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ESL Writing Strategies for Art Instruction

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ESL Writing Strategies for Art Instruction

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my friends and family, especially my parents Juan and Lydia Treviño, for their support in all my educational pursuits. They have always encouraged me to follow my dreams and never let anything come in the way of my education. I will continue to make them proud in my future endeavors. I'd also like to make a special dedication to Lorenzo Garcia for all his love and support along the way. Tú eres el sol de mi vida, mi amor.

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Abstract

ESL Writing Strategies for Art Education

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

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The purpose of this study was to investigate English as a second language (ESL) strategies and modify them for use in the art classroom. The goal of this research was to help improve writing skills for English language learners (ELLs). This study utilized collaborative action research to understand teaching practices and develop curriculum for 4th grade students at Texas Elementary School in the Lejana Independent School District. During this study I collaborated with Ana Rivera, the art teacher at Texas Elementary School. Through a semi-structured interview and informal discussions, we developed an art lesson, *Creating a Comic Book*, which combined writing and drawing activities. Several lesson resources were also created as a result of our collaboration. Data was collected from the semi-structured interview, teacher and student reflections, field notes, and photos of students' writing and artwork. By identifying academic areas that need support, I was able to draw conclusions and provide suggestions for ESL strategies. The findings of this study indicate that art educators can help improve writing skills for ELLs by utilizing vocabulary development, physical gestures, body language, visuals, and

demonstrations. After reviewing a final lesson evaluation and analyzing data, I was able to provide recommendations for other art educators. These recommendations include support for native languages, create connections between home and school, encourage rigorous thinking, and edit student writing. It is my purpose that my research be shared with educators and administrators in the Lejana Independent School District and other professional venues of research dissemination.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this study was to research English as a second language (ESL) strategies and modify them for art instruction to help improve writing skills for English language learners (ELLs). During this study, I observed and compared learning strategies used in the art classroom at Texas Elementary School in the Lejana Independent School District, near Austin, Texas. I collaborated with Ana Rivera, the art teacher at Texas Elementary School. I used collaborative action research to monitor and improve classroom teaching practices. Mrs. Rivera and I met regularly for six weeks to develop writing and drawing activities that enhance the elementary art curriculum. The study concluded with a collaborative lesson that she taught to her 4th grade bilingual students. I also provided a list of recommended ESL writing strategies for art instructors.

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

Using the following research question and sub questions for direction, I explored how to modify and implement ESL strategies for use in the art classroom to benefit English language learners. I focused specifically on strategies to support writing in the classroom.

What kinds of ESL strategies can be modified for art instruction to help improve writing skills for 4th grade English language learners in the Lejana Independent School District?

Sub-Questions

- How can art teachers include vocabulary development in their instruction?
- What kinds of physical gestures and body language can art teachers use to check for student comprehension?

- How can art teachers use visual aids and demonstrations to support ESL instruction?

PROBLEMS IN ART EDUCATION

This study addressed the need for culturally responsive teaching in public schools that contributes to improving the academic success of English language learners. Irvine and Armento (2001) address this issue, “In addition to the disproportionate school failure of culturally diverse students, there are other compelling data that speak to the significance and urgency of implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy” (p. 3). The ELLs and bilingual students involved in this study followed an early exit model, which aims to help the student become proficient in English with support in their native language. This is different from a dual language program, where the student learns to be proficient in both languages. Many of these students continue to struggle learning English even after several years of being enrolled in a bilingual program. Art teachers often teach the entire school population, including ELLs. They rarely receive adequate ESL and / or bilingual education training. Many schools offer some professional development and ESL services, but not all art teachers are ESL / bilingual certified. More resources are needed to help ELLs connect with their cultural backgrounds and give them the motivation to express their ideas through writing and responding to art.

MOTIVATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Professional Motivations

As an elementary art teacher of eight years, I have seen my ELL students struggle year after year with writing and speaking English. Many of my students

are not enthusiastic about writing and often complain that they do not enjoy it. I believe language is a component of a student's cultural identity. Zou (2012) explains the importance of language identity because it shapes "how we see ourselves, how we interact with others, and how we conform to social rules and norms" (p. 466). It is important that public schools provide the tools necessary to learn English as a second language while preserving the cultural heritage of the student's native language. More resources are needed to assist art teachers. I have attended ESL workshops in the past, however most of these trainings were not developed with art educators in mind. There is a need for professional development in bilingual education and ESL strategies that is specifically designed for use in the art classroom.

Personal Motivations

I have experienced my own struggle with learning Spanish. I feel it is important that I strive towards becoming bilingual and support native Spanish speakers. My parents' experiences learning English are a personal motivation for my research. As students, during the 1960s in San Antonio, Texas, they were encouraged to speak English and were punished for speaking Spanish in school. So I did not learn academic Spanish until high school. However, I feel that my Spanish skills have improved since I began teaching. I practice speaking Spanish with my students. For every lesson, I write the objective on the board with key vocabulary. I provide Spanish translations for all text. There are many instances when I will ask a student to help me translate. I have developed a reciprocal bond with my students as we teach each other English and Spanish. Even though I am

becoming more proficient in Spanish, I still lack some vocabulary skills. This is a motivation for me to want to conduct this investigation.

SPECULATION

In addition to improving ELLs' writing abilities, more focus is needed to build vocabulary, listening, speaking, and reading skills. I also feel there is a need to improve discussion and questioning techniques to motivate students to think critically about art. Janes (2014) explains the development of children's critical thinking skills, "Looking at the paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs and textiles, made by either contemporary artists or people from the past, helps to expand the imagination and acts as a central stimulus for developing questioning skills" (p. 1). Art teachers should create cross-curricular connections and reinforce themes that are taught in other academic subjects. Art projects can be a central focus for class discussions and "these interactions can develop into projects that involve historical investigations, scientific inquiry, creative writing and many other skills that are transferable across subject disciplines" (Janes, 2014, p. 21). There are many factors that may affect a student's academic success. For example, Li and Edwards (2010) explain, "Most ELLs are at risk for poor school outcomes because of not only language but also socioeconomic factors" (p. 17). This study is not intended to ensure that all ELLs pass the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exam. Instead, I desire that art educators use this research to help students build confidence when writing and develop their creativity through art. I believe that ELL students' writing skills will improve through the use of approaches identified and developed in this study.

RESEARCH METHOD

I used collaborative action research in my study, to monitor and improve classroom teaching practices. I collaborated with Ana Rivera, the art teacher at Texas Elementary School to develop the lesson: *Creating a Comic Book* (See Chapter 4). We met over six weeks for multiple planning sessions. I conducted a semi-structured interview with Mrs. Rivera and used audio recording. Our goal was to create an arts-based lesson that integrated writing and drawing. I also collected data using field notes, teacher created resources, photos of the teacher's word wall and photos of student writing and artwork. Mrs. Rivera and I created a list of ESL strategies along with writing and drawing activities. A more complete discussion of the research methodology utilized in this study is found in Chapter 3.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are used throughout my study to describe components of ESL education. Most of the following definitions are gathered from the current teacher handbook of the Lejana ISD.

- English as a Second Language (ESL): An intensive program of instruction in English from teachers trained in recognizing and dealing with language differences.
- Limited English Proficient (LEP): A student whose primary language is other than English and whose English language skills are such that the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English.
- English Language Learner (ELL): A person who is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the first native language.

- English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS): The instruction that school districts must provide to English language learners in order for them to have the full opportunity to learn English and to succeed academically.
- English Language Development (ELD): The purpose of the English language development block is to provide intensive instruction that results in advancement of ELLs language proficiency by one to two levels annually.
- Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC): Members include a professional bilingual educator, a professional transitional language educator, a parent of a LEP student, and a campus administrator. Within the first four weeks of the first day of school, the LPAC shall determine and report to the Board the number of LEP students on each campus and shall classify each student according to the language in which the student possesses primary proficiency.
- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS): Conversational or social language.
- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP): The academic language to learn and to be successful in the regular curriculum.
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS): The state standards for what students should know and be able to do.
- Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS): Designed to assess the progress that limited English proficient (LEP) students make in learning the English language.
- State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR): Annual assessments for grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics; assessments in

writing at grades 4 and 7; in science at grades 5 and 8; and in social studies at grade 8; and end-of-course assessments for English I, English II, Algebra I, biology and U.S. history.

- Culture: “The values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another” (Banks & Banks, 1989, p. 7).
- Native / Primary / First Language: “The language learned at home from the primary caregivers” (Díaz-Rico, 2008, p. 6).
- Realia: “Demonstration of real objects or events” (Calderón, 2012, p. 133).
- Think-Pair-Share (TPS): “A strategy that can be used in any classroom format which gives students time to think on a topic, turn to their neighbor for a short discussion and share the results of the discussion to the rest of the class” (Radhakrishna, Ewing & Naveen, 2012, p. 84).
- Total Physical Response (TPR): A learning strategy based on the association between language and body movement (Asher, 1969).
- Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): The area of learning that takes place between what the student can do independently and with the help of a more capable peer (Vygotsky, 1978).

LIMITATIONS

This study involved 4th grade English language learners at Texas Elementary School in the Lejana Independent School District that are native Spanish speakers. The lesson was taught to 30 4th graders in a bilingual art class. Mrs. Rivera and I focused on identifying teaching strategies to improve writing skills. Since we both teach in the same school district, meeting regularly was a challenge. I was able to meet with Mrs. Rivera every Tuesday for a short period to

discuss development of the lesson plan and monitor the students' progress. I would have preferred to be a participant observer in this study. However, our teaching schedules prevented me from working directly with the students. I also conducted research within the limitations of the Lejana ISD 2013-2014 academic school year. The lesson focused on this study was taught during the last six weeks of the 2013-2014 school year (April 29 - June 3). Due to time limitations, I only completed one cycle of investigation during this study. Additionally, I would have preferred to meet with the grant coordinator of the school district after completing this study to conduct a peer-debriefing meeting. However, shortage of time prevented this as well.

BENEFITS

Drawing on information from this study, art teachers can utilize the list of ESL writing strategies and learn how to develop and implement teaching strategies that will benefit all students (See Chapter 6). This study also supports art education and ESL / bilingual programs in the Lejana Independent School District. My goal is to become a certified bilingual art educator. I encourage other art educators to support ESL programs in public schools as a way of helping students and parents gain a sense of ownership in their child's education.

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

I organized this study into six chapters. *Chapter One* is the introduction to the study, providing an overview of the study and the central research question. This chapter also addresses problems in art education, personal and professional motivations for research, speculation, an overview of the research method, the definition of terms, limitations, and benefits. *Chapter Two* is the review of

pertinent literature, which covers other studies that support the research involved in this study. *Chapter Three* explains the methodology used in this study. It also outlines the sources of data an executive summary called for by the Lejana ISD. *Chapter Four* is a description of the study and lesson plan format. *Chapter Five* includes a discussion of data collection and analysis. Finally, *Chapter Six* summarizes the study as a whole and explains how the findings of this study apply to other professional venues of research dissemination.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This review of literature covers several topics related to this study. This range of subjects addressed in this literature review has occurred because I am combining research related to both art education and ESL strategies. In this chapter I outline key aspects in sociocultural theory, multiculturalism, and culturally responsive pedagogy. I have also included information on federal laws and programs regarding English language learners.

SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

Throughout the study, I refer to Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to learning. Vygotskian theory implies that history and culture affect how and what a student learns (Vygotsky, 1978). One of the main components of sociocultural theory is the rejection of a deficit perspective amongst children with disabilities and language differences. Instead of viewing language as a barrier to learning, sociocultural theorists contend "alternative ways of viewing what counts as knowledge" (Li & Edwards, 2010, p. 64). Vygotsky was also interested in the use of tools and signs to support learning, especially through language. According to Li and Edwards (2010), "a learner's cultural tools are mediators of action, and one cannot truly understand the learner or development without attention to the tools" (p. 64). As an art educator, I feel that supporting my students' language development will help them become more successful learners and artists. I also encourage my students to participate in cooperative learning activities. In the past I have used interactive writing with my students, which Colombo (2012) describes as "based on the sociocultural theory of learning, in which students work together with a more knowledgeable other to write at a level that is beyond which they are

capable of writing independently” (pp. 223-224). Cooperative learning aligns with Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development and “refers to the difference between what a learner can do independently and what he or she is able to do with scaffolding or when collaborating with a more capable peer” (Colombo, 2012, p. 11). Li and Edwards (2010) suggest that educators “implement a hybrid form of teaching that makes teaching and learning reflect what occurs naturally in home” (p. 65). If students learn from family interactions at home, then they may benefit from similar activities at school.

MULTICULTURALISM

This study also utilized a lens from a multicultural approach to education, which proposes that learning is shaped by cultural beliefs. Multicultural education is defined as:

An idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school. (Banks & Banks, 1989, p. 1)

Like all students, ELLs bring a unique background with them to school, and teachers can utilize art education to discuss how American culture is “influenced by a wide range of individuals, cultures and ethnic groups” (Davidman & Davidman, 1997, p. 25). Culture is often defined by tangible, symbolic aspects such as food, holidays, dress and styles of music amongst groups of people. However, it is also “the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another” (Banks & Banks, 1989, p. 7). Another goal

of multicultural education is to help students develop positive attitudes toward diverse cultures, ethnicities, and racial and religious groups. Banks and Banks (1989) explain, “When students are able to view the world from the perspectives of different groups, their views of reality are broadened and they gain important insights into their own behavior” (p. 21). Students and teachers should explore how language might influence their view of bilingual education in the art classroom. Empowerment and advocacy is another goal of multicultural education. Empowerment is needed to help students develop confidence and academic success. Spring (1995) defines empowerment as “providing the intellectual tools for creating a just society” (p. 23). The idea of empowerment extends beyond students to include efforts made by the parents and teachers. Student learning increases when parents are involved in their children’s education. Davidman and Davidman (1997) state, “Classroom teachers are uniquely positioned to become advocates for the students at their school site and beyond if they would collectively embrace this role” (p. 19). Art educators that teach within a multicultural perspective should develop curriculum and “select content that shows students that the art, music, language(s), history, ethics, science, mathematics, and politics of American culture have been decisively influenced by a wide range of individuals, cultures and ethnic groups” (Davidman & Davidman, 1997, p. 25).

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Art educators can help English language learners by practicing a culturally responsive approach to teaching. There is a need for cultural sensitivity in the art classroom. Irvine and Armento (2001) imply that “teachers should be responsive

to their students by incorporating elements of the students' culture in their teaching" (p. 4). Culturally responsive teaching is similar to sociocultural theory and multiculturalism in that it implies culture influences teaching and learning. It is my belief that when students are engaged in culturally relevant lessons, they develop identity awareness that can spark creativity and increase their motivation to succeed in school. Another component includes teaching research that supports culturally responsive pedagogy. It is important that educators involve students' prior knowledge and create connections between the school and home cultures. Trueba, Guthrie, and Au (1981) suggest that teachers "need to become more aware of the norms, values, skills, and abilities that members of the community use in their daily lives" (p. 44). Lessons that engage skills commonly used in the students' homes, can support their language and academic development. Colombo (2012) states, "valuing differences in language and culture and acknowledging and recognizing these differences as strengths are hallmarks of a culturally responsive classroom" (p. 246). Educators can practice a culturally responsive approach to teaching by using culturally appropriate materials and interactive teaching strategies. Díaz-Rico (2008) suggests, "teaching styles, interaction patterns, classroom organization, curriculum, and involvement with parents and the community are all factors that are within the teacher's power to adapt to achieve the goal of culturally compatible teaching" (p. 281).

Culturally responsive pedagogy also supports cooperative learning. Trueba, Guthrie, and Au (1981) explain how "cultural differences exist not only in cognitive information processing habits but also in the interactional contexts in which people prefer to learn and demonstrate what they have learned in some kind of performance" (p. 79). In my experience teaching art, I have observed how my

students' interest in a lesson increases when given the opportunity to work alongside their peers.

Teacher self-knowledge and reflection are aspects of culturally responsive teaching. Referred to as “the most important factor in achieving culturally responsive education” by Trueba, Guthrie, and Au (1981) is the staff involved in the students' education (p. 83). Educators must move beyond conventional training to include reflective practices. Irvine and Armento (2001) imply “reflective teachers are inquirers who examine their actions, instructional goals, methods, and materials in reference to their students' cultural experiences and preferred learning environments” (p. 11). In my class, I have used reflective teaching to relate the curriculum I develop with my students' cultural experiences.

Further, culturally responsive teaching sets high standards and expectations for students. These standards include the use of “assessment techniques, including observation, portfolios, self-assessment, peer assessment, and projects, as well as teacher-made and standardized tests” (Irvine & Armento, 2001, p. 12). Art educators often use portfolios to assess students' work. Expectations are set and include the parents and community in the students' learning process. Irvine and Armento (2001) suggest that teachers use “community resources in the classroom and understands teaching as situated in schools and communities” (p. 13). I explain other methods of assessment and family involvement later in this chapter.

FEDERAL LAW

There are several federal laws that protect the rights of English language learners that schools districts are responsible for abiding to in order to serve these students. The following are included:

- Constitution of the United States, Fourteenth Amendment, Section 1: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (U.S. Constitution amend. XIV. art. I).
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (Civil Rights Act (1964)).
- Lau v. Nichols: “Equality of opportunity is not provided by giving the ELL / LEP (Limited English proficient) student the same facilities, text books, teachers, and curriculum which non-ELL / LEP students receive” (Lau, 1974).
- Plyer v. Doe: “The burden undocumented aliens may place on an educational system is not an accepted argument for excluding or denying education service to any student” (Plyer, 1982).
- Federal definition of an immigrant student: “The term immigrant children and youth refers to individuals who are aged 3 through 21; were not born in any State; and have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more States for more than 3 full academic years” (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2001).

TITLE I AND TITLE III: PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Provisions for English language learners are included under Title I and Title III of the No Child Left Behind act of 2001 (NCLB, 2001). Under Title I, state standards, assessment and annual yearly progress are required by law for ELL students. This includes the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), which measures the students' English proficiency level. Title III provides funding to state and local education agencies to increase the English proficiency and core academic content knowledge of ELL students. Texas schools are responsible for maintaining the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). This instruction provides ELLs with the opportunity to learn English. The English Language Development (ELD) block is intensive instruction to help increase their proficiency by one to two levels annually. Currently, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has requested a waiver from the U. S. Department of Education that would give Texas schools flexibility in meeting state standards. Teachers in the Lejana ISD are encouraged to continue providing assessments and track the progress of ELLs.

STATE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program consists of annual assessments in reading, mathematics, writing, science, social studies and end-of-course assessments for English I, English II, Algebra I, biology and U.S. history. Alternative versions of the STAAR test include a linguistically accommodated English version, STAAR L and STAAR Spanish, the assessment in the students' native language. These tests are provided for ELLs who meet participation requirements. Linguistic accommodations include the use of a bilingual / picture dictionary, extra time, reading aloud of eligible text,

clarification of word meaning and oral translation. Great emphasis is placed upon state accountability tests. As an art teacher, I am often encouraged to develop lessons that support the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as part of the STAAR test. Teachers are often encouraged to include more writing in the classroom. It is my purpose to make sure I include the appropriate accommodations for my students.

ESL WRITING STRATEGIES

Vocabulary & Native Language

Encouraging students to write in their native language helps build writing skills in English. Students can develop their vocabulary by learning words in their primary language and then transferring that knowledge to their second language. It is difficult to understand content in their second language, without the strong foundation of the student's first language. According to Freeman and Freeman (2001), "When students in bilingual classes develop their native language, they gain both literacy and academic concepts" (p. 158). Even if a teacher is not bilingual, she or he can support their students by providing materials and resources that reflect their primary languages. This includes environmental print such as bulletin boards, word walls, books, magazines, newspapers, and videos.

Writing in their native language also helps the student develop multilingual awareness. The teacher could identify similarities and differences between the two languages. For example, teachers can refer to Spanish-English cognates or "words in two languages that look alike and have the same or similar meaning" (Díaz-Rico, 2008, p. 328). Providing students with opportunities to write about their experiences helps them think critically about their identity and motivates them to

express who they are. As Romo and Falbo (1996) suggest, “Teachers should seek to link the academic content and skills they are teaching with the student’s language and cultural identity” (p. 239). Language is commonly integrated with identity formation. ELLs may develop a “transfer of self” (Li & Edwards, 2010, p. 112) that connects the students’ identities and life experiences. Identity formation promotes metalingual awareness, thus enhancing the students’ Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Díaz-Rico (2008) describes CALP as “a transition from the simple use of language to the more complex ability to think and talk about language” (p. 310). Students may identify themselves as bilingual or multilingual. Art teachers can encourage students to write and create art about their linguistic and cultural identity.

Quick Writes & Journals

Students can also engage in writing exercises known as quick writes to convey what they know about a topic for a brief period of time, usually 2-3 minutes. They can also use a KWL chart. This is a pre-reading strategy used to access prior knowledge and set up new learning experiences. The students write down what they know, want to know, and have learned. Mesa-Baines (1996) offers the equation $EXPERIENCE + TEXT = MEANING$, which “refers to the importance of knowing your students and drawing relationships between their life knowledge and the text you are about to introduce” (p. 32). The author explains that this “text” could be a lesson, book, film, or other work of art that the teacher is presenting (Mesa-Baines, 1996). Art students can engage in quick writes through the use of sketchbooks or open-ended journals to write down their ideas. Teachers can also give students opportunities to write in multiple genres. According to Li

and Edwards (2010), “providing many opportunities to write for real audiences and purposes is the most important goal” (p. 113). Students can write about social and political issues and in doing so, develop their identities as writers and artists. Teachers can also respond to student’s writing through the use of interactive journals. With this strategy, the teacher provides feedback that helps validate the students’ work. It also offers opportunity for students to think critically about their writing.

OTHER ESL STRATEGIES

Funds of Knowledge

Connecting to students’ backgrounds is a strategy that combines the student’s “funds of knowledge” and their learning experience (Díaz-Rico, 2004). Funds of knowledge are described as “the cultural practices of households and communities as the resources within the students’ world that can be connected in a meaningful way to the school curriculum” (Díaz-Rico, 2004, p. 59). Students can apply skills they use at home to new learning experiences. The teacher can help the students make that connection by asking them to compare and participate in activities performed at school and at home. For example, Calderón (2012) suggests using “cultural artifacts and community resources in ways that are academically meaningful and culturally relevant” (pp. 135-136). Students could be encouraged to write and draw about experiences or people in their homes or surrounding community.

Discussion & Questioning Techniques

Another ESL instructional strategy is to develop rigorous curriculum that includes instructional conversation such as critical thinking and vocabulary

development. Questioning strategies can help generate ideas for writing and creating art. Colombo (2012) explains, “The most important quality of an academic question is that it fosters meaningful academic conversation that requires students to use content-area knowledge and concepts to actively participate in a classroom discussion” (p. 181). One way to engage students in discussion is by using the think-pair-share strategy. This is a method of student-to-student interaction. The teacher asks a question and provides wait time. The students then find a partner and share their ideas. Afterward, selected students share their thoughts with the class. Some of the advantages of this strategy are that it is “helpful in organizing content and tracking students on where they are relative to the topic being discussed in class, allows students to prepare for each class session, saves instructor time so that he/she can move to other topics, provides opportunities for students to interact with each other and helps the instructor in making the class more interactive than regular lecture sessions” (Radhakrishna, Ewing, & Naveen, 2012, p. 84). I have used the think-pair-share strategy in my own classroom with very productive results. This strategy creates the opportunity for students to engage in enriching conversations with peers and helps build their Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). Díaz-Rico (2004) explains, “The importance of BICS is that students can begin to understand and communicate with their teacher, develop and fine-tune their interpersonal skills, and begin to overcome culture shock” (p. 185). Students typically enjoy talking with peers in class, especially in their native language.

Gestures & Body Language

Total physical response (TPR) is a technique that involves “having students listen to a command in a foreign language and immediately respond with the appropriate physical action” (Asher, 1969, p. 254). For example, the teacher could use the oral command “Sit” while simultaneously sitting down and the students follow along. Students use these gestures to help them understand what the teacher is saying. This is a great strategy for beginning students who “tend to feel comfortable in activities that require sensorimotor involvement, such as TPR and playing games that require a combination of language and physical activity” (Díaz-Rico, 2008, p. 55). Teachers can also check for comprehension with simple gestures. For example, teachers can demonstrate how to place a hand on their head if they do not understand a concept. Or they can show the students how to touch their nose if they do comprehend. Gestures and body language can also explain things that are opposites, such as large or small objects. Body language and facial expressions can also be used as cues that the student is on the right track.

Visual Aids & Demonstrations

I investigated which visual tools help ELLs learn most successfully. These tools included interactive word walls and picture sorts. I studied the use of realia or objects found in real life: “Realia, video, photos, graphics, and graphic organizers can be useful in improving the comprehensibility of presentations” and “provide critical scaffolds for ELLs” (Colombo, 2012, p. 113). Learning by demonstration is an effective way to gain the student’s attention. It is different from modeling, which involves more conscious effort. The relationship between the demonstrator and the students is also important. Freeman and Freeman (2001) explain, “If the person providing the demonstration is significant to the learner, the

learner is more apt to pay attention to the demonstration” (p. 38). In this case, visiting artists are especially beneficial for demonstrating techniques with small groups or in front of an entire class with the use of a document camera and projector. Additionally, the art teacher may invite other artists and educators that speak the students’ native language to share information with the class.

Assessments

The students’ progress can be measured over time using summative assessments. This approach involves the use of art criticism activities and portfolios in addition to academic grades. Criticism is an important part of assessment because other’s insights “bring us to see things we would have missed if left on our own” (Eaton, 1988, p. 113). Students are sometimes surprised and subsequently empowered when their peers give them positive comments about their work. Assessing student progress over time is especially beneficial amongst ELLs, “who are continually developing academic language and therefore tend to perform better later in an instructional unit as their academic language develops” (Colombo, 2012, p. 96). Portfolios can include student artwork, writing samples, sketchbooks, and other student produced work. These are authentic forms of assessment that evaluate the student’s process and final products. Students can engage in reflective discussions and decide which works of art to include and why they made these decisions. Developing portfolio criteria is usually assigned by the teacher however, “in art and art education, students are given more autonomy in matters of what is included in a portfolio” (Castiglione, 1996, p. 2). Teachers can recommend which artworks to include, but the students should ultimately decide how to organize their portfolios.

Family & Community Involvement

Family and community involvement can be implemented into the art curriculum to support language development. Colombo (2012) describes home-school partnerships as “powerful tools for providing education that is relevant to ELLs in learning environments and they demonstrate value for ELL’s home culture and language” (p. 231). The teacher can encourage parents to support their children’s learning by reading to them, storytelling in their native language, and discussing the school day or homework. The students can interview their parents, family, and other members in the community in an effort to make art lessons personal and meaningful. In this study, students were encouraged to read to their friends and family. Colombo (2012) explains, “Learning becomes understood as something that occurs within schools and within families” (p. 232). Students can share what they have learned in the art classroom with their parents, siblings, and other members of the family or community.

SUMMARY

As more ELLs enroll in public schools, the need for ESL services continues to rise. Texas Teachers and students are under constant pressure to prepare for the STAAR test. Passing this standardized test has become the priority in public schools. Li and Edwards (2010) explain how the No Child Left Behind act of 2001 raised the stakes for educators, “Teachers of ELLs, as well as their site and district administrators, are thus under tremendous pressure” (p. 19). Art teachers can help support their students by creating exciting lessons that combine writing and drawing, while at the same time addressing skills such as vocabulary development that will be manifest in their test outcomes. *Chapter Three* discusses the methodology I used to plan and carry out this study. In this chapter, I provide an

overview of collaborative action research and describe the action research cycle. I also explain the individual and collective reasons for working with another art teacher, the research plan, sources of data, and a description of the school district's executive summary.

Chapter 3: Methodology

ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE

Action research is often described as a cyclical process (Hinchey, 2008). This method “connotes insider research done by practitioners using their own site, classroom, institution, school district, community, as the focus of their study” (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007, p. 2) I conducted research within the school district where I teach, using the pseudonym of Lejana Independent School District. Action research also supports culturally relevant teaching in that the researcher is involved in a reflective process to gain knowledge about his or her students. The researcher follows an action plan for choosing a topic, gathering literature, developing research questions, collecting data, and analyzing findings (Macintyre, 2000). These are the steps for an action research cycle:

1. Choose topic (relevant & important).
2. Gather literature.
3. Develop research questions.
4. Plan data collection (series of action).
5. Reduce potential bias.
6. Take action, reflect throughout the process.
7. Analysis, application, recommendations & suggestions.

Figure 1 displays a diagram of this cycle.

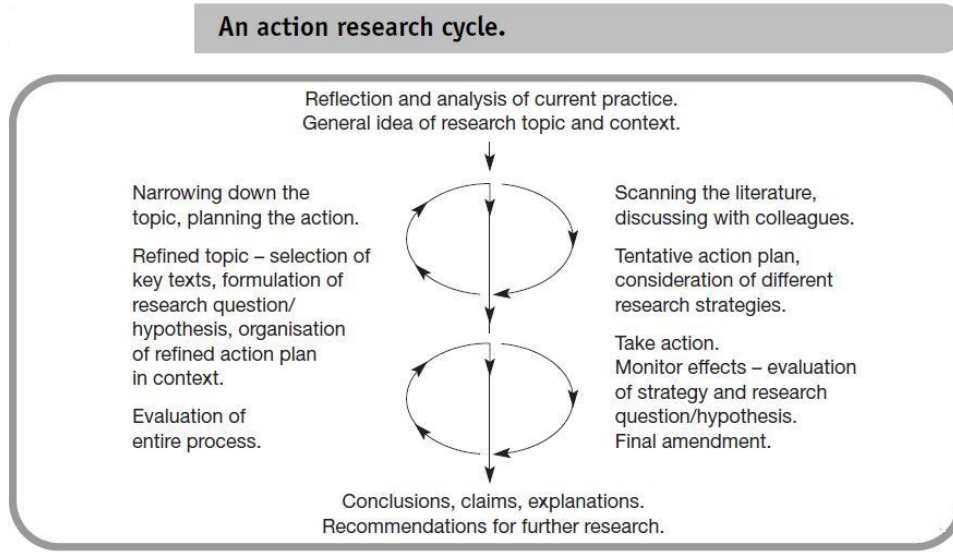


Figure 1: Action Research Cycle

Choosing a Topic

Macintyre (2000) recommends choosing “a topic that is relevant and important for you in your context, remembering that your aim is to extend understanding” (p. 8). Studying ESL strategies is relevant to my study because approximately 40% of the student population in the school district is labeled as English language learners. Since many of my students struggle with writing, my goal was to understand how I could utilize writing strategies in the art classroom.

Gathering Literature

During my research, I investigated a large amount of literature on ESL strategies and English language learners. However, I wanted to specifically identify strategies that could be applied to art education. Macintyre (2000) explains that a researcher must “plan their own study enlightened by what has gone before and secure in their knowledge that their new venture has substance and that their findings will take understanding forward” (p. 15).

Developing a Research Question

At the beginning of my study, I developed a research question with the purpose of understanding the topic more clearly. As the study progressed, I began to reshape my research question and sub-questions. Holly, Arhar, and Kasten (2005) state “questions evolve over time” and offer that defining a question can sometimes be a lengthy process. After interviewing Mrs. Rivera, I was able to refine my questions to help reach our collaborative goals.

Collecting Data

The teacher interview was the primary source of data I used in this study. This took the form of a semi-structured interview and six informal discussions. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) describe how interviews are “important in gaining a perspective on how others understand and interpret their reality” (p. 169). I also used photography to document students’ writing and artwork. This method of data collection was especially useful since I was unable to directly observe student behavior. The photos helped document qualitative artifacts and “offer a window into the school” (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007, p. 204) and the art classroom.

Reducing Bias

To help reduce bias, Macintyre (2000) suggests that researchers gather data “in different ways by different people, perhaps even by the children themselves” (p. 48). I worked with Mrs. Rivera to develop the collaborative lesson and questions for the students. She also assisted with photographing their artwork and writing. It is not possible to reduce all bias but as a researcher it is important to be aware of all variables and try to control them as much as possible.

Developing an Action Plan

Holly, Arhar, and Kasten (2005) offer the following advice, “To plan and develop a curriculum requires that we take an active part in designing our teaching and our relationships with our students” (p. 129). They further suggest that the action plan should involve “people engaging with others who are equals to effect change” (p. 135). I contacted Mrs. Rivera at the beginning of the school year to ensure she was willing to collaborate with me. This enabled us to secure the time necessary to plan our lesson to fit into the academic school year.

Analyzing and Application

Hinchey (2008) explains that “the point of all analysis is to identify patterns in the data, to see what may be common in the experiences or thinking recorded” (p. 90). Specifically, I aimed to find connections between strategies found in research literature and those suggested by an experienced teacher, Mrs. Rivera. I plan to share my research findings with members of the Lejana School District and other professional venues that I explain further in the final chapter.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

In this study I used collaborative action research and worked primarily with Ana Rivera, the art teacher at Texas Elementary School. Hinchey (2008) describes collaborative action research as “a group of researchers working together” (p. 35). Additionally, I met with Dr. Rita Villarreal, the director of ESL / Bilingual Education in the Lejana ISD at the beginning of the school year to gain a more complete understanding of the ESL programs in the school district. I conducted a semi-structured interview and informal discussions because Dr. Villarreal and Mrs. Rivera’s suggestions and feedback helped improve my research by contributing diverse perspectives on ESL strategies. This

helped to create what Hinchey (2008) describes as, “an action research group” (p. 36), which also serves as a support group to help each other. Throughout the study, I met with Rivera on a weekly basis to discuss the development of the lesson and exchange lesson materials. Macintyre (2000) explains, “Each record, whether it be taking field notes or completing observation schedules or tape recording oral contributions to a discussion, will change how they behave and distort the data” (p. 5). Therefore I included both formal interviews and informal discussion to help reduce bias.

INDIVIDUAL V. COLLECTIVE

Another reason behind my decision to conduct collaborative action research was the credibility collaboration helps brings to the research. Hinchey (2008) defines collaboration as the “sharing of findings and discussion of their possible application to other classroom and situations, the word research to describe collaborative work is more readily accepted” (p. 36). Since Rivera and I are both art teachers in the same school district, I felt our collaborative work would be practical and useful in our individual classrooms. As Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) state, “The researcher has collaborators, but they are not necessarily in the same site” (p. 127). I have known Rivera for six years, since I began working in the school district. We quickly became friends and enjoyed working together as colleagues. In the past, we would meet at district gatherings, workshops, and professional development gatherings. This study has given me the opportunity to explore my individual and collective efforts to improve my teaching practices. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) suggest, “Researchers can share readings, share strategies, and act as critical friends” (p. 127). This study was based on such collaborative efforts.

RESEARCH PLAN

Purpose

I believe language is a component of a student's cultural identity. As an art educator, my purpose is to help students succeed artistically and academically.

Research Question

What kinds of ESL strategies can be modified for art instruction to help improve writing skills for 4th grade English language learners in the Lejana Independent School District?

Sub-Questions

- How can art teachers introduce vocabulary development in their instruction?
- What kinds of physical gestures and body language can an art teacher use to check for student comprehension?
- How can art teachers use visual aids and demonstrations to support ESL instruction?

Data Collection (Discussed in detail later in this chapter)

- Interview & Transcript: A formal interview was conducted with the art teacher and audio recorded. An interview transcript is provided (See Appendix A: Teacher Interview).
- Field Notes: Informal notes taken by the researcher throughout the study.
- Questions for Teacher & Students (See Appendix C: Follow-Up Questions): The researcher developed questions for the teacher throughout the study regarding teaching strategies and reflective questions about the lesson. The teacher and researcher developed reflective questions for the students regarding the comic book lesson.

- **Written Reflections:** Teacher and student responses to the questions mentioned above.
- **Final Lesson Evaluation:** A document used to assess the collaborative lesson as a whole.
- **Photos of Student Writing & Artwork:** Documented artifacts created during the collaborative lesson.

Data Analysis

- **Inductive Analysis Process:** A method of interrogating data that involves looking for patterns and asking questions of the information collected.
- **Ask for feedback:** A process of sharing data and analysis with study participants to determine if they agree or disagree with research findings.

Time Line / Plan of Action

- April 27 – Gather teacher consent, conduct interview.
- April 29 – Introduce study, distribute consent forms.
- May 6 – Begin lesson, meet with teacher, collect consent forms.
- May 13 – Continue lesson and collecting consent forms.
- May 20 – Continue lesson, collection consent forms, etc.
- May 27 – Begin photographing writing & artwork, questions for teacher and students, final lesson evaluation.
- June 3 - Finish lesson, complete consent form collection and photographing writing and artwork.

Written Report

A thesis report was written for The University of Texas at Austin and an executive summary of the research was submitted to the Lejana Independent School District.

Support

I worked collaboratively with Dr. Rita Villarreal, Director of ESL / Bilingual Education at Lejana ISD and Ana Rivera, art teacher at Texas Elementary School.

Permissions

Consent forms, parent permission forms, child assent forms were needed to conduct interviews and photograph students' writing and artwork. All the participants' identities are kept private through the use of pseudonym names. See Appendix F for examples of these forms.

SOURCES OF DATA

I used the following sources of data throughout my study: documents, artifacts, journals, field notes, interviews, audio recordings, and photographs. These sources of data support the triangulation method to help minimize bias and ambiguity. Hinchey (2008) suggests that researchers, "frequently collect multiple types of data – minimally three – to increase confidence in their findings" (p. 76). It was useful to include Mrs. Rivera in the data collection process. She helped distribute and gather consent forms, developed lesson resources, and maintained students' artwork and writing. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) express, "The notion of triangulation, or the inclusion of multiple perspectives, guards against viewing events in a simplistic or self-serving way" (p. 41). Our collaborative efforts created opportunity to blend our perspectives and help guide the research study.

Documents & Artifacts

The documents I used to gather data included a collaborative lesson plan, teacher created resources, and a vocabulary word wall. These documents are explained in Chapter Four and Appendix B: Lesson Resources.

Written Reflections

The researcher developed questions for the teacher. The teacher and researcher developed questions for the students. The teacher responded to these questions through e-mail messages and informal discussions. The students answered questions about the lesson in their journals and participated in quick writes. The questions are explained in Chapter Four.

Field Notes

Every time I met with Mrs. Rivera, I used field notes to record information. These informal notes were collected in my notebook during our discussion meetings. I also had Mrs. Rivera complete a final lesson evaluation at the end of the study (See Appendix D: Final Lesson Evaluation).

Interviews

The semi-structured interview enabled me to ask Mrs. Rivera about her experience teaching ELLs, as well as put forward specific questions regarding ESL strategies. The interview lasted approximately twenty minutes. Mrs. Rivera and I also met for six informal discussions, each lasting about fifteen minutes. Hinchey (2008) explains that these documents can provide insight into “what people thought and said at a given moment in a particular circumstance” (p. 77). I feel that this is a valid source of data collection because the teacher knows her students best. Hinchey (2008) states that,

“people directly involved in a situation can and do provide the most reliable information available” (p. 81).

Audio Recording / Photographs

I used an audio recording during the interview and transcribed our discussion. I also photographed student writing and artwork, classroom displays, comic book examples and other visual aids used during this study. Hinchey (2008) suggests that student work, “can offer insight into their interests, growth, difficulties, feelings, and engagements” (p. 78).

LISD EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lejana ISD department of curriculum and instruction requested that I provide an executive summary of the research (See Appendix G: LISD Executive Summary). This executive summary contains a description of the study, research questions, lesson plan outline, recommended ESL strategies, and suggestions for other teachers in the district. In the future I plan to meet with administrators and teachers in the Lejana ISD to discuss the findings of my study. I feel it is important to meet with my peers and ask for their feedback to help improve the credibility of my findings.

SUMMARY

Through collaborative action research, I organized my study by choosing a topic, gathering literature, developing research questions, collecting data, reducing bias, creating an action plan, analyzing data and applying my findings. Collaborative action research provided rich sources of data for my study and the opportunity to work closely with my fellow colleague. Mrs. Rivera was eager to create this lesson and taught it to her other 4th and 5th grade students. Chapter Four contains a description of the study, study

preparation, the lesson plan, “Creating a Comic Book,” and resources used in this investigation.

Chapter 4: Description of Study

During this study, I observed and documented learning strategies used in the art classroom at Texas Elementary School in the Lejana Independent School District. In conducting this study, I collaborated with Ana Rivera, the art teacher at Texas Elementary School. My focus of this study was to research English as a second language (ESL) strategies, and modify them for art instruction to help improve writing skills for English language learners (ELLs). I conducted a semi-structured interview with Mrs. Rivera and analyzed our discussions throughout the process. The study concluded with a final writing / art lesson that I shared with Rivera. She taught this lesson to 4th grade students, specifically ELLs. Rivera also shared photos of her students' artwork and writing samples with me. Art teachers can utilize this lesson and suggested ESL writing strategies to develop and implement teaching strategies that will benefit all students. This research will assist the field of art education because it contributes to the development of much needed resources for ELLs. The nation has experienced a continued rise in the number of ELLs enrolled in public schools, so there is much needed work to be done in this area. This study also supports art education and ESL / bilingual programs in Lejana ISD.

TEACHER DESCRIPTION

Ana Rivera is the art teacher at Texas Elementary School in the Lejana Independent School District. At the time of this study, she was certified to teach art, grades PK-5th, and in her sixth year of teaching. Mrs. Rivera speaks both English and Spanish. She identifies herself as Mexican American. Mrs. Rivera was not ESL or bilingual certified at the time of the study. However, she did explain that she aspires to become bilingual certified in the future.

STUDY PREPARATION

To prepare for this study, I met with Dr. Rita Villarreal, Director of ESL / Bilingual Programs in LISD. I asked general questions about the current ESL program in the school district and recommendations for teaching strategies. I used this informal discussion to help guide the direction of my study. I also asked Mrs. Rivera, at the beginning of the 2013 – 2014 school year, if she was willing to collaborate with me on a lesson plan. This helped us plan ahead and fit the study into our curriculum before the end of the school year.

COLLABORATIVE LESSON: CREATING A COMIC BOOK

Our motivation for the comic book lesson idea was derived from the students' interests and popular culture in the Austin area. During the study, I attended the Free Comic Book Day event at Austin Books and Comics. I browsed through an instructional guide for creating comic books for children. It served as my inspiration for developing this collaborative lesson. It seemed like an interesting topic that combined drawing and writing. I presented the idea to Mrs. Rivera and she agreed that her students would find the lesson exciting and beneficial for improving their writing skills.

Objective

The objective for this lesson was developed according to the Lejana ISD lesson plan guidelines: Students will combine writing and drawing to create a comic book using a story web, story board and panel frames. The objective was written on the board and read aloud by the teacher.

Materials

The following materials were used during this lesson:

- Pencils

- Sharpeners
- Erasers
- Markers
- Crayons
- Colored Pencils

Vocabulary / Vocabulario

The following vocabulary words were written on the board and explained by the teacher:

- Title / Título
- Speech Balloon / Globo de diálogo
- Storyboard / Guión gráfico
- Panel (los cuadros para dibujar la estoria)
- Plot / Estoria (de que se trata)
- Setting / Escenario (Donde ocurrió la estoria?)
- Character / Carácter
- Comic Book / Revista de historietas o libro de comics
- Artist / Artista
- Writer / Escritor

Discussion Questions

The following questions were developed by Mrs. Rivera. She asked this question in addition to the ones listed below at the beginning of the lesson: “What is being emphasized?” The students mentioned that the hero is usually larger and in the foreground while the villain commonly appears smaller and in the background. She encouraged her students to emphasize their characters using size.

Think - Pair - Share Activity

For this lesson, I developed the following questions to be asked for the Think-Pair-Share activity:

- “Where have you seen a comic book?”
- “What kinds of comics do you like to read?”
- “What do you like best about comic books?”

Mrs. Rivera asked these questions to the students at the beginning of the lesson. The students thought about each question and then shared their answer with a peer. Some students were selected to share their answers with the class.

Resources

The following resources were developed by Mrs. Rivera and I to use throughout the lesson (See Appendix B: Lesson Resources):

- Story Web Worksheet: A worksheet containing spaces for students to write in information regarding the story idea (plot), setting, conflict, and resolution.
- Dream Cast Worksheet: A worksheet with spaces to draw a hero and villain.
- Storyboard Worksheet: A worksheet containing a space to write the title of comic book, and six sequenced boxes to draw action scenes from the beginning to the ending.
- Panel Frames: Blank frames used for creating the final comic book with three different formats containing squares and rectangles.
- Word Wall: Comic book vocabulary and definitions in English and Spanish with pictures. The word wall was displayed on the board.
- Video: An online video was presented at the beginning of the lesson: Bruce Blitz – *Make Your Own Comic Book*.

- **Comic Book Examples (realia):** The teacher showed students real comic books and referred to specific stories and scenes.
- **Speech Balloon Visuals:** Four examples of speech balloons used to represent a character's speech or thinking. These images were presented to the students using the document camera and overhead projector.

LESSON PROCEDURES

Each class session during this study lasted approximately 45 minutes, once a week. The lesson procedures for each day of the lesson are described below:

Day One

The teacher introduced the lesson to the students by showing a video about creating comic books (Blitz, Bruce. "Make Your Own Comic Book with Bruce Blitz."). The video emphasized that a comic book should include a story with a cast of characters, plot, setting, conflict, and resolution. The teacher also showed an example of an actual comic book. The teacher read the objective to the class and referred to the word wall on the board. She directed the students to include no more than four characters. The students began filling out their story web and dream cast worksheet. Figure 2 shows a photograph of the word wall used in this lesson.

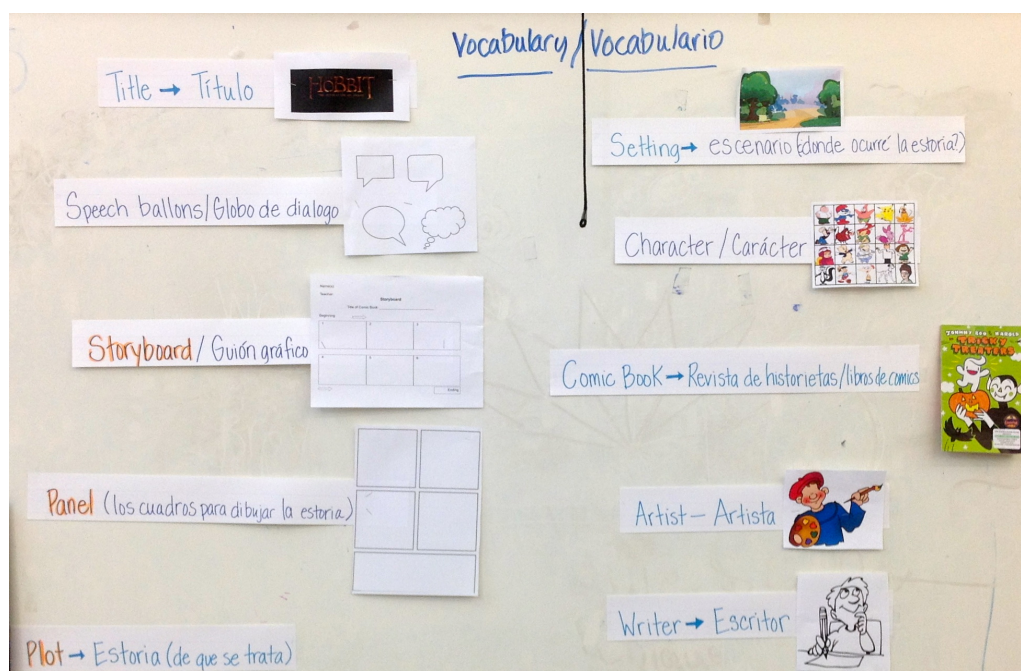


Figure 2: Word Wall

Day Two

The students continued working on their story web and dream cast worksheets. After the students completed their work, they began drawing each scene of their story using a storyboard worksheet. The teacher instructed the students to distinguish the foreground, middle ground, and background in their drawings.

Day Three

The students continued working on their storyboard worksheet. After finishing their work, they began outlining and coloring in their comic book using the panel frames. The teacher showed examples of speech balloon images using the document camera and projector.

Day Four

The students completed their comic books and then answered four questions about the lesson. The teacher encouraged the students to read their comic book to a friend or family member.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Questions for Teacher

The researcher developed the following questions for the art teacher. I sent these questions via e-mail (See Appendix C: Follow-Up Questions) throughout the study:

- How am I introducing vocabulary to my students?
- What kinds of physical gestures / body language am I using to teach my students?
- How have I used visuals or demonstrations with this lesson?
- What has been the most effective way to help my students learn vocabulary?
- How do I prepare to use physical gestures to be effective in my class?
- How do my students react when I use realia in my classroom?
- What else do I need to know about ESL strategies in order to better teach my students?

Questions for Students

The researcher and teacher developed the following questions for the students. I sent these questions through e-mail to Mrs. Rivera. She created a document with spaces for the students' written responses (See Appendix E: Photos of Student Work).

- What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?
- Where else have you seen a comic book?
- Is this your first time creating a comic book?
- What other types of activities combine writing and drawing?

SUMMARY

In this chapter I described the study preparation, the collaborative lesson outline, and the questions for the teacher and students. Using collaborative work, Mrs. Rivera and I developed a comic book lesson for 4th grade students that included an objective, vocabulary, discussion questions, a think-pair-share activity, and resources. The following chapter discusses the data and analysis of the study. In *Chapter 5* I explain the procedures for collecting data, method of data analysis, the teacher interview, questions for the teacher and students, student demographics, student writing and artwork, and the final lesson evaluation.

Chapter 5: Data and Analysis

In this chapter I discuss the methods used to collect and evaluate the data drawn from this investigation. I developed an interview process and established follow-up questions for the art teacher. This strategy helped me prepare how to work collaboratively with Mrs. Rivera. Together, we created the comic book lesson plan and resources (described in Chapter 4). I also developed a series of reflection questions for response by the students. From their responses to these questions I was able to identify common themes found in their writing and artwork. I determined that the teacher repeatedly referred to the same learning strategies. I was able to draw connections between the teacher's suggestions and the work the students produced. I developed a final lesson evaluation to complete the analysis. Students were each asked to create their comic book in the language of their choice. Although most students wrote in English, there were a few students that used Spanish exclusively. I was not able to interact directly with the students and therefore took photographs of their artwork and written responses.

PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA

Before collecting any data, I discussed the study with Mrs. Rivera and obtained a signed consent form. I also had her distribute letters and consent forms to the parents, informing them of the study. Additionally, the students were required to sign an assent form if they agreed to have their artwork and writing photographed. I collected these forms throughout the study (See Appendix F: Consent Forms).

In order for our collaborative work to be effective, I gathered feedback from Mrs. Rivera using a formal interview and informal follow-up questions. Since Mrs. Rivera and I are both teachers in the same district, meeting together regularly was a challenge. Hinchey (2008) suggests that feedback between collaborators can be “verbal or written,

formal or informal” (p. 97). Therefore, we often exchanged information via e-mail and verbally in person. Our meetings were brief yet informative and focused on each other’s suggestions.

During our meetings, we observed the students’ progress. We discussed which strategies were most effective and how the students responded to them. At this time I also collected student data by photographing their artwork and writing (See Appendix E: Photos of Student Work). This included a story web, storyboard, comic book, and student questions.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze the data, I first reread my research question and then set out to identify which ESL strategies could be implemented in the art classroom. I utilized the inductive process, which Thomas (2006) describes as, “Approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher” (p. 238). I searched for repeated occurrences of recommended strategies in the research literature and those suggested by the art teacher. Hinchey (2008) suggests looking for patterns in areas such as “events, issues, trends, behaviors, feelings, word use... any area of experience” (p. 90). I organized the data into two categories: teacher and students. I searched for words that the participants used frequently in verbal and written responses. I also studied the students’ artwork and looked for common themes embedded within them. I developed a coding system to help me organize the data. Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) recommend developing coding systems, which “enable you to see categories in the data” and help make the data more manageable (p. 216). Three common ESL strategies were derived from the teacher interview and explained below.

TEACHER INTERVIEW

The interview was created at the beginning of the study (See Appendix A: Teacher Interview). I used these interview questions as a data gathering device to help me understand how much and what kind of experience Mrs. Rivera had with English language learners and ESL strategies. I also asked if she was bilingual or ESL certified. I specifically inquired about which strategies she currently used in her classroom and what resources she felt were needed to assist students in this way. For example, Mrs. Rivera suggested the following ESL strategies, “I do a lot of physical, where I’m showing them with body language. I’m giving them examples visually over the...the doc cam.” She also referred to building vocabulary such as, “I have handouts where they, they’ll cut out certain things and paste them next to the vocabulary word.” Mrs. Rivera also mentioned using demonstrations and visuals, “I think they need, especially when they’re learning a language, they need a lot of visuals.” After reading the interview transcript several times, I discovered three common ESL strategies to investigate: (a) vocabulary development, (b) physical gestures / body language, and (c) visuals / demonstrations.

QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER

I asked the teacher two sets of questions during the study (See Appendix C: Follow-Up Questions). I sent these to Mrs. Rivera via e-mail. We then discussed these questions during our meetings. The first set of questions included, “How am I introducing vocabulary to my students? What kinds of physical gestures or body language am I using to teach my students? How have I used visuals or demonstrations with this lesson?” Mrs. Rivera emphasized the need for the transfer between the Spanish and English language: “Each vocabulary word is written in English / Spanish and each word has a picture next

to the word.”¹ She would often point to the word wall (See Appendix B: Lesson Resources) throughout the lesson. Mrs. Rivera also mentioned the use of comprehension checks with physical gestures and questioning techniques: “I ask students to put a finger on their nose if they understand, put your hand on your head if you need more help.” She also explained the need for scaffolding by sequencing the lesson into a series of steps.

The second set of questions was sent to Mrs. Rivera at the end of the lesson. These questions included, “What has been the most effective way to help my students learn vocabulary? How did I prepare to use physical gestures to be effective in my class? How did my students react when I used realia in my classroom? “Realia is the demonstration of real objects or events”, e.g., actual comic books (Calderón, 2012, p. 133). The final question was, “What else do I need to know about ESL strategies in order to better teach my students?” Mrs. Rivera mentioned how important visuals were in assisting her students to hold on to information: “Images helps students retain the information longer.” She also described the used for developing physical gesture techniques by first thinking about the concepts she wanted to teach: “I use physical gestures to check for comprehension. It is a more private way to check their understanding.” Then, she created simple yet effective gestures for demonstrating size (big and small), foreground, middle ground, and background. Mrs. Rivera also responded to the use of media in the classroom, by stating, “Any type of media helps students add to the new information given.” The video and comic book examples motivated the students and also helped them make connections to their prior knowledge. Lastly, she stated that more resources are needed to assist in the development of group work, the editing of

¹All teacher quotations are from the interview that took place on April 27, 2014.

student writing and providing opportunities for students to read. This relates back to the sociocultural theory and use of cooperative learning.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The students that participated in this study were in a 4th grade bilingual art class. There were 30 students in this class consisting of 13 boys and 17 girls. The LPAC committee administered a home language survey at the beginning of the year to identify the students' native language. All the students in this study were identified as native Spanish speakers. However, nearly all students chose to write and speak in English. Only two students created their comic book written entirely in Spanish. These students were identified as ELLs with limited English proficiency (LEP) and Mrs. Rivera explained that they spoke very little English. The approximate age range of the students was nine to ten years old. I collected consent forms from seven students and included photographs of their writing and artwork in my study.

STUDENT WORK

Most of the students' comic books were based on a hero and villain. The structure of the story web worksheet shaped their stories to include a plot, setting, conflict and resolution. The Bruce Blitz video Mrs. Rivera showed her class at the beginning of the lesson also influenced the students to create their comic book based on the hero / villain dilemma. In each of their stories, the villain is in the midst of ruining or destroying a city or park. Many of the students included a super hero, animal, monster, or robot characters in their stories. The hero and villain often used a special power, such as lasers, to defeat their enemy. Observing the students' artwork led me to realize how influential visuals are in representing their ideas. This is especially true of the comic book examples and video

used to support this lesson. The students' prior knowledge of comic books is an example of how popular culture influences learning.

Many of the students' story webs contained misspelled words and incomplete sentences. This was also observed in their storyboards, comic books, and written responses. I felt that there was a lack of editing in the students' writing that consequently affected the quality of their final comic book. Due to time constraints this could not be done, but I believe this lesson would have been more effective if the teacher had edited the students' story webs before continuing on with the making of their comic books. Peer editing could have also been useful in this lesson. This is relevant to Vygotskian theory and the Zone of Proximal Development. Students in this study could benefit from higher standards set on their writing.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

I gave Mrs. Rivera four questions to ask her students at the end of the lesson (See Appendix C: Follow-Up Questions). She created a worksheet and instructed the students to write down their answers. These questions were, "What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book? Where else have you seen a comic book? Is this your first time creating a comic book? What other types of things combine writing and drawing?" Most of the students stated that they enjoyed drawing their comic book and using their own ideas. Figure 3 shows an example of a student's written response to the question about creating a comic book.

What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?
 I liked it cause I
 could my my own
 comic book.

Figure 3: Student A Written Response

Seven of the students' written responses were documented in this study and stated that this was their first time creating a comic book. All students already had prior experience reading comic books and understood their relationship between writing and drawing. Their written responses stated that they have encountered comic books in "the library...in movies...television...cereal boxes."² Figure 4 demonstrates a bar graph of the students' written responses to the question, "Where have you seen a comic book?"

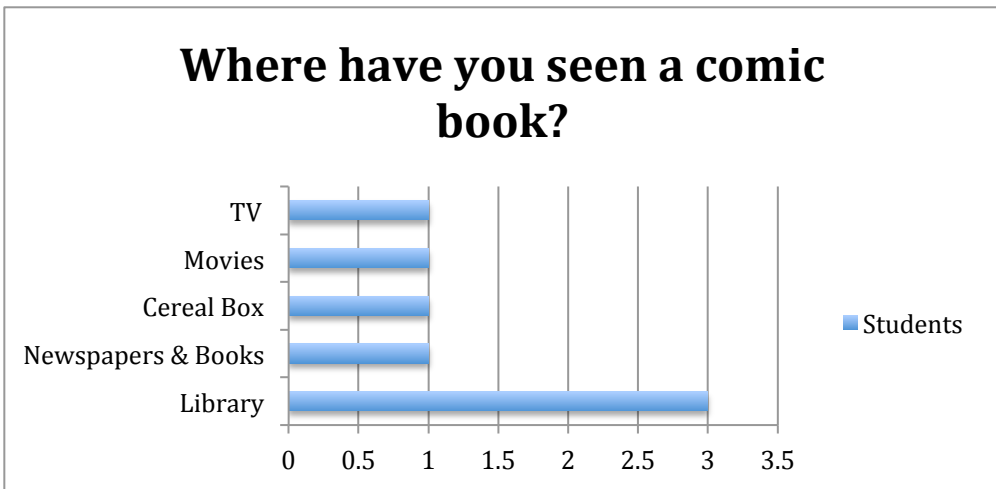


Figure 4: Line Graph of Students' Written Responses

²All written responses are derived from the questions for students. See Appendix E: Photos of Student Work.

A few students stated that they did not enjoy tracing or drawing their comic book twice. Figure 5 shows an example of a student's response to the question about creating a comic book.

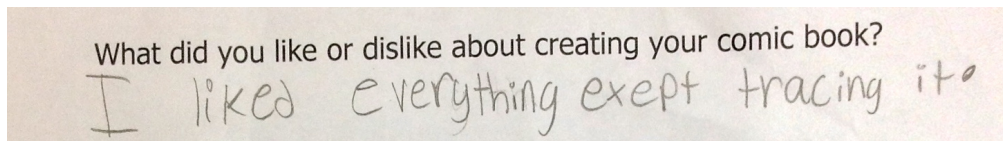


Figure 5: Student B Written Response

They were referring to the storyboard, which had to be completed before beginning their final comic book using the panel frames (See Appendix B: Lesson Resources). Although this was a bit tedious for the students, I found these worksheets essential to helping the students understand the sequencing of the story in their comic book.

FINAL LESSON EVALUATION

At the end of the study, I met with Mrs. Rivera for our final meeting and lesson evaluation (See Appendix D: Final Lesson Evaluation). Using this form, she was given the opportunity to rate the lesson based on how well it supported ESL strategies and provide any last suggestions. We also discussed the research question one more time and talked about the need for sharing what the students learned. She suggested that the students read their comic books to peers in class as well as friends and family at home. This was an important part of the lesson because doing so helps to make it meaningful to the students' lives. It also empowers students and parents to support reading and writing in the home environment. She mentioned how much her students enjoyed the lesson and would recommend it to other art teachers.

SUMMARY

This chapter covered the data collection and method of analysis used in my study. The teacher interview and follow up questions provided qualitative feedback and data regarding ESL strategies. Photographing the students' artwork and writing revealed common themes that influenced which strategies were most needed. The next and final chapter is the application of my study. *Chapter 6* contains my reflections on the central research question, benefits of the findings of this research to the field of art education, professional venues of research dissemination, the LISD Executive Summary and ESL writing strategy recommendations.

Chapter 6: Application

REFLECTIONS ON THE CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the modification of ESL writing strategies for art instruction in one 4th grade classroom in Texas. Through collaborative efforts between Mrs. Rivera and I, we were able to develop art activities and a list of strategies that support drawing and writing skills for ELL students. I gained information and insight on how art teachers could accomplish the following:

- (a) Help develop vocabulary using word walls with terms and definitions written in English and the students' native language.
- (b) Use physical gestures to check for comprehension, such as the student touching their nose if they understand or touching their head if they need more help. Gestures are also useful for conveying concepts such as size, foreground, middle ground, and background.
- (c) Utilize visuals and demonstrations to support their ELL students. This includes pictures located next to the vocabulary words, realia, such as actual comic books, and lesson resources (e.g., speech balloon images).

Using a collaborative action research method I was able to examine ESL writing strategies, conduct a semi-structured interview, co-develop a lesson plan with resources, ask discussion questions, take field notes, and photograph students' writing and artwork. In this chapter, I have included a list of recommended ESL strategies for use in the art classrooms. This includes (a) supporting native languages, (b) creating connections between home and school, (c) encouraging rigorous thinking, and (d) editing student writing.

ESL WRITING STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of recommended ESL writing strategies that may be useful for art educators. These are drawn from this research, and are useful outcome for art teachers to implement.

Support Native Languages

Art teachers can improve vocabulary development through the use of word walls that include English and native language translations. Vocabulary words should also include visual representations. Teachers may speak to students in their native language, if possible. For examples, Mrs. Rivera stated, “I’ll ask them in Spanish if they know...what this means or know what that means.” Allow students to speak, read and write in their native language, as doing so may help transfer cognitive skills. Concepts learned in their native language can be applied to what they learn in English.

Create Connections Between Home and School

Encourage students to share what they have learned with others at home and in the community. The teacher expressed the importance of reading to students, “I would say one thing that really helped me is to have opportunities to read to them.” Students may read to others including friends, family members and peers. Teachers and parents should read aloud to students as often as possible. Reading to peers and family members are examples of “meaningful ways that schools can actively involve parents” (Colombo, 2012, p. 233).

Encourage Rigorous Thinking

Students can engage in critical thinking when teachers ask engaging questions: “And then ask them thought provoking questions based on what they heard.” Art educators can use questioning and discussion techniques such as think-pair-share to

encourage rigorous thinking. Teachers may also use gestures to explain concepts and check for comprehension.

Edit Student Writing

Have students engage in quick writes and journal reflections. Peer editing activities can be utilized to help students improve their writing skills. Art teachers should provide feedback to students by editing and responding to their writing. There are times when a tight schedule does not permit much opportunity for editing student writing in the art classroom. Mrs. Rivera suggested the use of technology to help speed up the process: “Technology [is] important in our culture today...it would allow more time for them to actually produce and create.” Students can utilize word processing programs to edit their writing. They can also use technology to share what they have learned through online journals and blogs.

BENEFITS TO THE FIELD OF ART EDUCATION

This study addresses the need for more ESL resources for art educators. The lesson in this study is beneficial to the field of art education because it is a practical example of how an art teacher can implement ESL strategies for the benefit of students. The lesson combines drawing and writing to support ELLs but is also beneficial to all art students. This supports the idea of arts integration, described by Marshall (2006) as, “Exploring fundamental commonalities and differences between art and other areas (especially how ideas are researched, conceptualized and communicated) and making them explicit through art practice” (p. 19). The recommended ESL strategies can be applied to most lessons to help enhance the art curriculum. I plan to share my findings and recommendations through various professional venues in the school district and

beyond. Hinchey (2008) encourages this: “The more that researchers share their work, however, the more that colleagues – and the profession – will benefit” (p. 105).

Using a collaborative action research method provided the opportunity to work with others and develop new ideas. Hinchey (2008) agrees with the benefits of action research in that “it allows practitioners who would not normally have the opportunity to interact and learn from each other to share their experiences, advancing the knowledge base and expertise of the larger professional community” (p. 106). Teaching schedules sometimes limit the amount of time teachers are able to share their knowledge with one another. Nonetheless, I successfully conducted this study while working as a full time teacher in the school district.

PROFESSIONAL VENUES OF RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

Lejana ISD

I plan to share my research findings with other teachers and staff in the Lejana ISD. I may present information at future professional development events such as staff meetings, trainings, workshops, and school board meetings. There is also the opportunity to share what I have learned with my students during Career Day at the school where I currently teach. I would like to visit other schools in the district as a guest speaker or visiting artist. I hope the findings from my study will be considered when decisions are made in regard to the district’s ESL and bilingual programs. I submitted an executive summary to the LISD department of curriculum and instruction at the end of this study (See Appendix G: LISD Executive Summary).

Peace Corps

This summer, I will depart for The Gambia, West Africa to become a Peace Corps volunteer. I have been assigned as a primary teacher trainer. My role is to provide formal

and informal training and support elementary school teachers. I intend to utilize what I have learned in this study through educational programs in the Peace Corps. One of these programs is the Third Goal Program that promotes helping Americans understand the people and cultures of other countries. I plan to implement the recommended ESL strategies during my service abroad. When I visit home, I will have the opportunity to discuss the effectiveness of using ESL strategies in Gambian schools.

FUTURE RELATED RESEARCH

There are other research opportunities that emerge from this investigation. Although time and resources did not permit me to do so, the following are some related research directions. It is my purpose to encourage researchers and educators to utilize the findings of my research for the conducting of future studies. Revising the comic book lesson to include higher writing standards and expectations for writing would be worthwhile research extensions. More time is needed for the educator to investigate how to edit students' writing and provide feedback. There is also a need for further research in student collaboration and peer editing strategies. For example, a language arts teacher and art teacher could develop a collaborative arts integration project. Students could engage in writing activities and art projects and combine their work from each class. Additionally, I am interested in developing activities that encourage students to share what they write with family and community members. Another research extension would be to utilize the resources and recommendations in this study for all types of English language learners. This includes ELLs of diverse ethnic groups, native languages, and ages. I anticipate developing teaching strategies for different populations while I am serving in the Peace Corps, and it would be worthwhile to research the outcomes of such instruction.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study investigated the use of ESL writing strategies for art instruction. Through this research it was learned that by utilizing vocabulary development, physical gestures and many visuals, art educators could help improve ELLs' writing skills. I think back to my parents' experiences learning English and the difficulties they encountered. The stories of their experiences have influenced my view of ESL and bilingual programs in public schools. I believe it is critical to involve parents and community members in their child's language development. Colombo (2012) states, "ELL parents who are second generation in the United States may have had negative experiences with schools as they themselves struggled to learn content and academic English" (p. 232). I plan to continue studying multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching. I hope my research will help others understand how language is an important part of a child's learning and cultural identity. I feel that the ESL strategies presented in this study can be included in culturally relevant lessons that support the students' native language and unique backgrounds.

Appendix A: Teacher Interview

A1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What do you teach?

How many years have you been teaching?

What languages do you speak at home and school?

How do you identify your ethnicity / heritage?

Are you English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual certified?

How many of the students you teach are English language learners (ELLs)?

In what areas do ELLs struggle most with reading and writing?

What kinds of ESL strategies do you use with your ELLs?

What strategies do you feel are best for improving reading and writing skills?

Do you encourage parent and community involvement?

How do you include their suggestions and input with your teaching?

How can other teachers, specifically art teachers, support ELLs?

What additional resources do you feel are needed to help your students be successful?

A2: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

CT: Cynthia Treviño, Researcher

AR: Ana Rivera, Art Teacher at Texas Elementary School

CT: Okay. so, first question is, “What do you teach and how many years have you been teaching?”

AR: I teach art and I have been teaching for six years, this year.

CT: Okay, what languages do you speak at home and school?

AR: Spanish and English.

CT: Is that both in school and at home?

AR: Yes.

CT: Okay, How do you identify your ethnicity or heritage?

AR: Mexican American.

CT: Are you ESL or bilingual certified?

AR: No. Neither.

CT: I will go ahead and add to that one. Have you ever been like to any ESL or bilingual workshops?

AR: Yes. Well, I’m trying to think. I know I did take a bilingual certification test and missed it by a point for secondary bilingual. But I did have to take, you know, the oral part. So points off from...

CT: Do you plan in the future to try out for it again?

AR: mm-hm.

CT: Okay.

AR: And that was for a specific position that at a high school to teach Spanish. So that’s why I kind of pursued that. But it’s something that interests me for sure.

CT: I see, okay. Approximately, even if you can give me a percentage, how many of the students that you teach are ELLs, the English language learners?

AR: In the whole school or well I guess I come in contact with everyone.

CT: Who ever you teach.

AR: Oh, uh.

CT: Cause there's a bilingual class at every grade level?

AR: Yes, so let me go based on that. We only have four fifth grade classes. Just so you know. There's not a large fifth grade this year so. Let's see that's one, two, three, four...

CT: So that's six bilingual classes then?

AR: I have, there's actually two in fourth grade. One in fifth. Two in third. One in second. Two in first and Kindergarten we have like three. Two or three.

CT: Okay. Wow, so you do have a lot then.

AR: Yeah. Let's do two, just say two. Two in kinder.

CT: So you have about ten classes then. And do you think like do all those classes, are they a mix of English only and bilingual or are they all like pretty much, all the kids in each bilingual class are Spanish and English speakers?

AR: Yes. Yes, I would say that.

CT: Pretty much the whole class?

AR: Pretty much the whole class. There are however, my kindergarten classes, both of those classes. Those are fully, mostly only Spanish.

CT: Only Spanish? Okay.

AR: Very little English in my kinder classes. Where instructions are done in Spanish first and then repeated in English so that they can hear the English as well. That's just for my, mostly for my kinder.

CT: Is that mandated by like the school policy? Or is that's just something you go on your own?

AR: No, that's something that I go on my own because I'm watching them based on comprehension. I'll ask them in Spanish if they, you know, they know what this means or know what that means. The majority of classes don't or they don't show me that they know. I ask them questions.

CT: Do you think that...do you focus mostly like, on vocabulary?

AR: Yes. Colors, numbers...

CT: Basic terms you think?

AR: Basic terms.

CT: Okay, in what areas do your ELLs struggle most with when it comes to reading and writing?

AR: Huh, they struggle big time with both. And I've, I've actually have had lots of projects where I would have known before there's, no I mean, but there's parts so that where they had to write and parts of it where they had to read and it was very challenging. The writing is sometimes not, can't even understand, they have issues reading it back to me.

CT: Both. Yeah, it's not legible or... okay.

AR: I've noticed that a lot with fourth grade this year. It's a big struggle.

CT: Okay, I'll come back to that probably. If you practice any specific ESL strategies, which ones do you use with your students?

AR: I don't know. I mean if I had a list of the strategies, but I do a lot of like physical, where I'm showing them with body language. I'm giving them examples visually over the...what's it called.

CT: The projector?

AR: The doc cam. The doc cam. So I'm, as I'm giving instructions in English, I'm showing them, you know, we're drawing a circle, we're drawing these shapes. You are to shade inside or color inside. Here are the colors. You know, background, everything is you know, I'll draw an arrow, or give them an example of a painting. This is the foreground, middle ground, so if I'm introducing vocabulary, it's usually done with visuals.

CT: So a lot of visuals and demonstrations?

AR: A lot of visuals and demonstrations. I'll often times say it in Spanish because I can speak Spanish and say it in English and have them actually repeat it in English back to me. I do that a lot, especially with the younger kids because vocabulary is being, lots of new vocabulary are being introduced. I'll have them actually repeat the word in English as practice for them.

CT: Okay, so from these strategies which ones do you feel are the best for improving their reading and writing skills?

AR: I think that seeing like an actual demonstration really helps them. But then also when it's a...when it's a project that entails a reading and writing portion of it. I'll have, sometimes I'll have them read a short biography of the artist. I'll read a book to them. And then I have them actually take some time to journal on a painting of the artist that we are discussing.

CT: So you have them write about it?

AR: So I have them write. And all of my third, fourth and fifth, all have journals. Where they draw, when I'm introducing vocabulary. I'll have them write the word down and then draw.

CT: Like an example?

AR: An example. Or sometimes I have handouts where they, they'll cut out certain things and paste them next to the vocabulary word. But I like to use it more so for an intro to a project where I'm having them think about a painting or something visual. I think that really helps them practice describing, using descriptive words. Cause I think in art we have that advantage in terms of color and shape, you know when those vocabularies are introduced. Those words are introduced. Then that's really helps describe a painting or describe...

CT: So they get to practice using these skills before actually starting the lesson?

AR: What you're seeing. Yeah.

CT: And like the cut and paste type handouts...is it like a word and a picture and they match it up or something?

AR: I often times, well for the younger levels, it's a lot of that. And as it starts getting, moving up, like if it's a painting and the objects have changed size. Then I'll have them cut out like, you know, foreground, middle ground, back ground. And...and they paste those objects. And so that's, so it's a little bit more being you know...you have to understand really what the...you know, what those words mean. Based, looking at...at the pictures and the size, like through, you know. Obviously things in the background will be smaller and then what the pictures are in the foreground.

CT: Okay.

AR: So I usually, you know, that's something I do with upper levels. Whereas for like kinder, it would be like texture or something.

CT: More basic.

AR: One of the basic probably.

CT: Basic terminology?

AR: Yeah.

CT: Okay, do you encourage parent and community involvement? And if so, you know, how do you do that?

AR: Well...well like last year we did that. Or it was like two years ago. The Action uh, what is it called?

CT: Oh, the Action Theatre...Project?

AR: Project. Where you know, it was dif...different, for different schools. It was either P.E. or you know, there was more emphasis on different things but because it dealt with painting and drawing, they asked me to head that up and so there were people in the community that...that would come and volunteer to take part in doing these, you know, map of the U.S., the states, rulers.

CT: Did they do sidewalk stuff? Like it was for the black top and everything?

AR: Yeah.

CT: Okay, was that afterschool?

AR: With the parents. Uh huh.

CT: O.K. Did parents get to help out with that?

AR: Yeah. We had about four at our school.

CT: Oh, neat, cause they had the same thing at our school.

AR: We had about four consistent maybe two or three, off and on. We're also holding a...on June third. A...for the fifth graders. They're having an event, where their artwork will be po...will be shown. So each fifth grader will have a piece that they will enter and be shown for parents.

CT: Will it be like a certain viewing day or something like that? Like a little art opening?

AR: A little show.

CT: Okay.

AR: There's the other, another thing that I've actually talked to the community liaison about it. And, you know, I've shared it with her, I don't know how much she has on her plate but it's something that I would be interested in doing. Once a month, we would do a...I would have a craft. Like for example, you know in February. For, in every month would be a different theme. So for February would be a project, an art project that would deal with, you know, the Valentine's day.

CT: Some type of holiday craft?

AR: Some type of holiday craft...and where we would invite the community to come and it would be a afterschool thing. And we would have supplies for them that they would need to bring, like if we were making a bag, they would need to bring their bag. And then we would have, we would supply...

CT: Have other things?

AR: Because there's been interest in that with our teachers. I've had for Christmas and holidays, I'll say, you know, "I'm going to be doing...we're...I'm going to be showing how to make wreaths, if you'd like to join." And so that's what we did this year, for...

CT: So you did it this year?

AR: Yeah, I did it this year, for teachers.

CT: For how many of the months you think?

AR: So January, we did it in February. So...so I'm sorry. Christmas and February.

CT: So two months?

AR: Two months. But there was interest for...

CT: For more probably, right?

AR: For more, for teachers.

CT: Oh, how fun.

AR: Yeah and I think that, that would...I think that, you know, for like Cinco de Mayo, it could be a craft that dealt with...that I know that our community is really big into celebrating that so...

CT: Oh yeah.

AR: You know offering things were they're creating and where we can offer some supplies, I don't know where the budget would come in with that.

CT: Yeah. Probably have to do, like a fundraiser or something?

AR: Yeah.

CT: Special...special collection for it.

AR: But it would be where, you know, in the cafeteria...would be plenty of table space. I would have a mic on me. There would also be an overhead so they can see. So they're getting a visual.

CT: Oh, okay.

AR: But I...I...I've talked to the community liaison about that and I thought, you know, that would...what a great way to I feel like to get the community to...to get to know them and feel, you know...

CT: Welcome at the school?

AR: Welcome. More a part of it.

CT: So, who participated this year, in the two you hosted this year?

AR: Teachers.

CT: Just the teachers?

AR: One, well there was one custodian that was interested. She just didn't come.

CT: Oh, okay.

AR: But she...but I told her she was more than welcome to come.

CT: So...

AR: But it kind of, I think it interfered with her time of work.

CT: Oh, okay. So no parents came to these, but you..

AR: No, this was just strictly for..

CT: Want to do something like this for the parents?

AR: Yeah, that gave me the idea to offer that to parents, for parents.

CT: That sounds fun. That's totally doable. It's just about funding. That's it.

AR: Awesome. Yeah.

CT: Cool, well let's see...so how do you include or do you include parent or community member suggestions? Like do you include their input...take it into mind when you're teaching?

AR: Mm, I'm...I'm trying to go back to the...when we were doing the Action Theatre Project. I mean there were some suggestions on colors but it wasn't, you know, I wasn't asking them you know, pointed questions. They were giving, you know, their opinion and I welcomed, you know, their opinions. But it wasn't, you know, "What do you think that your kids would benefit from this or that?" I didn't ask any of those questions.

CT: Okay. So how can teachers, especially art teachers, support ELLs? Like if you had suggestions for other art teachers?

AR: I mean, I think we do...I think that they need...especially when they're learning a language. They need a lot of visuals. And that's where I think that we're...we have something that maybe other teachers don't have enough time to give. So, I would say one thing that really helped me is to have opportunities to read to them. And then ask them thought provoking questions based on what they heard. So there, you're checking for comprehension. And then one of the best ways is...is for them to actually produce because when children or students produce something it's making that stay in, I mean, they're retain...they're retaining that information.

CT: It makes it personal?

AR: Because it's making it personal and it becomes more meaningful. So for that reason I feel like it's such wonderful thing to have to be able to help them with. So, that's the biggest thing.

CT: Okay. And then, what additional resources do you feel are needed to help your students be successful? If you could have any resource you needed, regardless of cost. What would you...what kind of things you wish you had?

AR: I wish I had a...you know, a laptop for each student because I feel like not only is technology important in our culture today, but it would also serve as another, a quicker way to go through paintings, to learn about artists, biographies, to be able to create something quickly. I mean if we're talking about time. And you're talking 45 minutes or hour, how much time that you have. Then your time in your classroom is very precious so it would...I think it would allow more time for them to actually produce and create instead of you know, I got to flip through, or I got to show one at a time. They could actually do a lot more group work. So they would inter...I feel...I feel like they would be able to interact more with the program or have more time for discussion. It's really a good time saver. And I feel like there's so many programs out there, you know that would be really helpful.

CT: Okay. Alright well thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Lesson Resources

B1: STORY WEB & DREAM CAST WORKSHEET

Story idea ①
PLOT

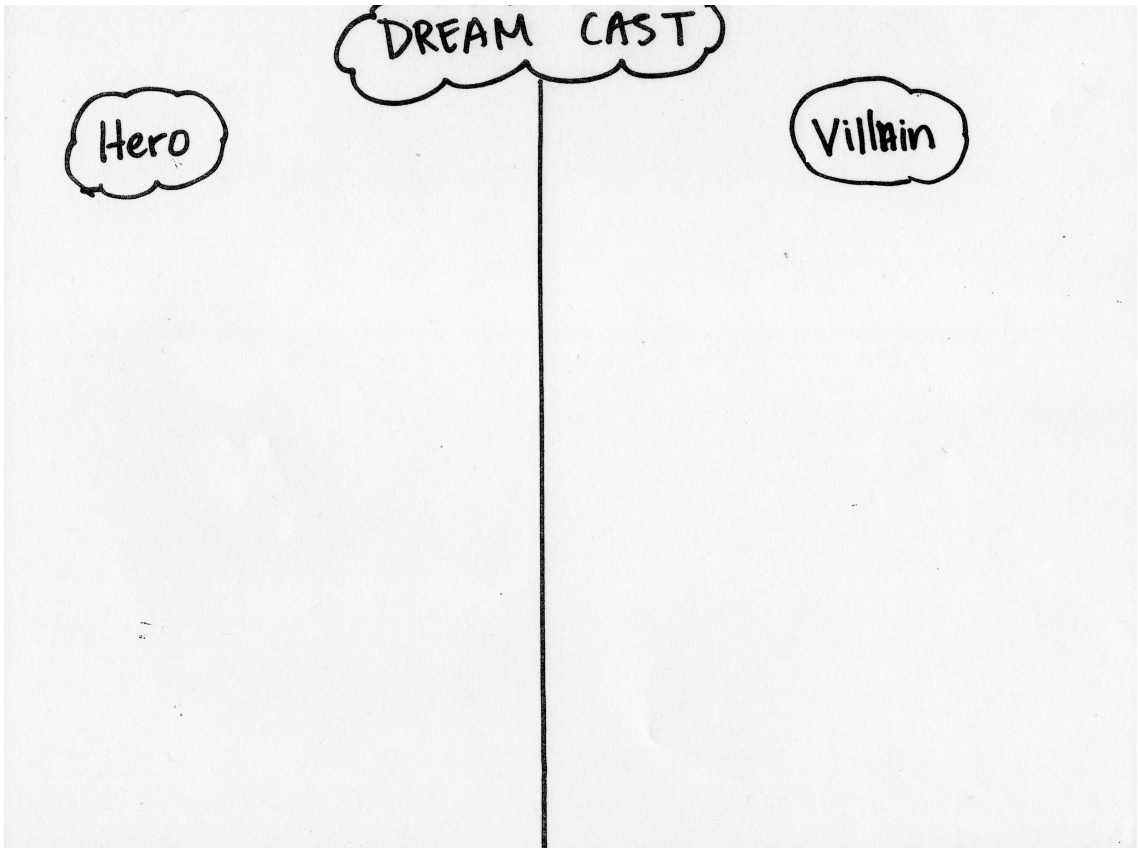
Setting ②

Conflict ③

Resolution ④

name: _____

Teacher: _____



B2: STORYBOARD WORKSHEET

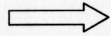
Name:

Teacher:

Storyboard

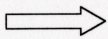
Title of Comic Book: _____

Beginning



1	2	3
---	---	---

4	5	6
---	---	---



Ending

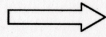
Nombre:

Maestro/a:

Guión Gráfico

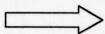
Título de cómic: _____

El principio



1	2	3
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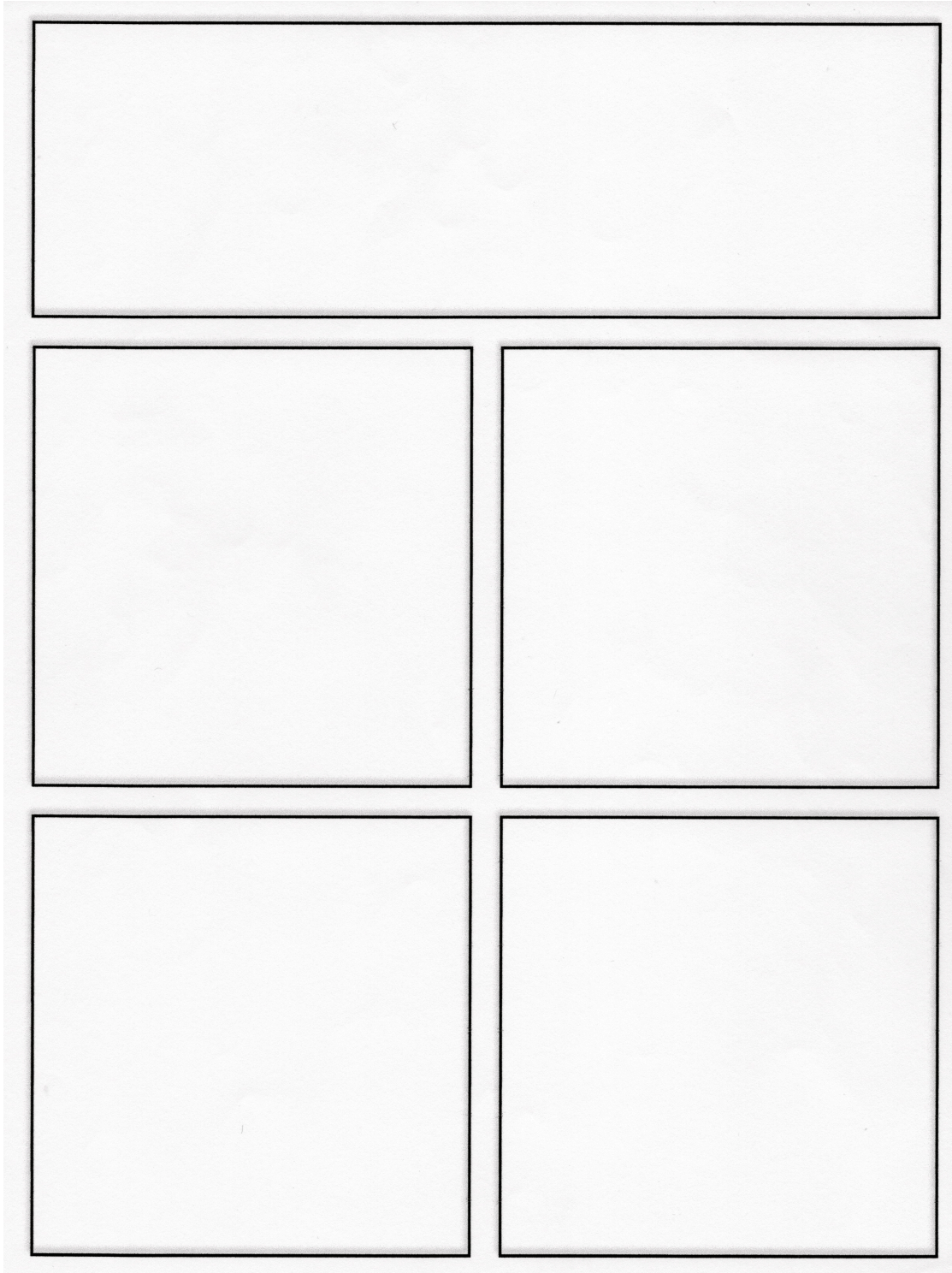
4	5	6
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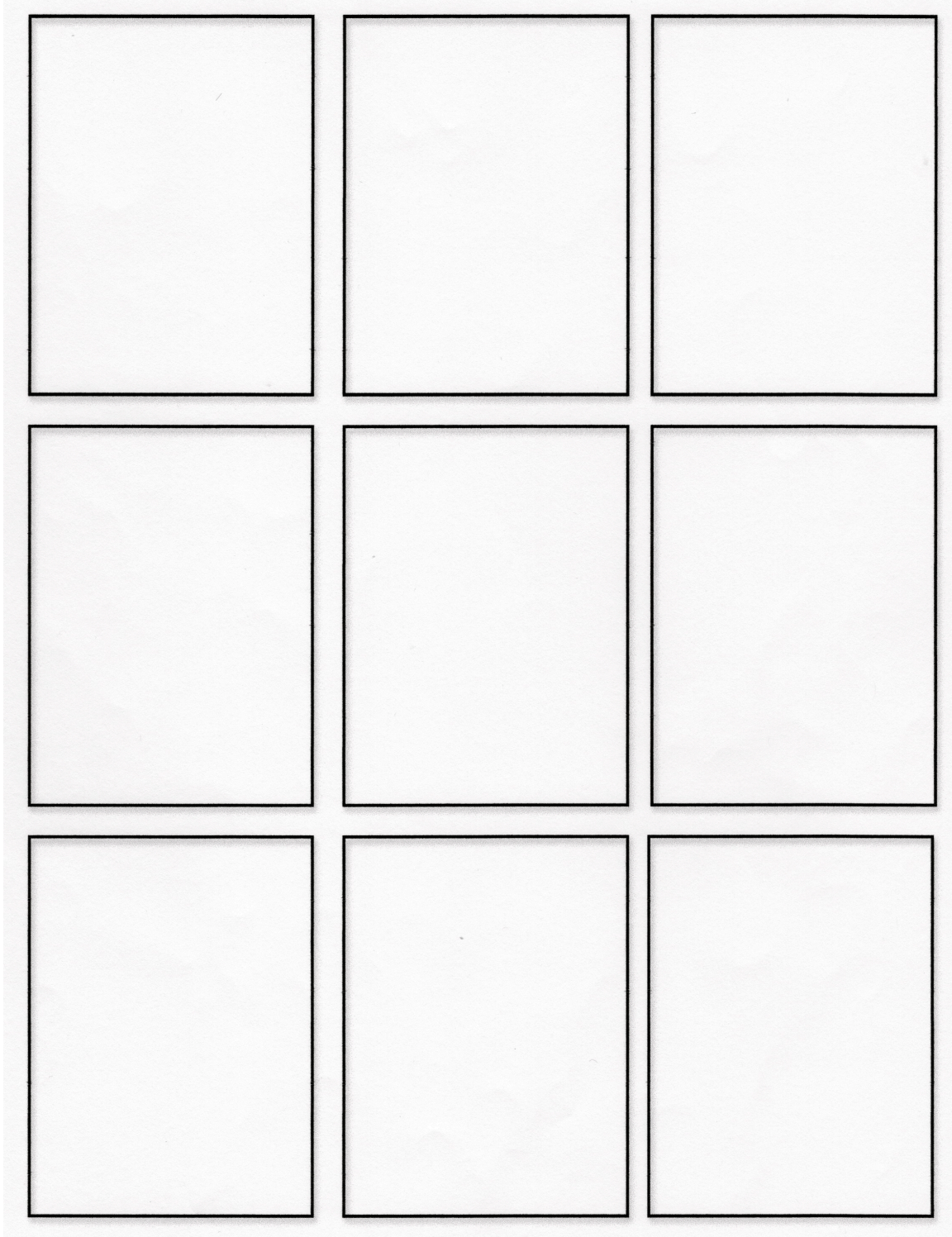
El final

B3: PANEL FRAMES

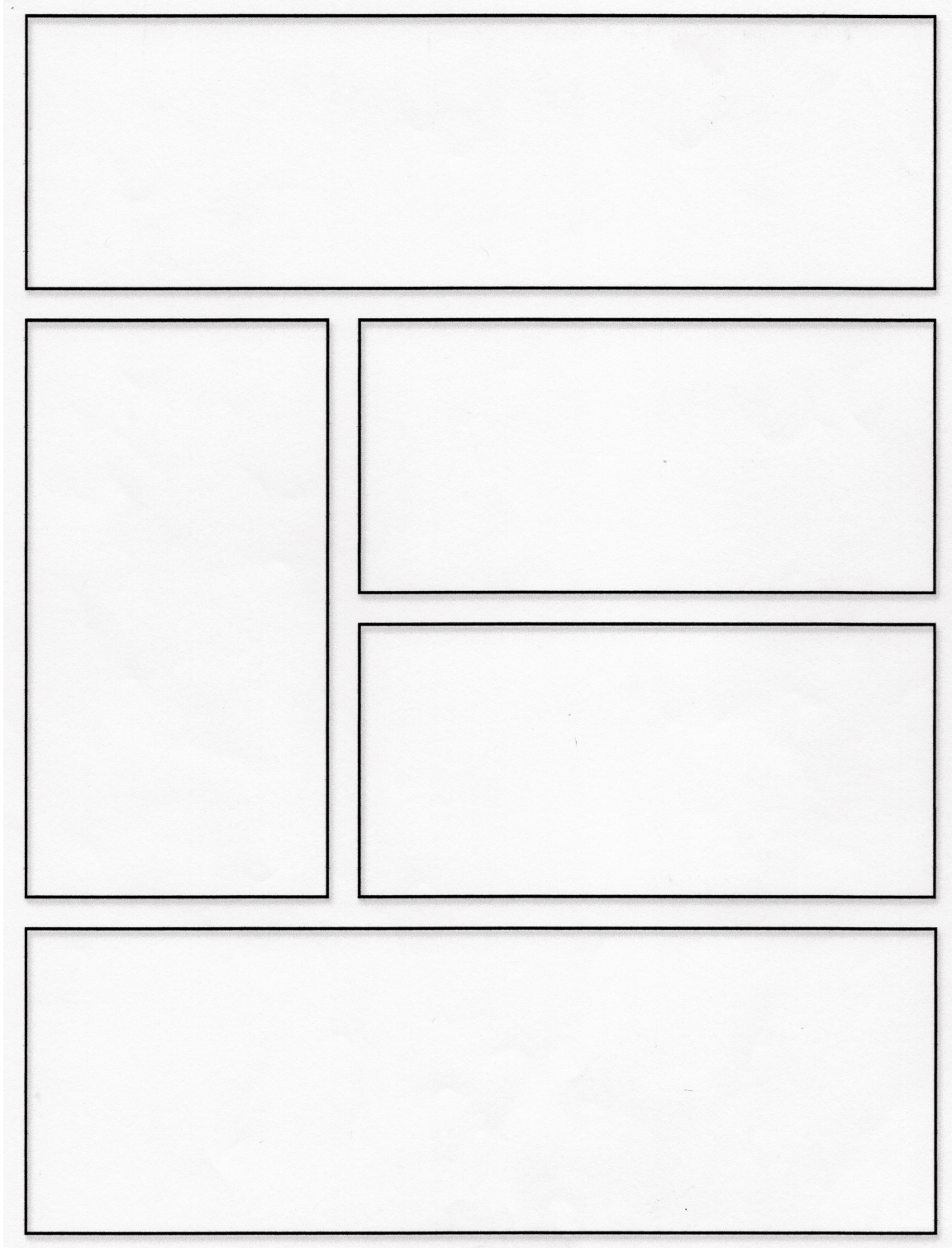
Layout 1



Layout 2



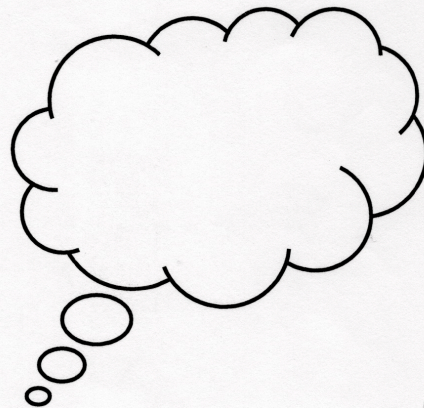
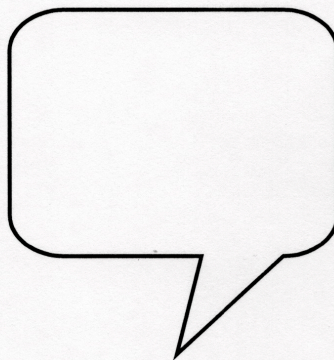
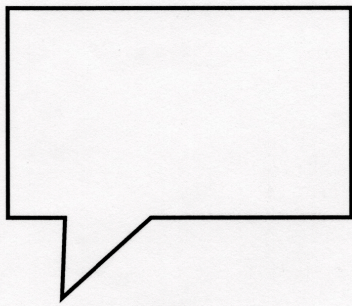
Layout 3



B4: SPEECH BALLOONS


Speech Balloons


Globos de diálogo





B5: WORD WALL

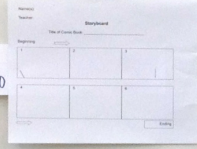
Vocabulary / Vocabulario


Title → Título 

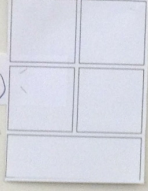
Setting → escenario (¿dónde ocurre la historia?) 


Speech balloons / Globo de dialogo 


Character / Carácter 

Storyboard / Guión gráfico 

Comic Book → Revista de historietas / libros de comics 

Panel (los cuadros para dibujar la historia) 

Artist - Artista 

Writer → Escritor 

Plot → Estoria (de que se trata)

B6: COMIC BOOK EXAMPLES



Henderson, S. "Flipper Follies." *Spongebob Freestyle Funnies* (2014), United Plankton Pictures.



Kochalka, J. "Happy Halloween, Johnny Boo!" Tricky Treaters (2012), Top Shelf Kids Club.

B7: VIDEO STILLS



Blitz, Bruce. "Make Your Own Comic Book with Bruce Blitz." Online video clip. *YouTube*. YouTube, 15 Oct. 2009. Web. 6 May 2014.



Blitz, Bruce. "Make Your Own Comic Book with Bruce Blitz." Online video clip. *YouTube*. YouTube, 15 Oct. 2009. Web. 6 May 2014.

Appendix C: Follow-Up Questions

C1: QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER

How am I introducing vocabulary to my students?

When I introduce a vocabulary word, I point to the words listed on the board. Each vocabulary word is written in English and Spanish and each word has a picture next to the word. I have all the vocabulary words discussed, listed on the board. So if I say one of the words, I go over to the board and point to the picture next to the word. Throughout the class, students can go over to the board if they've forgotten what something means.

What kinds of physical gestures / body language am I using to teach my students?

There are several things I do to check for understanding. I ask students to put a finger on their nose if they understand, put your hand on your head if you need more help. I also used my hands to show sizes: big and small. To help with vocabulary, I often times use physical gestures and movement to explain a new concept or vocabulary. For example, to discuss some art terms I moved forward to show foreground, moved back to show background and moved up from background to show the middle ground.

How have I used visuals or demonstrations with this lesson?

I use visuals throughout my lessons. The more, the better! Especially with language being a difficulty. Every vocabulary word had a picture for students to visual see what the word meant for the comic project. I also showed examples of students' work to emphasize or point out the things they did that were done really well. An example of a student's work was shown for each step of creating a comic. I showed examples of real, printed comics to introduce the lesson. Students also watched a short video of how to

create a comic, by Bruce Blitz. He really did a great job explaining a simple way to get started creating comics.

What has been the most effective way to help my students learn vocabulary?

Having visual aids next to the vocabulary list has been a very effective way for students to learn new vocabulary. Images help students retain the information longer.

How do I prepare for using physical gestures effectively in my class?

I use physical gestures to check for comprehension. It is a more private way to check their understanding. I also think about concepts involving opposites such as size: big and small. Then I develop gestures to represent these concepts.

How do my students react when I use realia in the classroom? (Student examples, video, actual comic books, etc.)

Any type of media helps students add to the new information given. I believe that videos, comic books, etc. all aid students in making connections that help them retain the information.

What else do I need to know about ESL strategies in order to better teach my students?

I need more information with group work and editing the students' writing. Students also need more opportunities to read aloud to others.

C2: QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Name:

What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?

Where else have you seen a comic book?

Is this your first time creating a comic book?

What other types of activities combine writing and drawing?

Appendix E: Photos of Student Work

Student A Story Web

Story idea ①
PLOT
My story is going to be about a superhero named super Z. Super Z tried to call the people from being robots.

Setting ②
The city.

Conflict ③
A villain named controller faze tried to do call the people to robots.

Resolution ④
super Z gets his powers on and goes chasing the controller. faze

name: _____
Teacher: _____

Student A Dream Cast



Student A Storyboard

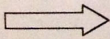
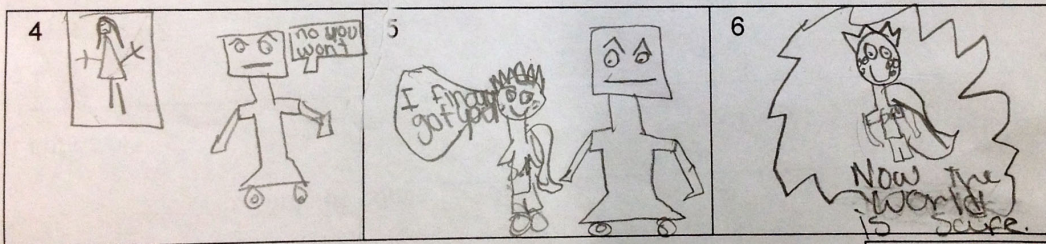
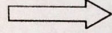
Name:

Teacher:

Storyboard

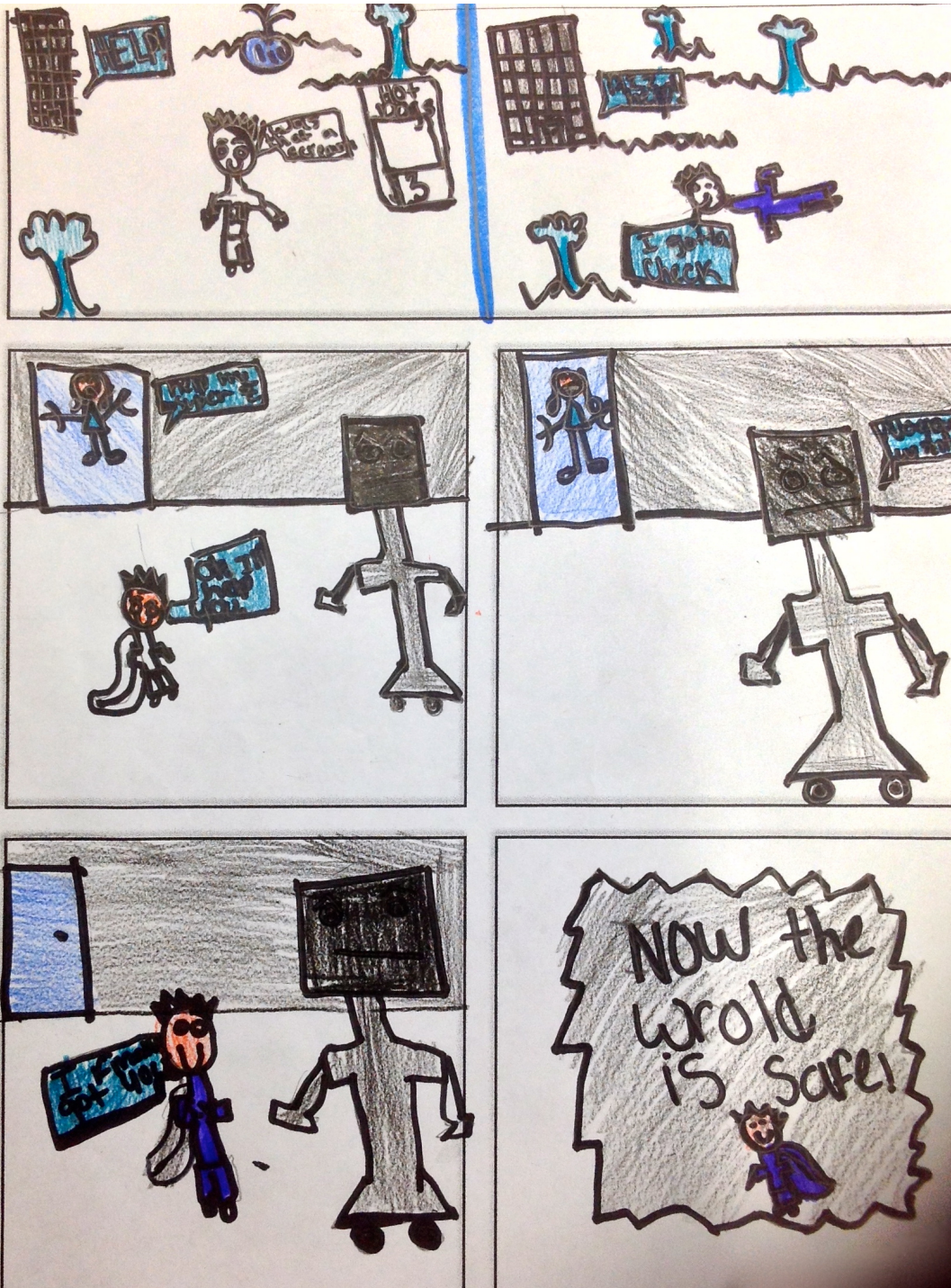
Title of Comic Book: Destroying the controller

Beginning



Ending

Student A Comic Book



Student A Written Response

Name:

What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?

I liked it cause I
could my my own
comic book.

Where else have you seen a comic book?

Library

Is this your first time creating a comic book?

yes

What other types of activities combine writing and drawing?

~~my imagination~~
my ideas

Student B Story Web

Falcon Man
Destroy Mad
Robot.

Story idea ①
PLOT
A super hero that saves the city from a mad robot. The hero has super speed, flies laser eyes, and controls air.

Setting ②
The city

Conflict ③
A robot tries to destroy the city

Resolution ④
The super hero defeats the super robot.

name: _____
Teacher: _____

Student B Dream Cast



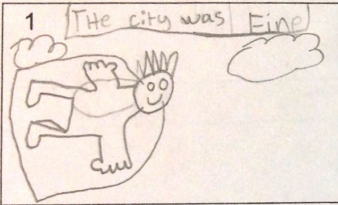
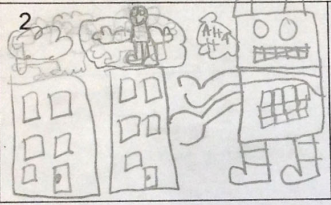
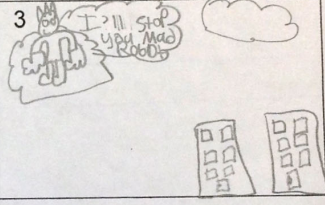
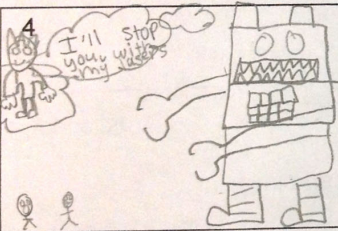
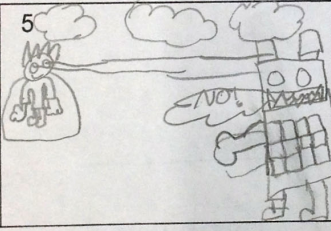
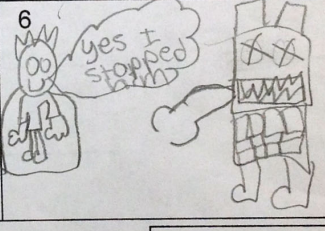
Student B Storyboard

Name: _____
Teacher: _____

Storyboard

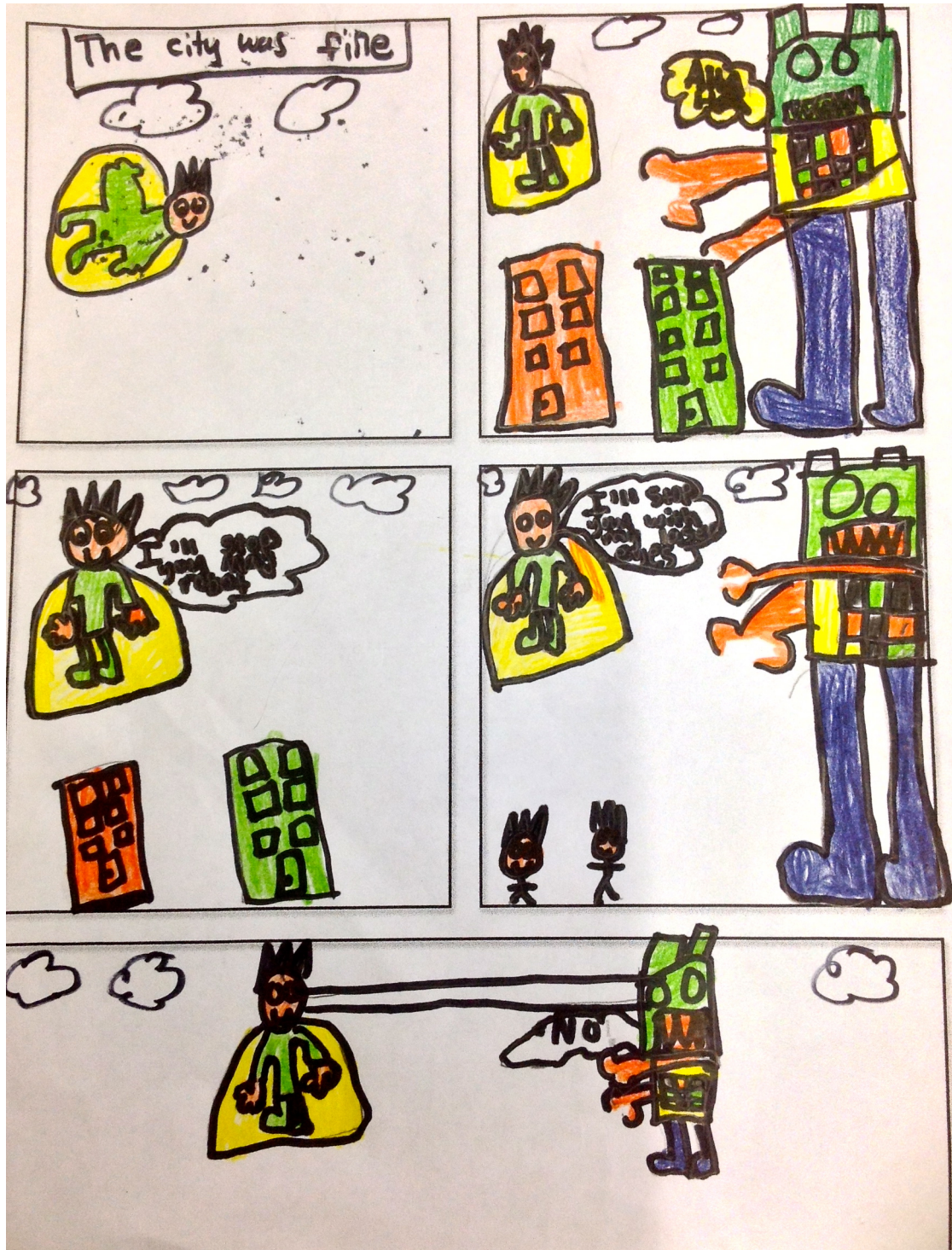
Title of Comic Book: Falcon Man Destroys Mad Robot

Beginning ➔

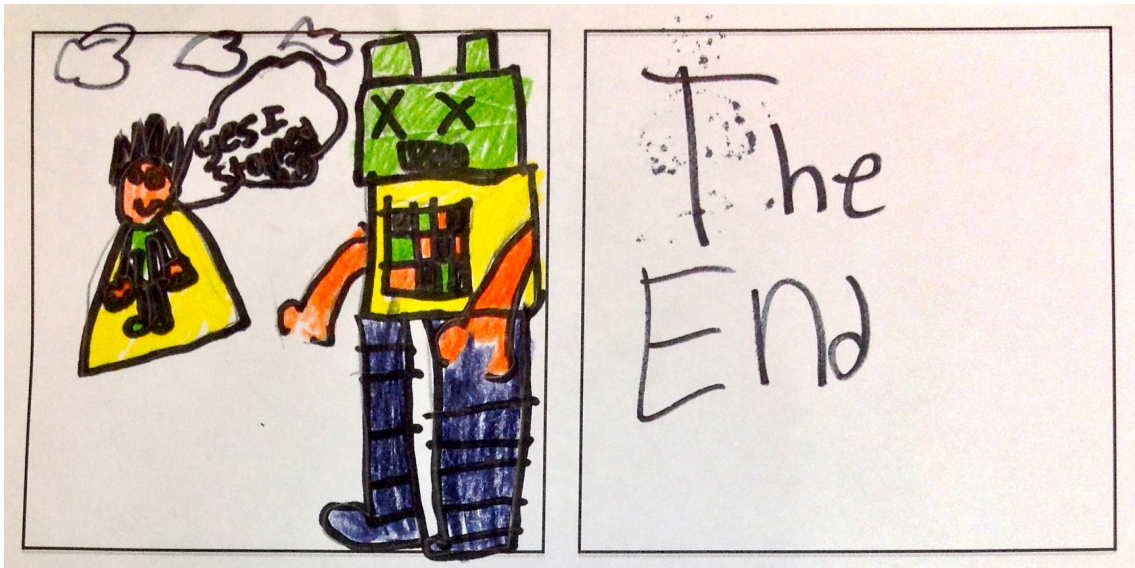
<p>1 The city was fine</p> 	<p>2</p> 	<p>3</p> 
<p>4</p> 	<p>5</p> 	<p>6</p> 

➔ Ending

Student B Comic Book



Student B Comic Book



Student B Written Response

Name:

What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?

I liked everything except tracing it.

Where else have you seen a comic book?

Cereal boxes.

Is this your first time creating a comic book?

Yes.

What other types of activities combine writing and drawing?

Books, some dictionaries.

Student C Story Web

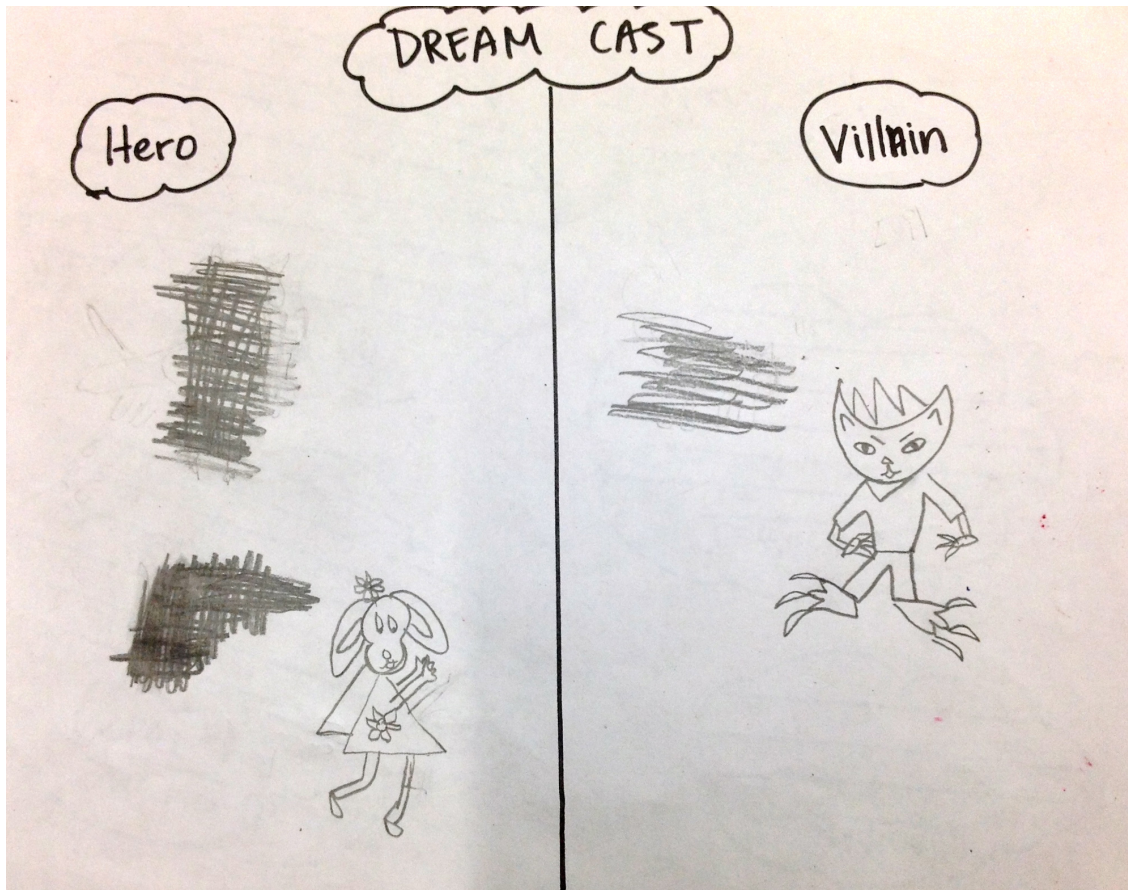
The image shows a student's handwritten story web on lined paper. It consists of four cloud-shaped sections, each with a title and a circled number. The sections are:

- Story idea ① (PLOT):** Contains the text "Some cat at the park destroys it and dog has super powers and hears it and goes to save the park." There are handwritten corrections: "was" above "was" and "hears" above "hears".
- Setting ②:** Contains the text "In a park in the dark."
- Conflict ③:** Contains the text "The cat is taking away the park." A handwritten word "problem" is written above the text.
- Resolution ④:** Contains the text "Dog saves the park from being destroyed from these cats."

At the bottom right of the page, there are two lines for identification:

name: _____
Teacher: _____

Student C Dream Cast



Student C Storyboard

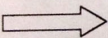
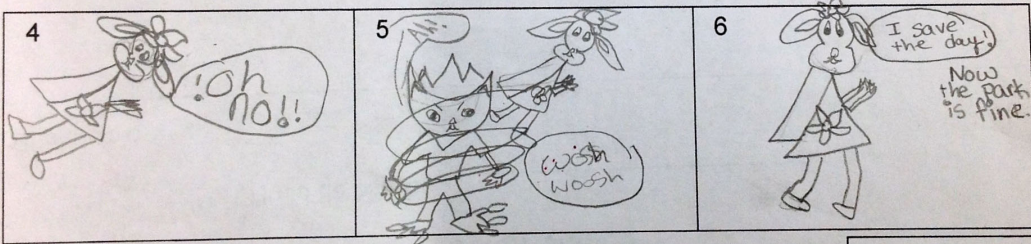
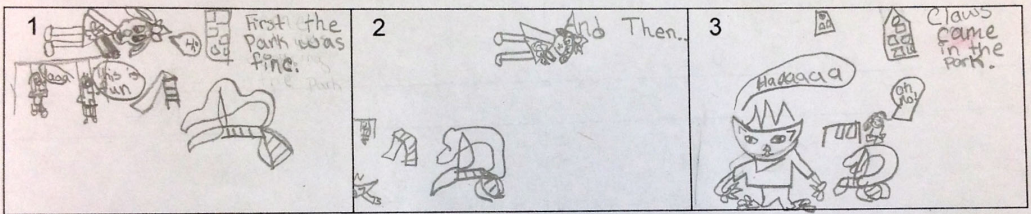
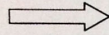
Name:

Teacher:

Storyboard

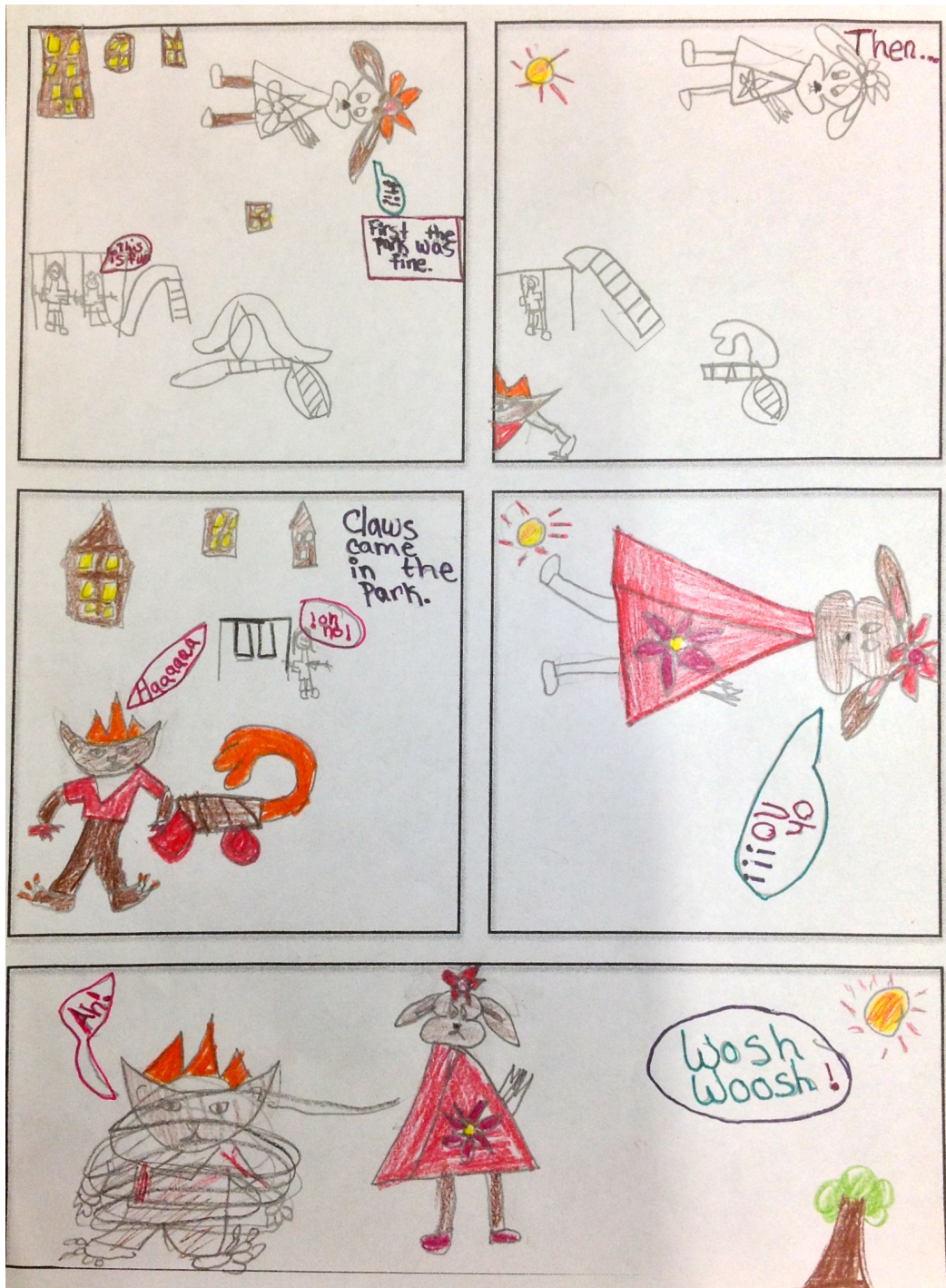
Title of Comic Book: Lucy the hero and claws the mean

Beginning

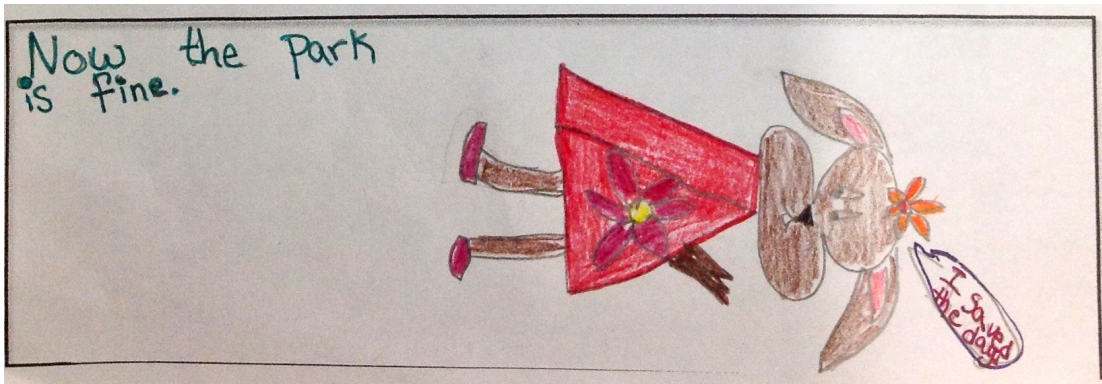


Ending

Student C Comic Book



Student C Comic Book



Student C Written Response

Name:

What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?

I like ~~bit~~ because it was fun. to draw it.

Where else have you seen a comic book?

I seen it in the libary.

Is this your first time creating a comic book?

Yes

What other types of activities combine writing and drawing?

I draw dog and cat and theirs a cat and dog v.s.

Student D Story Web

Story idea (1) PLOT
April name Kimberly
starts busier day in
round mothers day in
school.

Setting (2)
School

Conflict (3)
Lacey
Jennifer wants
to ruin mothers
day to stop the tigers
of making things
the mothers

Resolution (4)
Kimberly
Carter
Jennifer faces her
from stopping the tigers
to day stop for moms.

name: _____
Teacher: _____

Student D Dream Cast



Student D Storyboard

Name:

Teacher:

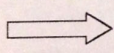
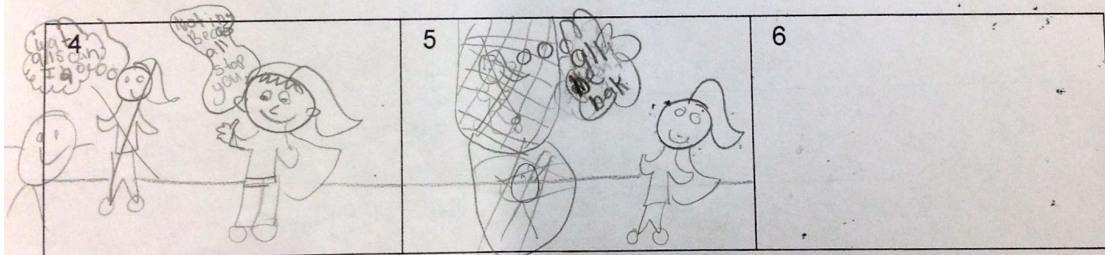
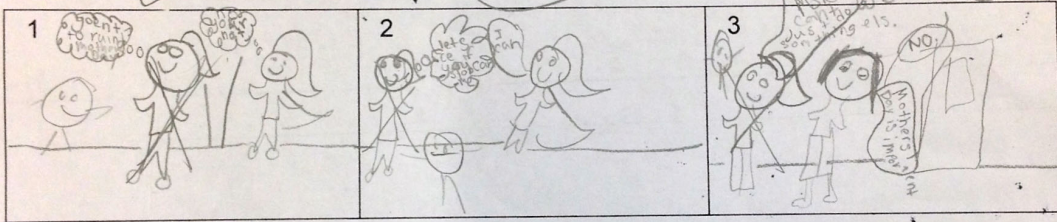
Storyboard

Saves

Title of Comic Book:

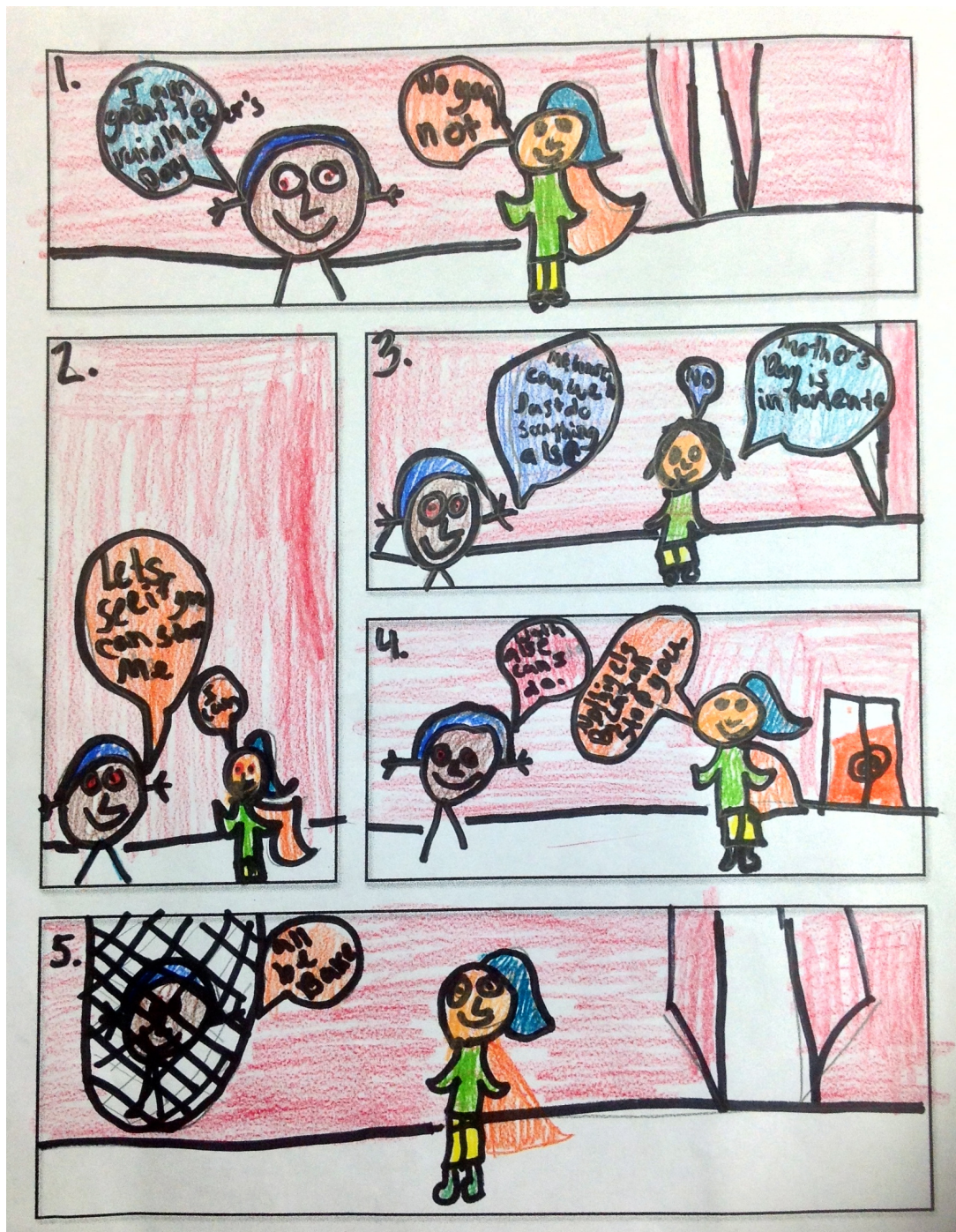
Kimberly Saves the day

Beginning



Ending

Student D Comic Book



Student D Written Response

Name:

What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?

I liked because there was a superhero.

Where else have you seen a comic book?

Lidery

Is this your first time creating a comic book?

Yes

What other types of activities combine writing and drawing?

books

Appendix F: Consent Forms

F1: LETTER TO TEACHER

Ana Rivera,

I am writing to inform you of a research study I will be conducting at Texas Elementary School. The focus of my research is to utilize ESL (English as a second language) methods to improve the writing skills of English language learners. I plan to develop a list of ESL strategies and a writing / drawing lesson. I would like to ask your consent to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, I would like to conduct an interview with you. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes and will be audio-recorded. The topic of the interview will cover information regarding ESL strategies and art education. I will transcribe our interview to include as data for my study. I would also like to collaborate with you to develop a writing / drawing lesson. If you agree to participate, I would like to meet once a week to discuss lesson development and student progress. Additionally, you are welcome to adapt this lesson for use in your classroom. If you agree to teach this collaborative lesson, I would like to photograph your students' writing and artwork. I will provide a letter, parental permission and child assent forms for the parents of your students. All information will be confidential and labeled with pseudonyms. Please see the attached consent form for more information.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Treviño
Art Teacher

F2: TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Consent for Participation in Research

Title: ESL Writing Strategies for Art Instruction

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will answer any of your questions. Read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your consent.

Purpose of the Study

You have been asked to participate in a research study about using art to support English as a second language and bilingual programs. The purpose of this study is to help improve the writing skills of English language learners.

What will you to be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

Teacher

- Participate in an interview, within one week after signing the consent form. . Approximately 30 minutes, audio-recorded, interview location: Texas Elementary School, art classroom. Audio-recording is not required for participation in the study.
- Meet once a week to discuss lesson development and student progress. First follow up meeting will take place approximately one week after interview. Meeting location: Texas Elementary School, art classroom.
- I will discuss the implementation of the lesson plan in the art classroom to follow normal classroom activities.
- This study will take 4 weeks and will involve the collection of student artwork and writing. The student's artwork and writing will be photographed only with parent and student permission.

What are the risks involved in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

There will be no direct benefits to participants in the study. However possible benefits of participation include encourages teacher collaboration, supports the development

of ESL strategies, and provides resources for ELLs. Benefits to the field of study include encourages student success, supports bilingual education, and encourages collaborative action research in art education.

Do you have to participate?

No, your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate at all or, if you start the study, you may withdraw at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin or Lejana ISD.

Will there be any compensation?

You will not receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you participate in this research study?

I will label data with pseudonym names for the art teacher, administrator, students and school district. Collected data, both hard copy and electronic format, will be stored on a password protected flash drive and in a locked file box at my personal residence. All electronic data will be deleted and paperwork will be shredded after earning my master's degree.

If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to you will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with you, or with your participation in any study.

If you choose to participate in this study, you may choose to be audio recorded. Audio-recordings will be deleted and transcripts will be shredded upon completion of my master's degree. Consent forms will be shredded 3 years from the date my thesis is received by the graduate school.

Whom to contact with questions about the study?

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher, Cynthia Treviño, for any questions. This study has been reviewed and approved by The University Institutional Review Board and the study number is 2013-10-0045.

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?

For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Participation

If you would like to participate please sign and return this form. You will receive a copy of this form.

Signature

You have been informed about this study’s purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. Please sign this form if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. You do not need to sign this form if you disagree to participate in this study. Please indicate if you agree or disagree to be audio-recorded. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____ I AGREE to be audio-recorded.

_____ I DISAGREE to be audio-recorded.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits, and the risks involved in this research study.

Print Name of Person obtaining consent

Signature of Person obtaining consent

Date

F3: LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I am an art teacher in the district and a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin. I am writing to inform you of a research study I will be conducting in collaboration with Ana Rivera, art teacher at Texas Elementary School. I would like to ask permission to photograph your child's writing and artwork. I would like to examine ESL (English as a second language) methods to improve the writing skills of English language learners. I plan to develop a list of ESL strategies and a writing / drawing lesson. Mrs. Rivera will teach this lesson to her 4th grade students. Your child will participate in class discussions, writing, and drawing activities. During this time I will meet with Mrs. Rivera once a week to discuss the lesson. I would like to photograph your child's artwork and writing if you agree to sign the parental permission form. Your child's signature is also needed on the child assent form. Your child's face or identity will not be included. Your child's name will not be attached to any documentation. Further, there is no academic penalty if you disagree to have your child's artwork and writing photographed. Please sign and date the forms and return them to Mrs. Rivera or I as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact me to set up a meeting. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Treviño
Art Teacher

F4: PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Parental Permission for Children Participation in Research

Title: ESL Writing Strategies for Art Instruction

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will describe the study to you and answer all your questions. Read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to allow the researcher to photograph your child's artwork and writing. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree, this form will be used to record your permission.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to help improve the writing skills of English language learners (ELLs). If you agree, your child's artwork and writing will be photographed. Collected data, both hard copy and electronic format, will be stored on a password protected flash drive and in a locked file box at my personal residence. All photographs of student artwork and writing will be deleted after my thesis is sent to graduate school. Parent permission and child assent forms will be shredded 3 years from the date my thesis is received by the graduate school.

What is my child going to be asked to do?

If you allow your child to participate in this study, they will be asked to participate in a discussion about their writing experiences. Your child will also write and draw about these experiences. This study will take approximately four weeks and there will be approximately 30 students involved in this study.

What are the risks involved in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

There will be no direct benefits to participants in the study. However, possible benefits include improved writing skills and provides resources for ELLs. Benefits to the field of study include encourages student success, supports bilingual education, and encourages collaborative action research in art education.

Does my child have to participate?

No, your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect their relationship with The University of Texas at Austin or Lejana ISD in anyway.

What if my child does not want to participate?

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study. If your child does not want to participate they will not be included in the study and there will be no penalty. If your child initially agrees to be in the study they can change their mind later without any penalty.

Will there be any compensation?

Neither you nor your child will receive any type of payment participating in this study.

How will your child's privacy and confidentiality be protected if s/he participates in this research study?

Your child's privacy and the confidentiality of his/her data will be protected by the use of pseudonym names. Photographs of students' writing and artwork will not contain any names or personal information about the students. Parent and student permission is needed to take photographs of student writing and artwork.

If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to your child will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your child's research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your child's participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with your child, or with your child's participation in any study.

Whom to contact with questions about the study?

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher, Cynthia Treviño, for any questions. This study has been reviewed and approved by The University Institutional Review Board and the study number is 2013-10-0045.

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?

For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Signature

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow them to participate in the study. If you later decide that you wish to withdraw your permission for your child to participate in the study you may discontinue his or her participation at any time. You will be given a copy of this document.

Printed Name of Child

Signature of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

F5: CHILD ASSENT FORM

Child Assent for Participation in Research

Title: ESL Writing Strategies for Art Instruction

Introduction

You have been asked to be in a research study about writing and drawing. This study was explained to your parents and they said that you could be in it if you want to. I am doing this study to help bilingual students improve their writing skills.

What am I going to be asked to do?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a class discussion about your writing experiences. You will also write and draw about these experiences. This study will take about four weeks and there will be about 20 other students in this study. Your artwork and writing will be photographed if you agree and sign this form.

What are the risks involved in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

Do I have to participate?

No, participation is voluntary. You should only be in the study if you want to. You can even decide you want to be in the study now, and change your mind later. No one will be upset. If you would like to participate please sign this form and return it to your art teacher. You will receive a copy of this form so if you want to you can look at it later.

Will I get anything to participate?

You will not receive any type of payment participating in this study.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

The records of this study will be kept private. Your responses may be used for a future study by these researchers or other researchers.

Whom to contact with questions about the study?

Prior, during or after your participation contact the researcher Cynthia Treviño, for any questions or if you feel that you have been harmed.

Signature

Writing your name on this page means that the page was read by or to you and that you agree to be in the study. If you have any questions before, after or during the study, ask the person in charge. If you decide to quit the study, all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix G: LISD Executive Summary

Description of Study

During this study, I observed and documented learning strategies used in the art classroom at Texas Elementary School in the Lejana Independent School District. In conducting this study, I collaborated with Ana Rivera, the art teacher at Texas Elementary School. My focus of this study was to research English as a second language (ESL) strategies and modify them for art instruction to help improve writing skills for English language learners (ELLs). I conducted interviews with Mrs. Rivera and analyzed our discussions throughout the process. The study concluded with a final writing / art lesson that I shared with Rivera. She taught this lesson to 4th grade students, specifically ELLs. Mrs. Rivera also shared photos of her students' artwork and writing samples with me. Art teachers can utilize this lesson and suggested ESL writing strategies to develop and implement teaching strategies that will benefit all students. This research will assist the field of art education because it contributes to the development of much needed resources for ELLs. This study also supports ESL / bilingual programs in Lejana ISD.

Research Questions

What kinds of ESL strategies can be modified for art instruction to help improve writing skills for 4th grade English language learners in the Lejana Independent School District?

Sub-Questions

How can art teachers include vocabulary development in their instruction?

What kinds of physical gestures and body language can art teachers use to check for student comprehension?

How can art teachers use visual aids and demonstrations to support ESL instruction?

Lesson Plan: Creating a Comic Book

Objective

Students will combine writing and drawing to create a comic book using a story web, story board and panel frames.

Materials

- Pencils
- Sharpeners
- Erasers
- Markers
- Crayons
- Colored Pencils

Vocabulary / Vocabulario

- Title / Título
- Speech Balloon / Globo de diálogo
- Storyboard / Guión gráfico
- Panel (los cuadros para dibujar la estoria)
- Plot / Estoria (de que se trata)
- Setting / Escenario (Donde oARuré la estoria?)
- Character / Carácter
- Comic Book / Revista de historietas o libro de comics
- Artist / Artista
- Writer / Escritor

Think - Pair - Share

Where have you seen a comic book?

What kinds of comics do you like to read?

What do you like best about comic book?

Resources

- Story Web / Dream Cast Worksheet
- Storyboard Worksheet
- Panel Frames
- Word Wall
- Video: Bruce Blitz – Make Your Own Comic Book.
- Comic Book Examples
- Speech Balloon Hand-Out

Student Questions

What did you like or dislike about creating your comic book?

Where else have you seen a comic book?

Is this your first time creating a comic book?

What other types of activities combine writing and drawing?

Day One

The teacher introduced the lesson to the students by showing a video about creating comic books. The video emphasized that a comic book should include a story with a cast of characters, plot, setting, conflict and resolution. The teacher also showed an

example of an actual comic book. The teacher directed the students to include no more than four characters. The students began filling out their story web and dream cast worksheet.

Day Two

The students continued working on their story web and dream cast worksheets. After the students completed their work, they began drawing each scene of their story using a storyboard worksheet. The teacher instructed the students to distinguish the foreground, middle ground and background in their drawings.

Day Three

The students continued working on their storyboard worksheet. After finishing their work, they began outlining and coloring in their comic book using the panel frames. The teacher showed examples of speech balloon images using the document camera and projector.

Day Four

The students completed their comic books and then answered four questions about the lesson. The teacher encouraged the students to read their comic book to a friend or family member.

Recommended ESL Strategies

- (a) Help develop vocabulary using word walls with terms and definitions written in English and the students' native language.

- (b) Use physical gestures to check for comprehension, such as the student touching their nose if they understand or touching their head if they need more help. Gestures are also useful for conveying concepts such as size, foreground, middle ground and background.
- (c) Utilize visuals and demonstrations to support ELL students. This includes pictures next to the vocabulary words, actual comic books, and lesson resources (e.g. speech balloon hand-out).

Suggestions for Art Teachers

Support Native Languages

Art teachers can improve vocabulary development with word walls that include English and native language translations. Vocabulary words should also include visual representations. Teachers may speak to students in their native language if possible. Allow students to speak, read and write in their native language.

Create Connections Between Home and School

Encourage students to share what they have learned with others at home and in the community. Students may read to others including friends, family members and peers. Teachers and parents should read aloud to students as often as possible.

Encourage Rigorous Thinking

Students can engage in critical thinking when teachers ask thought provoking questions. Art educators can use questioning and discussion techniques such as think-pair-share to encourage rigorous thinking. Teachers may also use gestures to explain concepts and check for comprehension.

Edit Student Writing

Have students engage in quick writes and journal reflections. Peer editing activities can be utilized to help students improve their writing skills. Art teachers should provide feedback to students by editing and responding to their writing.

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