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About the Journal

Founded in 2013, the Journal of Teacher Action Research (ISSN: 2332-2233) is a peer-reviewed online journal indexed with EBSCO that seeks practical research that can be implemented in Pre-Kindergarten through Post-Secondary classrooms. The primary function of this journal is to provide classroom teachers and researchers a means for sharing classroom practices.

The journal accepts articles for peer-review that describe classroom practice which positively impacts student learning. We define teacher action research as teachers (at all levels) studying their practice and/or their students' learning in a methodical way in order to inform classroom practice. Articles submitted to the journal should demonstrate an action research focus with intent to improve the author's practice.

Editorial Team

CULTURE, FAIRY TALES, AND ACTION RESEARCH

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Abstract This purpose of this action research study was to identify another way to promote cultural diversity in a human growth and development course (HGD) at a college located in Northwest Florida. Under the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), all courses listed in general education degree plans assess student learning outcomes (SLOs). A class assignment guided by Vygotskian sociocultural theory and integrating a fairy tale was another way to promote diverse cultures. The participants in this study consisted of 25 students taking an HGD class. Data collection consisted of two in-class presentation/activities, cultural fairy tale "Little Burnt Face," and reflective journaling of the teacher-researcher. The data obtained were then analyzed for cultural codes, themes, and categories. The teacher-researcher suggests future curriculum and instruction can be modified to identify ways to promote diverse cultures in HGD courses.

Introduction

This research highlights the value of integrating a cultural fairy tale into a college-level psychology course. As a result of recent administrative changes made at the state college, a specific psychology course, Human Growth and Development, moved from being a general education to a required elective course. This means that previously, students had a list of social science general education classes from which they would choose three to meet the social science Associate of Arts degree requirement. Currently, students in certain pre-professional

college programs (e.g., Nutritional Sciences, Nursing, Education), take pre-requisite courses in order to apply to these professional programs offered at the college or transfer to other institutions offering the same programs (Florida Department of Education [FDOE], 2016; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges [SACSCOC], 2011). These students must take Human Growth and Development while other students retain the option of taking the course.

As a result of this change, student learning outcomes were mandated so as to provide a common method of assessment of the social science general education core competencies. Three learning outcomes (SLO) were developed:

1. Recognize the scientific method and research concepts used in the social sciences.
2. Identify ways to promote understanding of differences and commonalities within diverse cultures from a global perspective.
3. Describe the effective synthesis of selected ideas, themes, and concepts present in history (FDOE, 2016).

All social sciences courses must include these learning outcomes. Because students are required to complete an end of course exam related to these student learning outcomes it is incumbent upon instructors to make sure appropriate materials and processes are integrated into the class.

This research addressed the SLO related to exploring differences and commonalities within diverse cultures because it is our assessment that the institutionally assigned textbook does not provide adequate coverage of cultural diversity. For example, a majority of comparative differences were related to white European Americans and Native Americans as distinct but homogeneous groups. The book did not acknowledge or discuss cultural differences among European Americans or even mention individual Native American tribes or nations.

Therefore, integrating a fairy tale served as an additional way to promote concepts of cultural diversity. The Human Growth and Development class includes chapters on prenatal and infancy, early childhood, adolescents, teens, and describes the developmental milestones that occur. It is likely the perfect course to infuse additional diversity as culture is relevant during all stages of development.

Literature Review

Growing populations of diverse students and the need to individualize the curriculum and instruction that meet criteria for pre-professionals and general education programs (Howrey & Whelan-Kim, 2009) challenge instructors of HGD courses. Integrating literature in a college HGD course through theory and cultural practice may promote student knowledge and discourse in

contextually diverse environments (Williams & Kolupke, 1986; Zipes, 2012). This strategy enlightens students to venture beyond the words in a textbook and encourage reading (Pittman & Honchell, 2014). Textbooks are often more research-oriented for post-secondary courses and classrooms (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Skinner & Howes, 2013; Toom, 2013; Williams & Kolupke, 1986).

Adding literature or narratives based on cultures mentioned in assigned textbook provides opportunities for discourse and discussion (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991). By asking the questions, "what do you think about the research in the book?" and "what do you know about the culture that the research discusses?" (Boyatzis, 1992; Hawkins, et al., 2015; McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Meyerson, 2006; Toom, 2013) establishes platforms for discourse in specific courses. College instructors can use stories to teach concepts beyond the textbook (Boyatzis, 1992; Levine, 1984; Skinner & Howes, 2013; Virtue, 2007; Williams & Kolupke, 1986).

Instructors also have the avenue to include or introduce cultures not mentioned in assigned texts. Stories and narratives in literature provide students with an ability to look at natural and familiar mediums close to their own culture (Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; Virtue, 2007). By integrating cultural fairy tales, students gain ideas about the historical culture that has transcended throughout human civilization (Kim, 2016). Students are already familiar with a variety of fairy tales, but may not have paid particular attention to the cultural aspects presented. Fairy tale plots often focus on human trials of morality and values (Bronner, 2017; Zipes, 2012). Fairy tales support opportunities for instructors to present research theories and frameworks discussed in assigned textbooks and to look at the power fairy tales have on emotional, cognitive, and sociocultural domains (Bronner, 2017; McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Virtue, 2007; Zipes, 2012). Fairy tales, through integration, grant the pedagogical podium to enrich specific courses as Human Growth and Development. Sociocultural models recommend teacher-researchers in the fields of education and social science promoting cultural diversity practices using action research (Ebersole, Kanahele-Mossman, & Kawakami, 2016; Howrey & Whelan-Kim, 2009).

The process of action research offers instructors a device to improve pedagogical practices. The components of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting adopt a procedure to evaluate course material and sources that align with learning outcomes. Teacher-researchers developing action research projects in the fields of education and social science often use the agent of fiction and non-fiction literature to build on current and future curriculum and specific SLOs (Boyatzis, 1992; Fernald, 1987; Meyerson, 2006; Sackes & Trundle, 2009). Literature as the instrument of integration can transport stories to any destination in the fields of education and social science. The fields of social science, especially psychology, have used fiction and non-fiction as an extension of theoretical association (Toom, 2013).

Research shows how studies in psychology using literature as supplemental material, disseminates and reinforces theorists' perspectives and increases students' understanding of people, places, and culture (Boyatzis, 1992; Fernald, 1987; Toom, 2013). Social science instructors have informally supplemented lists of fiction in classrooms in the hope of encouraging student discourse (Virtue & Vogler, 2008). One study investigated the interdisciplinary development of integrated folktales weaving psychological issues into cultural themes (Virtue & Vogler, 2008). Specific subjects in psychology relating to literature and the process of course development led to the formation of a reading list and the proper outline of course content (Levine, 1984). A study conducted by Williams and Kolupke (1986), discussed curriculum design and planning. The researchers focused on educational objectives within the field of literature and psychology addressing student perception of society through culture, history, and philosophy. Psychological theory can be a valuable aid to literature and literature a useful aid to psychology (Hawkins, Agnello, & Lucey, 2015; Hurt & Callahan, 2013; Kelly, 2008). Meyerson (2006) conducted a study using children's picture books through a constructivist approach to align theories of learning with development. His review of the literature showed evidence of children's literature included among elementary and secondary students, but lack of empirical data on postsecondary students. Through the integration of children's books, teachers can compare complex theories in a simple real form (Hawkins et al., 2015; Lushchevska, 2014).

Theoretical Framework. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory framed this study. The Vygotskian (1978) sociocultural worldview conceived the idea of material objects as cultural tools. The signs given to them as cultural artifacts can influence these cultural tools. Sociocultural theory is a theory based on social agreement and the information within a social context or collective (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978).

Individual ways of viewing the world based on interpersonal experiences underlined the human mind as containing all intellectual development at the ready and awaiting the social context (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Vygotsky (1978) proposed a path to intellectual development based on the child's mind. Adaptive behavior and sign use are treated in a similar context but are separate entities. Vygotsky (1978) explained that to understand what specifies as a human is to understand levels, starting with the simplest form of practical intelligence. This process of practical intelligence through description and identification labeled what was specific to humans.

In this study, the constructs of Vygotskian theory were implemented to support the use of a cultural fairy tale to illustrate the cognitive process in early childhood development. Vygotsky's (1978) constructs of tool, sign/symbol, mediation, and zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding were used to support the fairy tale as a way to promote cultural diversity. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of tool focused on the material tool for manipulation of use and future

tense on symbolic function. The symbolic tool in his theory referred to the creation of music, math, writing, and language. Tools were created socially and culturally by what nature provided (Vygotsky, 1978). Historical tools were materials that were manipulated and became part of the culture. Symbolic tools contained the elements of language, both written and oral. Symbolic tools could also be manipulated to teach culture and promote development. Symbolic tools became signs and symbols.

The construct of sign/symbols permitted development from intermental activity as speech to internal mental activity for private speech. Speech as signs provided the platform for cognitive development. Through observation and imitation, the child became a cultural representation Vygotsky, 1978; 1997a). The construct of mediation allowed for an external mental conversation between the teacher and learner. Speech as signs and symbols created communication between individuals and allowed measurement of what types of mediation were incorporated into learning. Mediation also provided the basis for Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD. The space and distance from the point of knowing and the space of cognitive growth were the outer edges of the ZPD (Solovieva & Quintanar, 2016). Through all constructs of tool, sign, mediation, and ZPD the teacher can build the scaffold to actual development level (Vygotsky, 1978). Scaffolding was the idea of Jerome Bruner and part of his social constructivist theory while Vygotsky's sociocultural theory became the template of Bruner's theory on the ZPD (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The use of scaffolding became interconnected with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and associations to the process of ZPD. The social context of the current study implemented the five constructs, tool, sign, mediation, ZPD, and scaffolding discussed in this section.

This theory was appropriate to use because of Vygotsky's (1978; 1997a) foundation of theoretical constructs connected directly to early childhood cognitive development. The constructs of tool, sign/symbol, mediation, ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), and scaffolding are evidenced by studies conducted in diverse cultures throughout the world. Vygotsky's (1978) constructs were scaffolds in the process of understanding how cultural learning takes place in social mediums. The HGD course teaches about the cultural development of the child (Vygotsky, 1929).

Methodology

Research Questions. The overarching research question in this study asked: How will integrating a cultural fairy tale into a college-level HGD class promote student knowledge of cultural diversity? The specific research questions were:

> **RQ1:** How can sign, tool, and mediation be used as a medium to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class?

RQ2: How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive processes in early childhood development?

RQ3: How is a cultural fairy tale used to scaffold cultural diversity in an HGD class?

Setting. This study took place during the spring semester of 2018 at a state college in Northwest Florida. The college operates six satellite campuses throughout the regional area in addition to the 264-acre main campus. The college has a population of just over 6,700 students. There are approximately 2,700 full-time and 4,000 part-time students. Student/faculty ratio at this college is 21:1 compared to the state ratio of 38:1. Almost half (48.5%) are under 21years old. Three-fourths of students report their race as white. However, diversity at this college has grown by 15% over the past five years. About 58% of students are female.

Participants. The participants in this study were students enrolled in an HGD class. There is no reason to believe the participants of this study are fundamentally different from those at the college. There was a slight over representation of females but that is likely due to the pre-professional students for whom this class is a required elective. Overall, students at this college will likely earn an Associate of Science or Associate of Arts degree. This teacher-researcher opted not to conduct the research in her classroom. Instead, she enlisted the assistance of a collaborative teacher. The class enrollment was 29 but only 25 were 18 or older and eligible to participant in the study.

Author Background. The primary researcher and author was an active participant observer and responsible for teaching HGD and other psychology courses. She is a full-time professor employed at this site for 16 years. This position gives her insider status to HGD courses offered at this college. However, she did not know any of the participants in the study nor did any of the participants seem familiar, as if she had had them in a previous class. Her life experiences as an avid reader of all genres of folktales influenced the topic for this study. The primary author is a White, non-Hispanic female born and raised in the United States and of Scandinavian (Norwegian/ Danish) descent. The primary author holds a doctoral degree in Education and specializes in Curriculum and Cultural Diversity.

Cultural Fairy Tale. Fairy tales as a data source represented the planning stage of action research (Mills, 2003). Since fairy tale analysis was a data source, potential fairy tales to be used in the study were identified. Fairy tale analysis is based on morphology or form. Fairy tales contain specific forms that follow a linear progression through the tale (Propp, 2015). This analysis permits fairy tales to be broken down into sequential parts for specific analysis dependent on the nature of why the fairy tale is being used (Zipes, 2012). One fairy tale from each culture identified in the textbook was selected from the National Council for the Social Studies (2000-2017). The cultures included were in the text were: Western European (United States), Scandinavian (Danish/Norwegian), Anglo-Saxon (British/Welsh), and Asian (Chinese).

One advantage to using documents reviewed by the Council is it allowed for specialized screening of published material thus, removing researcher selection bias. The lack of selection bias enabled the teacher-researcher to acknowledge topics not discussed in the assigned text.

Data Collection. The first presentation was a class discussion/lecture on early childhood cognitive development (ages 3-8). A review of the first stage of development briefly discussed the stage of infancy/toddler and the major developmental milestones of language (tool/sign) and the social contextual approach. The teacher-researcher introduced Vygotsky as discussed in the assigned textbook (Papalia & Martorell, 2015). This 45-minute discussion included the sociocultural model and the constructs of ZPD and scaffolding. This discussion reviewed the constructs of tool, sign, and mediation. The teacher-researcher introduced participants to the concept and process of autobiographical memory in reference to cognitive development in children. This discourse led to an introduction using folktales as a way to scaffold children's autobiographical memories. This teacher-researcher discussed the various forms of folktales: myth, legend, lore, fable, and fairy tales.

At the end of the presentation, the teacher-researcher handed the participants an index card and asked them to identify a fairy tale with which they were most familiar. On the same index card, participants identified the culture of fairytale origin. Index cards were collected. The teacher-researcher asked participants, "If you had to listen to a fairy tale from one of the cultures mentioned in the assigned chapter, which culture would you choose?" By anonymous vote, the participants selected Western European. The only fairy tale included that met all requirements was "Little Burnt Face" from Cinderella: 4 beloved tales (Meister, 2015).

The second presentation consisted of a quick review of the first lecture. An index card (tool) was distributed to each participant with a box of crayons (tool). The teacher-researcher read (mediation) the chosen fairy tale based on the culture chosen by the students. Participants were instructed (mediation) to draw an object (tool) from the fairy tale. Next, they were asked to write a word (sign/symbol) on the index card that related to the object they just drew. Finally, the participants were asked to construct a sentence (mediation) that described both the object (tool) and word (sign/symbol) on their index card. Once this activity concluded, the teacher-researcher collected all index cards of participants in the study. The teacher-researcher discussed taking the object (tool), word (sign/symbol), and sentence (mediation) and analyzing the fairy tale based on their interpretation (scaffolding for students).

Data Analysis. After Presentation/Activity One and Presentation/Activity Two, the teacher-researcher completed a step-by-step process to record all action during and action after in her composition notebook. This technique allowed for the transference of the information from the index cards and reflective notes based on observation from the teacher-researcher.

Coding for data collection was established after the first presentation index card activity was administered. All responses to the first index cards were transferred into the teacher-researcher's journal. All fairy tales written on the index cards were organized and grouped by name. All fairy tales listed by name were color coded. Index cards were arranged by fairy tale frequency. Organizing by frequency and color coding allowed for reflection and data analysis.

Presentation/Activity Two consisted of the same process of handing out an index card; this activity included a box of crayons. The fairy tale was read orally and instructions for the activity were presented to the participants. After the activity, the teacher-researcher collected all index cards. The techniques used for the second presentation comprised of taking each index card and arranging according to the construct of tool (object). A list of all objects (tools) and the word (sign) was organized based on frequency and noted in the teacher-researcher's composition notebook for journal reflection.

 Journal reflections by the teacher-researcher were coded at the end of the data collection process and after the journal entries were typed into an electronic document. A coding theme was established to continue coding all material including in-class presentations, observations, reflective journaling, and fairy tale. Coding was updated as data collection procedures were implemented and as new themes, categories, and codes emerged. Coding for mediation was themed by sociocultural surroundings, cultural codes, mythical language, and symbolic messages during the discussion with participants once data collection for Presentation/Activity Two was completed. Interpretation of the teacher-researcher's reflection was coded to establish participants' knowledge of culture and cultural diversity, early childhood cognitive development, cultural fairy tales. The index card data identified the participants' activity outcomes and were coded to identify specific tools, signs, and mediation of a cultural fairy tale.

Results and Discussion

The findings for the three research questions will be discussed relative to the action research process of planning, acting and observing, and reflection.

Research Question One: How can sign, tool, and mediation be used to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class?

Planning. This study used a fairy tale from the book *Cinderella: 4 Beloved Tales* (Meister, 2015) and approved for the Notable Trade Book list in 2016. This book retold the classic French version of Cinderella and the translated version to English along with three other modifications of the fairy tale: Rhodopis from Egypt, Yeh-Shen from China, and Little Burnt Face from the Micmac tribe of Canadian Maritimes (Meister, 2015). The planning required an examination of cultural commonalities and differences in signs (symbols), tools (objects), and mediation with the chosen fairy tale for this study, "Little Burnt Face."

Acting and observing. The first presentation/activity asked participants to identify a fairy tale they were most familiar with and the culture of literary origin. The fairy tale identified by participants the most was Cinderella. Only one participant identified the correct culture of origin of this fairy tale. The second fairy tale identified was Peter Pan. Of the four participants who identified this fairy tale, only two identified the correct culture of origin. One participant identified Beauty and the Beast and correctly identified the culture of origin. Two participants identified Snow White, and only one participant identified the correct culture of origin for this fairy tale. Two participants identified Little Red Riding Hood and did not identify the correct cultural origin. The remaining fairy tales identified were Sleeping Beauty, Rumpelstiltskin, and Hansel and Gretel. Participants did not identify the culture of origin for these tales.

The cultural themes of campfire, rainbow, and wigwam emerged from presentation/activity two and in alignment with tool, sign, and mediation. The themes emerged from the first responses to the fairy tale "Little Burnt Face." The themes were aligned with the construct tool (object) they were instructed to draw at the end of the oral presentation of the fairy tale. Three cultural themes emerged in the drawing of the object. The first theme was a campfire. Participants who drew this cultural object displayed the same items in the object: fire, wood, and coals. All were consistently the same campfire pictorial in the drawing. Participants were not seated next to each other. Nine participants drew this campfire object. The second cultural theme was the rainbow. All were consistently the same object drawn. These participants were not seated next to each other during data collection. Color pattern varied with each participant. Eight participants drew the rainbow object. The last cultural theme drawn was the wigwam. The cultural theme varied in each drawing. Four participants drew this cultural theme from the fairy tale. Three participants drew cultural themes that were not representative of the fairy tale. One participant drew the object of the face of Little Burnt Face and two participants drew trees.

Three cultural themes emerged from the sign (language) participants were instructed to write at the end of the drawn tool (object). The first cultural theme centered on the object fire. The sign given to the object varied to represent the drawn object of the fairy tale. The signs given included, ignite, flame, burnt, molten, dark, toasted, and fire. The second cultural theme centered on Rainbow. The sign (language) given to the object varied with the drawn object rainbow. The signs given included, rainbow, happy, color ray, whip, leprechaun, color stream, and flanenheim. The teacher-researcher could not find a translation for this sign Flanenheim. The third cultural theme to emerge was wigwam. The signs given included, teepee, stick house, and house. Four participants wrote signs (language) that were arbitrary, but still reflected the object drawn from the fairy tale. These signs included: girl, bark, tree, and scene. The analysis of sign and tool and mediation responses led to discourse for analysis of question two in the study.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of sign, tool, and mediation provided communication between the fairy tale used and responses from participants to enhance cultural diversity. Participants were familiar with fairy tales based on the correct identification of a fairy tale during Presentation/Activity One. Eighty-four percent of participants correctly identified a fairy tale based on responses listed on the index cards. The communication of the fairy tale was based on oral traditions of storytellers and, therefore, the mediation of choice for this study (Zipes, 2012). Based on the familiarity with drawing and writing, participants communicated their translation of "Little Burnt Face" through directed activities. Several cultural themes developed during the first exercise of Presentation/Activity Two. For example, participants who drew fire and wrote the word fire using different signs all had the same components of a campfire. These components consisted of coals, logs, and flames. Other themes communicated were direct objects from the fairy tale including rainbow and different forms of the wigwam. The two objects represented different cultural themes dependent on the specific culture. For example, one participant mediated the sentence of a leprechaun holding a pot of gold for his object of the rainbow. This specific cultural theme is representative of Irish/Scot culture and popularized in American pop culture (Radford, 2017). Another participant defined the sign for wigwam by using the word "teepee."

The cultural themes identified in this activity provided a springboard to communicate other symbols that represent Native Americans. For example, participants quickly compared "Little Burnt Face" to Cinderella. When asked, "What is the cultural difference" by the teacher-researcher, most participants replied, "her moccasins." This response led to a discussion on how fairy tales can become cross-cultural by changing out objects. The teacher-researcher furthered the discussion by asking what other types of shoes could replace glass slippers and moccasins. One participant replied, "flip-flops." The narrative and discussion based on one tool (shoes) provided a cultural viewpoint from the dynamics of participants and the teacher-researcher.

The meaning of "Little Burnt Face" produced different symbolic representations of the fairy tale by promoting a Native American tale that was not familiar to the participants. Based on the diverse cultural themes of fire, rainbow, and wigwam the teacher-researcher was able to make connections between Native American cultures. The limited information provided in the assigned textbook supported the use of this fairy tale to expound on the culture of Native American peoples.

Reflection. The primary reflection after presentations one and two focused on the pedagogical approach to conducting the activities and introduction to culture. Students reflected knowledge of sociocultural theory by definition in the assigned textbook. The teacher-researcher noted varying knowledge of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory and the impact of cultural influences on early childhood cognition. Based on discourse after presentation one, the

teacher-researcher should approach culture from the beginning of the course and develop activities allowing students to express lived experiences of their own culture. Journal reflections after Presentation/Activity Two indicated using oral traditions of fairy tales replicated the process of pre-reading levels in early childhood. Feedback from participants to the teacher-researcher provided ideas about how to solidify the activity to increase awareness of diversity within the fairy tale genre. The activities established further insight into curriculum instruction that aligned with targeted learning outcome.

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Reflective journal notes of the teacher-researcher provided deliberate action in and action after during presentation one and two implicating the constructs of tool, sign, and mediation. The teacher-researcher thought as she walked into the teacher collaborator's room, "I walked into a classroom with students that I didn't know!" Further thinking, "I had no idea what the teacher collaborator had discussed on the topics of ZPD and scaffolding, much less on Vygotsky himself." Simply put, the teacher-researcher did not know the participant's knowledge. During Activity Two, the teacher-researcher noticed different expressions as crayon boxes were handed to participants. At each table, participants shared the box of crayons. This activity increased the conversation among participants. The teacher-researcher made several remarks based on the observation. This observation granted an opportunity to discuss the crayons as "tools" and what Vygotsky meant by tools in his theory. The teacher-researcher furthered the discussion by stating, "I often give examples of naming an object based on the language I speak and ask my own students to give examples." The teacher-researcher discussed the value of language in cultural development using Vygotsky's social constructivist model. The teacher-researcher explained, "The fairy tale will be read orally, and you guys can make a decision if you want the fairy tale read again… This reflection granted an opportunity to establish the best language and choice of words to identify the culture for the activity. This reflection was a reference to understanding participants' identifying culture based on country or region. The teacher-researcher thought, "Do they come into this course thinking country is a culture?" The teacher-researcher later reflected, "In my classroom, I might teach that culture is different in the country due to diversity."

Research Question Two: How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive process in early childhood development?

Planning. The process in which the fairy tale was discussed during Presentation/Activity One provided a pedagogical platform for planning instruction on early childhood cognition. The targeted areas of this planning focused on theory of mind, autobiographical memory, and cultural literacy. The fairy tale was used as a cultural tool to explain Vygotsky's theory (1978) on private speech and the role cultural experiences influence cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). The planning process consisted of the teacher-researcher practicing ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) concepts to communicate during and after the activity. In short, the ZPD is the gap between what students can figure out on their own and what they need assistance with to grasp. In this case, the planning was to help students sort out the fantasy, folktales, and fairy tales discussion of the previous session.

Acting and observing. Based on responses in the classroom discussion on early childhood theories, categories of different types of stories developed. This discussion took place during Presentation/Activity One and after participants were asked to write down the fairy tale and culture of origin. The participants verbally discussed what stories they grew up with and others referred to stories based on the influence of television and Disney. The category participants stated the most was the genre of fantasy and the tale type was fairy tale. The teacher-researcher listed the different types of folktales on the board and allowed participants to identify favorite stories. This process aligned with early childhood development and the interest of fantasy by children at this specific age (Bettelheim, 2010; Favat, 1977; Zipes, 2012). The mediations used in this study were verbal presentations discussing early childhood development using Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) and the method of scaffolding to present the fairy tale through oral reading.

During Presentation/Activity Two, participants were asked to write a sentence based on the object (tool) and sign (language) during classroom time. Verbatim quotes reflected cultural themes written by participants about the fairy tale "Little Burnt Face" (Meister, 2015). The first cultural theme of fire was mediated through responses of participants' sentences about the object and sign. Eight participants reflected the main theme in this fairy tale with the description of fire. One participant stated, "I drew fire and coal." This description aligns with the fire and coal stated in the fairy tale and early childhood concepts of "I" in the development of the self as discussed in the assigned textbook.

The textbook described Vygotsky's concept of "social interaction model" based on sociocultural theory (Papalia & Martorell, 2015), aligning with the development of autobiographical memory. Three participants described "fire" through a narrative description. For example, one participant narrated fire by stating, "The fire is bright" and another participant stated, "The fire

is getting big." Two participants narrated a caution about fire. One participant stated, "don't get too close to the burnt." This participant was consistent with the title of the fairy tale. The other participant warned, "The flames are hot, be careful." The last two narratives of autobiographic structure in statements reflected personal narrative. One participant conferred, "Ignite the fire in your soul" as the other related, "When Abby picked up dark [sic] it burned her hand."

The second cultural theme mediated through participants' responses to object and sign was "rainbow." Nine participants reflected this cultural theme from the fairy tale. For example, two participants stated the colors of the rainbow and where the rainbow was located. These statements included, "The rainbow is in the sky" and "The rainbow has many colors." One participant narrated how the rainbow became visual by stating, "The light hit the rain, and a color stream appeared." Another participant added emotion to the rainbow in the response stating, "The happy is in the sky." Two participants' narrated responses: "The girl loves to see the color ray in the morning" and "The child saw the whip and ran toward it." The word "whip" is the only response in this cultural theme related to the fairy tale. One participant referenced the rainbow from Irish culture. This participant's sentence stated, "At the end of the rainbow you see a leprechaun holding a pot of gold."

The third and most related to cultural artifacts from the fairy tale was "wigwam." Three participants reflected through the mediation of object and sign to this cultural theme. One participant stated, "I walked into my teepee," a low elaborative response. The other two responses were directed to self and narrated the use of "I" and "my" in the responses. Thus, reflecting no connection to the fairy tale. The use of the word "house" (sign) also relates to Western cultural themes.

Overall, participants demonstrated knowledge of Vygotsky's (1978) concepts of ZPD and scaffolding. The teacher-researcher applied Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD and scaffolding centered on culture and language skills. Participants engaged with the teacher-researcher regarding the scaffolding or space in-between during presentation/activity one. Participants gained an understanding of how children can use stories to identify theory of mind and autobiographical memory.

Reflection. Journal reflections for research question two focused on theory to practice in early childhood. Reflections noted to develop/expand how culture and cultural artifacts, for example, stories, influence these cognitive concepts. The teacher-researcher reflected on using more information from the textbook to expand personal experiences. Further, to promote activities for students to practice their ZPD based on language, autobiographical memory, and theory of mind. Reflective journaling for this research question directly related to developing instruction that correlates different types of stories beyond the use of fairy tales, for example, biographical

literature. Reflection notes from the teacher-researcher's journal consisted of statements directed to concepts of early childhood cognition. One reflection stated, "But what do they know, there is a question on the SLOs directly related to ZPD and the theorist who coined the term." Participants reworded what they had read and learned from the textbook but they could not go above the definition and present different examples.

The teacher-researcher practiced scaffolding in reflection journal on autobiographical memory, language, and theory of mind. This practicing and referencing pedagogical instruction improved the activity in class. "Just to practice the art of scaffolding, and to feel comfortable doing the process" was a journal reflection. The teacher-researcher thought, "Planning takes practice!"

Research Question Three: How is a cultural fairy tale used to scaffold diversity in an HGD class?

Planning. Scaffolding is described as the space between what the child knows and what can be learned through adult guidance as the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). This process was used to plan presentation two for the activity and discussion after the object, sign, and mediation exercise. Planning was also influenced by participants' identification of the fairy tale Cinderella. Forty-six percent of the participants wrote Cinderella on the index card. Planning focused on the fairy tale as a mediation to discuss commonalities and differences among diverse cultures. The planning included the concepts of cultural diversity including cultural surroundings, cultural codes, symbolic messages, and mythical language (Bosma, 1992; Charles, 2009; Propp, 2015; Zipes, 2012).

Acting and observing. Students were first asked to identify social-cultural surroundings in comparison with "Little Burnt Face" and the fairy tale they verbally compared to this tale, Cinderella. The participants were asked to identify commonalities between the two fairy tales as one originated in the literary form in France and the tale for this study was Native American. Participants identified the family as a commonality. One participant replied, "The difference is one tale has stepsisters, and the other are her real sisters." Another participant stepped in to say shoes were a common theme. The discussion turned to the differences between Cinderella's shoes and the shoes of "Little Burnt Face." Differences in culture related to basic items as shoes and homes were discussed as the teacher-researcher wrote these commonalities and differences on the board.

The next concept to emerge focused on cultural codes of the fairy tale "Little Burnt Face." These cultural codes granted a scaffold to discuss cultural artifacts that may represent an identification of specific cultures. Participants replied with cultural codes of status, wealth, dress, and family. The next scaffold was mythical language. Fairy tales use mythical language that may represent a certain culture. Mythical language in "Little Burnt Face" established the categories of rainbow and milky-way. These categories led to a discussion on differences and commonalities of the cultural language used for the same object. The last scaffold for this

research question emerged as the theme of symbolic messages. Fairy tales present symbolic messages in the form of moral reasoning. This section of the analysis demonstrated connections between the narrative and discussion that took place during the two presentations/activities.

The scaffolding narrative centered on a variety of prompts by the teacher-researcher and responses by the class. First, she asked, "What do children in the early childhood stage know about themselves?" Participants responded with a discussion on self-awareness. The teacher-researcher asked, "Is self-awareness cross-cultural, meaning everyone develops self-awareness around the same time?" Responses varied from "I don't know" to "I would think." The teacher-researcher narrated back to biological development about understanding humans in culture. This focus led to the discussion on cultural self-awareness. The teacher-researcher proposed the narrative, "Are we taught cultural self-awareness?" Participants discussed possible explanations to cultural self-awareness and concluded, "It depended on who is teaching you." The teacher-researcher labeled in the center circle of the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), "real and ideal self." The teacher-researcher increased the narrative to state, "Is theory of mind cultural?" Based on the concepts of theory of mind listed in the chapter, participants discussed how they believed culture was the number one influence on theory of mind. The teacher-researcher listed theory of mind under real and ideal self. The third and final question of the inner circle ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) narrated, "Do children know stories exist? All participants led the narrative about stories read to them and favorite books. The teacher-researcher expanded the question to add culture. The question stated, "Is it your culture that determines the types of story?" All participants led a discussion among themselves and with the teacher-researcher. This discussion was added under theory of mind in the inner ZPD circle as cultural stories.

Reflection. Based on the results of Activity Two, the teacher-researcher reflected on the use of a fairy tale as another way to promote cultural diversity. Narrative both during and after both presentations granted insight into the overall concepts of culture and more importantly, what students bring to the classroom as reflective of their own culture. Reflective journaling provided a self-narrative into the personal experience of the teacher-researcher and the use of fairy tales compared to other types of folklore. Journal notes reflected the possibilities of broadening the use of fairy tales to include all stages of human lifespan or a continuation of the original exercise as the course progresses to other developmental stages.

The teacher-researcher noted limited knowledge of cultural relatedness to ZPD and scaffolding. Participants really could not go beyond definitions in the textbook on sociocultural theory. The teacher-researcher stated, "Okay, that's a great definition, but what does it mean? In your own words?" So that is where the teacher-researcher said, "Don't you think culture has a lot to do with it, meaning what a child is told-like stories?" The teacher-researcher continued by asking, "They know stories exit, but what types, after all, someone had to tell them there are different

types of stories." The teacher-researcher noted during the discourse that participants categorized fairy tales together by country, not culture.

The analysis of all three research questions led to the presentation of findings for the overarching research question: How will integrating a cultural fairy tale in a college HGD class promote student knowledge of cultural diversity? Using the constructs of tool, sign, and mediation (Vygotsky, 1978) provided a way to communicate a fairy tale and promote Native American culture. Themes emerged relating similarities and differences of Native Americans represented in this tale and participants in the study. Campfire and rainbow were common themes found in many global cultures. Participants were able to reconstruct their perspective and relate these themes to their own culture. Through open narrative and discussion, the teacher-researcher was able to make connections between the fairy tale on Native Americans and information they had read in the assigned textbook.

Analysis of Results. The findings based on narrative, discussion, and reflection of the teacher-researcher indicated the concern might be that students don't really know what culture means. If students taking this course do not come in with a basic understanding of culture, how will they learn diversity? Participants easily identified a classical fairy tale but when asked to identify the culture of origin, a majority (77%) identified a country, not a culture. Interestingly, even the course text included country (along with cultural representation) when identifying culture, as highlighted earlier. The results implored whether students in a college classroom have a correct understanding of what is culture and what defines diversity. The scope of this research was to incorporate a cultural fairy tale into a Human Growth and Development class as an additional way of promoting cultural diversity. What we learned is that we may have a larger issue at hand in that students may not have a proper conceptual understanding of what culture is.

Implications

Based on the analysis of findings and themes that developed from this study, the teacher-researcher identified the following action plan for future classes in Human Growth and Development to meet targeted learning outcome measures on cultural diversity.

The action plan includes four main areas to consider. First, developing and restructuring activities in the classroom to focus not only on cultures discussed in the text but include those cultures left out of the literature. Second, developing and restructuring activities that identify ways to promote culture that align with approved curriculum guidelines. Third, expanding cultural activities to other stages of human growth and development, for example, adolescence. Finally, developing and restructuring professional development activities to include the following:

1. Expand online resources for students taking HGD courses that align with pre-professional programs as a required course and students taking this course as an elective.
2. Introducing a similar activity for other classes in psychology (e.g., Abnormal Psychology and General Psychology).
3. Continue the action research cycle using the teacher-researcher's classroom. This action plan proposes developing communication with students through different media including online blogs and social media outlets such as Facebook.
4. Addressing future cycles of action research from the pedagogical perspective as culturally responsive teaching in both curriculum and instruction.
5. Addressing best practices pedagogy for defining culture and establishing curriculum and instruction that incorporates culture as a strategic goal for all HGD classes taught by this teacher-researcher.

Conclusion

Action research is a cyclical process that encourages educational improvements in both curriculum and instruction (Mills, 2003). Future studies could include carrying out an action research project within the other stages of child development (e.g., adolescents). There are in-class activities in each chapter, so it makes sense to explore what projects are working well and which might need adjustments. If it also possible to conduct action research in other psychology courses taught by this teacher-researcher. This study used action research to explore whether integrating a cultural fairy tale helps students improve their cultural diversity awareness. While the focus here was on culture and used the backdrop of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the method of action research provided the best approach for this project.

Even though fairy tales are predictable and most have a "happy ever after . . ." they are still powerful voices of culture. Using fairy tales lies in how the tale is told and the social context of the audience. The language of fairy tales is simplistic, dependent, and easy to follow. Other studies using fairy tales granted students the exchange of symbolic learning by comparing the familiarity of known tales such as Little Mermaid and Beauty and the Beast (Babauta, 2016). The participants in this study never heard of the Micmac tribe. They were familiar with tribes in the local area, but not the fairy tale or the tribe described. Most of the participants' responses to fairy tales directly related to Western culture. Realizing the common cross-cultural difference of how fairy tales travel made connections of globalization. In this study, "Little Burnt Face" was the cultural ambassador to understand Native American people and their cultural story of living, family, and marriage. Through discussion of similarities and differences in comparison to the traditional fairy tale of Cinderella, participants gained both cultural and development perspectives.

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