line 5.

Most of Laura's expansions and extensions occurred during her long exchange with Malik in the after reading phase of her lesson (because that is when the bulk of her instructional exchanges with a student occurred). However, in Excerpt 2 she was able to expand an observation Denpo offered about the book's illustrations during the reading. Her expansion was slightly delayed because she did not understand him initially.

Excerpt 2

1 **Laura:** Huh! ((holds book out and moves it around so everyone can see the illustrations,
2 which include Snake)) What's the next animal? (1.2) ((looks at Denpo; raises eyebrows))
3 What's next?
4 **Denpo:** ((leans forward toward book)): A snake! ((points to Snake on left page, and then
5 on right page)) and that's () () () () () snake. ((sits back))
6 **Laura:** Wow, that's a lot! ((turns book towards Vanessa and Lucas)) Do you see the
7 s::nake?
8 **Lucas:** Yeah.
9 **Laura:** Yeah! The ↑snake! There's- oh, I see what you mean. ((talking to Denpo)) There's
10 a picture of a snake here ((points to the snake on left page)) and a picture of a snake here
11 ((points to the snake on right page)). You are right! ↑Two pictures. (1.0)

Note how when Laura was at first unable to understand Denpo's utterance, she shifted her attention to Lucas and Vanessa. But as soon as she realized that Denpo had been pointing out that the character of Snake appeared twice in that two-page spread of the book, she turned back to Denpo, affirmed his observation and expanded it into a conventional construction. This interaction was somewhat reminiscent of Samantha's exchange with Nilar regarding the footprints in the forest path at the beginning of *The Gruffalo*. Both Nilar and Denpo were emergent bilingual students early in the process of acquiring English, suggesting that students' interpretation of illustrations, even if difficult to understand, had the potential to serve as a site of satisfying meaning negotiation between teacher and students.

Rachel demonstrated an example of an extension that did not have any built-in repetition or expansion in her response to a spontaneous comment from one of her students, Mohammed. She had just read aloud the part of the story in which the shy fellow swallows a flute when Mohammed interrupted to point out the size of the flute, "That's small." Rachel extended his observation by pointing to flute, nodding her head, and saying, "It is, compared to the other ones. You're right, Mo." She meaningfully compared the size of the flute to the other instruments that had already been swallowed (e.g. cello, harp, violin), thereby adding a proposition that was unspoken by Mohammed, but likely the stimulus for his observation about the flute.

Summary. Repetitions, expansions, and extensions were moderately widespread in Samantha's and Laura's language-promoting practices for reading aloud, while less common in Rachel's repertoire. Samantha and Laura both served a large number of students who were in the early stages of acquiring English, had been diagnosed with disabilities, or in some cases both. Meaningful communication was an overarching concern in both classrooms, which may have prompted in Samantha and Laura a pre-existing disposition to exploit these feedback routines. Although 80% of Rachel's students were classified as emergent bilinguals, only a few fell into the earliest stages of English language acquisition. Rachel and Kelsey's classroom climate was markedly rich with talk across instructional settings and groupings. Challenges with communication by and with students was less of a concern, perhaps helping to explain why Rachel used repetitions, expansions, and extensions less often than her peers.

Repetitions were primarily used for well-bounded purposes, like affirming the correct answers to constrained questions during episodes of IRE and clarifying uncertainty about students' speech by transforming statements into questions. Expansions and extensions were used by the teachers for a variety of purposes, but always to communicate mutual understanding with students. The books' illustrations proved to be the source of many student comments that teachers then responded to with expansions and extensions. The visual representation of meaning

provided in the illustrations appeared to create a springboard for greater negotiation of meaning through language.

Vocabulary and Concept Instruction

Consistent with other studies of shared reading and vocabulary instruction in early childhood education settings (Dwyer & Harbaugh, 2018; Neuman & Dwyer, 2009; Pelatti et al., 2014; Wright & Neuman, 2014) a limited to modest amount of instruction in vocabulary and concepts took place during the read aloud lessons overall. I observed five episodes during Laura’s lesson, six in Samantha’s lesson, and nine in Rachel’s lesson. Most of their instruction occurred opportunistically, usually initiated by the teacher but sometimes in response to student questions and comments, particularly in Samantha’s case. Samantha and Rachel provided explicit vocabulary and concept instruction only once each and Laura offered none.

Rachel appeared to provide the most instruction in vocabulary and concepts due to her book choice (a title related to their music unit) that introduced seven musical instruments (cello, harp, saxophone, fiddle, cymbal, flute, and kazoo). She initiated a number of brief, spontaneous comments designed to augment textual information as each new musical instrument entered the story. In this instance, she stopped reading from the text to build a connection from fiddle to violin, an instrument familiar to students from their music unit. She had already invoked the violin as an example of a known string instrument to help students think about the cello at the beginning of the book. She used it again in Excerpt 3 as an anchor to develop the concept of fiddle.

Note that bold typeface in transcript excerpts in this chapter indicate the text that teachers read aloud, while asterisks indicate their reading errors (which, in this case, Rachel quickly corrected).

Excerpt 3

- 1 **Rachel:** I know a shy fellow who swallowed a †fiddle. No time to twiddle, when you
- 2 swallow a twiddle* fiddle. >(And) (actually) what a fiddle is?< [A fiddle ((points to
- 3 fiddle))
- 4 **Student:** [Guitar!
- 5 **Rachel:** Listen. ((finger to her lips)) A fiddle (0.3) is a violin. ((holds arm out, elbow bent,
- 6 palm up)) A fiddle and a violin are exactly the same. They are just different depending on
- 7 what kind of music you play on them. So there's no difference between a fiddle and a
- 8 violin.

Whereas Rachel tended to supplement the book’s written language and illustrations with brief explanations of the concepts she anticipated her students would find unfamiliar, Samantha most often provided vocabulary and concept instruction in response to students’ comments and questions, such as in her Excerpt 4 exchange with an emergent bilingual student, Arjun. He pointed to a downed tree in one of the illustrations of *The Gruffalo* and referred to the tree as “broken.”

Excerpt 4

- 1 **Arjun:** ((points to a downed tree)) (Them) (is) (broken), [(broken).
- 2 **Samantha:** [Yes, that one is broken, ((points
- 3 to the downed tree)) you're right. A tree has fallen down. You're right.

Samantha expanded his characterization of the tree as “broken” by constructing a sentence with noun-verb agreement (“that one is broken”), and then she extended his idea into a more mature description of the tree’s condition (“A tree has fallen down”), thereby providing

some conceptual instruction. Samantha stopped short applying the label “downed” to this tree, though.

For Samantha and Rachel, the majority of their vocabulary and concept instruction took place while they read aloud from the text. The timing is likely due in part to the before and after reading phases of their lessons being rather short in duration (generally less than two minutes). And although vocabulary and conceptual instruction can be provided profitably for various purposes during any of the three read aloud phases, we might expect to see preschool teachers concentrate their vocabulary and concept development work at students’ point of need in consideration of the relatively short attention spans and still developing memory capacity of young children. An example of opportunistic, “just in time” vocabulary instruction was observed in Samantha’s lesson when she quickly offered a simple explanation to make an uncommon word more accessible to her students. After she read the text, “...quick as the wind he turned and fled,” she added “That means he left.”

In contrast to Samantha and Rachel, Laura taught vocabulary and concepts about as often during her brief before reading lesson phase (twice) as her longer during reading phase (three episodes). Most of her instruction during both phases centered about the characters and their names. At the start of her lesson, she began by asking her students to recall the Gruffalo character (from Carolyn’s storytelling session the previous week), then moved in Excerpt 5 into opportunistic teaching in response to Denpo’s enactment of the Gruffalo.

Excerpt 5

1 **Laura:** ((holds up book)) I have been thinking about *The Gruffalo*, and I (0.9) did not

2 know: (0.5) anything about this book and what is a Gruffalo? ↑What’s a Gruffalo?

3 **Denpo:** ((leans back, puffs out his cheeks; his hands are not visible due to camera angle))

4 **Laura:** Oh, does a Gruffalo make that face? ((points to Denpo))

5 **Denpo:** ((nods and smiles, then pulls his shirt up to his mouth and bites it))

6 **Laura:** With the claw::s? ((holds both hands out like claws)) I’ve been thinking about that

7 ever since Miss Carolyn told us. ((opens book to front end pages))

Note that although Denpo’s hands could not be seen on camera, it appeared from Laura’s question in Line 6 that he was making a claw gesture. She named Denpo’s enactment of this physical feature of the Gruffalo precisely here, offering the label “claws” for a concept that Denpo appeared to understand and could communicate about nonverbally. Laura was less precise in her response to Denpo’s puffed up cheeks; perhaps unsure of what to make of that aspect of his performance, asking “Oh, does a Gruffalo make that face?” She did not name any of the Gruffalo’s prominent facial features, such as his teeth, which Denpo may have been trying to portray when he bit his shirt. The interaction ended as Laura somewhat vaguely made reference to their storytelling session the previous week with Carolyn and then started to read. She did not provide any further input to guide students in answering her question, “What’s a Gruffalo?” but she may have decided reading the book was the best route to facilitating students’ understanding of this concept.

To summarize, vocabulary and concept instruction was present to varying degrees in each lesson: Rachel offered the most, Samantha gave a modest amount of attention, and Laura provided very little. Most (and in Laura’s case, all) instruction occurred opportunistically. Typically, teachers offered instruction as they encountered concepts and terms in their books that they anticipated students might be unfamiliar with or find confusing, but at times they (mostly Samantha) also provided vocabulary and concept instruction in response to student questions and comments.

Language Anticipation

Language anticipation is the ability to predict the next word or phrase that someone might say, or the next word or phrase that might appear in a text that one is listening to or reading. It is fairly commonplace in early childhood classrooms to see language anticipation in action in the course of read aloud lessons, as well as other forms of instruction. While reading a text aloud, teachers signal through gesture, prosody, pausing, or a combination thereof, that they wish for their students to orally supply the next word or phrase. This exercise frequently occurs just before the end of a clause or sentence and works particularly well during read aloud lessons with books that children have become familiar with through repeated readings and even on the first reading of predictable books. Predictable books have texts with moderately to highly structured language patterns; of the books selected for the storytelling units, *Up, Down, and Around* is especially predictable, but all four contain sizable stretches of patterned text.

Language anticipation work can be an engaging way for children to advance their abilities to parse spoken and written language, both required for proficient listening and reading comprehension. Many children enjoy chiming in on the refrains of stories. Language anticipation instruction during read aloud lessons is helpful for building syntactic expectations of written language. Thus, it ultimately supports emergent readers' future text comprehension once they begin to read independently.

This practice was used moderately by Rachel (five times), rarely by Samantha (once), and never by Laura. The text of *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* is substantially more predictable than that of *The Gruffalo*, so it stands to reason that Rachel would invite her students to join in on the most easily predicted line in the story, "I don't know why he swallowed the cello. Perhaps he'll bellow." In Excerpt 6, she waited until the fourth time this line appeared in the story before coaching the students to speak it with her.

Excerpt 6

- 1 **Rachel: He swallowed the harp to jam with the cello. I don't know why he swallowed**
2 **the cello. ((shakes her head)) >() say (it) with ↑me,< Perhaps he'll: (0.5) [BELLOW!**
3 **Some Students: [BELLOW!**

Note how Rachel stretched out the /l/ sound in "he'll" slightly and paused for half a second to signal to students when and which part of the predictable text to speak with her. After that interaction, she elicited her students' language anticipation for the same line each of the three remaining times it appeared in the story, but without needing to directly tell students "say it with me" after that first instance.

The Gruffalo, although a more complex story than *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello*, has noticeably structured language patterns. There are repeated lines throughout, such as, "A fox (snake; owl) saw the mouse and the mouse looked good." Moreover, the entire plot structure is predictable: each animal encountered by Mouse as he walks through the woods tries to eat him; he escapes each new peril by outsmarting his predators. Finally, much of the text is composed in rhyming couplets, lending a strong sense of rhythm and rhyme to the story, which help to propel language anticipation. All of these factors make *The Gruffalo* ripe for intentional language anticipation instruction. However, in Excerpt 7 Samantha capitalized on the affordances of *The Gruffalo* for promoting language anticipation just once, at the point when the character of Mouse came across the third predator, Snake.

Excerpt 7

- 1 **Samantha: ((Mouse voice)) Silly old ↑snake. ↑Doesn't he know? <There's no such**
2 **thing ((shakes head)) as: a:??> (0.5)**

- 3 **Jeff and Arjun:** Gruffalo.
- 4 **Guneet and Omar:** Gruffalo.
- 5 **Samantha: Gruff:alo:***. ((turns page; *text actually says Gruffal- Oh!))

Note how Samantha used techniques similar to Rachel's to elicit her students' language anticipation. However, instead of directly telling her students to speak the word "Gruffalo," she significantly slowed down the pace of the entire line and placed stress on or extended nearly every word in the sentence to signal her desire for them to join in at the end of the sentence. Samantha waited until this particular repeated line ("There's no such thing as a Gruffalo") had appeared in the story twice already before asking her students to anticipate it. Had it appeared again later, I imagine she would have continued to signal to her students to chime in for "Gruffalo," but at that juncture in the story the Mouse meets the Gruffalo and the text patterns, while still possessing predictable elements, becomes less well-structured for preschoolers to anticipate on a first read of the text. Samantha demonstrated more frequent elicitation of language anticipation from her students when she read aloud more *Up, Down, and Around* and *We're Going on a Lion Hunt*, both, though particularly the former, written with more predictable text structures.

Laura didn't try to cultivate her students' language anticipation during this lesson. She made a number of attempts to engage her students in other ways during this read aloud lesson, chiefly using a considerable amount of gesture to support text meaning and received few observable student responses in return. Laura may have judged her students' language comprehension, memory for language, and speech production as too limited to be able to participate profitably in language anticipation tasks with the fairly sophisticated literary language of *The Gruffalo*. She did, however, try to foster language anticipation when she read aloud *Up, Down, and Around* and *We're Going on a Lion Hunt*, demonstrating that this practice is part of her repertoire. More of her students, representing a broader range of English fluency, were present on the days those lessons took place; some of her typically developing, monolingual English speakers were able to successfully anticipate the upcoming text at times.

In summary, text selection appeared to be the primary factor influencing teachers' decisions about when and how often to include language anticipation in their read aloud instruction. Books more obviously disposed to this practice produced more episodes of language anticipation. Samantha and Rachel used language anticipation similarly: they deployed it at the word level, they waited until the repeated line they chose to highlight had already appeared several times in the book before asking students to speak it, and they signaled students to produce the next word in text by elongating the penultimate word in the line and then pausing slightly. A secondary factor appeared to be the composition of the students assembled for the read aloud lessons, and their language comprehension and production capacities in particular. Laura did not use this practice, which may have been a wise judgment given how few student responses she elicited using less taxing and more transparent engagement efforts (primarily her extensive use of gesture to communicate text meaning).

Intersubjectivity

Similar to the storytelling analysis in Chapter 3, I identified and searched for four types of intersubjectivity problems in the read aloud lessons: successful repairs to lost meaning, unsuccessful repairs to lost meaning, no repair enacted (intentionally), and no repair enacted (unintentionally). Rachel had no observable episodes of intersubjectivity problems of any kind. A number of factors serve as possible explanations for the consistent maintenance of intersubjectivity in her lesson. The book she selected, *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a*

Cello, contained some demanding vocabulary, including the names of less common musical instruments (e.g., harp, cymbal) and whimsical language included to produce rhyming pairs, such as “twiddle” (for fiddle) and “bellow” (for cello). But at the same time, this book presented affordances for reducing students’ comprehension challenges, including a fairly narrow plot with just one character and a predictable text structure, as noted in Language Anticipation. In addition, Rachel capitalized on her students’ prior knowledge of the more well-known story it is modeled after (*I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*) during her book introduction in the before reading phase and during a comprehension discussion with her students in the after reading phase. Further, Rachel preemptively addressed some likely student confusions by providing opportunistic vocabulary and concept instruction upon the introduction of each musical instrument into the story. Finally, she had the benefit of her co-teacher’s occasional contributions, such as Kelsey’s re-voicing of Mason’s “T-Rex” comment in Excerpt 1, which may have helped Rachel understand his message faster.

Overall, Laura and Samantha understood and appeared to be understood by their students. They each had a handful of interactions with students that indicated a loss of mutual understanding, three for Samantha and two for Laura, all of which they successfully repaired. Neither lesson contained any intersubjectivity problems characterized by unsuccessful attempts at repair or non-enacted repairs. However, one of Laura’s repairs to meaning began as an intentional non-enactment of repair, but soon resolved successfully. As can be seen in Excerpt 2, her initial response to losing mutual understanding with Denpo appeared to be to deliberately not enact a repair due to her difficulty understanding his speech. But then she fortuitously gleaned more of his meaning as she re-examined the illustrations to which he had pointed. She quickly turned her attention back to Denpo and affirmed his idea in an expansion of his message, suggesting that she wanted to understand him but did not at first know how to proceed with regaining mutual understanding.

A somewhat similar successful repair to meaning occurred between Samantha and Nilar in the episode I described in the introduction to the Repetitions, Expansions, and Extensions section. Samantha did not initially understand what Nilar was saying, but she knew she was pointing to some feature in the book’s illustrations and thus searched for helpful information contained in the picture forest path that opens *The Gruffalo*. Samantha distinguished herself from Laura in this case due to her efforts to repair mutual understanding with Nilar from the moment it faltered, but like her colleague, she used the illustrations as a potent source of insight into her student’s intended message.

The most interesting episode of a repair to lost mutual understanding took place near the end of Samantha’s lesson and demonstrates just how challenging maintaining intersubjectivity can be in an instructional context when there are multiple overlapping speakers, many of whom are young emergent bilingual students. Samantha, after reading the part of the story where Mouse declares that he wants to eat the Gruffalo, initiated a line of questioning about what mice eat that was designed to help her students articulate that Mouse was being disingenuous in order to intimidate and avoid being eaten himself by the Gruffalo. In this portion of that exchange in Excerpt 8, as Samantha worked to maintain intersubjectivity with one student, Jeff, she lost and then regained intersubjectivity with another, Arjun.

Excerpt 8

- 1 **Samantha:** What do mice usually [eat?
- 2 **Jeff:** [Miss Samantha, what he have in this ((touches his
- 3 mouth))

4 **Omar:** [() ()]
5 **Arjun:** [CHEESE! CHEESE! CHEESE! CHEESE! ((sounds like teet))
6 **Samantha:** ((checks the illustration)) Oh, those are his big teeth, his big tusks, Jeff. ((holds
7 out her thumb and forefinger next to mouth, moves hand up and down in the position of
8 the Gruffalo's tusks))
9 **Arjun:** Cheese. ((sounds like teet))
10 **Samantha:** Jeff says, why does he have these, right? ((points to the tusks in the
11 illustration))
12 **Jeff:** Yeah.
13 **Samantha:** Those are his ↑tusks.
14 **Arjun:** Cheese. ((sounds like teet))
15 **Samantha:** I wonder, why do you think he has them?
16 **Arjun:** CHEESE. ((kneels and gestures to his mouth)) Cheese! ((sounds like teet))
17 **Samantha:** To eat? ((gestures to Arjun)) With his teeth? Yeah.
18 **Arjun:** No! Chee[se. Cheese. ((sounds like teet; waving his hand in the air))
19 **Melanie:** [Cheese, cheese.
20 **Samantha:** CHEESE?
21 **Arjun:** Yeah.
22 **Samantha:** ((nodding head)) Mice? ((points to Mouse in illustration)) They eat the
23 cheese?
24 **Arjun:** Yeah.
25 **Samantha:** Right, some- (0.8) Have you ever heard of a mouse eating a: Gruffalo?

This intersubjectivity problem was particularly hard for Samantha to resolve for two reasons. First, her attention in this exchange was initially focused on clarifying Jeff's confusion about tusks, which likely caused her not to hear Arjun's utterance in Line 5. Thus, by the time she tuned into Arjun's voice, she thought he was answering her question in Line 15, not her original question in Line 1. The problem was further complicated by the fact that the word Arjun was actually saying, "cheese," and the word she thought he was saying (due to his developing control of English phonology), "teeth," both made sense in context. It wasn't until her colleague Melanie (the program assistant), re-voiced Arjun's utterance for her that Samantha understood he was telling her that mice eat cheese. The assistance that Samantha received from Melanie here is reminiscent of some of the support she provided to help Jill communicate meaningfully with her students during storytelling sessions. Note, also, how Samantha again used the illustrations as a site of meaning negotiation as she responded to Jeff's question, leading to a bit of opportunistic instruction on the concept of teeth and tusks. Finally, notice that she did not hesitate to use the irregular plural noun "mice" with her students (unlike Carolyn and Jill in their respective storytelling sessions).

In sum, intersubjectivity was mostly or always maintained between teachers and students in the read aloud lessons observed. Laura and Samantha experienced few problems overall with intersubjectivity and Rachel encountered none. Pictorial support for meaningful communication continued to be searched for and used profitably by both teachers and students. In addition, staff members who were present at lessons but not responsible for instruction may have been able to attend to student utterances somewhat differently than their colleagues leading the lessons, enabling them to provide valuable input during moments of confusion or potential confusion that assisted the teachers with re-establishing intersubjectivity with students. This appeared to be true

for Melanie's contribution in Excerpt 8 and may have also been the case for Kelsey's contribution in Excerpt 1.

Extended Conversations

Extended conversations were defined as a conversational exchange of six or more total turns (at least three turns each) between a teacher and student sustained on a single topic. As with many of the other language-promoting practices under analysis, when I examined the transcripts of each lesson, I found relatively few extended conversations. Laura had three extended conversations with students, Rachel had two, and Samantha had one. And upon further analysis, I found, as might be expected, that not all extended conversations are created equal. Some exchanges propelled teaching-learning interactions forward by helping students acquire vocabulary and develop deeper story comprehension, but others did little to advance instructional goals. A case of the latter situation is illustrated in Excerpt 9 by Rachel's exchange with Nichole regarding kazoos.

Excerpt 9

- 1 **Rachel:** I know a shy fellow who swallowed a (0.3) ↑kazoo:. >Does everybody know
2 what a kazoo ↑is?<
3 **Nichole:** Yeah.
4 **Rachel:** It's a little, tiny, go toot, toot, toot, toot ((pretends to play a kazoo, tries to imitate
5 the sound)) I should- [not really that ((throws her hand down, as if rejecting her attempt)),
6 but, >doo, doo, doo, doo, doo< ((pretends to play a kazoo and tries to imitate the sound
7 again))
8 **Nichole:** [Yeah, I had, I had a kazoo before [because but it was yellow, but
9 Patrick () broke it.
10 **Rachel:** [You had a kazoo before?
11 **Jelani:** ((lies down))
12 **Rachel:** Jelani, we sit at circle. ((gestures to him to sit up))
13 **Jelani:** ((remains supine))
14 **Nichole:** Patrick just broke it. ((reference made to her brother))
15 **Rachel:** He did? [All righty. **Strange thing to ↑do, swallow a ↑kazoo. He swallowed the**
16 **kazoo to jam with the ↑flute. He swallowed the flute to jam with the ↑cymbal.**
17 **Nichole:** [Yeah, () ().

Note that Rachel posed a constrained question in Lines 1-2, for which she likely did not want an in-depth response, but Nichole interpreted the question as unconstrained and an invitation to share about the kazoo she had that was broken by her younger brother. Other than finding out that Nichole definitely had some prior knowledge about kazoos, this exchange did little to advance Rachel's apparent goal of checking quickly on students' prior knowledge for kazoos and offering some opportunistic information about kazoos through an ad hoc demonstration. In Line 15 Rachel signaled that she was moving on ("All righty") and began reading the next line of text, suggesting she sensed the limited value of continuing this exchange (meanwhile, Nichole was still answering her final question in Line 17).

However, an extended conversation in Excerpt 10 between Rachel and Bilhana during the after reading phase of the lesson was more aligned with the goal of promoting students' story comprehension. Just before the start of this exchange, Rachel read the final line of the book, which describes how the shy fellow expelled the last of the instruments he had consumed, the cello.

Excerpt 10

1 **Rachel:** And all:: (1.0) ((circles the bottom half of the illustration with a finger, which
2 depicts an ensemble of musicians playing all the instruments the shy fellow just expelled))
3 his instrument friends, his musicians, are now playing the instruments he †brought. He
4 made his own †orchestra. ((holds book out for students to see)) (1.0)
5 **Nichole:** Well, why is he not a cello anymore?
6 **Rachel:** >‘Cause he bellowed it out.< And remember our other story, *The Old Lady Who*
7 *Swallowed the Fly?* >What happened to her at the end?< ((looking at Bilhana and
8 Mohammed))
9 **Bilhana:** She died.
10 **Students:** (Dead).
11 **Rachel:** She died. ((nods)) Well, did he die?
12 **Bilhana:** [No.
13 **Kelsey:** [((shakes head))
14 **Some Students:** No.
15 **Rachel:** No, he made musical, m- music, and shared all the instruments with all his
16 †friends. ((gestures to the illustration of the ensemble playing together on the last page))
17 **Bilhana:** Oh, so that's why he was eating it.
18 **Rachel:** That's why he was eating it. Can we do that in real life? ((smiling, humorous
19 tone))
20 **Some Students (including Bilhana):** NO.
21 **Rachel:** No. But in books ((points to book)), just like in, in movies, ((lifts her shoulders))
22 †anything can happen.

Note how Nichole’s question in Line 5 prompted Rachel to make a distinction between the ending of *The Old Lady Who Swallowed the Fly* (which students were already familiar with) and their current story selection, *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello*. She wanted students to notice that ingesting numerous instruments proved to be non-fatal to the shy fellow and, according to the illustration on the final page, enabled him to play music in an ensemble of fellow musicians. Bilhana responded briefly and accurately in 1-2 word responses in Lines 9 and 12 to Rachel’s preceding constrained questions, but then, after hearing Rachel’s description of the story’s conclusion in Lines 15-16, she generated what could be argued to be a fairly sophisticated inference about a not-so-transparent story arc: “Oh, so that's why he was eating it.” That may not be why the shy fellow was eating instruments, but it was a reasonable and meaningful interpretation. Bilhana’s reasoning was quickly adopted by Rachel, who parlayed it into commentary on what appeared to be an oft-discussed theme in that classroom: the distinction between real and pretend and the latitude for stories (and movies) to depart from reality. Thus, in this short exchange, Rachel demonstrated an ability to facilitate her students’ literal comprehension while connecting their story recall to a deeper, more global understanding of story, fueled in part by the extended conversation she had with Bilhana.

Interestingly, Laura had slightly more extended conversations than her peers, despite working with a small group of students who all had special language learning needs. During the lesson she was able to elicit very little speech from Lucas and none at all from Vanessa, but she had several exchanges with Denpo, including two extended conversations. The first conversation was fruitful and centered on his analysis of the Gruffalo character. He directed Laura to look at the book and when she replied, “What are you showing me?” he pointed to the Gruffalo, growled, and said, “This is no good. This one.” Laura responded by affirming his interpretation of the Gruffalo as a malevolent character. Both Denpo and Laura demonstrated strategic use of

the illustrations to help negotiate meaning together. The second exchange also appeared to focus on Denpo's analysis of character but could not be analyzed because I did not understand most of his utterances. Laura's three responses to Denpo—Yeah, Yeah, That's right—clearly affirmed Denpo's thoughts, but shed no light on the substance of his ideas.

Laura had a fairly lengthy conversation with Malik about his affective response to the book during the after reading phase of her lesson in Excerpt 11. Malik returned from speech therapy (and Lucas departed for his own speech therapy session) just as Laura was reading the last few pages of the book. As one of the older students in the class, Malik remembered *The Gruffalo* from Carolyn's storytelling unit the previous year and was able to enter the lesson seamlessly.

Excerpt 11

- 1 **Laura:** Did you like that story? (1.5)
- 2 **Malik:** (I) (don't) (know) () ().
- 3 **Laura:** Yep, it was a good one.
- 4 **Malik:** But, but it was too scary.
- 5 **Laura:** It was too scary for you? What part made you feel scary? (2.0)
- 6 **Malik:** (That) () () ((points to book))
- 7 **Laura:** ((points to Gruffalo)) The Gruffalo?
- 8 **Malik:** Yeah.
- 9 **Laura:** He had terrible claws. ((holds hand like a claw)) (1.0) He had terrible teeth.
- 10 ((gestures to show a large tooth growing out of her mouth))
- 11 **Malik:** So, I, so () teeth down to his () mouth (). ((gestures from his ear to his mouth))
- 12 **Laura:** Is that the part that made you scared?
- 13 **Malik:** (Yeah).

Laura's own positive view of the book appeared to color her interpretation of Malik's initial response in Line 2. But soon she understood that he did not like the book and pursued a line of questioning to uncover the reasoning for his opinion. Through the process of holding this extended conversation, Malik was able to articulate that Gruffalo's tusks (although he did not use that word, and Laura did not supply it for him) were the physical characteristic that most frightened him. Had there been more students present, it is possible that he may not have had the opportunity to engage in such a long conversation with Laura. She may have felt pressure to elicit briefer input from several students or some of his classmates may have interrupted their exchange to express their own views. Note that the opinion Malik expressed in this exchange was consistent with the negative reaction to enacting the Gruffalo's daily routines he expressed to Carolyn in unit two, session two the day after this read aloud lesson took place (see Excerpt 13 in Chapter 3).

Samantha had one extended conversation as she worked to repair mutual understanding with Arjun, as seen in Excerpt 8, Lines 15-25. And although this exchange resulted in some minor advancement of common knowledge (i.e., mice like to eat cheese) it primarily centered on Samantha's efforts (with some critical help from Melanie) to untangle her confusion about Arjun's difficult to understand pronunciation of the word "cheese." Samantha came close to holding an extended conversation with students on two other occasions. She had a four-turn conversation with Jeff regarding the Gruffalo's tusks, which was also seen in Excerpt 8, between Lines 2-13 (note that Samantha's speech in lines 6 and 10 count as one turn; they only appear to be separate utterances due to Arjun's comment in Line 9). She also had a five-turn conversation

with Omar (three turns for her and two for him) regarding Owl feeling scared of the Gruffalo. Both of these nearly extended conversations originated in a student's question or comment.

To summarize, extended conversation occurred sparingly in each lesson, perhaps due to competing interests facing the teachers, including completing the reading of the text and balancing holding extended conversations with one student at a time against managing (or attempting to elicit) briefer exchanges with multiple students. Extended conversation originated both in students' comments and questions and teacher-led questioning. They possessed variable power for developing students' story comprehension and vocabulary, but under some conditions could be harnessed to advance instructional goals.

Metalinguage of Story

The teachers incorporated very little of the metalinguage of story into their read aloud lessons. As with the analysis of the teaching artists' language practices in Chapter 3, I made the decision to consider the word "story" itself to fall within the metalinguage of story, as it was apparent that the teachers also invoked "the story" at times in pursuit of their instructional aims. Each teacher used the word "story" at least a few times (seven times in Samantha's lesson, three times in Rachel's, and two in Laura's).

Outside of this most common term needed for talking and thinking about narrative, there was only one other instance of direct use of the metalinguage of story. It occurred during Samantha's lesson. Recall that at the end of Jill's lesson with Samantha's class during unit two, session one, she charged students with the task of searching for the five story characters in *The Gruffalo* during Samantha's upcoming read aloud lesson (see Excerpt 24 in Chapter 3). When Samantha read aloud *The Gruffalo* a few days after Jill's session with her class, she appeared to be following through on that directive when, before opening the book, she asked her students to name the animals that Jill had pulled out of her magic hat. With Samantha's facilitation, they named the mouse, fox, snake, and Gruffalo (they/she appeared to accidentally overlook the owl). Just before she began to read the story, Samantha employed the same metalinguage of story as Jill ("story" and "character") by setting the purpose for reading as, "So, we're going to see those characters in this story." Furthermore, as she opened the book and turned to the front end pages, which show a path running through a forest in which three Gruffalo footprints are visible, Samantha enthused, "Ooh, the wilderness, I remember Miss Jill teaching us about the wilderness." This remark harkened back to their collective enactment of "wilderness" as the setting of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* during their very first session with Jill two months prior. Both of these comments from Samantha suggested that she viewed the storytelling program and Jill's work with her class within the program as valuable. Her ability to follow through with and reinforce concepts and vocabulary from the storytelling sessions creating instructional continuity and facilitating transfer of learning to a new instructional setting.

Laura was the only teacher who made indirect references to the metalinguage of story. She alluded to the concept of setting three times (including one accompanying use of the term "story") just before she began to read aloud *The Gruffalo*. Opening the book to the front end pages, she demonstrated using the illustrations to determine setting, predicting, "I have a thought that this is going to happen in the woods." She then asked the students, "What do you think? Does this story happen in the woods? What do you think?" As she spoke, she held out the book so her students could take a good look at the forest path shown in the end pages. But after pausing for two seconds with no response, Laura then commented, "Hmm? In a forest. We'll see," and then turned to the next page. Both uses of the phrase "in the woods" represent allusions to story setting, as did her final attempt to elicit students' predictions of setting, "In a forest."

In sum, the metalanguage of story was largely absent from the read aloud lessons. Every teacher used the basic yet essential term “story” at least a few times (notably more often for Samantha) within their lesson, but otherwise virtually no attention was given to mobilizing the academic language of story and narrative as part of students’ reading instruction.

Summary of Findings and Implications

Preschool teachers at the Stapleton School and Coleman Center Head Start sites operated under starkly differing social contexts which had substantial implications for what was possible in reading instruction at each site. Although there were important differences in the personal repertoires and practices between individual teachers, overall, traditional interactive read aloud lessons were relatively uncommon in Stapleton. In contrast, interactive read aloud lessons were institutionalized as an essential component of daily instruction at Coleman. The differences in read aloud practices appeared to be potentially consequential for students’ language and narrative learning opportunities and be attributable to a number of factors, but the presence or absence of the storytelling program within a site did not appear to have much influence on the nature or frequency of read aloud lessons that took place. A close analysis of seven language-promoting practices within three teachers’ read aloud lessons revealed many commonalities as well as some individual variation. I begin with a summary of key findings for contextual factors that explain the differences in observed practices for interactive read aloud at the two sites followed by a summary comparing the three teachers’ repertoires in which I synthesize the most salient differences and similarities found in my analysis.

Differential Contexts for Reading Instruction Across Sites

The primary explanations for the substantial differences in frequency and nature of read aloud lessons at Stapleton compared to Coleman appeared to be the needs of the students enrolled at each site and Head Start and school district administrator views on effective read aloud practices. Stapleton classrooms had many more students enrolled with behavioral, emotional, and learning difficulties which produced class dynamics that were often challenging for Stapleton teachers to manage and seemed to sap their energies for navigating traditional interactive read aloud lessons. Stapleton teachers’ motivation to provide traditional interactive read aloud lessons appeared to be further reduced by pressures exerted by the school district’s early childhood coordinator for special education and their Head Start site supervisor to modify and augment read aloud lessons with artifacts and extension activities that often displaced the interaction between readers and text as the central activity of the read aloud lesson.

There were certainly some students at Coleman who exhibited challenging behaviors that Kelsey and Rachel had to proactively manage, but, collectively, the students enrolled at Coleman were easier to teach. None had been diagnosed with a disability and although 80% were emergent bilinguals, their control over English varied considerably, with many well beyond the earliest stages of childhood secondary language acquisition. The robust environment for language and literacy learning fashioned by Kelsey and Rachel no doubt assisted some of these emergent bilingual students in accelerating their acquisition of English. As lead teachers of the sole classroom at a community-based site, Kelsey and Rachel operated with a great deal of autonomy from the Head Start agency and little to no interference in their decision making from the school district, and specifically its special education office. Rachel’s implementation of daily interactive read aloud lessons had the full support of the site supervisor and the Head Start agency’s education coordinator. Since I arrived around mid-year, I did not get to observe how Kelsey and Rachel built up their students’ stamina for and engagement with 1-2 interactive read

aloud lessons daily (plus a substantive morning meeting and a curriculum unit lesson) but I can only presume that this was a process they deliberately implemented across the school year.

The secondary explanations for the substantial differences in reading instruction at the two sites seemed to be the reduced instructional time at Stapleton due to a somewhat shorter session length, plus each teacher's personal proclivities for teaching read aloud lessons. Laura, for instance, spoke of and demonstrated knowledge and interest in reading aloud and children's early literacy development, which appeared to be reflected in her inclination to teach traditional interactive read aloud lessons somewhat more often than her colleagues at the start of the study, but over time, this practice diminished as her class's equilibrium deteriorated. Rachel demonstrated strong passion for and knowledge of reading aloud and children's literature, which appeared to result in a lively and robust read aloud program. However, had the enabling factors of strong administrator support and lower student behavioral and learning needs been removed from her classroom context and replaced with the corresponding Stapleton context, Rachel likely would have been forced to make some adaptations to her traditional interactive read aloud practices (though probably not to the extent seen in Stapleton classrooms due to her zeal and skill).

The absence or presence of the storytelling program appeared to have a minor impact, if any, on existing teacher practices and beliefs about reading instruction. While it is possible that Stapleton teachers felt a bit less urgency to provide read aloud lessons due to their students' participation in the storytelling program, the larger institutional and social forces at work—the challenging behavioral, emotional, and learning needs of many students and the influence of administrators' stated preference for adaptations to traditional read aloud lessons—appeared more consequential for teacher practice. I recall the reason given by the Head Start educator coordinator, Janice, for why the Coleman site wasn't selected to participate in storytelling. She and her fellow administrators had determined, given limited financial and personnel resources, that Rachel, Kelsey, and their students did not need this enrichment because the existing language arts instruction was already so robust. By contrast, Stapleton was selected to participate each of the four years the storytelling program had been implemented (the only site of eight operated by the agency to carry that distinction), suggesting that read aloud lessons were already relatively uncommon when the storytelling program was first implemented there. That being said, Stapleton classrooms appeared to be serving a particularly vulnerable population of students and families and conceivably might have been selected for the storytelling program even if read aloud practices were stronger at this site.

Language Practices for Focal Teachers

Despite their differing site and classroom contexts and personal proclivities for reading aloud, Laura, Samantha, and Rachel shared many common aspects in their repertoires promoting the narrative register, academic language, and comprehension for stories, overall. Their commonalities may be explained in part by the three teachers' statuses as seasoned early childhood professionals; they all had a great deal of experience working with preschoolers and with teaching read aloud lessons. Further, although Laura and Samantha were more apt than Rachel to augment their read aloud lessons with artifact and extension activities, since *The Gruffalo* was not aligned with a Creative Curriculum unit, no such supplemental materials were prepared by either of them or their colleague Hazel to accompany it. Laura and Samantha may have defaulted to the traditional interactive read aloud framework for their lessons, thus helping to explain why many of Laura, Samantha, and Rachel's language practices looked similar in a number of ways, including their relative counts for each practice. Laura and Samantha's

exposure to the teaching artists' strategies for engaging students in storytelling activities did not appear to influence their read aloud repertoires in any substantial way.

The majority of the seven language practices studied occurred only occasionally or infrequently in most teachers' repertoires. The exceptions were teachers' more extensive provision of contextual supports (chiefly, gesture matching text) to enhance student access to word meanings and their deployment of the repetitions, expansions, and extensions suite of feedback routines to affirm and build upon student meanings while modeling the mature form. Laura, Samantha, and Rachel all demonstrated fairly strong skills in maintaining intersubjectivity with their students, likely due in part to their knowledge of their respective students, well-honed by the time these observations took place in mid-winter to early spring (as well as their students' familiarity with them and their patterns of instruction). Rachel experienced no problems with maintaining intersubjectivity, while Laura and Samantha resolved all of their problems successfully (although, notably, in one episode, Laura seemed prepared to ignore a loss of mutual understanding, and in another, a colleague provided Samantha with crucial assistance).

In view of Halliday's (2004) third strand of children's language learning (they learn *about* language, in addition to learning language and learning through language), the metalanguage of story was identified as a significant language practice to examine within both storytelling and interactive read aloud instruction. A major finding of the close analysis of Laura, Samantha and Rachel's read aloud lessons was the paucity of students' exposure to and opportunities to work with the metalanguage of story. Although interactive read aloud lessons could credibly be viewed as a more favorable instructional context than storytelling for students to learn about the academic language of story and narrative, Laura and Samantha's students appeared to receive about the same or perhaps even less contact with the metalanguage of story in their read aloud instruction as they did in the storytelling program (although this is somewhat difficult to evaluate given that my analysis of the storytelling instruction examined three sessions compared to only one lesson in the interactive read aloud context). Rachel did not mobilize the academic language of narrative at all in her lesson (other than several uses of the term "story"). She did, however, notably demonstrate care for building her students' understanding of an important concept about narrative as a whole (specifically, that stories and movies are not restricted by the bounds of reality) that is related to the metalanguage of story.

Notwithstanding the many common features of the three lessons, each teacher revealed an individual repertoire of skills and knowledge for facilitating interactive read aloud lessons that they assembled at a particular time and with a particular text to entertain, engage with, and advance the literacy and language learning of a particular group of students. I was surprised to not to find even further distinctions between Rachel's language-promoting practices and those of Laura and Samantha given my observations of her conspicuously robust interactive read aloud practices overall. My choice of which of Rachel's lessons to enter into this three-way comparison may have unintentionally contributed to finding fewer contrasts than were generally present between Rachel on the one hand and Laura and Samantha on the other. As I noted earlier, a comparison between Laura and Samantha's readings of *The Gruffalo* and a different story taught by Rachel that was closer to *The Gruffalo* in length and complexity of plot and written language than *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* may have proved a fairer match-up. Such a comparison could possibly have revealed more substantial differences between Rachel's read aloud repertoire and those of Laura and Samantha.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The literature on read aloud practices indicates that extensive linguistic, cognitive, perceptual, and affective benefits accrue to young children who regularly listen to and discuss books being read aloud to them (e.g., Box & Aldridge, 1993; Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011; Elley, 1989; Neuman, 1999; Wasik & Bond, 2001). Interactive read aloud is viewed as one of, if not the, foremost vehicle through which early childhood teachers provide literacy and language instruction and experiences to advance students' early literacy skills and knowledge. The storytelling literature is not as well developed as the joint book reading literature because storytelling has not been institutionalized as an essential literacy practice in preschool and elementary school settings. But the existing literature indicates that storytelling also offers a host of affordances for students' language and literacy development, (Ellis, 1997; Isbell et al., 2004; Sobol, 1992, Trostle & Hicks, 1998; Vaahoranta et al., 2019). Though many of the benefits overlap with reading aloud, the higher level of engagement experienced by many students in storytelling versus read aloud conditions and the different tasks they encounter, particularly in participatory models of storytelling, appear to facilitate a number of substantially separate benefits for language and literacy development.

The storytelling program I investigated, *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling*, was an existing, authentic, arts-integrated preschool language and literacy initiative collaboratively implemented by a community arts organization and a Head Start agency and delivered by professional teaching artists in Head Start preschool classrooms. The teaching artists offered an emphatically interactive, participatory model of storytelling within which students were asked to both carefully observe demonstrations and actively participate in acts of storytelling and related activities. Although this storytelling model placed considerable demands on students' linguistic, cognitive, motor, and social capacities, in doing so, it offered an engaging forum for learning about and participating in narrative while encouraging students to leverage all their communicative resources, including expressive language, prosody, gesture, facial expression, and movement.

Embarking upon the data collection phase of my study, I projected that participation in the storytelling initiative, *Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling*, would position the preschool students at the treatment site, Stapleton School, to receive the benefits of interactive read aloud and storytelling—the best of both worlds—while students at the control site classroom, Coleman Center, who had access only to customary, “business as usual” reading instruction, would be at a relative disadvantage. However, these predictions were soon upended because the practice of interactive read aloud proved not to be a well-established norm in Stapleton classrooms whereas it flourished at Coleman. I found a set of practices and beliefs had taken root at Stapleton, due to several powerful professional, social, and instructional forces, that departed from established recommendations for the frequency and nature of read aloud lessons in preschool (McKeown & Beck, 2006; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Teachers' read aloud practices were characterized by relatively little reading aloud overall, infrequent repeated readings of books, and common use of concrete objects, visual aids, and extension activities intended to enhance students' comprehension but that sometimes diverted teacher and student attention from extracting and constructing meaning from text through interactive talk.

Within these differing contexts for reading instruction, I studied and compared the repertoire of pedagogical tools used to promote the narrative register, academic language, and

comprehension for stories by three classroom teachers during read aloud lessons and two teaching artists during storytelling sessions.

Comparison of Storytelling and Read Aloud Lesson Findings

The teaching artists' and classroom teachers' pedagogical repertoires were analyzed for seven language-promoting practices identified through conceptual (review of the literature) and empirical (data-driven analysis of storytelling and read aloud lesson transcripts) processes:

- Vocabulary and Concept Instruction
- Repetitions, Expansions, and Extensions
- Metalanguage of Story
- Contextual Support
- Intersubjectivity
- Language Anticipation
- Extended Conversation

The complexity of the teaching artists' storytelling practices and their affordances for students' language development could not be fully captured by the coding scheme developed for read aloud instruction. Three additional language-promoting practices were included in the analysis of teaching artists' pedagogical repertoires:

- Noticing and Naming
- Narration
- Unison Speaking

When limiting the analysis to the language-promoting practices shared among the teaching artists and classroom teachers, I found that there was a fair amount of intra-group variation as well as inter-group variation, making it difficult to rank the practices in order of prevalence in a meaningful manner. However, an important finding is that the most common practice used by teaching artists and teachers differed: teaching artists offered instruction on vocabulary and concepts more than any other practice, whereas teachers most often provided contextual supports for word and text meaning (i.e., prosody, gesture, artifacts). The one practice teaching artists and teachers used (relatively) about as often as the other were the feedback routines of repetitions, expansions, and extensions.

Another important finding for the classroom teachers—Laura, Samantha and Rachel—was that outside of offering contextual supports and repetitions, expansions, and extensions, the remaining practices were generally used occasionally or not at all. Several of the practices that are well-documented in the literature for their positive contributions to expanding children's vocabulary development and deepening their story comprehension, such as extended conversation and vocabulary and concept instruction, were largely absent. An important caveat is that my analysis of classroom teacher pedagogical repertoires was limited to one lesson apiece, whereas I analyzed three lessons for each teaching artist. This approach was justified due to how much is already known about effective read aloud practices compared to how little is still known about effective storytelling. I turn now to a direct comparison of the most salient differences and similarities found between the teaching artists' and the classroom teachers' pedagogical repertoires.

The storytelling forum proved to be a rich site for conceptual development and vocabulary instruction. The degree of emphasis placed on teaching concepts and developing story-related vocabulary to build common knowledge, most notably by Carolyn but also by Jill to a large degree, was one of the big surprises of the study. Carolyn designed, and she and Jill both delivered, several sessions in which the entire objective was to introduce vocabulary and

co-construct concepts with the students, as was seen in the first session of unit one (the concept of wilderness as the setting of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*) and the first session of unit two (the concepts of *The Gruffalo* characters; fantasy and magic). Vocabulary and concept instruction were observed even in sessions focused on traditional storytelling activities, such as retellings and enactments (for example, the Gruffalo daily routine enactment in unit two, session two). In contrast, only a modest to small amount of attention was given to instruction for story vocabulary and concepts during the read aloud lessons despite an instructional context classically well-suited for such activities. Further, nearly all of the vocabulary instruction that did occur was carried out opportunistically. In some cases, this could be attributed to teachers responding in the moment to student questions. But most episodes suggested that teachers had not considered intentional vocabulary instruction during any planning they might have done for the read aloud lessons, a finding consistent with many studies of vocabulary instruction in early childhood education settings (Dwyer & Harbaugh, 2020; Neuman & Dwyer, 2009; Pelatti et al., 2014; Wright & Neuman, 2014).

Unsurprisingly, the classroom teachers had fewer problems with maintaining intersubjectivity with their students than did the teaching artists. The read aloud lesson structure is a well-defined instructional setting with fairly narrow avenues for student participation; thus, there are fewer opportunities for students and teachers to become confused by each other. In addition, the teachers' knowledge of their students, including their patterns of speech, their interests, life experiences, and personalities were far superior to that of the teaching artists. The scope of the storytelling activities in which the teaching artists engaged (or attempted to engage) students was broad and complex, and they made only 12 visits to each classroom across the school year. Carolyn was able to resolve all the problems she had adequate awareness of, but Jill faced more challenges in reaching mutual understanding with students at times due, in part, to her high expectations for preschoolers' reasoning capacities. Samantha's knowledge of her students proved helpful to Jill as she revoiced a number of other student utterances for Jill's benefit and took several other actions to support meaningful communication between her students and Jill. As the year went on, as Samantha's students grew older and matured, and as Jill herself became more familiar with them and the storytelling program in general, Jill experienced fewer problems with maintaining intersubjectivity. She did her best teaching in units three and four, when she started to develop her own lessons and her training in dance began to emerge prominently.

Extended conversations about story, or any other subject, were not intentionally developed by Carolyn or Jill and thus were a rare occurrence during storytelling sessions. Rather than create openings for extended conversations, they offered students generally well-defined participation structures that suited the pace of the sessions and the purposes of the storytelling activities. Jill and Carolyn's instructional priorities were building collective knowledge, facilitating observation of demonstrations, and cultivating active participation in acts of storytelling, not conversation. The activity setting of reading aloud is well-suited for extended conversations, so it follows that they occurred more frequently in that instructional context. Still, extended conversations were not a prominent feature of the read aloud lessons, occurring just 1-3 times per lesson, and some episodes were wholly unrelated to promoting story comprehension. But when teacher and student were able to sustain a focus on some aspect of the story over multiple turns, these conversations produced some of the most powerful teaching-learning interactions seen at any point across the lessons. Compelling examples include Laura's conversation with Malik in which she uncovered the reasoning for his affective response to *The*

Gruffalo and the conversation between Rachel and Bilhana that led Bilhana to make a sophisticated inference about the outcome of the story, which Rachel seized upon to offer a meta comment about narrative.

The metalanguage of story was another language-promoting practice that occurred at a low level in the storytelling sessions but that, similar to extended conversations, may have been better suited for the read aloud activity setting. However, teachers mobilized the academic language of story and narrative during their read aloud lessons even less often than the teaching artists did in storytelling sessions. Carolyn (and to a lesser extent, Jill) applied a great deal of effort and intention to explicitly teaching concepts related to specific focal stories. Jill and Carolyn's level of awareness of the metalanguage of story as one ripple in the wider pool of academic language that they clearly believed students benefited from hearing and working with is unclear. Perhaps the large degree of attention paid to developing story and story-related vocabulary (e.g., wilderness," "leafy trees," and "boulders") in their sessions absorbed all of Jill and Carolyn's bandwidth for vocabulary instruction, or maybe they assumed this somewhat more abstract type of academic language would emerge for students during teacher-led reading instruction. However, that former explanation could not attributed to the classroom teachers, who provided little instruction in vocabulary and concepts during their read aloud lessons. It may be that teachers thought the metalanguage of story concepts were too advanced for preschoolers to learn or work with. Alternatively, perhaps they missed most of the opportunities for teaching about story and narrative that were presented in their lessons due to low awareness of the value of teaching the metalanguage of story.

Invoking Halliday's (2004) three aspects of children's language learning for this analysis of the language-promoting affordances of the storytelling program and the classroom read aloud instruction indicates that students were *learning language*, including the vocabulary and phrases explicitly taught by Carolyn and Jill, and that they were learning how to enact stories, characters, and other concepts *through* language, but that they only occasionally had opportunities to learn *about* the language of story and narrative within storytelling and even less often through classroom reading instruction. The teaching artists and teachers may have implicitly judged that learning *about* language was too challenging for students who were emergent bilinguals or diagnosed with disabilities.

Unexpected Findings

There were two major unexpected findings of this study: the substantial differences in read aloud practices between the treatment site, Stapleton School, and the control site, Coleman Center, and the profound impact of individual classroom contexts upon the implementation of the storytelling program

Differential Contexts for Reading Instruction Across Sites

Strong professional, social, and structural forces appeared to be largely responsible for the diminished frequency and nature of interactive read alouds at Stapleton compared to Coleman. First and foremost, Stapleton teachers taught classes with many emergent bilingual students and children diagnosed with disabilities, many of whom were the children of recent immigrants and refugees. Teachers were sensitive to supporting the behavioral, emotional, and learning needs of individual students. Individual student needs combined to produce class dynamics that were challenging to manage and seemed to sap teachers' energies and motivations for enacting traditional interactive read aloud lessons. Concurrently, Stapleton teachers contended with administrator views that were generally less supportive of traditional interactive read aloud lessons and more supportive of foundational skill development. Second, the teachers

faced pressure from the school district's early childhood coordinator for special education and their Head Start site supervisor to modify and augment read aloud lessons with artifacts and extension activities that often displaced interaction between readers and text as the central activity of the read aloud lesson. Third, Stapleton teachers had somewhat less instructional time to work with compared to their peers at Coleman. All of these forces interacted with each teacher's personal proclivities for teaching read aloud lessons. Even when a teacher was disposed to include traditional interactive read aloud lessons in her instructional repertoires, as with Laura, the practice could be hard to maintain in the face of the social and structural forces that worked against her impulse.

Rachel and her co-lead teacher, Kelsey, worked in a starkly different context at Coleman. They taught a class of students who were nearly all emergent bilingual children of recent immigrants and refugees, but none had been diagnosed with disabilities and as a group they were easier to teach than the Stapleton classes. Rachel and Kelsey certainly did have to negotiate the challenges of supporting students with learning and behavioral difficulties, but their students' needs were simply not as profound as those faced, collectively, but any of the classroom teachers at Stapleton. That being said, the language- and literacy-rich classroom environment that Rachel and Kelsey created likely helped many of their students to accelerate in their secondary language acquisition; few of their students remained in the earliest stages of learning English by the point I arrived at mid-year. In addition, Rachel and Kelsey operated their community-based site quite autonomously from the Head Start agency and the local school district. They enjoyed strong administrative support for all aspects of their program of instruction, including Rachel's implementation of daily interactive read aloud lessons. All of these factors worked in concert to make the 3-4 daily whole class gatherings for instruction, including 1-2 read aloud lessons per day, both feasible and worthwhile for their students.

The storytelling program appeared to have a minor impact, if any, on existing Stapleton teacher practices and beliefs about reading instruction. Without any influence from the storytelling program, Coleman students gleaned expected linguistic, cognitive, and affective benefits from Rachel's robust program of interactive read aloud lessons. Upon occasion, they even got the chance to participate in activities that were reminiscent of storytelling activities, like their enactment of *The Mitten* on the first day I visited. Stapleton teachers may have felt a bit less urgency to provide read aloud lessons due to their site's ongoing participation in the storytelling program. However, the larger institutional and social forces at work—the challenging behavioral, emotional, and learning needs of many students and how those needs shaped class dynamics, plus the influence of administrators' stated preference for adaptations to traditional read aloud lessons—appeared more consequential for teacher practice.

The Impact of Classroom Context on Implementation of Interventions

For any intervention or initiative, its success or failure (and every position in between) depends upon the context it enters into and the inherent interaction: on the one hand, how conducive is the context for supporting the goals of the intervention? And on the other, how nimble is the intervention? Can it adapt to varied contexts without overly compromising its core mission?

A unique constellation of factors impacted the implementation of storytelling in each of the four Stapleton classrooms. Three of the four classrooms were deeply affected by either personnel or significant student enrollment changes; only Samantha's class was stable in both respects. As a result, all four classes experienced remarkably distinctive trajectories across the school year, which, in turn, had substantial impacts upon their interactions with the teaching

artists and the storytelling program. Recall from the classroom profiles (“class arc”) described in Chapter 2 that the stability of student enrollment enjoyed by Samantha plus her consistent, rigorous teaching and clear learning goals combined to facilitate student development along all pathways: linguistic, cognitive, social, and emotional. As a result, Samantha’s students appeared to profit noticeably more from the storytelling program by the final unit than any of the other Stapleton classes due to their expanding ability to take in and work with the arts-integrated literacy and language learning opportunities that Jill offered. Furthermore, Samantha had played an important role initially in helping Jill to negotiate meaning and communicate successfully with her students.

Laura’s class, by contrast, experienced significant upheaval during the final quarter of the school year as multiple students, many of whom had just recently turned three and were diagnosed with disabilities, entered the class. This development shifted the age balance in the class toward younger students and added students with substantial behavioral and learning needs to the already challenging group dynamic without the provision of any additional personnel or other resources to help Laura and her colleagues to cope with the increased strain. Although the class was well underway with its routines and students were achieving curricular goals when I arrived at mid-year eventually, that forward momentum arrested toward the end of the year as Laura had to increasingly abandon even brief whole class instruction. Laura’s long-time students continued to benefit from their work with Carolyn in the storytelling program, but likely not as much as might have been possible if the class dynamic had not been so disrupted.

I observed storytelling sessions and read aloud lessons in the two other preschool classrooms at Stapleton as part of my original research design. While these classes wound up not being the focus of this study, they also experienced distinctive trajectories across the school year that colored their experiences with the storytelling program. I share those trajectories here because they reinforce the critical importance of classroom context for the implementation of the storytelling intervention, and more broadly, any intervention.

Julia’s Class

Julia taught the other morning class that met at the same time as Laura’s class. She had formerly co-taught with Heather in an afternoon class but agreed to move into the lead teacher role for the morning class that had lost both of its lead teachers. She was an experienced, knowledgeable Head Start preschool teacher who offered a structured, predictable learning environment to her students.

The class had six girls and nine boys. Eight members of the class (53%) were learning English as an additional language and seven students (47%) were diagnosed with disabilities. There was little overlap between these two special populations: just one child was classified as both an emergent bilingual and a special education student. A single child in the class fell into neither category; she spoke English only and had no diagnosed disabilities.

When Julia transitioned from the afternoon to the morning standard classroom, she lost a simpatico teaching partner in Heather. Julia and Heather still saw each other daily and continued to work together as part of the wider Head Start team at Stapleton School, but by all indications they both felt the loss acutely. They often appeared beleaguered and sometimes voiced feelings of feeling overwhelmed, though these struggles seemed to dissipate somewhat for Heather after a few months. In addition to losing a satisfying teaching partner relationship, Julia also lost her connection to the afternoon students with whom she had already deeply bonded. At the same time, she was faced with building rapport and authority with students in the morning class who had experienced upheaval in the wake of the sudden departure of their teachers.

The afternoon class she had been teaching with Heather happened to be composed largely of older children, primarily four- and five-year-olds. This class as a collective was notably more developmentally advanced along cognitive, linguistic, and social continua than any of the other three classes at Stapleton School. Julia's new class was younger overall, with more acute special needs, including behavioral difficulties, and with more emergent bilinguals in the earliest stages of learning English. On many visits to Julia's classroom, I observed her display frustration and impatience with regard to the hardest to teach students as she attempted to cope with the stress of unexpectedly becoming the sole lead teacher for a taxing class.

Of all four classrooms, Julia provided her students with an especially predictable schedule and imposed a great deal of adult control into class routines. Julia's implementation of a highly stable classroom routine initially appeared to be a strategy for course correcting the turmoil the students had undergone in December and January, but over time seemed it might be concurrently the result of a limited personal capacity for handling any additional disorder or confusion that might arise from varying the daily activities. Although her approach may have constrained the range of curriculum and learning possibilities and while it sometimes seemed as though children's behavior was being circumscribed more than was necessary, Julia created a secure, predictable environment that allowed for a more functional and happier group dynamic to take shape as well as notable progress in individual student development.

The students' interaction with Carolyn and the storytelling activities she prepared is a case in point. I visited Julia's class for the first time to observe Carolyn teach the second storytelling unit just two days after Julia had assumed responsibility for the class. The classroom energy was rather chaotic; that was not particularly unexpected given the recent staffing changes, but still worthy of note. The students were largely unsettled and unfocused during Carolyn's session and had difficulty participating even minimally in the activities. Carolyn ended the session about ten minutes early because the class was out of sorts and she sensed that they could not tolerate the final activity she had planned. Fast forward to the fourth and final storytelling unit in May when I observed that most students were effectively tuned in to Carolyn's instruction. They followed her directions, including turn-taking, were engaged and enjoyed the activities, and contributed mainly on target verbal and nonverbal responses. Their ability to take in, work with, and benefit from the arts-integrated literacy and language learning opportunities offered by Carolyn had significantly increased. Of course, some of the stark contrast from January to May can be attributed to typical maturation and developmental processes, including the greater English proficiency of the emergent bilinguals. However, Julia's class appeared to gain more from the storytelling program at year-end than any other class except for the afternoon class taught by Samantha. I ascribe that transformation in part to Julia's steady guidance and consistent teaching style.

Heather's Class

Heather was a beginning teacher in the second year of her teaching career. She was a caring and patient teacher and a conscientious professional. She tried to respect every rule and regulation that governed her work and became concerned if any obstacles stood in her way. Heather worked closely with a long-term substitute teacher, Vicky, who was assigned to assist Heather while a search was conducted to hire a new co-lead teacher to replace Julia.

The class consisted of eight girls and seven boys, the only class with an (approximately) even gender balance. Eight members of the class (53%) were learning English as an additional language and five students (33%) were diagnosed with disabilities. Limited overlap existed between these two special populations: only two children were classified as both emergent

bilinguals and special education students. Four children, more than any other classroom, fell into neither category; they spoke English only and had no diagnosed disabilities.

Interestingly, Heather's class experienced approximately the reverse trajectory of Julia's class. And as stated earlier, Heather's class represented the oldest age balance of the four classes, with the majority of students being 4-5 years old. And although about half were emergent bilinguals, many had progressed beyond the earliest stages of English language acquisition. When Jill began working with the class in the storytelling program in January, Heather's students stood out for being able to participate more fully in storytelling sessions, as a whole, than any of the other three classes. They quickly processed and contributed ideas, they seemed to understand and anticipate where Jill was leading them in many instances, and demonstrated a good deal of world knowledge in their responses to Jill's teaching, all of which seemed to enable them to really benefit from and enjoy the storytelling sessions. In the first half of the study, Jill was able to both 1) complete more components of her lesson plans with this class than she could accomplish with Samantha's class and, 2) implement more cognitively and linguistically demanding extensions to the basic lesson framework than she used with Samantha's class.

At the end of March, a new co-lead teacher, Lisa, was hired for the afternoon class. Lisa, a mid-life career changer, had no prior experience teaching preschool, which was evident in her tentative approach to working with the students. Prior to Lisa's arrival, Heather had capably provided continuity of instruction for students. Although Julia's move to the morning class presented a significant loss to Heather and the students, Heather maintained a happy and pleasant class climate, continued to advance curricular objectives, and provided and enforced clear, reasonable boundaries for student behavior (which were supported by Vicky, who, of note, stayed on for the first hour of the afternoon session to help with lunch even after Lisa had been hired). However, Lisa's arrival in the classroom marked another turning point in the year-long arc of the class.

At first, Heather continued to lead and provide all instruction for the class as Lisa mainly observed and took on minor management tasks, but even these responsibilities seemed to feel unnatural to her. For example, she was given the responsibility of calling on students to clear their place settings at the conclusion of lunch, but did this notably slowly, despite having observed how capably the students had completed this task at a faster pace when managed by Vicky. After about one month, Heather began to ask Lisa to lead small periods of instruction, such as the daily toothbrushing routine and singing songs during transitional moments, which she was able to do but her pace remained slow and tentative. The students, unsurprisingly, were sensitive to these changes in their classroom leadership and routines. As Heather progressively stood back to allow Lisa to find her way, students began to probe Lisa's expectations for their behavior and discovered they could get away with more than was possible in the past.

Heather continued to conduct the majority of direct instruction through the end of the year, including all read aloud lessons I observed. However, the more Lisa assumed direct responsibilities for teaching the class, the more disordered the classroom environment became and the more difficult it was for Heather to maintain the behavioral expectations she had clearly and consistently enforced prior to Lisa joining the class. This group of students, who stood out at the onset of the study as the most developmentally advanced and mature preschoolers and were positioned favorably to continue to reap benefits from the storytelling program, actually began to regress under inconsistent and unstable instructional leadership. Heather chose to leave Lisa in charge of the class during several of the storytelling sessions during units three and four. Despite Jill's best efforts to maintain student focus, these sessions were markedly chaotic in comparison

to earlier sessions during units one and two when students had been so in tune and engaged with Jill's instruction.

Implications for Practice

My observation and analysis of the teaching artists' implementation of the storytelling program at Stapleton and the classroom teachers' read aloud lessons at Stapleton and Coleman yielded a number of general and specific implications for storytelling and read aloud practices. I begin with the broader implications that my study findings present for children's literacy and language learning in relationship to the existing bodies of literature for reading aloud and storytelling with young children.

General Implications for Reading Aloud and Storytelling

In terms of what is already known about interactive read aloud and storytelling in early childhood settings, my study's findings at times confirmed the existing literature, in some cases offered slight variations to established findings, and occasionally differed in important ways. One particularly salient confirmation of the existing literature on reading aloud given the widely varying contexts for read aloud found at my two study sites is that children who are read to frequently tend to demonstrate greater interest in, enjoyment of, and knowledge of books and stories (Neuman, 1999; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). Granted, there will always be some variation in children's personal inclinations for reading and seeking out books for reasons outside of their learning environments. I observed a minority of students in each Stapleton classroom drift into the library corners to look at books alone and with friends from time to time during free play periods; they tended to be the same handful of students, suggesting that interacting with books was something they found pleasurable and were motivated to seek out.

Coleman students, while not participating in the storytelling program, reaped all the benefits of a robust program of reading instruction, as evidenced by their ability to sustain and enjoy emergent independent and partner reading during the end of session transition time. When teachers and students co-construct a strong classroom culture of literacy, as was seen at Coleman, even those students who would not ordinarily gravitate to books if given their druthers appear to be carried along on a rising tide of interactive read aloud lessons and talk about stories that builds interest in, enthusiasm for, and knowledge about books. Children who find listening to and talking about books to be pleasurable activities are more likely to read independently once they learn to read (Bus, 2002; Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2011) which can have consequential impacts on their success in school and available life choices, as volume of reading is strongly correlated with general knowledge and reading achievement (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015; Sparks et al., 2014; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993).

Another confirmation of well-established patterns in the literature on reading aloud was my finding that attention to vocabulary and concept instruction was a minor component of the read aloud lessons overall. Although a number of studies have found a dearth of vocabulary instruction in preschool settings, including during read aloud lessons (Dwyer & Harbaugh, 2018; Neuman & Dwyer, 2009; Pelatti et al., 2014; Wright & Neuman, 2014), it was still somewhat surprising to see hardly any explicit instruction and only a small degree of opportunistic instruction. One might expect that teachers, who are fundamentally tied to the language contained within the covers of the books in their hands, would feel obliged to address vocabulary, but that was generally not the case in practice. Rachel's lesson was somewhat of an exception to this trend; she appeared to be both compelled by the content and organization of the book she selected (which introduced new musical instruments on several consecutive pages) and

aware of the need to support her students' understandings of these concepts, resulting in the provision of some spontaneous vocabulary instruction throughout much of the lesson.

Perhaps the literary language common in more traditional children's stories, including *The Gruffalo*, is less likely to provoke the same degree of alertness to language learning opportunities and language comprehension challenges in teachers than discipline-specific vocabulary, such as the musical instruments presented in *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello*. Another possible contributor to the low occurrence of vocabulary instruction is the Stapleton teachers' working environment, in which artifacts and extension activities were used as mediators for meaning making, with less emphasis placed on directly extracting and constructing meaning through talking about books. In early childhood settings like Stapleton where the story is not necessarily positioned as central to the read aloud experience and books are sometimes viewed as an inadequate resources for scaffolding students' comprehension, there may be a tendency for teachers to pay less attention in general to the book's written language, even in the instances when they deliver what would be considered a traditional interactive read aloud lesson, as was the case with *The Gruffalo*.

Something of a variation on the storytelling literature was my discovery of how prominent attention to and interaction with vocabulary and concepts was in the storytelling sessions. One might think that, given how the teaching artists positioned their creative work as influenced by but not limited to the substance and language of the focal picture books, they might feel less compelled to build vocabulary and concepts with students. And yet instruction for vocabulary and concepts was a major priority for Carolyn, and, although less emphasized by Jill, still a significant aspect of her storytelling practice. The teaching artists likely gained at least some degree of familiarity with teaching explicitly for vocabulary and concepts from their experience working for many years within the arts organization's kindergarten to eighth grade arts-integrated curriculum development program. Their experiences teaching in diverse elementary and middle school classrooms, settings where vocabulary and knowledge building are emphasized more than in typical preschool classrooms, may have heightened their sensitivity to the importance of promoting students' facility with discipline specific knowledge and language, and if so, appear to have transferred into their work with preschoolers. The possible influence of these broader experiences in arts-integrated teaching and curriculum development spotlight the importance for all educators to have opportunities to work with and learn from peers in other grade levels, disciplines, and schools. The value of cross-pollination for spreading and sustaining effective pedagogical practices is reflected in the professional development practices of some of the world's most effective large school systems, including the provincial system in Alberta, Canada, and the national systems in Finland and Singapore (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015). By contrast, in the United States, teachers rarely get opportunities as part of their professional development to visit other classrooms in their own buildings, let alone other schools or school districts.

The influence of school administrators on teacher's read aloud practices represents another variation upon the findings in the existing read aloud literature. This is not the first study to find the broader contexts in which teachers work, as well as their personal enthusiasm and expertise for reading aloud, to be consequential for the types of language and literacy learning opportunities their students are afforded in read aloud lessons. Nor is this the first study to find that school administrators' beliefs and priorities have the power to influence teachers' instructional choices and their own implicit theories of literacy learning. However, the finding that administrators responsible for supervising teachers serving large numbers of children with

special language learning advised teachers to adopt a set of instructional practices for read alouds and offered materials supports to that end, that, although well-intended, constrained teachers' scope of practice and reduced the frequency of read aloud lessons is not an obstacle that arose in the literature. The close analysis afforded by an ethnographic study such as this one, although limited in some ways by the local and specific nature of the work, may be partly responsible for this finding, which reinforces the importance of school administrators' roles as instructional leaders.

A notable difference between my findings and those of the existing literature on storytelling is the substantial emphasis placed on performance in the storytelling program (*Language and Learning Through Oral Storytelling*) that I investigated. The teaching artists' broad conceptions of oral storytelling privileged individual and collective rehearsal of discrete story elements and often culminated in a collective enactment or retelling of a variation on the unit story. I attribute the frequent invitations extended by the teaching artists to students and staff to observe and perform acts of storytelling to Carolyn and Jill's professional training and identities as practicing performing artists. Although the existing literature on storytelling in early childhood settings is undeniably smaller than that of read aloud practices, in no other study was the storytelling intervention led by professional teaching artists, and in no other study was fully embodied participation by students so emphasized. The emphasis on performance lent a particularly exciting and engaging quality to the storytelling sessions. The teaching artists imbued imagination and versatility into every storytelling session; this was exemplified particularly by the regular opportunities for students to observe and express multiple representations of the same concept and in the character and story development that was inspired by, but not yoked to, the focal picture books. The prominence of performance, imagination, and versatility appeared to reflect norms and values present in the performing arts community, and thus are more likely to be heightened in storytelling interventions where artists are at the helm (rather than researchers or teachers).

Metalanguage of Story

Teaching artists and classroom teachers alike can use the metalanguage of story when appropriate and helpful. To be sure, they want and need to make their instruction accessible to students but need not withhold the complexity of language from young children. Metalanguage of story involves all three of Halliday's (2004) aspects of children's language learning, but it is primarily a matter of learning *about* language, and specifically learning how the particular vocabulary of story and storytelling function to frame the discourse of narrative. The academic language of story requires attention because it benefits children's holistic linguistic development, promotes their story comprehension and understanding of narrative in oral and written language, and contributes to their entry into the academic discourse that is valued in school settings.

Book Selection

Both the storytelling program and the broader context for language arts and read aloud instruction observed in each classroom reinforced the critical importance of book selection for optimal student learning opportunities. Within the context of a storytelling program such as the one I studied, a foremost concern is choosing focal picture books that are of high literary quality and offer enchantingly interesting stories rich with opportunities to deepen students' understandings of narrative and story comprehension. The inclusion of *Up, Down, and Around*, the focal text for the third unit, stood out as a problematic choice. Although this book has many positive attributes, including highly engaging illustrations, it is not a story. Its purpose is teaching about gardening, vegetables, and the positional vocabulary named in the title. When I

asked Carolyn about how *Up, Down, and Around*, came to be selected, she told me that it originated from an event two years prior. She had needed to create a few make-up sessions and chose *Up, Down, and Around*, in order to align her work with a spring gardening unit she observed taking place in several classrooms. After that first instance of using *Up, Down, and Around*, some Stapleton teachers, including Samantha, had requested that she teach it again. Carolyn reported that in addition to the alignment between *Up, Down, and Around*, and spring curricular themes, teachers liked its short length and simple, patterned language.

Jill and Carolyn really had to stretch to construct a 3-session arc out of this text because typical storytelling activities, like plot and character enactments, were not viable options for a book without a plot or any named characters. Carolyn and Jill both devoted the entire first session to developing conceptual knowledge of the insects (fly, butterfly, ant) depicted in the end pages and their movement pathways (hop, fly, crawl). By the third session, Carolyn's session content had departed so far from the gist of the book that *Up, Down, and Around* was no longer recognizable as the source of the activities. Jill, however, did not have as much difficulty with keeping her session content in tune with the essence of the text due to the infusion of dance she brought into the second and third sessions.

In addition to protecting and advocating for the literary quality of focal stories, another concern is to ensure that all teachers have easy access to the selected titles so that there are no material barriers to reading aloud. Further, if traditional literature is selected, teachers should be provided a short list of recommended titles that have been evaluated for literary quality, or better yet, provided with a copy of a version that has been evaluated for suitability. As Samantha's choice of a humorous, highly abbreviated version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* for reading aloud to her class demonstrated, no assumptions should be made about teachers' abilities to evaluate text quality (not a simple task) or about their access to suitable texts.

Adaptation of Storytelling Practices to Classroom Teacher-Led Reading Instruction

One need not be a performing artist or even artistic to engage young children in enactments and retellings of familiar stories. There is nothing Jill and Carolyn did that could not be replicated, with some modifications, by classroom teachers. Jill and Carolyn's training and professional experience in theater and dance were certainly evident in their charming, expressive, and often graceful performances. However, those attributes of their work, while captivating, are not the substance upon which the retelling, enacting, and related storytelling activities have rested, and they are not necessary to advance children's story comprehension and understanding of narrative. Classroom teachers could adopt or modify much of the teaching artist's pedagogical repertoires to introduce the benefits of storytelling into their language arts instruction.

And indeed, in the year after my study, the preschool storytelling program model shifted to include more participation and contributions from classroom teachers by establishing co-planning and co-teaching with the teaching artists. Rather than selecting participating Head Start sites from an administrative level, participation in the storytelling program became optional because of the increased investment of time and commitment required from the teachers in this more collaborative, and presumably, more durable model.

Continuity of Personnel and Resources for Vulnerable Students

Needless to say, experienced and consistent teachers are paramount to the success of any educational program or classroom. The unexpected dismissal of the original two co-teachers in the morning classroom that would become Julia's classroom could not be foreseen. Unfortunately, the sudden teacher vacancies in that classroom had long lasting ripple effects that

shaped the rest of the year for that class as well as Heather's class and had a direct impact upon Julia and Heather's students' differential experiences with the storytelling program.

The disruption to Laura's classroom by the introduction of several students with substantial behavioral and learning needs over the course of two months, however, could be foreseen by school district administrators. The most vulnerable students are entitled to the most expert support. No single class should be expected to welcome several high needs students in quick succession without considerable resources provided to sustain an effective and safe learning environment for all. Without adequate supports, a series of unfortunate events can swamp the best of intentions and plans.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by a number of factors, the greatest of which were the chaotic circumstances at the administrative, personnel management (all the teacher replacements and shifts), and classroom levels. Beginning with the unexpected dismissal of both teachers in the classroom that was meant to be my full treatment classroom, circumstances conspired to force me to continually revise the research design and methods that I had originally intended to deploy. The disruptions and shifts away from the original research design had implications for the research questions I could ask and answer. The only path forward was to adapt my research agenda to the changing circumstances while trying to preserve as much of the original purpose as possible.

It bears repeating what I stated at the outset in Chapters 1 and 2: this research was deeply grounded in the complexity of daily life in real preschool classrooms. The storytelling program remained the heart of the study, but it was hard at times for the complex and rich learning opportunities offered by the teaching artists to shine through the frequently disruptive classroom interactions and the profound needs of students. That the teaching artists accomplished as much as they did with each class is a testament to their individual expertise and perseverance. Although the study that I implemented was not the one I had planned, somewhat ironically, these obligatory changes allowed me to learn about some facets of language and story development that I had not expected to encounter.

Future Research Directions

I plan to perform several future analyses of the existing data set, including a deeper analysis of how the teaching artists' repertoires diverged as they planned separate lessons for units three and four and Jill brought her training in dance into her work; analysis of the teaching artists' repertoires for promoting story comprehension and narrative outside of the language practice categories I identified for this study, such as their performing arts techniques; and further analysis of their teaching for story elements (plot, character, setting) through enactments and retellings.

If the new storytelling program model involving teaching artist-classroom teacher collaboration is able to resume after the pandemic ends, I would be interested in investigating how and to what degree direct involvement in storytelling planning and instruction through collaboration with teaching artists influences classroom teachers' instructional practices for reading aloud, including book selection and modification of storytelling activities. It would be illuminating to study what something akin to the "best of both worlds" for children's literacy and language learning looks and sounds like by observing how teachers working in enabling contexts and possessing moderate to high levels of zeal and skill for reading aloud might appropriate and adapt storytelling practices to their existing instructional repertoires.

Finally, I would like to investigate further early childhood educators' understanding of and beliefs about Halliday's (2004) three aspects children's language learning and, in particular, under what instructional conditions they think it is appropriate and worthwhile to help young children learn *about* language.

Conclusion

Storytelling with young children and reading aloud to them are separate, but complementary activities with overlapping and distinctive benefits. I identified three practices in storytelling sessions that did not appear in read aloud lessons: noticing and naming, narration, and unison speaking, suggesting that some of the distinct benefits of a participatory model of storytelling such as the one I studied may originate in these instructional strategies. But the pathway I anticipated finding between storytelling experiences and children's awareness of the academic language of story and narrative appeared murky at best. It was no clearer in the read aloud lessons delivered by classroom teachers, either. Still, the storytelling program offered an engaging forum for children to learn about narrative and story through observation and direct participation in acts of storytelling. In addition, the program placed an unexpectedly strong emphasis on developing common knowledge. These three foci of the storytelling program—building knowledge, observing demonstrations, and participating in acts of storytelling—provided students with rich opportunities to learn language and learn *through* language, with less thorough attention paid to learning *about* language.

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Appendix A: Synopses and Videos of Focal Picture Books

Unit 1—Goldilocks and the Three Bears (traditional)

Special Note

Goldilocks and the Three Bears is one of the most well-known and popular English language fairy tales, and as such, numerous published variations exist. Stapleton School teachers selected and read somewhat different versions of the story to their classes in preparation for the first storytelling unit. Likewise, the artists each brought different books with them to use as visual aids while they worked with students during this unit.

Synopsis

A family of three bears (mother, father, and child – “Baby Bear”) lives in a house in the woods. One morning, they decide to go for a walk while they wait for their breakfast porridge to cool. While they are out, a curious girl with blond hair, Goldilocks, finds their home and enters without permission. She eats from the three bowls of porridge, finishing Baby Bear’s porridge. She then tries sitting in each of their three chairs and manages to break Baby Bear’s chair. Finally, she goes upstairs to their bedroom and tests out each bed before falling asleep in Baby Bear’s bed. When the bears return from their walk, they notice that their bowls of porridge have been disturbed and that Baby Bear’s chair is broken. They go upstairs and find Goldilocks sleeping in Baby Bear’s bed. She awakens and runs out of the house in terror.

Video Link

Video of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* read aloud: <https://youtu.be/kQgZXtCGIBI>

Unit 2—The Gruffalo (Donaldson, 1999)

Synopsis

In this story full of repetitive, rhyming language, a mouse encounters in quick succession three animals that want to eat him (a fox, an owl, and a snake) on a walk through a forest. He uses his wits to escape death each time, declaring that he is on his way to meet a “Gruffalo.” Mouse describes the Gruffalo, a monstrous creature that he believes is of his own invention, in such convincingly vivid detail that each predator is frightened and abandons all attempts to eat him. But Mouse discovers that Gruffaloes are real when he comes face-to-face with an actual Gruffalo, who promptly threatens to eat him. In another example of clever problem-solving, Mouse rebuffs Gruffalo’s intimidation, boasting that the other forest animals are all, in fact, afraid of *him*. Gruffalo scoffs at Mouse’s claim but agrees to walk with him in order to test it. As they walk through the woods, retracing Mouse’s steps, they happen upon the snake, the owl, and the fox, each of which flees upon seeing the Gruffalo. As the Gruffalo becomes increasingly impressed and convinced of Mouse’s power, Mouse then leverages the moment to his advantage by asserting that his favorite food is “Gruffalo crumble.” Frightened, the Gruffalo quickly runs away. The story concludes with Mouse, having successfully tricked all of his foes, peacefully eating a nut in the forest.

Video Link

Video of *The Gruffalo* read aloud: <https://youtu.be/LshGQmaJc9I>

Unit 3—Up, Down, and Around (Ayes, 2007)

Synopsis

This book develops three related concepts – plants, gardening, and vegetables – and introduces children to prepositions. A man plants a garden with two child helpers; these

unnamed characters are depicted in the illustrations but are never explicitly referred to in the text. The book begins with the man and one of his assistants planting seeds and culminates with all three characters enjoying a large meal made from all the vegetables they have harvested (e.g., salad, pickled beets, vegetable soup, tomato sandwiches). There is no plot in the classic sense (e.g., problem, climax, resolution); between the initial planting and the final harvest readers learn about the three directions in which vegetables can grow: up (e.g., broccoli, peppers), down (e.g., onions, potatoes), and around and around (e.g., the vines of melons and squashes). The inviting illustrations are bright and playful and the simple, rhythmic text (“Corn grows up. / Carrots grow down. / Cucumbers grow around and around.”) promotes anticipation of written language and propels the book along at a cheerful pace.

Video Link

Video of *Up, Down, and Around* read aloud: <https://youtu.be/tYQ6kWQuYa4>

Unit 4—We’re Going on a Lion Hunt (Axtell, 1999)

Synopsis

Two young sisters set off to look for a lion in this retelling of *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* set on an African savanna. The sisters boast plans to catch a big lion and bravely declare that they are not afraid because they have “been there before.” On their quest, they must pass through long grass, a lake, and a swamp. Repetitive, rhythmic text accompanies each natural obstacle they encounter, offering an endorsement of tenacity: “Can’t go *over* it. Can’t go *under* it. Can’t go *around* it. Have to go *through* it.” At last, the girls reach a dark cave and tiptoe inside. But when they find a lion sleeping within, they are suddenly overcome with fear and race home, quickly retracing their steps through the swamp, lake, and long grass. They slam the front door, jump under the covers of their bed and decide, on second thought, that tomorrow will be a better day to catch a lion.

Video Link

Video of *We’re Going on a Lion Hunt* read aloud: <https://youtu.be/LuSM5bshdds>

Rachel’s Lesson—I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello (Garriel, 2004)

Synopsis

Based on the old children’s rhyme, “**There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly**”, this rendition features a tall, slender mouselike character who breaks out of his shyness by swallowing up a cumulative series of musical instruments. Like “There Was an Old Lady,” the repetitive pattern promotes recall and allows for introduction of the various instruments. The shy fellow’s thin physique takes on the shape and size of each instrument he swallows; first the cello, then a harp, sax, fiddle, cymbal, flute, kazoo, and finally, “...the teeniest, tiniest, petite cascabel,” with comical and whimsical illustrations. The wee bell tips the scales, causing such gastrointestinal disturbance that the bell is expelled with a jingle. Then, in reverse swallowing order, all the instruments are ejected until, “...last but not least, out cha-chaed the cello!” Clever rhyming in this silly, light-hearted tale presents the musical instruments and introduces unusual vocabulary (e.g. bellow, jam, twiddle).

Video Link

Video of *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* read aloud: <https://youtu.be/c56V6Gv33zE>

Appendix B: Transcription Conventions

Notational conventions employed in the transcribed excerpts examined in the dissertation include the following:

- . The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
- ? The question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
- , The comma indicates “continuing” intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
- ! The exclamation point indicates an exclamatory statement.
- ::: Colons indicate stretching of the preceding sound, proportional to the number of colons.
- A hyphen after a word or a part of a word indicates a cut-off or self interruption.
- word Underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis on the underlined item.
- WOrd Upper case indicates loudness.
- ◦ The degree signs indicate the segments of talk which are markedly quiet or soft.
- > < The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed.
- < > In the reverse order, they indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed.
- = Equal sign indicate no break or delay between the words thereby connected.
- (()) Double parentheses enclose descriptions of conduct.
- (word) When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part.
- () Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing can be achieved.
- (1.2) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence in tenths of a second.
- (.) A dot in parentheses indicated a “micropause”, hearable but not readily measurable; ordinarily less than 2/10 of a second.
- [Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers indicates a point of overlap onset.

hhh letter “h” indicates hearable aspiration.

↑↓ Vertical arrows indicate shift into especially higher or lower pitch.

Appendix C: Coding Schemes for Storytelling and Read Aloud Lesson Analysis

1. Classroom Teachers—Interactive Read Aloud Coding Scheme

Language Practices				
		Before	During	After
Instruction for Vocabulary & Concepts	Explicit			
	On the Fly			
	Responsive to Student(s)			
Contextual Support	Prosody – matches word meaning			
	Gesture – matches speech meaning			
	Gesture – matches text meaning			
	Gesture – matches character’s feelings			
	Artifact (e.g., realia, pictures, visual aids)			
Language Anticipation	Leads Ss to speak the next word(s) in the text using prosody, pausing, and/or gesture			
	Attempts to lead Ss to speak the next word(s) in the text using prosody, pausing, and/or gesture			
Metalanguage of Story	Used (e.g., setting, characters, end) Words (Count):			
	Alluded to (e.g., “Does this story happen in the woods?”) Phrases:			
Intersubjectivity	Repair - successful			
	Repair - unsuccessful			
	Repair - not enacted (intentionally)			
	Repair - not enacted (unintentionally)			
Extended Conversation	3+ turns each on a single topic			
Repetitions, Expansions, & Extensions	Affirms student ideas with repetition, expansion, and/or extension (e.g., “His head <i>does</i> look skinny”)			

2. Teaching Artists—Storytelling Coding Scheme

Language Practices		Count
Instruction for Vocabulary & Concepts	Explicit – Echo technique (speak; possibly whisper and/or sing)	
	Explicit – Other	
	On the Fly (opportunistic)	
	Responsive to student-initiated comment or question	
	Artifact(s) used to build concept(s)	
Contextual Support	Prosody – matches word meaning	
	Gesture – matches speech meaning	
	Gesture – matches text meaning	
	Gesture – matches character’s feelings	
Language Anticipation	Leads Ss to say a word/phrase using prosody, pausing, and/or gesture	
	Attempts to leads Ss to say a word/phrase using prosody, pausing, and/or gesture	
Metalinguage of Story	Uses metalinguage of story (e.g., story, setting, characters, once upon a time, beginning) Words (Count):	
	Uses language of fantasy/imagination, (e.g., magic(al), spell, hocus pocus, pretend) Words (Count):	
	Indirect reference/alluded to (e.g., “Does this story happen in the woods?”) Phrases:	
Intersubjectivity	Repair - successful	
	Repair - unsuccessful	
	Repair - not enacted (intentionally)	
	Repair - not enacted (unintentionally)	
Extended Conversation	3+ turns each between Teaching Artist and Student	
Repetitions, Expansions, & Extensions	Affirms S utterance with repetition	
	Affirms S utterance with expansion	
	Affirms S utterance with extension	
	Affirms S nonverbal communication with repetition of idea in speech	
	Affirms S nonverbal communication with extension of idea in speech	
Unison Speaking	Choral singing, chanting, or speaking of a word, phrase, or sentence	
	Leads Ss to repeat a word, phrase, or sentence without her	
Narration of...	Personal actions (e.g. “I pick up my bag. I sit in the chair.”)	
	Personal experience (; e.g., “I was walking down the hall and came upon this hat.”)	
	Unit story or variation of the unit story	
Noticing & Naming	Notices and names Ss’ actions – specific (e.g., “Look how still your knee is”)	
	Notices and names Ss’actions – vague (e.g., “Abby’s got a good one”)	