Multimodal Literacy: Journey Through the Collaborative Transmediation of Wordless Picturebooks

Catherine Todd Thomson

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MULTIMODAL LITERACY:
JOURNEY THROUGH THE COLLABORATIVE TRANSMEDIATION
OF WORDLESS PICTUREBOOKS

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION
LITERACY LEADERSHIP

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
August 2017

Approved by:

Judith Dunkerly Bean (Co-Chair)
Kristine Sunday (Co-Chair)
Peter Baker (Member)
With a shift towards 21\textsuperscript{st} century literacy practices and a greater variety of literature, the mere definitions of literacy and text are shifting. The focus on traditional text that heavily relies on words and supporting pictures to convey meaning has changed to text of multiple modes. Teachers are now charged with fostering new skills in students in order to help them engage with these texts effectively and to allow them to make meaning of the multimodal texts that surround them (Siegel, 2006).

In this qualitative case study, the primary investigator assumed a dual role as the classroom teacher and researcher in order to examine the meaning-making process and find trends in students’ learning, particularly in the context of a social constructivist learning environment. The study examined a group of ten first graders in an independent school setting as they explored and constructed meaning of the wordless picturebook, \textit{Trainstop}, by Barbara Lehman. This genre offered an opportunity to examine meaning-making without the constraints of decoding and interpreting written text (Serafini, 2014). Students were asked to collaboratively read the book and transmediate their meanings by creating a digital book with the iPad application, Book Creator. This afforded them a means to create collaborative versions of this story on a multimodal platform.
Data collection included video recordings of student exchanges through the processes of reading, rereading, and then creating their meaning in the form of their digital book. Video transcriptions, researcher’s notes and reflections, as well as the final digital books were examined for paths of meaning-making and collaborative exchanges. The findings show how each pair approached the text differently, assumed distinctive roles, and used a blend of modes in order to make meaning of the wordless picturebook. Students collaborated to navigate, interpret, interrogate, and design their stories (Serafini, 2012), but this process also highlighted how the collaborative environment provided a means to discover performative meaning in their stories. As they blended their transactions to create a collaborative poem, these modes of reading translated into modes of creating without losing this performative nature.
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To my sons, Elliot and Landon… I hope that my journey inspires you to make the most of your many journeys to come.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every journey involves choices, decisions, changing, and learning; and my journey was no exception. I am so thankful for those who influenced my path and inspired me to follow it through to completion.

I have to start with an individual who inspired me to start this journey to begin with – Dr. Sharon Phillips. You have been with me from my early days of teaching and helped mold me into the teacher that I am today. Thank you for seeing my potential, for modeling positive leadership, and for sharing your own educational aspirations and visions with me. Your accolades whispered to me through these past several years, coaching me through tough classes and assignments, and motivating me to keep going. You will always be an inspiration to me, my friend.

Of course, I encountered a number of people who influenced my journey at Old Dominion University. There was not a professor who did not challenge my thinking or impact my learning. To my faithful graduate advisor, Dr. Charlene Fleener, I especially thank you for your guidance through my program. I am so thankful I was able to learn from you both as an advisor and as a professor. Thank you for your insight to recognize the kind of compassion and inspiration that I would need to get me through the dissertation process and for seeing those qualities in my fabulous committee members. To Dr. Peter Baker, I thank you for your calming demeanor, your sense of humor, and your ability to stretch my thinking and performance without causing me to feel overwhelmed. To Drs. Kristine Sunday and Judith Dunkerly Bean, I am so thankful for the nudge you gave me to explore reading comprehension through a multimodal lens. After every meeting with you, I left not only with new insight and perspective, but I also left with a replenished sense of motivation and energy. You challenged me and inspired me to
reflect on my own teaching practices. The knowledge that I gained through this process, with your guidance, has been invaluable. You have not seen the last of me.

There are numerous individuals who supported me throughout this process. My friends – I dare not try to list you by name for I will inevitably leave someone out who touched me over the past seven years – thank you always for your encouragement and friendship. To Cleteus Smith, my fearless leader, I thank you for your continued words of praise and inspiration, for your recognition of the importance of reflection in order to improve, and your faith in me both as a teacher and as a colleague. I am thankful for your excitement to dream big as well as your guidance and support in implementing new, innovative approaches. To my school family, who has watched me try to juggle my roles of teacher, mother, student, and wife, thank you for your cheers and support when I needed them. I am especially thankful for my work spouse, my friend, my partner in crime, Emily Lindale. I truly believe that my journey would not have been the same had you not entered into it just a few years back. You have inspired me in countless ways. I treasure our abilities to reflect and grow, our tendencies to challenge each other, and especially our excitement to explore new paths. No matter where our journeys lead, you will be an integral part of mine. I am eternally grateful for your partnership and your friendship.

To my family, I am not sure I could find the words to thank each one of you for how you have shaped my life. Mom and Dad, you instilled in me a determination to accept challenges and to see them through; to have fun while working hard; and to follow my passion. I am so thankful that you were part of my final process to see how this journey changed me and to see my world of teaching through my eyes. To my siblings, Courtney, Craig, and Carolyn, you have each impacted my path in your own ways. I have always admired different aspects of your lives, whether as parents, as professionals, or as individuals, and I feel blessed for our eclectic family.
I am thankful that my kids experience boundless love and inspiration from you all. I do thank Elliot and Landon for their patience with me as I disappeared on weekends and mornings to work. I can only hope that my determination inspires you to always put your best into whatever you do. I love imagining where your paths may lead you, and I am so excited to be a part of those journeys to come. To my husband, Tyler, who certainly did not anticipate this journey when we married years ago, I especially thank you. To say that I couldn’t have done this without you is an understatement. You supported me in every possible way. You encouraged me when I doubted myself. You listened when I needed to think out loud. You believed in me, and I love you for that. I am already enjoying our journey to the next station… wherever that may be.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Books are the plane and the train and the road. They are the destination and the journey.” This quote by Anna Quindlen (1998, p. 22) capitulates the essence of why we read. We read to experience new places, new feelings, new information. We read to learn, to grow, and to change. Much of that journey begins even before they step foot into my first grade classroom, but the journey often takes students to new heights during this developmental time.

Each year, my little group of first graders never ceases to amaze me. These six-year-olds undergo such great transformation throughout the year. They are naturally equipped with a great curiosity, but when they are provided a safe, supportive environment, they gain a sense of independence to explore, interact, and learn. One of the most evident areas of growth is in their literacy skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Not only do these first graders gain skills to decode and accurately read more complex text as the year progresses, but their tendencies to think and talk about text grows in sophistication. As their teacher, my aim is to guide their thinking as I teach them strategies to navigate text and to make meaning of the world around them.

As a first grade teacher, I have several primary duties in the classroom. First and foremost, I must ensure that the learning environment that I sustain is safe and inviting for learning to take place. My next responsibility is to ensure that my students are learning and growing – especially as readers. I have embraced various theories of teaching and learning that are supported in the research, such as social constructivism and transactional reading response theory. Through my years of experience, I have learned to partner these theories with the
constraints of the classroom in order to provide a blend of teacher modeling with individual and collaborative exploration, especially with literacy skills such as reading and writing.

As a teacher researcher, I seize any opportunity to reflect upon and improve my understanding of children’s learning and thinking in order to instill more effective guidance in my lessons and interactions with the students. This research project stems from that desire to learn about the thought process of my students – to follow the journey they embark upon from the moment they encounter a new book through the navigation process of their first reading, their exchange of interpretations and interrogations, and finally to the designs of their collaborative transactions.

This qualitative interpretivist case study stemmed in part from a specific moment that occurred within the context of a comprehension lesson with my first graders. In reflection of this moment, I realized that my focus on reading thus far had been very much dependent on the textual features of stories. My reading pedagogy centered primarily on teaching reading and thinking strategies needed to decipher meaning in order to be thoughtful about text and verbalize this comprehension. What I realized was missing was a more direct focus on the multimodal aspect of reading – incorporating the visual skills that drive much of my young friends’ comprehension, along with the different modes of interpretation they use as they read. This led me to explore what the research reveals about how primary students make meaning as they explore multimodal text, how they can also create their own meaning through transmediation using these various modes, and how this fits within the established social constructivist environment in my classroom.

To understand the premise of this study, I found it important to provide a sense of the social constructivist environment that has been established over the course of the year as well as the
application of transactional reading responses currently in place. This includes the format of our literacy instruction - from teacher modeling to student collaborative exchanges and independent response activities.

**Social Constructivism**

Constructivist classrooms come in all shapes and sizes, but the fundamental principle is that learning is a process where students are actively engaged in making meaning. Vygotsky (1962) supported the social aspect of constructivism, which asserts that students learn within a social context first before developing independence with new skills and knowledge. He supported that “people construct their knowledge, not only from direct personal experience, but also from being told by others and being shaped through social experience and interaction” (Reusser, 2001, p. 2058). He proposed that instruction should be within a student’s zone of proximal development, include appropriate scaffolding needed for support, and engage students in language to encourage learning.

**Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Just as content and interest level play important roles in the success a learner will have when attempting new skills, the appropriateness of the expectations of learning is also important to consider. Vygotsky (1978) titled this a child’s zone of proximal development, which he defined as “the distance between the actual development level determined by individual problem solving and the level of development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 56-57). There is a great difference between what a student can do independently, what they could do successfully with the support of a peer, and what may be just challenging enough that the support of the teacher is needed. These independent, instructional, and frustrational levels needs to be considered for every literacy task.
in which a child engages. Based on this notion, I have established a classroom model that allows for a mix of grouped, paired, and individualized reading practice in order to provide opportunity to scaffold the instruction and practice that students need to become readers.

**Scaffolding**

Vygotsky (1978) first developed the idea of scaffolding to illustrate the level of support that a teacher offers to a student until the student is independent in that action. The scaffolding process is thus a series of stepping-stones as the student strives to reach independence. Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) criticize that the notion of scaffolding implies that the adult is in charge of the process of learning by providing a structure to which a child responds. They argue that the term tracking is more fitting to literacy instruction, as the adult makes instructional considerations according to how the child is responding and progressing. Regardless of the term used to describe this process, a critical step in literacy instruction is monitoring student progress in order to provide appropriate support and foster growth.

The comprehension lessons in my classroom follow a scaffolded approach based on the gradual release of responsibility framework (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983); that is, it is structured in such a way to allow for opportunities of modeling, guided practice, collaborative practice, and independent practice of reading based on varying levels of skill and need (Vygotsky, 1962). This model of instruction does not mirror a linear path, but rather ebbs and flows in response to student needs. Sometimes more modeling is required. Sometimes students need more opportunities to practice while other students are ready to tackle more complex text and stretch their thinking in new ways (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). As a facilitator of their learning, I continuously monitor their progress and reflect on ways to meet individual needs.
Because the ultimate goal of the reading program is to build independent readers, the focus of instruction centers both on the process of decoding text to accurately and fluently read the words as well as the comprehension strategies needed to monitor understanding while reading. Based on research that suggests young children can develop thinking strategies before the time they are fluent in decoding more advanced text (Eilers & Pinkley, 2006), I incorporate think-alouds as a part of the modeling process to demonstrate this type of thinking and to foster the metacognition of these strategies (Ness, 2011). Trade books are often read multiple times in order to capture more details through extended opportunities of applying these comprehension strategies and monitoring our thinking. Such strategies include making connections, self-questioning, visualizing, and inferring. These strategies are introduced in a progression that allows for direct modeling of thinking processes that a reader may experience when implementing strategies, with particular focus on the language that may encourage this type of thinking.

**Language**

Social interchanges between the learner, an expert, and his or her community enhance the learning process (Green & Gredler, 2002). By incorporating opportunities for collaboration, discussion, and interaction between peers as well as with the teacher, language becomes an assistive tool for learning. Vygotsky (1962) proposed “what a child can do today in cooperation, tomorrow he will be able to do on his own” (p.87). Teachers can provide specific language that encompasses a reading strategy, which is also referred to as metalanguage (New London Group, 2000). Students are first encouraged to use dialogue with the teacher to guide their thinking. In a classroom that is structured as a community of learners, these student-teacher interactions are practiced together and then internalized. As the process continues, students engage in dialogue
with peers to collaboratively explore their thinking. This student-teacher communication and student-student communication promotes problem solving in a safe and supported method (Lee & Schmitt, 2014). This “community of practice” builds independent readers and thinkers (Green & Gredler, 2002).

Specific literacy language, used in the context of my classroom, centers on the thinking strategies we practice to enhance our understanding of text. Table 1.1 provides an overview of key phrases that are modeled and practiced through the different units of study we use throughout the year, with the goal that students internalize these phrases to promote the use of these strategies.

Table 1.1

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| Making Connections | *This reminds me of...*  
*When this happened, I felt...* |
| Visualizing | *I can imagine...*  
*I see/feel/hear/taste/smell...* |
| Questioning | *I wonder...*  
*Who/Did what/When/Where/Why/How...* |
| Inferring | *I predict...*  
*When it says .... I think...* |

The language arts block, in my first grade classroom, allows for the modeling of reading behaviors and metalanguage, followed by student engagement with peers to collaboratively explore their thinking or engage in independent reading activities (Pardo, 2004). The curricular structure of this instructional period is outlined in Table 1.2. This structure allows for guided
modeling and practice as well as independent practice; however, most importantly, it allows for
time for students to collaborate in order to learn from each other and expand on their learning.

Table 1.2

*Morning Literacy Block: Sample Daily Schedule and Routines*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 8:50</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Read Aloud</td>
<td>During this time, I typically read a book aloud and focus on modeling and/or practicing a particular comprehension focus with the class. Our focused strategies include monitoring comprehension, retelling, visualizing, making connections, asking questions, and inferring.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8:50 – 9:15| Individual, partner, or small groups | Daily 5 practice | * Following the Daily 5 structure (Boushey & Moser, 2006), students participate in one of the following literacy practices:  
  - **Reading**: Students Read to Self, Read to Someone, or Read with Mrs. Thomson.  
  - **Writing**: Students practice spelling or sight words in Word Work and then proceed to Work on Writing either independently or with a partner.  
  - **Listen to Reading**: Students listen to recorded stories for reinforcement of good fluency, repeated readings, and comprehension practice. During this time, I meet with individuals or partners to monitor students’ progress towards individual reading goals. |
| 9:15 – 9:20| Whole Group                    | Minilesson        | This minilesson typically has a fluency focus, where students come together to read a common poem or piece of literature that is reread to enhance fluency and expressive reading.                                   |
| 9:20 – 9:45| Individual, partner, or small groups | Daily 5 practice | * See above.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9:45 – 9:50| Whole Group                    | Minilesson        | This minilesson typically focuses on vocabulary, whether it reinforces vocabulary from our morning story or a particular grammar unit.                                                                    |
| 9:50 – 10:15| Individual, partner, or small groups | Daily 5 practice | * See above.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
The instructional period involves multiple opportunities for me to provide short lessons with the entire group of first graders. Minilessons are positioned between longer periods of time that allow for individual student practice, collaboration of students, or collaboration with the teacher. Individual student practice may include independent reading or independent reading response activities. Student collaboration may center on partner reading, discussion of a text, or coauthoring written work. Teacher collaboration typically involves an individual conference with a student to read together, to provide support or formative feedback, and to monitor application of comprehension strategies. These conferences sometimes include more than one student who are working on similar reading goals, are collaboratively responding to text, or are in need of similar support. It should be noted that this routine is established gradually over the course of several weeks at the beginning of the school year. Each Daily 5 choice is introduced and practiced in isolation with ample teacher support and feedback. Students build stamina over the months in order to truly work independently and remain focused on tasks for such extended periods of time. The timeline in Table 1.2 reflects the schedule by the end of the year, when the current study took place.

The workshop model provides a structure that allows students in my classroom to observe, discuss, and engage in literacy behaviors used by good readers. This gradual process is monitored throughout, but each unit of study also concludes with a culminating activity that students complete either independently or collaboratively to help me monitor progress. This transactional reading response is meant to formatively assess the use of these strategies while students are engaged in an authentic reading experience (Rosenblatt, 1986; Pearson, Valencia, Wixon, 2014).
Transactional Readers Response Theory

A common approach embedded in reading pedagogy includes the incorporation of a reader’s response activity to capture the comprehension ability of students. In many cases, this approach is based on the transactional reading theory outlined by Rosenblatt (Lewis, 2000). Rosenblatt (1986) emphasized that a transaction occurs between a reader and the text during the reading process that promotes “the poem” (p. 123), which she labeled the meaning created as a result of this transaction. She described this process of comprehension as the following:

A complex, to-and-fro, self-correcting transaction between reader and verbal signs continues until some final organization, more or less complete and coherent, is arrived at and thought of as corresponding to the text. The “meaning” – whether poem, novel, play, scientific report, or legal brief – comes into being during the transaction. (Rosenblatt, 1986, p.123)

Because each reader brings varied levels of skill, experience, and understanding to the reading, each reader’s poem is unique. As indicated in Figure 1.1, this transaction does not occur in a linear path, but rather a fluid and constant cycle.

![Graphic Representation of Rosenblatt’s Transactional Reading Theory (1986).](image)

As the reader contemplates the poem, he or she often revisits the text. As the reader revisits the text, the poem is changed. The essential concept is that text is just text until a reader makes
meaning from it. Furthermore, the purpose in which a reader approaches a text often affects this transaction.

Rosenblatt (1986) highlighted two particular stances that readers assume when reading. When text is read for the purpose of learning or finding information, the reader assumes an efferent stance. On the other end of the spectrum, when a reader engages with text for the experience – to stimulate personal connections, sensory experiences, and imagination – the reader assumes an aesthetic stance of reading (Rosenblatt, 1986). Rosenblatt (2005) insists that readers need a mix of these experiences, and teachers are charged with ensuring both are encouraged.

While some research supports that these two stances exist on a continuum, critics of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory highlight that current educational practices put too much emphasis on the efferent stance (Lewis, 2000). By providing questions or activities that recall or summarize information presented in the text, teachers encourage reading more often for the purpose of a final result as opposed to focusing on meaning-making as a process (Rosenblatt, 2001). Rosenblatt (2005) offers suggestions for probing questions that teachers could utilize to push past the efferent stance and better encourage the aesthetic stance when reading, similar to the following:

- What were you feeling when you were reading the story?
- Was there anything that surprised you when you were reading?
- Did anything seem familiar to you as you were reading?
- What parts of the story most interested you?

By drawing students’ attention to internal feelings and dialogues that they have experienced as they read, they become increasingly aware of their tendencies to make meaning. Rosenblatt
(1998) describes the experience that a reader goes through as reading text as an evocation. When students are given an opportunity to reflect on their own evocation, they can move on to better interpret meaning and evaluate the text (Rosenblatt, 1998).

Serafini (2011) supports that reading response activities should foster student engagement as well as deep thinking about the meaning created. He encourages teacher to consider the rigor, relevance and authenticity of reader-response activities. Table 1.3 highlights key questions he provides for teachers to consider these aspects before assigning a reader’s response activity.

Table 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Ask…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to literature</td>
<td>Is the connection between the activity and the piece of literature robust or superficial?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time ratio</td>
<td>Does the activity take up more time than the reading done for the activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>Who is making the decisions about what is occurring? Do the students have any choice in the activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>How does this activity support the kind of readers you want to create? Does the activity become an end in itself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Does the activity remind you of anything that occurs in the “real world”, or is it just a school-based activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>Are the activities based on literal recall, or do they require some thinking beyond memorization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of entry</td>
<td>Are readers of different abilities and interests able to engage with the activity? Are there ways for each student to be successful within this activity?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deep understanding

| Have we discussed the themes and structures of the piece of literature? Have we gotten past the literal story to examine its implications for our lives and experiences? Is there a broader context for our meaning making? |

Book report or book review

| Does the activity have an audience beyond the teacher? Will the activity be used to further discussion or thinking, or just provide proof that a book was finished? |

Respect for the piece of literature

| Does the activity respect the book as a piece of art and literature before it serves as an instructional tool? |

Because readers bring different levels of skills, background knowledge, and interests to a text, evocation looks different for each student. When provided with an opportunity to share or discuss individual evocations, readers can reflect on, change, or build on socially created meaning. Rosenblatt (1998) states,

> Readers may bring similar cultural, social, and educational histories to the reading of a text and may arrive at a consensus about their evocations. Or they may disagree and seek to persuade one another of the validity of their own unique experience in relation to that text. (p.887)

She encourages teachers to create an environment that encourages not only the freedom of texts to read, but also freedom to share thoughts and feelings freely without pressures of being critiqued. This idea is that there is not a right answer when interpreting a story, but the thought process that is the key. Research demonstrates that the inclusion of positive social exchanges enhances these reader responses, expanding the transaction from not only the reader and the text, but also with other readers and their transactions with the text (Lewis, 2000; Sipe, 2000).
Based on this idea that readers interact with the text to create meaning, Pearson et al. (2014) noted the teacher’s involvement in this transaction process helps to establish strategies in growing readers to support their meaning making. Based on this notion, I incorporate a number of formative reading response activities to monitor student progress and development of strategies. I also intentionally encourage collaboration among students to extend their individual responses and stretch their thinking. The reading response activities vary, depending on the comprehension strategy that is currently part of the focus. The following shows some sample response activities that students complete for particular strategies highlighted in our units of study:

Table 1.4

Sample Reader Response Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of Study</th>
<th>Reader Response Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making Connections</td>
<td>Students record a personal connection to a particular part in the story and share that connection with a partner or group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualizing</td>
<td>Students read a portion of text and illustrate a picture of it. Students share pictures to compare what similarities they shared and what differences they highlighted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Students record questions they have before they read a story, while reading, and after they finish the book. Students share questions and discuss if any questions could be answered and what answers are possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferring</td>
<td>The teacher selects a portion of the text, and the students would explain what meaning could be determined. This is done both independently and collaboratively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon reflection of these reading response activities, coupled with my research on multimodal literacy practices, I yearned to enhance my students’ reading transactions to include more focus on meaning created by the student as well as more choices of modality to fit the students’ needs.

**Study Justification**

The current age of literacy instruction offers multimodal literacy as an avenue to reach all learners. New pedagogical approaches expand the means of helping students to understand text and produce text through a variety of modes, exposing them to skills and approaches that are used within society at large. As Siegel (2006) best described,

> We need only consider the ease with which children today can not only draw, sing, and dance, but also produce their own digital movies, master the intricacies of computer games, and participate in fanfiction or interactive websites. Language arts education can no longer ignore the way that our social, cultural, and economic worlds now require facility with texts and practices involving the full range of representational modes. (p. 65)

Research continues to explore best practices of multimodal literacy in the elementary and primary grades to determine how to best transform these digital natives into critical readers and producers of text. Based on the notion that students need an opportunity to transact with text (Rosenblatt, 1986), I sought an avenue to foster meaning-making with the affordances of multimodal transmediation. This process not only provides opportunity to make meaning of text with multiple choices of modes, but it also forces readers to revisit and contemplate the meaning determined, reflect on the meaning created, and make adjustments as needed (Siegel, 2012).

Because wordless picturebooks offer greater opportunities for students to decipher meaning and be freer navigators of the text (Arizipe, 2013; Serafini, 2014), the transactions of reading throughout the transmediation process will cover several levels of interaction: the initial reading,
subsequent rereading, the production of meaning, and the revision of meaning. The purpose of this study is to closely examine this process as it occurs in the midst of a social constructivist environment. The research will address the following questions:

1. What modes of responses do first graders use during collaborative transactions with a wordless picturebook?
2. How do children make meaning through the process of multimodal transmediation of a wordless picturebook?
3. How do different modes of collaboration facilitate the construction of meaning?

In chapter two, I begin the research by presenting a review of the literature that informed my investigative process, guided both by existing research as well as my reflections as a classroom teacher. The review of literature examines the focus on multimodal literacy in primary classrooms as a means of promoting comprehension skills as well as providing tools for creating meaning. Various common multimodal formats are presented that support comprehension, with particular attention to wordless picturebooks as an opportunity to emphasize visual literacy skills used to make meaning. The concept of transmediation is also presented as a means of creating meaning while responding to literature in a multimodal format - a transactional reading response supported both by theories of social semiotics as well as social constructivism. The review literature presents a need for the exploration of the transmediation of wordless picturebooks to foster comprehension strategies and to empower first graders with multiple modes to demonstrate this meaning.

In Chapter 3, I present the qualitative approach used in examining the meaning-making of first graders in my own classroom. I detail the data collected, including digital recordings of
student discussions and interactions, field notes, informal interviews, and student work samples along with my own reflections as a teacher researcher. This chapter includes an overview of the first graders that took part in the study in addition to a detailed description of the school and classroom environments. It continues with the process used in preparation of this study, including selecting materials, preparing lessons, and executing portions of the unit of study in order to prepare the students for the culminating reading response activity that was part of this study. It concludes with an account of the data analysis process used in order to look for patterns and trends throughout the reading and transmediation process.

Chapter 4 begins with a brief narrative describing the collaborative attempts unique to each set of partners as they read, created, and produced meaning of the wordless picturebook, *Trainstop*. It illustrates how they navigated the text, how they interpreted meaning from the given pictures, how they interrogated the story as well as each other to negotiate meaning, how they performed meaning, and how they designed their stories. These depictions highlight the different modes of reading and creation they used throughout the process. Several examples are presented to show the modes used as well as the roles that students played, as they became meaning makers of the story.

In Chapter 5, I offer my finding through the reflections of both a researcher and a classroom teacher. Findings support that the added layer of collaboration in reading wordless picturebooks offers opportunities for students to blend their individual poems in efforts to establish a collaborative poem. This back and forth process engages students with the text as well as each other in order to create meaning. This added element of collaboration also highlights readers not just as readers but also as performers of multimodal literature. In reflection of these notions, I offer further considerations for teachers in order to enhance aspects
of social constructivism and foster the collaborative imaginations and meaning-making potential of students. In addition, this chapter presents concrete suggestions for primary teachers to consider as they foster such paths of exploration in their own classrooms as well as possibilities for further examination of the reading of wordless picturebooks as a means to enhance overall literacy performance.
I flipped through the pages of the book “The Ghost-Eye Tree”, by Bill Martin (1985), rereading portions of the text that especially allow for opportunities of wondering and questioning. This is a story-poem about a brother and sister who travel through the dark forest, past a spooky tree, in order to fetch milk from town. This was the third year that I used this selected text as part of a unit of study on this thinking strategy, so I was quite familiar with the stopping points that allow for the most meaningful discussions with our talking partners. It was during my second reading of the text with my current students when I called on a pair to share their insights – their questions and wonderings – at this particular point in the book. They had just finished collaborating their ideas in response to the prompt, “What are you wondering at this point in the story?” One of my students so matter-of-factly stated, “We wondered if it really was the cat the whole time. Could it be the cat making the eyes in the tree and making the strange noise in the wind?” During the next pause, I thought to myself, “What cat?”, and I am quite certain the look on my face showed the same question. After validating their questioning, we quickly revisited the illustrations throughout the book from the beginning, noting the cat – so small and insignificant to the written story – but nonetheless, such a significant possible symbol of meaning for these students as they listened to the story and intently examined the pictures. What a great example of what we can learn from reading the words and the pictures. Well done, my thoughtful readers.

My qualitative interpretivist case study stemmed in part from this very moment illustrated above. On one hand, I pondered the notion that if I had not noticed the cat, what are
the chances that other readers had not noticed it either. The act of collaborating our ideas helped bring that idea to the forefront, illustrating the imminent power that the act of sharing and exploring literature together has on our understanding. On another hand, I began reflecting on my own practices and began to realize that my focus on reading thus far had been very much dependent on the textual world. My reading pedagogy centered on teaching the thinking strategies that are needed to decipher meaning in order to be thoughtful about text and verbalize this comprehension. What I realized was missing was a more direct focus on the multimodal aspect of reading – incorporating the visual skills that drive much of my young friends’ comprehension along with the text. This lead me to explore what the research reveals about how primary students make meaning through different aspects available in multimodal literacy, how they can also create their own meaning through transmediation using various modes, and how such an approach fits within an established social constructivist environment.

**Multimodal Literacy**

With a shift towards 21st century literacy practices and a greater variety of literacy resources (Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010), the mere definitions of literacy and text are changing. Hobbs (2012) explains,

> When people think of the term literacy, what generally springs to mind is reading and writing, speaking and listening. These are indeed foundational elements of literacy. But because people use so many different types of expression and communication in daily life, the concept of literacy is beginning to be defined as the ability to share meaning through symbol systems to fully participate in society.(p.14)

This focus on the use of various symbols to make meaning is the foundation behind multimodal literacy. The focus on traditional text that heavily relies on words to convey meaning has
changed to text of multiple modes; therefore, teachers are now charged with fostering new skills in students in order to help them engage effectively with the multimodal texts that surround them in their everyday lives.

*Multimodal literacy* refers to meaning-making that occurs through interacting with multimodal texts and communications (Walsh, 2009). It may include actions such as reading, listening, talking, viewing, and dramatizing as well as the writing, designing, and producing of such texts (Walsh, 2009; Walsh, 2010). The process is often referred to in the research as *multimodality*, which refers to these simultaneous actions of reading, processing, producing and interacting with various modes of communication. Students are living in a world in which meaning is made through multiple modes and written language is being replaced with various semiotic resources to create meaning (Siegel, 2012). Serafini (2012b) describes a reader as a “reader - viewer” when navigating through multimodal text, requiring a different set of skills to consider the visual aspects of text as opposed to reading the printed text alone (p.27). He insists that,

The role of progressive literacy education is to open up the interpretive spaces we provide through the expectations we set, the responses we endorse and support, the texts we select to expand readers’ interpretive repertoires and the strategies we demonstrate during reading instruction. (Serafini, 2012a, p. 161)

Thus, we begin to explore the teaching of multimodal literacy to enhance our students’ literacy world.

**Making Meaning of Multimodal Text**

Comprehension can be defined as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (Snow, Burns,
& Griffin, 1998, p.11). This suggests that reading is not just passively receiving information or decoding print; reading involves interacting with text to understand the world around us (Semali, 2002). Reading is active, involving levels of comprehension and responses ranging from affective and cognitive skills to that of analyzing and critiquing efforts (Walsh, 2006). Cognitive strategies such as using background knowledge, inferring, visualizing, making connections, and predicting still come into play when reading multimodal text; however, keeping in mind that the definition of text has expanded to include various modes such as print, images, movements, graphics, animations, sounds, music, and gestures, this concept of comprehension also takes on a new facade with multimodal literacy (Edwards & Willis, 2000; Walsh, 2006). Walsh (2006) highlights that readers of multimodal text have to attend to numerous details and engage more senses in order to fully process the information presented. Other differences that affect the reading process include the following:

- The appropriateness of the modes selected to portray meaning
- The arrangement of visuals and/or text, to include graphics, typography, and color
- The reading pathway, which tends to be provide more choice of directionality and offers a less linear path in multimodal text

With these clear differences that determine the multimodal reading process, the role of the reader to determine meaning is greatly increased (Walsh, 2006).

Sipe (1998) described the relationship between multimodal text and the reader as a “synergistic relationship in which the total effect depends not only on the union of the text and illustrations, but also on the perceived interactions or transactions between these two parts” (p. 98-99). This synergy describes the notion of social semiotics – the theory that meaning is derived from the use of various signs, not just linguistics (Siegel, 1995). Kress (2015) stressed
the great potential of semiotics to affect meaning by offering that images and writing offer
different perspectives and different meanings when contemplated separately or in combination.
Considering that different readers bring different skill sets, strategies, and background
knowledge to a reading experience, the potential for meaning-making appears endless (Mavers,
2007). Kress (2015) offered that “the conceptions of communication have changed out of
recognition: away from a clear location in ‘language’, fragmented now across a wide domain of
social and semiotic means, resources, and practices” (p. 66). While the pictures and text may
work together to provide the author and/or illustrator’s intentional meaning, the reader has a
huge role to play in deciphering that meaning.

Serafini (2012a) identified four unique roles that are defined by the actions they make
while making meaning in multimodal text:

(1) As a navigator, the reader must determine the path of navigation through multimodal
text. This involves not only deciphering the written text, but also includes considering
visual images and design elements.

(2) As an interpreter, the reader must decipher the intended meaning of the text, which is
done by inferring and drawing conclusions based on background knowledge and support
of the multimodal resources within the text.

(3) As a designer, the student has to actively construct meaning while simultaneously
considering the affordances of a certain mode as well as the content and audience of the
finished work.

(4) As an interrogator, a student has to challenge his or her thinking and the meaning
presented in the text, questioning multiple views and perspectives and deciding on the
best depiction of meaning.
With these varied roles, a reader actively engages with text to understand its meaning.

The teacher plays an important role in this pedagogical approach as well. By modeling reading behaviors and using relevant metalanguage to describe these actions, she offers support needed to nurture this meaning-making process. Serafini and Ladd (2008) examined the responses of students as they deciphered meaning in textual, visual, and multimodal versions of a story. They determined that not only did students innately offer more inferential questioning when presented with pictures, but this inferential thinking increased throughout the week when coupled with teacher modeling and support.

Hassett and Curwood (2009) describe the teacher’s role as more than a facilitator, instructor, or model of good reading. They go on to describe three additional roles a teacher assumes when guiding students through multimodal literacy. This includes assuming the role of a resource manager, as she manages not only physical resources such as text and digital equipment but also cognitive resources needed to approach making meaning with this text. A teacher is also a co-constructor of knowledge, as she explores text alongside students and helps clear up questions or misconceptions as they occur. The teacher is also a design consultant, aiding in the reading and production of multimodal text with either technical assistance or feedback to assist students in their meaning-making. With these duties in mind, it is equally important for teachers to consider some various affordances of different formats of multimodal text in order to depict a format that may meet the needs of his/her readers.

**Multimodal Text**

The term *multimodal text* describes texts that have more than one mode to make meaning (Walsh, 2010). These modes may include print, image, movement, graphics, animation, sound, music, and gesture. Traditional texts that have print and images, such as picture books,
informational text, and graphic text, can be included in this category. These texts involve the interaction of written words and images in order to create meaning (Edwards & Willis, 2000). Among the most prevalent genres found in an elementary setting include picture books and graphic novels.

**Picture Books**

Picture books have been a traditional resource used for comprehension instruction and classroom engagement. However, through a multimodal lens, picture books offer valuable resources to extend students’ comprehension strategies. Martens, Martens, Doyle, Loomis, and Aghalaroo (2012) highlighted ways in which meanings can be woven into picture books through various modes. This includes through linguistics, or the use of language; visuals, or the use of illustrations; space, or the use of design, layout and composition; and gestures, or the position and movements indicated by the illustrations. Picture books provide visual resources beyond just the images, with text and pictures to interpret as well as layout designs to consider for meaning (Serafini, 2012b) as well as the ease with which it is read (Daly & Unsworth, 2011). Bezemer and Kress (2008) described that readers are social with the text, as if the text speaks to them through fonts, layouts, and illustrations. Hassett and Curwood (2009) encouraged readers to note multimodal characteristics of picture books. They also noted how words express meaning through typesetting, how narration can be interactive, and how images expand the meaning of the text. With the multiple modes within a picture book, the process of reading and the process of comprehension are supported.

**Graphic novels**

While graphic novels and picture books both utilize text, images, and
layout designs to depict meaning, the visuals of graphic novels differ from those in picture books. They can be described as “sequential art narratives” (Brenna, 2013, p.88). In graphic novels, the purpose of the visuals is not to just add to the story, but rather they actually tell aspects of the story, such as the setting, character feelings, and actions (Serafini, 2012b).

The synergy of pictures and words, along with the interpretation of the reader, help direct a purposed meaning in picture books and graphic novels (Sipe, 1998). With multiple readings, new meaning can still be discovered as behaviors in the reader changes. “Because the meanings of signs are always shifting, this oscillation is never-ending. The possibilities of meaning in the picture-word relationship are inexhaustible.” (Sipe, 1998, p.103). If this is the case in picture books where the pictures and words work together to portray meaning, how endless are the possibilities of meaning-making within the context of a wordless picturebook where the pictures carry the weight of the story, and there are few, if any, words to help anchor meaning?

Wordless Picturebooks

In the case of wordless picturebooks, the reader relies on interaction with the pictures in order to interpret the story. Giving considerations to the pictures becomes so much more than a typical picture walk that is associated with comprehension practice with a picture book. The purpose of looking at the pictures pushes past using them to help support the text but rather using them to derive meaning to create the story (Serafini & Ladd, 2008; Serafini, 2011). The layout and design of these books also influence the meanings portrayed throughout the story (Arizpe, 2013). Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad, and Zhang (2002) highlight that pure wordless picturebooks tell the entire story through the pictures; almost wordless picturebooks have some words or short phrases intermingled into the pictures to add to the meaning. The narrations in some wordless picturebooks are presented like those in graphic novels, with a sequence of events depicted on
each page. Others have full-page narrations that extend the events of the story throughout several pages (Serafini, 2014).

Jalongo and colleagues (2002) share several rationales for using wordless picturebooks with young readers. The emphasis on visuals not only appeals to contemporary children who are often engaged in the viewing of television, computer screens, or other digital devices, but it also reinforces inferential skills to decipher the story and examine the visual effects. The removal of text that needs to be decoded levels the playing field for readers of different abilities while maintaining other important reading concepts. Such skills include directionality of books, use of oral language, sequencing events, and determining importance (Arizipe, 2013; Jalongo, 2002; Serafini, 2014). Because the reader cannot rely on the text to provide meaning, there is an increased level of participation on the reader’s end. Arizpe (2013) explains that “it would seem that it is the degree to which readers are expected to actively engage that marks the difference between picturebooks with and without words and which enables the reader to co-construct meaning” (p. 165-166).

With an increased level of responsibility to make the meaning of the wordless picturebooks, readers often utilize unique comprehension skills, such as identifying relevant signs in the pictures, reconstructing sequences of events, predicting and revising predictions, and collaborating story ideas (Arizpe, 2013). O’Neil (2011) posits that visual literacy is a vital aspect of comprehension that involves other cognitive strategies such as making intertextual connections, inferring, determining main idea, and questioning, and assures that this strategy can be addressed by attending carefully and purposefully to pictures. By actively examining pictures, students also practice visual discrimination and inferential thinking (Serafini, 2014).
Lysaker and Miller (2013) add that picturebooks also allow for teaching affect in children as they examine character traits and social interactions through the pictures.

Previous research dealing with wordless picturebooks follows two main trends (Arizpe, 2013). In some studies, the wordless picturebooks are used and recommended as an anticipatory tool for reading—a process to familiarize young children with the orientation of books and the concept of stories. Other studies focus on having students retell the story after reading a wordless picturebook. Mantei and Kervin (2015) used wordless picturebooks as an independent reading choice with a class of fourth graders. During informal interviews at the conclusion of reading, they assessed the student’s comprehension of the story in hopes of determining how attentive the students were to using comprehension strategies while reading. Such studies often focus on the retelling of the story as opposed to the meaning-making process. Arizpe (2013) suggested that further research should be done that examines this meaning-making process, including what aspects of the pictures provided meaning and how students come to determine the story.

Teachers must provide a safe atmosphere where students are not under pressure to tell the story perfectly or in haste. This includes ample time to read, reread, and reflect on the story before trying to make sense of it. Meaning must be constructed through multiple readings, discussion, and collaboration of peers before students can attempt to verbalize words about the picture in order to formalize a story (Arizpe, 2013, emphasis added). This also means the teacher must account for explicit instruction of these types of reading behaviors in order to expect children to also attend to visual designs and understand meaning in visual messages (Mantei and Kervin, 2015).

In his book, Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Teaching Multimodal Literacy, Serafini (2014) offers a curricular framework for teachers committed to incorporating a
multimodal pedagogy, including instruction with wordless picturebooks. He suggests initiating the following three stages: (1) exposure, (2) exploration, and (3) engagement. These stages follow a similar structure as a gradual release of responsibility model, as illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Modeling</th>
<th>Guided Practice</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Independent Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>The particular genre is introduced and students are exposed to several examples of this genre. Students get a sense of how to approach this type of texts.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Teachers highlight various elements of the text, such as visual elements, textual features, or design. During this phase, the teacher models the use of particular reading behaviors or vocabulary (metalanguage) used while reading this genre. A mentor text is also used as a model to guide expectations.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>During this phase, students become active participants - reading and creating their own meaning of a multimodal production.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When contemplating a method of engagement for reading wordless picturebooks, Arizipe (2013) insists that “research on readers’ response confirms that the wordless nature of those picturebooks demands a heightened co-authoring role that requires taking risks with the imagination, activating intertextual and cultural knowledge and trusting in the readers’ ability to make sense of the story” (p. 170). She cautions that this genre demands ample time to read and revisit the story in order to gradually form a narrative, and that teachers must caution to create a
safe environment where students are comfortable to take risks with meaning-making. With these concepts in place, the challenge for a classroom teacher is determining how to capture this process of meaning-making in a meaningful, purposeful way.

Serafini (2015) suggests that reading response activities should foster engagement and intellection, while also considering rigor, relevance, and the authenticity of the activity. He posits that they should “require readers to go beyond the literal levels of meaning, reject the notion of a single main idea, and construct meaning for themselves rather than search for predetermined answers” (Serafini, 2015, p. 241). The concept of transmediation opens up doors to multiple possible means for reader-viewers to then become creators and producers of meaning.

**Transmediation**

The term *transmediation* literally translates as the following: *trans* means to cross the boundaries of language and *mediation* means that one sign system is explored in terms of another (Siegel, 1995). It is based on the theory of social semiotics, which emphasizes that meaning is made through symbols, signs, or a combination of these (Jewitt, 2007; Mavers, 2007; Ranker, 2014). Kress (2003) referred to multiple symbols as semiotic ensembles that are joined together intentionally to create meaning. Practice of transmediation enforces the notions that there are multiple ways to represent the same content and that learning is a continuous process as new connections are always being created (Ranker, 2014; Semali, 2002).

Charles Suhor (1984), considered the father of transmediation, defined it as “the translation of content from one sign system into another” (cited in Siegel, 1995, p. 250). He recognized that the linguistic system is considered superior to others, but it is most powerful when language is used in conjunction with other sign systems or modes of communication. When meaning is created across sign systems, learning becomes a generative process, as
opposed to a traditional transmission of knowledge (Siegel, 1995). In language arts instruction, the process of transmediation involves the act of taking the meaning derived from a text and presenting that meaning in new forms or sign system (McCormick, 2011). This typically implies to having students respond to text in a variety of means, thus allowing students to become the meaning-makers of a text (Fueyo, 2002). These sign systems may include written text, artwork, dance, verbalizations, or any other mode that portrays the intended meaning (McCormick, 2011; Mills, 2011; Semali, 2002; Siegel, 2006). Sipe (1998) referred to the oscillation of thoughts needed throughout the meaning-making process. He noted that the “reviewing and rereading will produce ever-new insights as we construct new connections and make modifications of our previous interpretations” (p. 106). In this sense, students do not just analyze work for content alone, but they must also consider the distinctive choice of mode of expression as well as the limitations of each sign system to hold the desired meaning (Siegel, 2012).

Students do not excel as passive learners, receiving knowledge through lectures or memorizing information. Rather, students gain the most knowledge by teaching the content and showing mastery of the knowledge. Kress (2003) stresses the benefits of transmediation, which he refers to as transduction, as the engagement of students’ cognitive and affective thinking that leads to the notion of creativity. Generative processes of meaning-making offer students multiple forms in which they can portray their intended meaning. With the incorporation of multimodal literacy as a means for generating knowledge, students explore information through a critical thinking process (Semali, 2002). When the intention is formalizing their meaning in order to share their ideas publicly, readers are pushed past their initial conceptualizations and are forced to review, reflect on, and critique their own ideas (Short, Kauffman, & Kahn, 2000).
Traditionally, a written approach, such as writing or drawing, has been used to provide opportunities for transmediation in classroom practices (King & Stuart, 2011; Wright, 2007; Hassett & Curwood, 2009; Siegel, 2006). While this approach is still prevalent, there is an increase of digital opportunities to enhance comprehension through the production process.

**Affordances of Digital Transmediation**

Mills (2011) described the process of transmediation as a process of knowledge that is central to digital text production because it involves translating semiotic content through the use of specific software. Semali (2002) explains,

The fact is that individuals born in the media age are savvy and very good at transmediating. In their lives outside school, students naturally move between art, music, movement, mathematics, play, and language as ways to think about the world. They talk and write, but they also sketch, sing, play, solve problems, and dance their way to new insight. It is only in the schools that students are restricted to using one sign system at a time to think. (p. 8)

With the growing presence of technology, social networking, and multimodal forms of literacy available to our students, teachers must begin to help students be successful in making meaning with multiple sources in our world. Students should have the opportunity to have choice about the mode of learning or the presentation of knowledge they use (Krause, 2015).

Digital resources open up endless means of modalities to produce meaning. With an increase in the use of media, students learn to consider the audience who will read their work to gain meaning. During a case study with her own ten-year-old son, Krause (2015), noted the intricate use of photography, videos, and blogging he used to journal his summer traveling, all
confined to the capabilities of a mobile phone. Such resources, when available, can be utilized in the production of multimodal literacy in the classroom.

In a primary school in Sweden, Oman and Hashemi (2015) noted how third grade students actively designed advertisements using digital programs on laptops that allowed them to incorporate images, sounds, music, text, and speech. After three basic introductory lessons and a basic example of a design provided by the teacher, the students planned their advertisements by hand. These designs mimicked the design of the teacher. However, when students were then permitted to use the iMovie application on the laptops, they redesigned the advertisement to not only portray the focused content, but also to include enhancements. Some enhancements added to the meaning of the advertisement; some added to its character. Regardless, the students were actively engaged and demonstrated the ease with which such technological components can be included in multimodal literacy instruction.

Likewise, Mills (2011) examined elementary students sketching visualizations from an excerpt of a chapter book read by the teacher and then transferring these sketches into a digital storyboard. Sketches and digital storyboards were compared for commonalities, showing evidence of students making accommodations to keep the meaning of the story while working within the affordances of the storyboarding program. Mills (2011) best describes the process of transmediation as involving “a process of continually anticipating, evaluating, and revising their intentions as they shifted meaning across modes”(p.62). This illustrates the contemplations a student generates throughout the continual process of adaptation as they work to produce multimodal text.

The process of transmediation can also enhance the types of transactions that students have as they read. Not only must the students attend to the narrative structure of the story, but
they also attend to elements of visual literacy and design of the story (Pantaleo, 2016). This may include colors used, typography, and particular layout of objects on a screen or page. This enhances a student’s aesthetic stance to the literature. Serafini, Kachorsky, and Aguilera (2015) examined a selection of fictional narratives that were presented in both printed text form as well as digital formats. Examining the differences in the way these stories are presented, they noted the different paths of meaning-making and the different levels of reader engagement that was afforded with various modes utilized within the digital text. Perhaps offering the modes of narrative recordings, visual manipulation, and various textual options will engage first grade students in the transmediation process and allow them to better demonstrate the meaning they create in the stories they encounter.

Fueyo (2002) highlight conditions in a classroom that make it conducive for a positive transmediation experience. This includes having a place to work and the necessary tools needed to make meaning. It also involves having ample practice, both on the focus of instruction as well as the logistics of the creation process. Finally, she offers that a positive community is necessary to foster this type of work. “By supporting different ways of knowing and different kinds of knowledge, we maximize meaning potential and creative wonder” (Fueyo, 2002, p.31). In a collaborative environment, student talk becomes an effective means of reflection and generative learning and is considered a sign system unto itself (Siegel, 1995). McCormick (2011) adds that teacher talk and support also aids students to better transfer meaning across sign systems. Therefore, with a social constructivist environment already established to provide this support and collaboration, the proper digital tools available to create meaning in multiple modes, and a genre of text requiring high student involvement to make meaning, I found an opportunity to expand the research through the transmediation of wordless picturebooks.
Through classroom observations, informal and formal interviews, and teacher self-reflection, I closely examined the process first graders followed in order to make meaning of a story presented in a wordless picturebook and collaboratively manifested that meaning in the form of a digital storybook. As a result, I provide qualitative descriptions of the actions and language used throughout the transmediation process, in a first grade classroom, as well as thoughtful suggestions for improvement in future studies. In addition, I reflect upon instructional considerations used when focusing on these multimodal literacy skills with young students.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: PLANNING FOR THE JOURNEY

The purpose of this study was to examine a group of first graders as they collaboratively worked to make meaning of a wordless picturebook and subsequently portrayed that meaning in the form of a digital text to demonstrate their interpretation and comprehension. I had the unique opportunity to approach this research through the dual role of teacher and researcher. As both teacher and researcher, I was able to reflect on thinking strategies we practiced throughout the year, the metalanguage we emphasized, and the modes of meaning we practiced as we collaboratively explored other wordless picturebooks. My hope, as their teacher, was to evaluate how the students implemented these strategies and behaviors together to make meaning of a wordless picturebook and how they collaborated to create a digital version of the story as a demonstration of comprehension. As a researcher, I examined their meaning-making processes to find trends in their learning and production of multimodal text. I paid close attention to modes of collaboration, focuses of discussions, visual literacy skills, and specific actions taken to help build meaning. In addition, I examined the final products to compare how they chose to represent this meaning created throughout the story.

Research Framework

The current study followed the format of a qualitative interpretivist study. Qualitative research was especially useful in this process in order to generate theory in the context of fieldwork rather than being driven by preconceived expectations or hypotheses. Patton (2002) described some of the benefits of designing qualitative studies. Because it took place in a naturalistic environment, I was able to study real world situations as they naturally occurred (Emond, 2005; Ruddell, 2007). This afforded me flexibility with the design of the study,
allowing adjustments when needed as the research continued. This type of research also requires purposeful sampling in order to achieve rich information centered on a certain phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Because I examined the meaning-making process as it unfolded - examining the origination of meaning and causes of changes - I assumed an interpretive stance in my analysis (Serafini, 2015).

The data collection and fieldwork strategies used included digital recordings of student discussions and interactions, field notes, informal interviews, and student work samples. In addition to collected data, I also considered my role both as a teacher and as researcher by including my level of engagement and the experiences surrounding that contact as well as my reflections and anticipations throughout the study (McMillan, 2008). By including myself in the study, I had to practice mindfulness, staying fully present and free from judgments (Ruddell, 2007). The remainder of this chapter presents an outline of the research methodology, including an overview of the research site and participants, a detailed overview of the unit of study conducted, the data collection process, and analysis procedures.

**Participants**

**School**

This study took place in my first grade classroom in a small independent school in southeastern Virginia. In keeping with the progressive times, the mission of this school centers on fostering innovative learning by developing active learners and creators of knowledge through engaging instruction. As an independent institution, standardized curriculum, such as the Virginia Standards of Learning and the Common Core State Standards, are used as guidelines for curriculum development but do not drive the assessment process. Formative assessments are used with primary students to monitor reading skills and the application of comprehension
strategies as they are practiced with consideration to the amount of support needed to be successful with this process (Pearson, Valencia, & Wixon, 2014). This allows me the freedom to engage in authentic means of literacy practice as well as flexibility to fluctuate the time required during different units of study. With an increase of technology in the classrooms, including the use of iPads as an instructional tool for students, the study responded to a push for teachers to use technology as a means of creation and interactive learning to enhance 21st century literacy practices.

Some of the benefits of working at an independent school setting include the freedom to establish my schedule, classroom environment, and pedagogy that not only work towards our mission as a school, but also reflect my own educational philosophy. I am afforded voice in the materials that I use to teach, the schedule I follow in my room, and the structure for teaching and learning that has been molded through my years of experience and research. I pride myself in being a professional educator by staying abreast of current research and best practices; yet even with such freedom, there is always compromise when it comes to making instructional decisions. When reflecting on the theories that drive my pedagogical routines, I recognize that I still have to make adaptations to suit my needs or my students’ needs. These tensions are constant, and compromises are necessary to establish a connection between research and an educational environment - where no two students are the same. This particular year was no exception. I had a class of varied personalities, interests, and abilities.

**Students**

Collectively, this school serves kindergarten through grade 12, but the elementary division extends through fifth grade. At the time of the study, the lower school’s student body consisted of 188 students, with two classes of each grade and approximately 12 to 18 students in
each class. The total demographic makeup of the school consisted of 104 male and 84 female students. The ethnicities of the student population at this division were as follows: 135 Caucasian, 29 African Americans, 7 Asian Americans, 4 Hispanic, 3 Middle Eastern, 3 Native American, and 4 multi-racial ethnicities. The student participants included were in one of my first grade classrooms (N = 12; age: M = 6 years, 10 months) enrolled since August of the current year. My class consisted of six boys and six girls with the following ethnicities: 9 Caucasian, 1 African American, 1 Hispanic, and 1 Middle Eastern. Of these twelve students, ten participated in the study. This group included five boys and five girls.

The ten students were all members of middle to upper class families. Three students were independent readers, showing abilities to decode texts at a Lexile level equivalent to second grade expectations. Eight students were reading on a first grade level, with some effort necessary to decode words, decipher sight words, and monitor reading fluency. One student needed extra teacher support or prompting to use strategies to actively decode text in order to read early level texts accurately.

**Teacher Researcher**

I initially assumed the role of a first grade teacher for six years in the public school district in the same city as the participating school. Upon the completion of my M.S. Ed degree in Reading Education, I also acted as a reading specialist in an elementary school setting for an additional six years. Four years ago, I returned to the first grade classroom in this private setting while simultaneously pursuing my doctorate in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in literacy leadership from Old Dominion University. As my role from teacher to teacher researcher shifted in my classroom, I assumed the role of a covert researcher (Emond, 2005) and did not draw attention to the research aspect of my role. My thoughts were that students could
feel affected by this announcement, feeling the pressure of a higher level of expectation or assessment than I would normally expect. Because we conference on a regular basis, I did not feel that my probing about their work or thoughts would seem out of the ordinary to them. I was also accustomed to using my phone or iPad to take pictures, videos, and even audio recordings of their reading and retellings, so I did not anticipate the presence of recording devices to draw any negative attention as I collected data throughout the study. Because I would be collecting video and photographs of my students for the purpose of adding to my research, I did seek permission from the Head of my school. This letter can be found in Appendix A.

**Classroom Environment**

Since the first day of school, I worked to establish a caring and safe environment for students in order to build their trust as well as their own feelings of safety and belonging (Noddings, 2012). My classroom is designed in such a way to afford for intimate meetings as a class, whether gathered in a cluster or in a circle on the carpet. This was the location of our daily morning meetings that allowed for us to share stories, caring concerns, and daily discussions. This was the same location where students gathered in closely as I read an engaging story to apply listening comprehension thinking strategies. We had established routines for sharing ideas or self-reflections, such as “turn and talk to your partner” or “stop and jot”. Comprehension strategy anchor charts, created with the class, were clearly visible on the surrounding walls for easy reference during think alouds or modeled lessons.

Other areas of the room allowed for collaboration and individual practice. Student desks were arranged for working spots, along with extra meeting tables, carpeted areas, and pillowed surfaces for individual or collaborative meeting areas. The first six weeks of school were designated for establishing routines to follow for work and interactions that take place in various
areas during our Language Arts block. Students were independent in selecting work choices, finding materials, sitting in proximity to partners or finding a suitable spot for independent work, and transitioning from one location or activity to the next.

Students were also familiar with the multiple resources afforded to them. In the writing corner, various styles of writing materials were available, including blank paper of various sizes, paper with lines and picture space, paper with all lines, and familiar graphic organizers used for planning or organizing stories. Tools such as staplers, tape, and scissors were available to create different presentations of literacy as well as coloring and drawing devices such as markers, pens, pencils, and crayons. In addition, a set of five iPads were available with apps such as Book Creator and Explain Everything that had been used to create multimodal text that can include any combination of scripted or typed text, photographs, drawings, and clipart along with recorded student voices. These applications had been explored by the students to understand procedures for proper use and were used in previous lessons to model various opportunities of use.

**Parental Relationships**

As a classroom teacher, I established open relationships with the parents and other family members of my students. Through weekly newsletters and photographs, I kept them abreast of upcoming lessons and goals as well as recapped learned skills and happenings from the past week. I met with at least one parent of each student throughout the year, and I maintained regular contact through emails, weekly newsletters, and individual weekly progress reports with narratives specific to each student’s progress. I felt my rapport was strong with these parents, and I did not anticipate any concern for gaining parental consent. It is my feeling that my parents appreciated my attempt to review and reflect in detail on the practices that were already in place in my classroom with the understanding that I would maintain a high level of
confidentiality in my review (Emond, 2005). As a result, I gained written consent from ten families to allow their child to participate in this study (see Appendix B). One student anticipated a family trip during the conducted study, so that child did not participate. Another student did not return the consent form for reasons unknown. These two individual students worked together as partners on this classroom assignment, but their work sessions were not recorded, and their work was not considered as part of this study.

**Preparing the Study**

After considering the research and determining that wordless picturebooks provided an open-ended opportunity for students to make meaning using visual cues, I found myself having to balance some particular needs as a classroom teacher as well as my needs as a researcher. I needed to consider how I could incorporate a new unit of study in my current curriculum and the learning objectives of this new unit of study. I needed to determine what wordless picturebooks I would actually use with my class as part of the modeling and practicing stage of the unit, and what wordless picturebook my students would collaboratively read. It was also necessary to determine what choices would be afforded to students as a means of creating their own versions of digital books during their transmediation process. Finally, I needed to plan the sequence of events, including the key points to highlight during modeled lessons to the sequence of steps to require during the student collaboration sessions.

**Curriculum requirements**

The first obstacle that comes to mind to any teacher who explores the addition of a new unit of study is finding the time to include it in an already packed curriculum. Because I was fortunate to work in an independent school setting, I had the opportunity to modify my instructional approach as needed, as long as I was teaching the content and skills that are
included in the scope and sequence of the curriculum. During the latter part of our language arts program, I typically conduct an author study. The unit is designed to allow for students to apply thinking strategies used throughout the year, but also enables opportunities to apply deeper comprehension by making connections across books, inferring about the author, and even applying writing styles to our own work. Because this unit is a bit more flexible in focus, I initially decided to substitute the author study for a genre study, with wordless picturebooks as the focus of this new genre. I anticipated that this new unit of study would still allow for students to apply these deeper comprehension strategies, but in a way that was more meaningful and challenging for the students. As part of the planning process, I first contemplated the learning objectives in order to intentionally select materials, anticipate learning experiences, and select the best means of multimodal transmediation.

**Learning Objectives**

In order to develop a unit of study based on the use of wordless picturebooks, I first determined the learning objectives I sought to reach with my students. I first referenced Serafini’s (2014) learning objectives listed for his sample wordless picturebook unit of study. Those objectives were listed as the following:

1. Understand how narrative sequences are portrayed in wordless picturebooks.
2. Determine the possible reading paths in wordless picturebooks.
3. Consider any recurring patterns and visual symbols used in wordless picturebooks, especially the symbols and images used in the contextual elements, including the cover, title page, dust jacket, and endpapers.
4. Understand how gutters and panels are used to present a narrative sequence of images and how these design elements affect the narrative.
5. Understand what happens in the gutters between the illustrated panels in wordless picturebooks. (p. 111-112)

Because I worked with first graders, coupled with the fact that this was my first experience directly focusing on the visual elements of wordless picturebooks, I decided to focus on the first three objectives. I instantly determined that the wordless picturebooks I would select would maintain focus on the narrative primarily through the pictures on each page, without added gutter or panel pictures to consider. With that decision made, the fourth and fifth learning objectives were no longer fitting. This could be a suggestion for further practice with wordless picturebooks as students progress through second and third grade and continue this focus.

I reviewed other suggested learning objectives listed in Reading the Visual. One mirrored a learning objective from my original author study unit, which reads, “Applying reading comprehension strategies to understand and analyze wordless picturebooks.” (Serafini, 2014, p. 97). Once learning objectives were established, I looked for books suited for the unit of study. As it turns out, I decided on a set of wordless picturebooks by Barbara Lehman, allowing an opportunity to combine the original author study with additional emphasis on genre.

**Book selection**

While I am grateful for the freedom to select my own literature to suit the needs of my students and my instructional intentions, this luxury is also one of the most taxing responsibilities of a teacher. The options of wordless picturebooks are not nearly as plentiful as typical picturebooks, but there is still a vast array of wonderful selections available. Table 3.1 lists some of the noteworthy books I considered.
Table 3.1

*Wordless Picturebooks Considered for this Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title and Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A Ball for Daisy</em> by Chris Raschka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chalk</em> by Bill Thomson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Flashlight</em> by Liz Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Flotsam</em> by David Wiesner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fox’s Garden</em> by Princess Camcam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Inside Outside</em> by Lizi Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journey</em> by Aaron Becker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pancakes for Breakfast</em> by Tomie do Paola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Quest</em> by Aaron Becker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Snowman</em> by Raymond Briggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tuesday</em> by David Wiesner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wave</em> by Susy Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zoom</em> by Istvan Banyai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I considered each text, I found myself narrating the story aloud, considering different points of contention for meaning-making throughout each text. I questioned some of the elements of each book, and the following list of questions ultimately guided my decision:

- Is the setting clear and recognizable to first graders?
- Are character emotions demonstrated through gestures and facial expressions?
- Is the sequence of events evident and understandable to first graders?
- Can character actions and/or events be interpreted in multiple ways?
- Is there opportunity for imagination?
- Is there opportunity for inner dialogue or dialogue between characters?

Another consideration involved the similarity of the books chosen. Following the gradual release of responsibility, part of my consideration involved modeling and scaffolding the students’ instruction. In order to build their independence with this new genre, I decided to take the same approach when selecting text. The stories I chose needed to offer different
complexities of plot and or character development. They also needed to utilize a variety of modes to entice discussion about different aspects of visual literacy, such as design, layout, and order of the visuals.

Ultimately, I decided to select a set of books composed by the same author, Barbara Lehman. Not only did her stories meet the criteria listed above, but they also built in terms of sophistication and opportunity for meaning-making. This progression helped me determine which books would be used as part of the modeling process, as part of the scaffolding process, and finally as an independent application. In order to justify my selection of texts, I also sought the guidance from outside sources, including a fellow reading specialist as well as the other first grade teacher at my school. Taking their opinions into consideration, I determined the order of progression in which I utilized these texts as well as the particular mini-lessons used to highlight actions and language used when reading wordless picturebooks. The final unit of study highlights each book along with the potential lessons and learning experiences that accompanied each book (see appendix C). It also presents my anticipated modeling of word choice and interpretations as I explored these books with my class for each initial reading.

After determining the wordless picturebooks that would be used as part of the unit of study, as well as the wordless picturebook that would be used for the culminating reading response activity, I next contemplated the final project. Serafini (2014) suggests having students create their own wordless picturebook in order to apply the visual literacy skills they acquired through studying these other books. However, I wanted to find a way to not only capture the meaning that the students made as they read a wordless picturebook but also how they negotiated that meaning to tell their interpretations of a common story. Considering the enhanced focus on
comprehension encouraged through the process of transmediation, I decided to take an alternate approach to include digitally transmediating the wordless picturebook.

I consulted the research for guidance to assure that my process was meaningful, purposeful, and genuine. Serafini (2011) offers a guide for classroom teachers when considering reading response activities. Table 3.2 outlines the key elements of this chart along with my personal reflections that helped me to justify my decisions for transmediating wordless picturebooks.

Table 3.2


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Ask…</th>
<th>My considerations…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to literature</td>
<td>Is the connection between the activity and the piece of literature robust or superficial?</td>
<td>I believe this activity is robust. I am asking students to read and reread the book, building their meaning each time. They have to make real decisions about how they construct the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time ratio</td>
<td>Does the activity take up more time than the reading done for the activity?</td>
<td>The activity and the reading are one in the same. Because they construct the story as they read a wordless picturebook, they are just taking the time to really consider each page and the meaning they create.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>Who is making the decisions about what is occurring? Do the students have any choice in the activity?</td>
<td>I did select the book and the iPad application that is to be used. However, the students have a range of choices within the iPad application to suit their needs and wants for their own book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>How does this activity support the kind of readers you want to create? Does the activity become an end in itself?</td>
<td>This activity pushes the students not to just read through the story, close the book, and accept the story as it was first told. Through the actions of rereading, contemplating language to accompany the pictures (whether spoken or written), they have to really stretch their interpretations of the pictures and consider the story they create.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>Does the activity remind you of anything that occurs in the “real world”, or is it just a school-based activity?</td>
<td>This activity itself is not an exact replica of what might be done in the real world, but I do think it has value. It extends the act of reading a wordless picturebook and applies students’ sense of story that is needed in both reading and writing of narratives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical thinking</strong></td>
<td>Are the activities based on literal recall, or do they require some thinking beyond memorization?</td>
<td>This activity requires no memorization. The students have the wordless picturebook in hand to reference, and are working to add to the meaning of the story through their imagination, interpretation, and creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point of entry</strong></td>
<td>Are readers of different abilities and interests able to engage with the activity? Are there ways for each student to be successful within this activity?</td>
<td>All students will be able to engage in the same text due to the nature of wordless picturebooks' absence of words to decode.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deep understanding</strong></td>
<td>Have we discussed the themes and structures of the piece of literature? Have we gotten past the literal story to examine its implications for our lives and experiences? Is there a broader context for our meaning making?</td>
<td>Through the unit of study, we explored various visual literacy skills and practiced discussing and negotiating meaning together with other samples. We’ve explored the value of pictures and how different meanings can be created from the same pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book report or book review</strong></td>
<td>Does the activity have an audience beyond the teacher? Will the activity be used to further discussion or thinking, or just provide proof that a book was finished?</td>
<td>The students will share their books with each other. During this time, they will get to react to any surprises, questions, likes, and dislikes they may have with other students’ books. The digital e-books will also be sent home through email to each student to share with his/her family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respect for the piece of literature</strong></td>
<td>Does the activity respect the book as a piece of art and literature before it serves as an instructional tool?</td>
<td>I contemplated this one a great deal. A wordless picturebook is designed without words, so one could question why we should add words to them. In the end, we communicate through so many modes. As we look at a picture, we contemplate words in our minds to determine meaning. When we engage with others to discuss this meaning, we use words to share our thoughts and listen to other’s words. We also talk with our hands, and point to pictures to enhance our messages. These are instinctual habits, and I truly hope to capture these natural progressions through this activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Satisfied with my selection of reading response activities, I next determined the iPad application that would be best suited for the multimodal transmediation process.

**iPad Application Selection**

When choosing the digital platform for the purpose of multimodal transmediation, I looked for an application that first graders could manipulate easily but that also provided choice of modes within the application. In keeping true to some aspects of constructivism, in which students should be able to create meaning freely with whatever resources they deem fit and in whatever time that is needed, I also had to maintain realistic expectations related to time, management, and productivity. Instead of letting them choose from a variety of applications available on our iPads, I weighed the affordances and limitations of these applications and determined the most fitting selection. Table 3.3 illustrates some of the iPad applications that were considered, highlighting the affordances and limitations that accompany each one.

Book Creator was a clear contender for our creation tool. While the students did not have a choice of technology platforms, they were still granted freedom to manipulate their creation in multiple modes through a familiar, simple process and without an overabundance of extra options. With wordless picturebooks and the iPad application selected, I next planned the unit of study.
Table 3.3

Review of iPad Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>iPad Application:</th>
<th>Book Creator</th>
<th>Explain Everything</th>
<th>Educreations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs from the photo library</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typed text</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripted text (use of a pen)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shapes, such as speech bubbles, thought bubbles, or frames</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Shapes only</td>
<td>Only if drawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice recordings</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESIGN CHOICES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple pictures per page</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page color</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page size</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text color</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text size</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text style</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREATION PROCEDURES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to add pictures</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to edit pictures</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to add text</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to edit text</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to draw</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to edit drawing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>(Until it saves)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to add voice</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to edit voice</td>
<td>Rerecord all voice on a page</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>(Challenging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL PRODUCT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-book</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Movie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie / pdf / presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to share with parents</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview of the Wordless Picturebook Unit of Study

This study took place during the latter part of our first grade year. By this point in the year, students demonstrated understanding of literacy behaviors, after explicit practice, including strategies such as monitoring comprehension, making connections, retelling, visualizing, questioning, and inferring in both fiction and nonfiction text. The students also established
autonomy in their work habits, exhibiting understanding of expectations of interactions, available materials, and familiarity with various iPad applications used for production of student work.

Following the format of the gradual release of responsibility, the unit of study started with a model of reading the wordless picturebook, *The Museum Trip*. In reference to Serafini’s (2014) pedagogical framework for teaching with wordless picturebooks, the following steps were conducted:

1. Anticipating reading:
   a. Explore the cover and title
   b. Examine how the book is organized
   c. Note the types of pictures used throughout the book

2. Reading the book:
   a. Determining the events happening in the story
   b. Noting what do we know and do not know about the events and characters
   c. Questioning before, during, and after reading

3. Analyzing the book:
   a. Noting how the pictures are presented and how they change
   b. Determining the sequence of events
   c. Determining the setting(s), including how time is shown
   d. Noting how the borders or gutters are used in the story.

The next several days involved modeling interpretation of the wordless picturebook using multiple rereadings and discussions. During the next two weeks, we repeated this process with three more of Lehman’s wordless picturebooks: *The Red Book, The Secret Box, and Rainstorm*. After reading and discussing each book, we selected the book *Rainstorm* to explore a little more
closely. Collectively, we transferred the illustrations within this book into Book Creator. For this portion of our collaborative exploration, I took pictures of each page in *Rainstorm* so they were available in our iPad photo storage. Through discussions of meaning, we decided together how and what pictures could be joined together and how they could be arranged to best portray the meaning we created. We explored adding meaning through scripted text, typed text, speech bubbles, and voice recordings. Table 3.4 highlights some of the purposeful changes we made in order to explore the various modes available in Book Creator.

Table 3.4

*Samples from the Rainstorm Minilessons*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample page from Book Creator</th>
<th>Mode(s) explored</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sample page" /></td>
<td>Text: Thought bubble, Text: Narration</td>
<td>The text on this page was revisited several times in order to provide information about the character and the setting in the beginning. The thought bubble is used to let us know what the boy is thinking and feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sample page" /></td>
<td>Design: Picture layout, Text: Narration</td>
<td>The pictures from different pages in the book are grouped together on one page in the digital book because they all depict the same event. The text helps explain what’s happening in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sample page" /></td>
<td>Design: Picture layout, Text: Narration</td>
<td>This time, the same picture was repeated in order to make meaning from the picture layout. The boy was climbing a tall staircase, so the pictures repeat in a way that indicates climbing the page until he gets to the top.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text: Speech bubble</th>
<th>A speech bubble is used to indicate what the character is saying. The pictures are laid out in a way that zooms in to show the location of the boy and then zooms out to show the whole setting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design: Picture layout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice: Speech bubbles</th>
<th>Voice recordings are used to indicate what each character says during their conversation at the table.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

We revisited the original text, reread our creation, and made changes as we thought necessary, throughout the creation process. This process of multimodal transmediation highlighted the actions and thought processes used and prompted the students to use tools to attempt this process on their own.

The last stage of this unit involved the collaborative application of the reading and transmediation of wordless picturebook, *Trainstop*. In order to encourage collaborative exchanges, students were assigned partners for this reading response activity. Table 3.5 highlights key work and social habits that I considered as I formed these pairs in order for them to be successful in this project. I wanted to note any differences among mixed gender and common gender pairs, but I also wanted to match students with similar reading abilities. One particular situation I wanted to avoid was having a strong reader with high comprehension dominate the conversation or creation of the digital story. Considering their personalities and typical performance on comprehension activities, I arranged the pairs accordingly.
### Considerations for Matching Student Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Students (Pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Teacher considerations in student placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Wyatt &amp; Cathy</td>
<td>Both genders represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both high readers with high comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both socially outgoing and vocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Max &amp; Evelyn</td>
<td>Both genders represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One high reader with basic comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One average reader with high comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both socially outgoing and vocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Clark &amp; Katie</td>
<td>Both genders represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both average readers with basic comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both socially timid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Ellen &amp; Maggie</td>
<td>Both females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One average reader with high comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One below average reader with basic comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both socially timid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Scott &amp; Adam</td>
<td>Both males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both average readers with average to high comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both socially outgoing and vocal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During our language arts block each day, students were allotted 20 to 25 minutes of “Read to Someone” time. The focus of this time typically varied, but during his particular unit of study, it was designated for partner reading and the transmediation of the wordless picturebook. Two pairs of students worked on this task at a time, as students rotated through different portions of our language arts block, such as “Listening to Reading” or “Working on Writing”. The pairs were given designated working spaces in the room that allowed for collaboration without interfering with others’ workspace or disrupting others’ concentration. Each pair was provided with a copy of the book and an iPad to share.
Although the premise of social constructivism emphasizes the freedom to explore and create meaning, for the purpose of time management as well as a means of scaffolding this new process, I did provide a general outline of procedures for students to complete. They were allotted the freedom to work at their own pace, though, so the timeline of events varied between the pairs of students. Table 3.6 outlines this suggested progression.

Table 3.6

*Overview of Suggested Working Sequence for Trainstop*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Direction given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td><strong>First reading</strong> <em>Look through the book, talk about what you notice, start thinking about the story this book tells.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td><strong>Second reading</strong> <em>Look back through the book and talk about the story that this book tells. Repeat this process as needed.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td><strong>Picture placement</strong> <em>Start adding your pictures to your digital book. Think about what pictures you might want to group together and how you want to place them on each page.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td><strong>Tell the story</strong> <em>Go through your digital book and decide how you would tell that story. Make it so someone could read your book just the way you think the story should be read.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td><strong>Review and revise</strong> <em>Read / listen to the story you created. Make any last changes you would like to so that it tells the story you want it to tell.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated above, the first few days of the study were designated to viewing and discussing the story, working together to make sense of the storyline. The remaining days involved rereading, discussing the book, and making decisions about how to best transform this book into a digital version. Partners worked at varied rates over the course of 2 weeks. The hard copy of the book was always available to them to reference or review. As a facilitator of their
learning, I monitored progress, provided feedback through class mini-lessons, and answered questions when needed, but my goal as their teacher was to nurture their independence in this process. The researcher side of my persona busily collected data in order to examine this process more thoroughly.

**Data Collection**

After collaboratively reading a wordless picturebook a few times, students were asked to recreate that story in a digital form using the iPad application, Book Creator. The pictures of the story were obtained through an e-book version of the story. I took a screen shot of each individual picture, including those on the cover, book jacket, title page, and dedication page. The pictures were made available to the students in the iPads’ photo gallery. On the third day of the study, the students added the pictures to their digital book, discussing how to group, order, and arrange them to best show their meaning. Over the next few days, students found ways to capture the story that they collaboratively created by adding text, speech bubbles, and/or voice recordings to the photographs of the book’s graphics. This process allowed students to take ownership of their meaning making.

Because literacy is a social habit (Hamilton, 1999), I anticipated various modes of collaboration to occur among the students. During this time, I casually observed students’ independent and collaborative efforts, providing support or prompting as needed. In addition, I established several means of formal data collections. Over the course of 2 weeks, the following means of data collection were included in this study:

- **Observations**: I obtained a digital recording of each working sessions to capture the actions and discussions conducted between the pairs of students as well as any interactions with me. I placed a video recorder at both work stations to focus solely on
the pair of students working. The students’ voices, actions, and interactions with the book were all captured in this footage. These videos were used to add to the sequential description of the work at hand as well as the detailed descriptions or visual depictions of collaboration.

- **Informal Interviews:** As I collaborated with students during working sessions, I captured these interactions on the video recordings. I followed a “Tell me” format when prompting student responses, such as: “Tell me about the parts of the story that surprised you” and “Tell me about what you were wondering during (a particular picture or page)” (Cowie, Huser, & Myers, 2014). These casual conversations were transcribed.

- **Field Diary:** Each day, I jotted notes of general observations, thoughts, or reactions I had or noticed among my students. At the conclusion of this block each day, I reflected on these notes and typed a general reflection.

- **Presentations / Interviews:** At the conclusion of the assignment, the students shared their final products with the class, as was typically done at the conclusion of such tasks throughout the year. During the presentations, I used similar probing “Tell me” questions to gain insight about the student’s thoughts and purpose of features included in their final products. Students were also given the opportunity to comment on each other’s final products, noting differences in their presentations or in the meaning created. These presentations and interviews were digitally recorded to account for any gestures or animations students added when retelling the story.

- **Student artifacts:** The first two days of digital recording provided verbal artifacts of the meaning-making without the addition of the iPads. Meanings that were created from the initial viewing and subsequent viewings were both transcribed in order to compare the
paths that meaning took as the children revisited the story. The final digital reproductions were collected for analysis and cross comparison purposes, as well as providing visual samples to accompany written descriptions of findings. A print copy of each of the final products is available for reference in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through Constant Comparison Analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) in hopes to find common themes and patterns in the students’ collaborative transactions as they worked through the process of transmediation. All digital recordings were transcribed and organized according to the suggested steps of the project. This included the following sections of transcribed data for each pair of students:

- The entire initial reading of *Trainstop*
- An initial informal interview with the teacher, including a general retelling of the book
- The entire second reading of the book
- Meaningful conversations held during the placement of pictures into Book Creator (unrelated conversations were noted, but not typed out in their entirety)
- Meaningful conversations held during the story creation of the digital book, including the final revisions
- Class conversations held during the sharing of each pair’s final presentation

Field notes were typed and expanded for thorough depiction of teacher thoughts and researcher notations. Student work was printed for examination at two points during the project: after the initial stories were completed and again after final revisions were made.

While the analysis was grounded in the data, I used the lens of multimodal literacy and social constructivism to provide initial points of interest. This included viewing and reviewing
the reading of the book to note the various modes used in telling the story during the first reading, the subsequent readings, and the final project presentation. The evident modes included various uses of text, photographs, design, voice, and gestures. The uses of these modes were traced from the beginning reading through to the final presentation for each pair of students in order to examine any possible fluctuation in the use of a particular mode as the process evolved.

I also looked for indications of various levels of interpretive thinking to determine how meaning was created and the collaborative exchanges that lead to making decisions. Loosely based on multimodal (inter)action analysis (Norris, 2011), a systematic process was used to organize the data in order to track the construction of meaning for each pair of students during various parts of the story. This process discriminates the lower-level actions conducted by students from higher-level actions that occur when meaning is created. Video snapshots were coupled with transcriptions as well in order to isolate moments of meaning-making and make the students’ reading transactions a series of visible data to review.

The vast amount of data afforded a means of triangulation to capture this collaborative meaning-making process. It is my hope that careful consideration of this data will help to not only foster my own pedagogy but will also present insight into the potential meaning-making abilities of first graders.

**Considerations**

As in all research, particular ethical considerations must be met in order to acquire a moral and acceptable study. Throughout both the data collection and data analysis processes, I had to attend to such considerations, especially when dealing with children in an educational setting. These considerations include the regulation of a caring and safe environment, the
recognition of the power imbalance between adults and children, and the commitment to collecting and reflecting accurate and valid depictions of the interactions of the classroom.

Noddings (2012) described a caring environment as one that incorporates listening, responding to needs, and validating student feelings. The researcher assumes this responsibility when entering into an environment with young children. In order to establish the environment for trust and learning to develop, the researcher must engage in the reciprocity of verbal and physical exchanges. She must consider the rights and emotional well being of the participants (Cowie et al, 2014).

A qualitative researcher must also recognize the natural imbalance of power between children and adults (Cowie et al, 2014). When seeking parental consent to work with children for the purpose of research, I was open and clear about the intentions of the research with the students’ gatekeepers, or the child’s parent or other guardian. To remain true to the naturalistic means of the learning environment, I was careful not to use this status of power to sway the reactions or responses of the students, such as policing student behaviors or trying to obtain the status of friend as opposed to teacher (Levey, 2009). Children are accustomed to having a caring adult in the primary classroom setting that maintains a certain level of power, and my goal was to maintain this status (Cowie et al, 2014; Noddings, 2012). Such interferences could have altered any attempts to maintain validity and reliability of the study.

Because the basis of qualitative case study is centered on the researcher’s data collection and analysis, a heavier burden is placed on the researcher to maintain acceptable standards of accuracy and validity. It can be difficult for researcher to be disconnected from the data collection or analysis process (Emond, 2005). It can be argued that in some level, these studies will always include some level of subjectivity. I had to find a middle ground of reflexivity to
ground the research in consciousness, providing a blend of theory and personal accounts for analysis (Bath, 2009; Levey, 2009).

By systematically identifying and examining all possible factors within a naturalistic setting, as a researcher, I know I cannot control the extraneous factors that are a natural part of primary classrooms. I also clearly recognized that the purpose is not to be able to generalize finding into other exact studies, but rather seek to explore phenomena that may be applicable or transferable to similar settings. As a qualitative researcher, I sought validity by painting the picture of natural occurrence in the classroom, maintaining a reflexive lens and honest depiction of the experience (Denzin, 1998).
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

IT IS ABOUT THE JOURNEY, NOT JUST THE DESTINATION

In this study, the multimodality of reading was examined through the modes in which first grade students engaged when reading and designing text. While the meaning depicted in their final products was a focal point, I wanted to consider the equally important aspect of how the students collaborated and what roles they assumed in order to make meaning of a text. As Serafini (2012a) highlighted, readers become navigators, interpreters, interrogators, and designers of text in order to make meaning of multimodal text. This study showed that the added element of collaboration created opportunities for students to also become performers as they read and redesigned a story. With an added layer of transmediation, modes and roles fluctuated throughout the process of creating.

In order to fully appreciate the findings, I found it to be important to examine the unique developments that the students in my class undertook while making meaning. This included how each pair approached the text differently, assumed distinctive roles, and used a blend of modes in order to make meaning of the wordless picturebook, Trainstop. The following sections first provide a brief narrative describing the collaborative attempts unique to each set of partners as they navigated, interpreted, interrogated, performed, and designed these stories, highlighting ways that meaning was created throughout the process. It then provides an overview of the common modes used throughout the reading and transmediation processes as well as the trends that became apparent through this examination.
Examining Students’ Collaborative Exchanges

When students first opened the book, *Trainstop*, they assumed various roles as readers and incorporated various modes. The following sections examine, in isolation, the collaborative exchanges in which five pairs of students engaged. A flowchart illustrates the roles and modes utilized by each pair of students, followed by examples of these exchanges that helped shape their meaning-making process. The beginning blocks indicate modes and roles assumed in the first reading of *Trainstop*. The middle blocks indicate how modes and roles changed as students reread the story, building familiarity with the layout and content, and resulting in more of a narrative stance of reading. The final blocks indicate the dominant modes used in the final design of their digital books. By examining each pair in isolation as well as together, some commonalities and trends surfaced.

**Cathy and Wyatt**

As Cathy and Wyatt collaboratively read and designed their digital *Trainstop* stories, they maintained a cohesive partnership. Their styles of reading so closely complemented each other that they worked as a true partnership. They began their journey as interpreters and interrogators of the pictures, but their roles quickly transformed into collaborative performers of the story. Their performance was captured in their final design through text, picture placements, and voice (Figure 4.1).
Interpreters and interrogators. Cathy and Wyatt had an instant collaborative approach to the reading the story. Beginning with the first opening of the book, these students approached the storybook with a narrative stance – they told the story. They did not talk through their roles, nor did they discuss observations. They simply navigated their way through the story, interpreting the plot and making adjustments to the plot as it unfolded. They took turns telling the story, but their vocabulary and narrative tone blended well and their storyline flowed. They stopped sporadically for discussions to make decisions about character, setting, and particular wording. In these cases, their tone switched to more conversational as they plainly shared their reasoning for their desired character’s name, their thoughts about the setting, or a particular word or phrase they thought would be fitting in their story. For example, the following exchange sparked by Figure 4.2 demonstrates interrogations about the gender of the main character:

Cathy: Ok – now that’s a girl definitely. Because we couldn’t see the ponytail. Boys don’t wear ponytails.
Wyatt: Some boys do. Some can have hair all the way down to their knees.
Cathy: Yeah, but...
Wyatt: It’s really rare.
Cathy: Once I saw a boy with really long hair.
Cathy and Wyatt had clear characteristics they used to defend their character identification through means of discussion. They used their background knowledge to make a determination of the gender that allowed them to later designate a feminine name for the protagonist and then proceed with telling the story.

During the initial reading, they stopped for discussions in order to agree on their interpretations. They interrogated each other about the various settings of the story. They debated for two days about what the overall setting was, and they tried to name a specific location for the train station. The city setting led them to name Michigan, but when the country setting presented in the middle of the story, they decided on Alaska. Finally, they determined that it should just be “a countryside”, as illustrated in the following exchange:

Wyatt:  
*Ok. One Saturday, a girl and her mom and dad were going to Michigan on a train.*

Teacher observation: They proceed to tell the story about Stella on the train, but revisit the setting when they turn the page to see the country landscape.

Wyatt:  
*I’m going to change that they are going to Michigan. How about they are going to Alaska?*

Cathy:  
*No, no, I know... let’s change the first page. Stella and her mom and dad were taking a train to a country. Ok. Your turn.*
Teacher observation: She returns to part in book where girl is getting off train.

Wyatt: *Ok – but let’s say it’s Alaska.*

Cathy: *Well, but it looks like the country.*

Wyatt: *It is the country. Ok.*

This exchange traced their interpretations of the setting, and they negotiated meaning and determined their ideal word choice. This meaning is still present in their final product, as shown in Figure 4.3.

![Figure 4.3: Cathy and Wyatt’s Digital Page Indicating Final Use of Word Choice for the Setting](image)

As collaborative interrogators, Cathy and Wyatt studied evidence in the pictures as well as logic in the story to help collaboratively determine suitable word choices for the setting of the story.

**Designers.** As they read through the book, Cathy and Wyatt maintained a dominant narrative voice with moments of expressive exchanges and sounds. This narrative voice turned into traditional text narration as they created their digital products. They put thought into how to best arrange some pictures and present some text in order to add to the meaning of their story. At times, they paired pictures in a manner that physically implied other actions that takes place
in the story. In the first example, the students contemplate combining two pictures to show movement of the girl on the train (Figure 4.4).

Wyatt: *Mrs. Thomson, could we put these two pictures together because it is just still showing her on the train but she is turned around looking out the window?*

Mrs. Thomson: *You may place the pictures any way you would like in order to create the story that you think is best.*

**Teacher observation:** Students decide to put the two pictures together.

Wyatt: *Look – it’s like she actually scoots over to look out the window.*

In a similar example, Cathy and Wyatt combine pictures and place them in a particular manner in order to represent the action of the character exiting the train (Figure 4.5).

Wyatt: *Do you think these should go together?*

Cathy: *Yes. Because she’s getting out, and then she’s like thinking as she gets off.*

**Teacher Observations:** Wyatt and Cathy decided to keep the four pictures and single picture together because they decided to group the pictures that deal with the character
getting off of the train. They start to arrange them side-by-side, but Wyatt moves the single picture down to allow more space.

Wyatt: * It’s like a tunnel. The train is going through here (showing with hand on screen) and opening up into town. *

*Figure 4.5. Additional Example of Wyatt and Cathy Placing Pictures to Add to Meaning Making*

In addition to picture placement, Cathy and Wyatt put effort into how they narrated the pictures to aid the audience in reading, while also contemplating the design of their story. In the following examples, students placed the text in a manner in which it aligned with the illustrations (Figure 4.6).
Example 1 illustrates enlarging the picture in order to fit text through the middle in order to give a simple overview of action on this page. Example 2 illustrates placing text in conjunction with a particular picture to dictate action in each individual frame.

Figure 4.6. Selected Pages Illustrating Text Placement as a Means of Sharing Interpretations

Performers. While Cathy and Wyatt used the dominant mode of text to narrate the story, they also incorporated several modes in order to capture aspects of their role-playing performance as they read through the story. To this end, they incorporated speech bubbles and thought bubbles to illustrate character thoughts and reactions, just as they had done through expressive voice in their original narrations. The illustrations show in Figure 4.7 sparked the beginning of such a performance.

Figure 4.7. Story Illustrations that Sparked Performance
Teacher Observations: As Cathy and Wyatt turned the page, their eyes widened and they began laughing almost immediately. They responded with a “Wo!”, pointed to the picture and continued laughing.

Wyatt: Those aren’t kids. Are those elves?
Cathy: They are very tiny.
Wyatt: But, huh? These kids were smaller than Stella. They looked big but when she got out of the bus they were so small. And it looked like one of the tiny kids was up in the tree trying to get an airplane. So Stella decided to help. One of the kids – small kids – was stuck in the tree getting an airplane, so she decided to help.

Cathy and Wyatt represented the making of meaning from the first reading to the final product (Figure 4.8). It captures the gestures and voice modes used in the initial reading and how they translate this performance in their final design.

![Image of children running with a thought bubble]

Voice within the Thought Bubble: I wonder why these kids are so small.

All the little kids were running to a tree but as she got closer she saw that all the little kids were all so tiny.
Then she ran up to them and saw what was happening.

Figure 4.8. Cathy and Wyatt’s Final Product Representing Performance Through Voice

Cathy and Wyatt were careful to distinguish between characters’ thoughts and spoken words. As seen in the following examples in Figure 4.9, when an elf was asking for help, they indicated this with a speech bubble. When the character was thinking to herself, they placed the vocalization within a thought bubble. Their expression also varied between these two. The thought bubble
included a quiet voice while the recording in the speech bubble was spoken with urgency and in a squeaky voice to represent the elf asking for help.

**Example 1:**

**Voice Recording:**

*Help! Somebody help me here!*

Teacher observation: These words are spoken with urgency but also in a squeaky voice to represent the elf.

---

**Example 2:**

**Voice Recording:**

*Why is everyone else sleeping?*

---

*Figure 4.9. Examples of Thought Bubbles and Speech Bubbles Used to Portray Performance*

Other voice insertions were used to depict onomatopoeias that were included in their original readings of the story. They used voice recordings to capture the importance these sounds had in the story (Figure 4.10).
Example 1 - First Reading:

**HONK!** – The train went. Stella had to leave. She said goodbye to the other kids.

Final Product:

Voice Recording: *Ehhhhhh!*

---

Example 2 – First Reading

**HONK, the train went. The horn on the train went. Stella looked up at the train. HONK, the train went again. Stella looked up at the train. There was John again.**

Final Product:

Voice Recording: *H-O-O-ONK!*

---

*Figure 4.10. Examples of Sounds Recorded with Voice to Capture Performance in Final Designs*

Cathy and Wyatt maintained the voice and expression represented in their original readings of the story. Their narrations revealed word choices they deliberated, expression they naturally depicted in their exploration, and the overall storyline they created through their exchanges. They were intentional in the placement of their pictures and their text, and maintained a level of performance even as they transmediated their story to a digital platform.
Max and Evelyn

Max and Evelyn illustrated how two students with very different styles of reading and methods of thinking could collaborate in order to blend their viewpoints to create common meaning. As illustrated in the flowchart (Figure 4.11), Max and Evelyn approached the readings with different modes. Both students contributed their interpretations, but Evelyn proved to be a natural performer of the story while Max relied on his analytical interrogations to propel the story. Through interrogations and negotiations, they were able to establish common language and modes from which they could design the meaning they created.

**Figure 4.11**: Max and Evelyn’s Progression of Roles

**Interrogators and navigators.** Max and Evelyn assumed interrogating roles right from the start. They had distinct conversations about how to navigate through the story and where to start the story as well as some discussions over particular scenes throughout the story. During the first reading, Max wanted to approach reading the story by noting events, but Evelyn felt it necessary to first give the protagonist a name – giving the story a more narrative stance. They
also had a significant discussion as they navigated through the story, especially when it came to establishing where to begin the story. Evelyn wanted to start reading with the very first picture on the title page. Max wanted to wait until the official first page of the story, beyond the dedication pages. As they finished discussing the character’s name (Elizabeth) on the cover, they started to turn the page to start reading. The conversation went as follows:

**Teacher observation:** Max turns the pages all the way to page 1. Then Evelyn turns the pages back to title page.

Evelyn: *Let’s just go on and read it.*  
Max: *Ok – yeah*  
Evelyn: *Once Elizabeth was...*  

**Teacher observation:** Max turns the page back to page 1.

Max: *Seriously? That’s not part of the story.*  
Evelyn: *One day Liz was walking with her family.*  

**Teacher observation:** Max turns the page back to page 1.

Evelyn: *Seriously?*  
Max: *One day Liz is on a train.*  
Evelyn: *We haven’t even read this part*  

**Teacher observation:** Evelyn turns back to the title page and dedication page.

Max: *This is not a part – this is just the train coming.*  

Here Evelyn and Max have their own ideas of navigation set, but they go through interrogations in order to agree upon the starting point. Max was trapped in the notion that stories do not start until the first true pages of the book – after the dedication pages and the title pages. In the end, they decided to begin their final creation by including the picture presented on the title page of the original text, even though Max had a difficult time starting to narrate the story here during their initial reading (Figure 4.12). It seemed that when they were presented with the pictures in the photo library of the iPad, Max was no longer hindered by the
illustration’s placement on the title page to indicate whether it was or was not part of the story. When presented amongst the other photographs, it transpired as a logical starting point for them.

![Image](example.png)

*Figure 4.12: Starting Point of Max and Evelyn’s Digital Book*

Through their initial navigation discussions, Evelyn got frustrated. She consented to let Max start telling the story, stating, “*So, you just do it all the first time, and I’ll do it the second.*” It would seem that their collaborative efforts were not going to work. However, as Max started to tell his poem, Evelyn began to chime in with her storytelling stance as well. They developed a positive flow of exchanges, between her storytelling and his discussions about the story. Ultimately, they blended his descriptive approach and her narrative approach in order to provide a means for them to collaborate meaning.

During subsequent readings, Evelyn took over as the storyteller, but Max was persistent to chime in if he felt the word choice should be altered. Both students were able to voice their interpretations. Most notably, Max made thoughtful connections throughout the story, including a text-to-text connection in reference to other wordless picturebook titles by Barbara Lehman (Figure 4.13) as well as a connection to a common movie the first graders saw earlier in the year (Figure 4.14).
Max: It looks like they are going somewhere.
Evelyn: It looks like they are going to Los Angeles.
Max: Wait… do you remember the book *The Red Book* that we did? The one with the city? This kind of city? It matches *The Red Book*!

Max: Guess what… have you watched the Polar Express movie yet?
Evelyn: Mm-hmm.
Max: Remember at the end, they threwed up their hats?
Evelyn: Oh yeah.

Evelyn always validated Max’s connections but did not add much to those conversations. She was very focused on actually telling the story. When Max contributed, he had a greater tendency to voice any interrogations with Evelyn’s narration or particular word choice. For example, with the discovery of the little people in the middle of the story, Max interrogated the purpose of the illustrations (Figure 4.15). With his background knowledge about illustrations, Max tried to convince Evelyn that the small size of the people was only an artistic attempt to depict the distance of the character to the people.
Figure 4.15. Illustrations from Trainstop. These illustrations sparked interrogations about word choice to describe the new characters that entered into the middle of the story.

Evelyn: Everyone was running and Liz was trying to catch up. And then they saw some tiny... oh wait.

Teacher observation: Evelyn turned back the page.

Max: So one day...
Evelyn: Wait. I found something. Liz was running after some tiny people.
Max: It’s not tiny. When it’s further away, they look smaller.
Evelyn: No... look, look... she’s bigger than these tiny humans.
Max: Yeah, that’s because they are further away.
Evelyn: Just trust me. But then one of the tiny humans got stuck.

Teacher observation: Max is pointing to the tiny people and whispers “Oh wait...”

Evelyn: He got stuck in the tree with his helicopter and the girl was thinking and everyone was thinking and staring at her and then she tried and went on her tippy toes...

Teacher observation: Max is still commenting on picture... They are so tiny!

Evelyn: Then Liz went on her tippy toes and tried to grab both of them

As they further investigated the pictures, Max soon realized that the small characters were, in fact, very “tiny people”. Then they easily settled on the word choice “elves” to represent these characters, as outlined in their second reading of the story:
Evelyn:       And then she looked outside and she saw people.
Max:          You mean tiny people. No tiny elves. She was like, “I do not know what just happened!”

In the end, the word choice “elves” transpired to their final digital book (Figure 4.16).

Designer verses performer. Evelyn and Max maintained a blend of narrating and discussing through the first reading. By their second reading, Max became concerned about how they would represent the meaning in the digital form of the book. For example, he stated, “What about adding, ‘What somebody says’ or ‘he said’ or something like that.” When Evelyn continued to tell the story, he insisted, “We’re going to put SOME ‘he says’ and ‘she says’, okay?” Max clearly assumed the role of a designer and wanted to immediately start planning how they would design their interpretations in the digital format. Evelyn was less concerned about this during initial readings and instead, maintained a narrative stance that incorporated much more animation and performance. She often assumed the role of characters with facial expressions, gestures, and voice.

Evelyn’s performance while exploring and interpreting the story was one of the most vivid accounts of role-playing that occurred during this project. Her facial expressions and gestures alone often told much of the story, interpreting the actions and feelings of the character.
The following example shows a pause that Evelyn made in order to act out just how the character was thinking about a solution to her given problem – how to get the elf down from the tree (Figure 4.17).

![Figure 4.17. Example of Evelyn’s Use of Facial Expressions](image)

Figure 4.18 illustrates a few examples of portions of *Trainstop* during which Evelyn used hand movements along with her storytelling. It also includes the meaning inferred from these actions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture from <em>Trainstop</em></th>
<th>Hand Movements</th>
<th>Meaning Inferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hand Movements" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hand Movements" /></td>
<td>Showing how the little elf whispers an idea to Liz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hand Movements" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hand Movements" /></td>
<td>Showing how Liz reached to tall to get the elf out of the tree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.18. Examples of Evelyn’s Use of Hand Gestures in Order to Create Meaning*

In this next example, Evelyn combined the voice of the narrator, the voice of the characters, and gestures using hand movements to emphasize action in this particular scene (Figure 4.19).
**Teacher observations:** Evelyn became very animated during this portion of the reading. She placed her hand to chin to mimic the character in the story. Then she assumed the role of the little people in waving her hands. Then she cupped her hands around her mouth and changed her voice to a whisper voice. She then assumed the role of the elf and acted out this part by waving her arms around as she is speaking (Figure 4.20).

**Designers.** With one partner that relied on discussion and some narration and another partner that relied heavily on physical performance to tell the story, it was questionable how these students would represent their final interpretations as they designed their digital version. When reviewing their final product, they captured some of these performative elements through
the modes afforded in the digital platform. This included the use of speech bubbles, thought bubbles, and color.

In this first example, they proceeded to narrate the story through standard text. However, they included a thought bubble on this page to emphasize the problem solving thought process that they had established in their first readings (Figure 4.21).

Likewise, in this next example, Max and Evelyn represented the events of the story through narration while representing Evelyn’s performance elements through the speech bubble of the elf’s talking (Figure 4.22). They included a voice recording of the elf whispering, “Pick me up. I can reach my friend.”
Figure 4.22. A Second Example of Using Various Text Placements to Make Meaning

Notice that Max’s connection to the Polar Express was also represented in the final product. They were the only set of students to narrate about the throwing of the hats, which shows that the verbalization of their connection made a lasting impact to their interpretation of this part of the story.

Max and Evelyn represented their interpretations primarily through word choices in their text along with the inclusion of speech bubbles and thought bubbles; however, one unique mode that they used involved the use of background color for their product. During the following exchange, they brainstormed the use of color to add meaning:

Evelyn: Why don’t we change the color on this page? She’s leaving and going back into the tunnel and it’s like this part is over.
Max: Ok. What color?
Evelyn: Let’s look. Blue.
Max: No, let’s do green since she was just in a really green place. In the country.
Evelyn: Yeah, ok. Green.

The use of a background color added another layer of meaning through a new mode in Max and Evelyn’s digital book. They chose it to represent not only the conclusion of the climax of the book, but also the changing story setting (Figure 4.23).
The collaborative exchanges between Max and Evelyn involved an exciting hybrid of reading roles. Evelyn maintained her preference of performing while Max interjected with his interrogations, feedback, and insight to enhance the meaning of their collaborative poem. The connections he made maintained influence on their final product just as did her modes of expression and voice.

**Clark and Katie**

Clark and Katie immediately assumed roles of interrogators as they approached the first reading of *Trainstop*. They discussed how to navigate through the story and where to begin their interpretations. Once they got started on the process, they exchanged interpretations and gradually assumed the role of collaborative performers (Figure 4.24). They maintained their performances in the final versions of their story by recording voice as the narrator as well as speech and thought bubbles to capture character’s spoken words and thoughts.
Clark and Katie’s Progression of Roles

**Interrogators.** Clark and Katie had a significant exchange about the logistics of their first reading. Katie very much supported just looking through the story and using a conversational tone to talk about the pictures and their initial interpretations of their meaning. Clark, however, wanted to initiate a narrative tone from the start. Gestures of tugging at the book and flipping back and forth added to the interrogative feel of this initial exchange (Figure 4.25).

Clark: *No, let’s tell it like a story.* (Moving book)
Katie: *No wait* (Moving book back). *We just need to look at it right now and then we can maybe go back if we have time.*
Clark: *Why can’t we tell the story?*
Katie: *It’d be better if we look at it first.*
Katie: *Ok, let’s start on the first page. Hmmm... which one is the first page?* (Flipping back and forth)
Clark: *I don’t know. This one is confusing. This one has some words over here.* (Referring to the copyright information.)
Clark: *No – let me tell the story. That’s really what picturebooks are all about.*
Katie: *No- just look right now, and THEN we will tell the story.*
This exchange highlights a brief discussion this pair had about the starting point of this story – a point of contention as they began navigating through the book. They had additional discussions about specific details, such as character names, as indicated in the following exchange in reference to the first few pictures (Figure 4.26).

Figure 4.26. Title Page and Dedication Page Illustrations

Clark: Hmm... Ok. What do you think the character’s names are?
Katie: It’s a girl, so...
Clark: No, it’s a boy...
Katie: No, it’s a girl
Clark: No, it’s a boy. See... (Clark looks back to front cover). No, it’s definitely a girl.
Katie: See, I told you.
Clark: The red hair...
Katie: That’s a ponytail tie. See here (pointing) the ponytail tie.
Clark: Well, boys do have ponytails sometimes.
Katie: Yeah.
Clark: Ok, so let’s think of a girl name. Carla.
Katie: That sounds like a boy name. Let’s think of a girl name. Marissa.
Clark: Sophia
Katie: Yeah, I like Sophia. Oh, or Emily.
Clark: No, that’s my mom’s name.
Katie: Ok, let’s go with Sophia.

Through discussion, they agree upon a name for the main protagonist, and as other characters appeared in the story, they began similar exchanges. Their interrogations became a little long-winded, and I had to redirect them to talk through the story and to make final decisions about character names at a later time.

As they continued through their first reading, there were a few other points of interrogations. Each time, they assumed a mode of talk in which they discussed particular details and word choice before continuing on with their reading. The following example illustrates the discussion of word choice when describing the little characters that appear in the story (Figure 4.27).
The following teacher observation describes this exchange:

   *In this picture, Clark is pointing to justify his suggestion for the words “lots of kids” instead of “some boys and girls”. He counts the kids to justify that eleven is more than just some.* (Teacher field notes)

As seen in the photograph, Clark used pointing as a gesture to help monitor their discussion or emphasize his point about word choice.

   The next example involved several points of interrogation. Clark and Katie were still finding their path through the story, experimenting with different labels and language as they read. They played with possible names and locations; they anticipated character’s thoughts and feelings. They also questioned the story itself, indicating that this series of illustrations “just didn’t make sense” (Research field notes). They also critiqued some of the illustrations, questioning meaning of particular marks in pictures and talking through this meaning. The conversation centered on a sequence of six pages, highlighting some of the key interrogations that occurred. Figure 4.28 first displays the pictures from the story that inspired the discussion followed by the student exchange with assorted interrogations.
Katie: So they are sitting on the train and it looks like they are going somewhere.
Clark: It looks like they are going to Los Angeles.
Katie: Wait… do you remember the book The Red Book that we did? The one with the city? This kind of city? It matches the Red Book!
Clark: Yeah, but what is that tunnel?
Katie: It might be a way to get out of the city. And she’s looking out the window and they are getting ready to go into the tunnel.
Clark: Hey… maybe we can do a little speech bubble here that says “I’m having fun going on the train.”
Katie: So, she’s looking at the city, and she goes into the tunnel and
Clark: Hey… another speech bubble…
Katie: No… we are just looking right now. We don’t need speech bubbles yet. Ok? So she is looking out the window in the tunnel – looking at the black tunnel. Then it looks like she’s looking out the window again. Maybe she’s dreaming.
Clark: No – she’s looking out the window again at some trees and some houses and some hot air balloons.

This exchange illustrates the back and forth that this pair had during their first reading. They interrogated about word choice, how to proceed reading the story, and critiqued each other’s interpretations.

Performers. As Katie and Clark began subsequent readings, they had a distinct transition from using conversational tone to discuss logistics, characters, and events to
developing a narrative with additional modes of voice and gestures. Once they began the narration, they complemented each other’s contributions, occasionally interjecting only to add or slightly alter word choice. As they continued telling their story, they assumed the roles of performers, primarily using the character’s voice for the majority of their readings. In this example, they used the voice of the characters to demonstrate the character’s thoughts as well as spoken words within the context of the story. Figure 4.29 shows this particular part of the story in which Katie and Clark playfully exchanged turns, exploring different ways to express these thoughts and comments.

![Figure 4.29: Illustrations from Trainstop that Sparked Expressive Voice](image)

Katie: (Speaking in a soft, sweet voice) *I must get back on the train. Goodbye. Goodbye small people. I’ll see you another time.*

Clark: (Speaking in a soft, but high-pitched voice) *Hmmm... where are my mom and dad?*

Katie: (Speaking in a soft, sweet voice) *Oh, my mom and dad are still asleep.*

Clark: (Speaking in a louder, high-pitched voice) *Bye! Bye little people.*

Katie: (Speaking in a louder voice) *Bye! Thanks for saving us. Saving me!*

Clark: (Speaking in a louder, high-pitched voice) *Bye! I wish I could see you another time.*

In other examples, such expression was incorporated with the voice of the characters to add to the performance of their interpretations. In reference to the part of the story show in Figure 4.30, teacher observations indicate that, “both students used a louder, urgent voice when playing the
role of the conductor. In addition, they used a lower pitch to represent a man’s voice.” (Research field notes).

*Figure 4.30. Illustrations from Trainstop that Sparked Expressive Voice*

Clark: (Speaking in a loud voice with urgency) *Get out of the way!*
Katie: *Oh yeah, we should put a big speech bubble that says, “Hey, excuse me guy. Get out of the way!”*

In another example, the students simple exchanged the farewells, “Bye!” spoken by the conductor, and “Bye!” spoken by the girl in the part of the story (Figure 4.31).

*Figure 4.31. Illustrations from Trainstop that Sparked Expressive Voice*

The teacher observations indicate,

*The students both used louder voices as well as change of pitch. A low pitch was used first to indicate the conductor. A higher pitch was then used to represent the girl.* (Research field notes)

Even the train earned a vocal role in their performance, both when the train was ready to leave the country (Figure 4.32) as well as when the train was departing the train station (Figure 4.33).
Designers. Because the exchanges between Clark and Katie involved a great deal of performance that focused mostly on the use of character voice, it was appropriate that this pair selected recorded voice as the primary mode of storytelling within their digital text. This way, they could maintain their performance by telling the story through the role of the character. The recording on this digital page (Figure 4.34) provides an example of using pitch to indicate character gender:

Katie: “Look! I see some friends. I hope I can go play with them. I wonder where they’re going. I wonder if I can help them.”

Teacher Observation: Spoken in a soft voice with a higher pitch to indicate a girl’s voice.
On another digital page (Figure 4.35) Clark provides an example of using pitch to indicate both character gender and sense of urgency:

Clark: *Hey! Where are you guys going? Can I go with you? You small people, where are you going?*

**Teacher Observation:** Spoken in a higher pitch to indicate a girl’s voice, but spoken with louder volume to indicate urgency.

As Katie and Clark designed their digital product, they also incorporated speech and thought bubbles to add to the understanding of the character. In some cases, they included text in the speech bubble (Figure 4.36).
They used narrating voice as well as speech bubbles to maintain their role-playing in the context of their digital book. They also represented character’s voice by using recorded voice within the speech bubble to show that the character is speaking (Figure 4.37).

Once this pair worked through the logistics of the reading and creating process, they blended their interpretations and became common performers of the story. Their final product predominately told the story through the voice of the character, with some added text for narration and speech bubbles. Just as they methodically worked through their story, they
thoughtfully designed their story with the inclusion of thought bubbles, speech bubbles, and purposeful picture placement.

**Ellen and Maggie**

Ellen and Maggie approached this project differently than any other pair. Right from the start, they interrogated about how to approach reading a wordless picturebook. They debated alternating pages, but both girls wanted to contribute to the meaning of the story in isolation. Therefore, they decided to take turns telling each page of the story (Figure 4.38).

![Figure 4.38. Ellen and Maggie’s Progression of Roles](image)

As they read the story, one girl would tell her interpretation, and then the second girl would retell that same page. Often, the choice of vocabulary was similar. They never had a point of disagreement about the other’s narration, but they often elaborated with details. They both became performers with their own style. Those performances eventually blended as they designed their final project with their performances in mind.
**Interrogators.** Some of the most critical interrogations Ellen and Maggie had included which details in the picture were most critical to the story. In the first pages, their story was brief. Ellen noticed and quickly stated, “Wait. We don’t want to make it so short. What else do we see?” For the remainder of the first reading, these girls discussed many aspects of the pictures thoroughly in order to determine which details had significance to the meaning of the story. In reference to the story picture shown in Figure 4.39, Ellen and Maggie flipped back and forth to determine the importance of the main characters in the book and determined that the couple in the picture must be the parents of story’s protagonist.

![Figure 4.39. Illustration from Trainstop: These sparked discussion about determining characters.](image)

Ellen: Well, it looks like people are walking down to the bus stop. Peyton looks like she’s ready to go on the bus. So it looks like she’s ready to go.

Maggie: So it looks like people are ready to go places. Like college people are waiting for people to pick them up. Some are looking at newspapers. Wait, wait, wait… what about her family? What about her mom and dad? (Flips back to the first picture) See those people (pointing) are those people (pointing), so those are her parents.

Ellen: Ok – so let’s go back to the first page. It looks like everyone is walking and waiting for the train. Peyton looks over at the side and sees that the train is coming. Her parents are looking at newspapers or like a map.

In the end, the parents earned mention in subsequent readings and the final version (Figure 4.40).

Note that they combined the two pictures that helped them determine the importance of the characters.
**Interpreters and performers.** As Maggie and Ellen interpreted the pictures in the story, they became immediate performers in their own style. Maggie used more pointing to connect interpretations with particular pictures or aspects of pictures and would assume the voice of the character to add to the story. Pointing was especially prevalent on pages with a sequence of events represented in multiple pictures. This gesture often coincided with details about each picture. Pointing was also used to clarify a thought between students. The following example indicates the pictures and exchanges that occurred between these students during which Maggie used pointing to emphasize her interpreted meaning (Figure 4.41).

*Figure 4.40. Ellen and Maggie’s First Digital Page Identifying their Story’s Characters*

*Figure 4.41. Example of Maggie’s Pointing Used to Emphasize Meaning*

X = Peyton was walking down holding the parents’ hand. Then she stopped and they went down to the trainstop place and then she peeked over at the side and saw a train.
In this picture, Maggie points to each picture as she states,

*It looks like she’s trying to reach and then she says, “Oh, I have an idea” and she’s trying to reach. Then a person pulls her and Peyton is like, “Hi,” and then she is telling her, “Maybe I can help reach.” And then she tries it, and then she gets him down.*

Her narration clearly follows in suit with each sequential picture.

Ellen did not use the voice of the character, but often added facial expressions and hand gestures to her narration to act out characters’ movements or reactions. In her playful narrations, she also began to incorporate more physical gestures as a mode of her performance. This included facial expressions that were used as a means of emphasis for character feelings or reactions. The following example shows the part of the story that sparked the expression along side a snapshot of Ellen’s appearance (Figure 4.42).

![Figure 4.42. Example of Ellen’s Facial Expressions Used to Emphasize Meaning](image)

In addition to facial expressions, Ellen became very animated in her interpretation of the story and began to use her hands for emphasis as she assumed the role of characters. She often used hand gestures that mimicked the character’s movements, such as demonstrating how Peyton waved goodbye to her little friends as the train left (Figure 4.43).
As these girls revisited the story, they incorporated more expression as they narrated the story, emphasizing the excitement and wonder of the main character. An example of this expression includes their use of pitch and voice in reference to the following illustration (Figure 4.44):

**Figure 4.44. Illustration That Sparked Expressive Voice**

Ellen: *And Peyton tries, and she grabs him down and everyone is cheering. They are shouting *Yay! Yay! Yay! Yay! And they are throwing their hats up in the air.*

**Teacher Observation:** Ellen and Maggie used louder voices to emphasize the excitement, but they also used higher pitched voices to represent the little people’s voices. This high pitch almost resembled a squeaky voice.

By the second reading, the girls blended their interpretations and efforts in telling the story and soon translated that into role-playing as they interpreted the thoughts, words, and actions of the main character in the story. They often used the main character's voice, mimicked
her actions, and told the story through her eyes. Maggie continued to interject with the voice of the character and Ellen interjected with gestures.

**Designers.** Because these students used animation in their performance to read the story, it was not surprising that they selected the mode of voice recordings in order to capture the story as they designed their digital book. Knowing the academic strengths of these students, this also afforded them a way to avoid inputting any text, which would require sentence structure, spelling, and particular vocabulary. The use of voice was not only less strenuous, but it also afforded them a means to preserve their sense of performance. Their exchanges involved a high presence of performing, including hand movements, facial expressions, and expressive voice. These modes translated into their designing process through the use of voice. They were able to maintain their role-playing stance through the voice of the characters and the voice of the narrator.

**Adam and Scott**

Adam and Scott started off with interrogations about the process of reading a wordless picturebook (Figure 4.45). Once they determined a method, they alternated sharing interpretations. Adam typically offered more interpretations while Scott offered interrogations as needed to add to or correct Adam’s narrative. These two offered only slight performance through voice, but they did continue that performance through their design. These boys’ designs also reflect the methodical discussion tone that they maintained through much of their interactions.
Progression of Roles

First Reading  |  Subsequent Readings  |  Creating Final Product

- Navigators  * Where to start
- Interrogators  * Logistics
- Interpreter  * Talk  * Pointing
- Interpreter  * Talk  * Pointing
- Interpreter  * Word Choice

- Interrogator  * Pointing
- Performers  * Voice
- Designers  * Picture Placement  * Text Placement  * Text Size

**Figure 4.45.** Scott and Adam’s Progression of Roles

**Interpreters and interrogators.** Scott and Adam started their conversation right away to determine how to navigate through the book. As noted through the series of snapshots of these exchanges, they addressed each other directly and often directed their equal attention towards the book itself (Figure 4.46).

**Figure 4.46.** Snapshots of Scott and Adam’s Initial Discussion about Navigation

Adam:  *I will read one page and you read the next page.*
Scott:  *No, put in the middle. This is not the middle (of the table).*
Adam:  *I still get to read the first page.*
Scott:  *Ok. Fine. But put it here.*  (In the middle of the table)

During the first reading, Adam dominated the conversation. Scott interjected to make interrogations about particular details but overall remained less engaged. For example, as Adam
made meaning throughout this story, he first focused on the actions of the main character. He
then briefly narrated aspects of the setting, such as what the character is seeing and what other
background characters are doing as well. Figure 4.47 includes a series of pages from the story
during which Adam gave a brief narration.

Figure 4.47. Series of Illustrations from Trainstop. These sparked Adam’s use of narration.

Adam: It looks like he is sitting on the bus and he is... well some people are
sleeping; he’s talking on the phone. Then he looks out the window and
sees the buildings. The train starts to go into the tunnel. And then he’s still
in the tunnel and he finds clouds. And then he finds a beautiful spot.

Scott interjected here to correct Adam that the picture was actually a train - not a bus, and that
“he” was actually a “she”. While these were short interrogations, these interjections helped the
boys work through details of their narration. Each time they told the story, narrations altered.

This first reading resulted in a very brief overview that was lacking details. In fact, they
finished the first reading several pages short of the actual ending of the book. After some
prompting, they completed the story and revisited a few sections to discuss some discrepancies.
Their subsequent readings shifted to more narrative tones and included more details.

In a subsequent reading, Scott interrogated a comment that Adam made about the
secondary characters’ actions. He insisted that the characters are asleep in the picture, shown in
Figure 4.48. This, in fact, is what every pair of students listed as a detail for this particular part of the book.

Figure 4.48: Illustration from Trainstop

The following exchange illustrates their exchange and shows how they compromised their wording to suit both students’ transactions:

Adam:  *She is looking out the window. And everyone else is sleeping.*
Scott:  *How do you know that they are sleeping? Maybe they are just closing their eyes. You just don’t really know if they are sleeping. I just don’t want to say that.*
Adam:  *Well these people that aren’t doing anything... they are sleeping.*
Scott:  *Yeah, but look at these guys. How can she hold her hand up and this guy hold the phone when they are sleeping? It just doesn’t make sense.*

In the end, they compromised with the word choice in their digital page, as shown in Figure 4.49.

Figure 4.49. Scott and Adam’s Final Digital Page: This shows common word choice used to describe the characters on the train.
For the final product, Adam and Scott settled on the word “tired” to describe the characters. This word choice satisfied both interpretations of the scene, and the students were able to proceed.

Performers. Throughout these readings, these boys relied on a pointing gesture to keep on track and guide their interpretations throughout the story. As the boys became familiar with the story, they started to incorporate more modes of expression and took on the role of performers. They used expressive voice to emphasize the role of the character as they joined in unison to shout, “Stop”, holding the long o sound for longer for emphasis (Figure 4.50).

![Figure 4.50. Example of Scott and Adam’s Use of Expressive Voice of Characters](image)

They also used expression to add emphasis to the excitement in the scene, such as repeatedly singing a song to emphasize the rescue scene (Figure 4.51).

![Figure 4.51. Example of Scott and Adam’s Use of Expression to Emphasize a Scene](image)

At times during the story, facial expressions were used as a means of emphasis for character feelings or reactions. Adam represents the train conductor, wondering why the character is blocking the track (Figure 4.52).
Scott and Adam did not indulge in excessive performance throughout their readings. They were more methodical in telling a sequential story, including succinct details about characters and events. As they began to design their stories, aspects of their performance remained, but more evidence of their methodical style emerged as well.

**Designers.** As Scott and Adam took on the roles of designers in order to create their digital version of this story, they were very intentional about various aspects of their designs. For example, they considered each picture as they put them into the digital platform and contemplated which ones should be placed adjacent to each other. When they seemed to make meaning, then they joined them together (Figure 4.53).

**Scott:**  *Ok – we’re going to put these two on the same exact page. She walks to the door and she looks out and she is still looking.*

**Sarah was thinking for a second - should I get out of the train?**

*Figure 4.53. Example of Scott and Adam’s Picture Placement to Create Meaning*
In several examples, Scott and Adam deliberated about the layout of the text in conjunction with the pictures. In Figure 4.54, they joined these pictures together, but they maintained separation of the text narration each picture.

![Figure 4.54. Example Use of Picture and Text Placement to Support Navigation](image)

Some pictures were placed in order to allow room for text. Some text was placed in conjunction with the placement of the pictures. A series of pictures is present in a cluster of six in the original book. Scott and Adam enlarged the picture in order to create space between each frame, which allowed them to add a narration under each individual picture (Figure 4.55).

![Figure 4.55. Another Example Use of Picture and Text Placement to Support Navigation](image)
Aside from just deciding on word choice used to tell their story, Scott and Adam made decisions about how to present that text on the page. In some cases, they made changes to the style of the text to give emphasis or meaning to the words. Figure 4.56 shows how text style adds to the emphasis of the words during one of the segments of the story during which they showed the most performance.

Figure 4.56. Scott and Adam’s Final Digital Page. This shows their use of text size to emphasize meaning.

Adam and Scott approached this project with a little less enthusiasm and focus than their peers. Their initial reading was lacking in details and seemed to go through the motions of reading. As they engaged more and more with the text, they added more insight and more interpretations. They added some performance to key parts of the story, and this voice was represented through text type in their design. Their reading remained oriented to the pictures in the story. Their heavy reliance on pointing to help navigate through the story translated to their final design through their purposeful picture placement and text placement.

As the boys progressed through each stage of this process – from reading to discussing interpretations and from rereading to transmediating their collaborative poems – it is evident that they explored various modes and assumed various roles. The following sections provide a closer
look at the common modes used collectively by these five pairs of students while reading the text and how these modes shifted when creating their digital text. It then highlights some common trends that occurred as the various roles of reading shifted throughout the process.

**Modes of Reading**

Throughout the course of this process, from the initial reading to the final presentations, the students explored various modes and levels of collaboration that attributed to their thinking while making meaning of the wordless picturebook, *Trainstop*. As their teacher, having the opportunity to further examine how initial modes transferred to other modes helped verify the need for choice and freedom to represent thinking in various means. In attempt to allow this freedom, I was afforded the opportunity to examine what they would truly create on their own - without restrictions or expectation for final products. When examining the modes of responses that the first graders used during their collaborative transactions with a wordless picturebook, the dominant modes that emerged included talk, voice, and gestures.

**Talk**

Talk encompasses any exchanges during which students used a conversational tone and engaged in a discussion. Talk sometimes focused on the logistics of the process, such as where to start, how to take turns, and how to approach reading the story. Ellen and Maggie, Scott and Adam, and Clark and Katie all engaged in much discussion about how to approach reading the book, deciding to take turns on each and every page. Likewise, Max and Evelyn interrogated each other about not only how to read the story, but also where they should start. These sorts of discussions aided in the process of meaning-making as they talked through logistics in order to approach their initial collaborations.
Talk also included determining important narrative elements, such as which characters deserved names and what words should be used to label the setting. While Wyatt and Cathy did not discuss the logistics of their approach, they did have much discussion over the gender of the character and the beginning setting of the story. They discussed word choice as they revisited pictures and made decisions about these narrative elements.

In addition, the category of talk included other conversations, such as the sharing of personal connections to the story. During several instances, students made connections to other Barbara Lehman books as well as movies viewed in first grade this year. In these cases, students talked out their connections and partners either validated their connection or added to the conversation with their own connection. These discussions helped add to the students’ meaning-making as they explored the wordless picturebook for the first time.

**Voice**

Once students became familiar with the story, most pairs started to incorporate expression into their spoken words as they told the story or even assumed roles of the characters. These instances were categorized as using voice. At times, they took on the voice of the narrator. This involved speaking about the character’s thoughts and actions as they told the story, as if reading a story aloud. An example is when Ellen used the following narration to describe the character’s actions on the train (Figure 4.57).

Ellen: *Peyton is waiting for the train stopping, and she is looking out the window. Her parents are just sitting next to each other and feeling so nice.*
Other times, they actually took on the role of the character, verbalizing thoughts or spoken words just as the character would in the story. This usually involved a change in pitch to characterize the gender of the character or a change in the volume of their voice to demonstrate the character’s feelings in a given scene. For example, Clark and Katie used louder, urgent voices when playing the role of the conductor while also maintaining a lower pitch to represent a man’s voice (Figure 4.58).

Clark: \textit{Get out of the way!}
Katie: \textit{Oh yeah, we should put a big speech bubble that says, “Hey, excuse me guy. Get out of the way!”}

Clark and Katie both used louder voices as well as change of pitch in order to perform the voices of the girl and the train conductor (Figure 4.59). A low pitch was used first to indicate the conductor. A higher pitch was then used to represent the girl.
At times, the students added additional expressive sounds, such as the sound of the train. These sound effects included the following variations:

- **Clark and Katie:** Then the horn goes *MMMMMMM*. “I must get back on the train. Goodbye. Goodbye small people.”

- **Max and Evelyn:** Then the train said “*CHOO CHOO!*”, and Liz started to run when she heard the noise.

- **Wyatt and Cathy:** “*HONK*, the train went. Stella had to leave. She said goodbye to the other kids.

**Gestures**

A final mode used throughout the initial readings of *Trainstop* involved the use of gestures. This included any bodily movements that were made in order to capture meaning when telling the story. Some students emphasized character feelings in their facial expressions. When the character was surprised or excited, students showed that expression through poses of their eyes, wrinkling of their noses, or positioning of their mouths. Table 4.1 presents instances when a part of the story evoked expression alongside snapshots of the expression presented by the reader.
Table 4.1

Examples of Facial Expressions Used to Perform While Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture from <em>Trainstop</em></th>
<th>Facial Expression</th>
<th>Meaning Inferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Representing that the girl is surprised as she looks out the window to see the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Representing that the train conductor is wondering why the guy is blocking the track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Representing that Liz is thinking about how to get the elf down. (This also included a hand gesture.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to facial expressions, students added additional hand movements to act out motions they felt in which the character engaged. Sometimes this included a pose and sometimes it involved movement such as the waving of a hand in farewell, such as Ellen mimicking the main character as she waved goodbye to her little friends in the picture in Figure 4.60.

![Figure 4.60](image)  
*Figure 4.60. Example of Ellen’s Use of Hand Gestures*
Evelyn also engaged in many hand movements to mimic the actions of the main characters. Her movements and the meaning inferred from her movements are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture from Trainstop</th>
<th>Hand Movements</th>
<th>Meaning Inferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Evelyn is emphasizing how the little elf whispers an idea to Liz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Evelyn is emphasizing how Liz reached high to try to get the elf out of the tree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another particular movement that the students often used included pointing. This gesture was used so frequently, I considered it a separate category from other hand movements. Students used pointing to emphasize particular parts in the picture while discussing or narrating a scene, such as Clark in Figure 4.61 as he justifies his suggestion for the words “lots of kids” to describe the characters in the story.

*Figure 4.61. Example of the Use of Pointing to Emphasize Meaning While Reading*
Others also used pointing to indicate the sequence of events, to help show the progression in conjunction with spoken narration or discussion. Scott and Adam heavily relied on this process as they read through and revisited pictures throughout *Trainstop*, but several pairs of students used it at times to help establish sequence of events or draw attention to a particular part in a picture.

These three categories of modes – talk, voice, and gestures - dominated the initial reading process; however, they were rarely used in isolation. Through most of the reading process, these modes were used in conjunction with each other. Different pairs of students used different modes, but all students used a variety in order to tell their stories. Modes also changed from one reading session to the next. As students became more familiar with the story, they transitioned from discussing story elements to actually narrating the story. They evolved from pointing to characters to assuming characters’ spoken words or movements. They became natural performers of the story. Furthermore, as students moved beyond reading the story to transmediating their meaning to digital form, the modes they used changed.

### Modes of Creating

After collaboratively reading the wordless picturebook several times, students were then asked to collaboratively create a digital book that depicts the story they created through their reading. Using the iPad platform, *Book Creator*, students were provided various features to use in order to show meaning in digital form. This included access to a photo library with the pictures from *Trainstop*, capability to add text or voice recordings, and design features such as page color, text color and style, and shape designs. As students completed this process, they used several modes to create the meaning they depicted. These modes included design elements used throughout their digital books, text, and recorded voice.
Design

When examining the design features used throughout picturebooks, meaning was created through the modes of picture placement, text placement and style, and the use of color.

**Picture placement.** The first step in the transmediation process involved the placement of pictures on the digital pages of their book. The digital platform allotted students the freedom to combine, isolate, or rearrange pictures from the original printed book. The most common approach involved isolating the pictures – presenting a picture one at a time and not joining it with the adjacent picture as seen in the printed book version. In some case, students did combine two to three pictures in purposeful ways in order to create specific meaning through the layout of the pictures. The following example in Figure 4.62 illustrates a way that Wyatt and Cathy made meaning through the placement of the pictures. They discussed this placement by saying,

Wyatt: “Do you think these should go together?
Cathy: Yes. Because she’s getting out and then she’s like thinking as she gets off.”

They decided to keep the group of four pictures and single picture together because they decided that all of those pictures dealt with the character getting off of the train. As they arranged them side by side, Wyatt moved the single picture down to allow more space. In his placement, he exclaimed,

Wyatt: “It’s like a tunnel. The train is going through here (showing with hand on screen) and opening up into town.”
In this way, meaning-making involved picture placement on the page. Students sometimes chose to manipulate the size of the picture or the location of the picture on the page both for the purpose of aesthetics as well as the purpose of creating meaning, as if the placement of the picture added an extra detail to the story.

**Text Placement.** Just as students were thoughtful about the placement of the pictures, they were equally as thoughtful about the placement of text. Most of the students used text as a means for narrating the story. Text was placed in conjunction with pictures to narrate each progression of a scene or along the bottom of the page to give an overview of the scene. Scott and Adam added text for each individual picture to aid in the navigation of their story (Figure 4.63).
Wyatt and Cathy combined some illustrations on their digital pages, but they carefully placed the text in conjunction with specific pictures to also aid in the navigation of their story (Figure 4.64).

Some text was included within a shape design, such as a speech bubble or a thought bubble (Figure 4.65).
Students also manipulated the size of the text to add to the meaning of the story at times. The following example in Figure 4.66 illustrates how text style adds to the emphasis of the words:
Use of color. Another option that students had to create meaning in their digital books included the incorporation of color. This included the color of the text or the color of the background for the book pages. This was not commonly used, but one set of students made a noteworthy alteration to their page color within their booklet to add to the meaning of a part of the story, as illustrated in Figure 4.67.
In this case, Max and Evelyn discussed using color to indicate the end of the exciting part of the story as well as the exit of a prominent setting. This slight change in design created an added layer of meaning.

**Voice**

The use of recorded voice was another dominant mode that was used to create meaning in their collaborative digital books. Each pair of students used voice in some way. A few students used voice as their prime mode of narration. Maggie and Ellen in particular used this mode for their entire digital book. Each page contained a recording to tell their story. Others incorporated voice within a speech bubble or thought bubble to share the voice of the characters. These recordings included more expression and variation of tone to capture their interpretation of the character’s feelings or thoughts. Clark and Katie include expressive voice in the speech bubble to mimic the train conductor (Figure 4.68).

*Figure 4.68. Example of Using Voice Within a Speech Bubble*

Likewise, Wyatt and Cindy use voice to capture their performance of the elf stuck in the tree (Figure 4.69). They used a high, squeaky voice to represent the small elf.
Some of the pairs of students found the expressive sounds, such as the train whistle, as vital to the story. They also used voice to capture these sounds by recording various sounds on their digital pages, such as in Cathy and Wyatt’s digital page shown in Figure 4.70.

As students moved from reading the story to creating a digital form of the story, their modes of meaning shifted. Talk, voice, and gestures changed into aspects of design, text, and voice. Students had to collaborate to make these changes and commit to a representation of their story that suited both individuals. Examining this process in its entirety revealed different types of collaboration between the students and different roles they assumed to continue this meaning-
making process. The pairs had to collaborate in order to navigate the text, interpret and interrogate its meaning, and design their own creation while all along remaining performers of the story. It is through these exchanges that their final collaborative poems would develop.

**Collaborative Roles**

In most cases, individual students assumed their modes of preference when reading *Trainstop*, but these modes blended and shifted as students collaborated to make their digital book. Each pair of students assumed various roles as they collaboratively engaged in this process. At different times, they assumed the roles of navigators, interpreters, interrogators, designers, and performers by talking through various aspects of the story and the process together. The following section further explains what behaviors were associated with each of these roles and examines how these roles changed throughout each pair’s meaning-making process.

**Collaborative Navigators**

During the first reading, students naturally took on the role of navigators. As navigators, they made decisions, whether intentional or not, about what pictures add meaning to the story. This included conversations about what initial pictures were important to the story to indicate where the actual story-telling should begin. As they navigated through the text, they interpreted pictures to create meaning and tell their story.

During the initial interactions with the book, several partners discussed the logistics of reading the wordless picturebook. In a typical picturebook, readers read the title and then turn to the first page to begin reading the words. Pictures may or may not be present on the cover, book jacket, title page, and dedication page, and students may or may not consider those when opening the book. In a wordless picturebook, when the meaning is constructed from only the pictures,
readers determine where the story starts and which pictures hold meaning to add to the construction of the story.

When exploring the physical book, prior reading habits drew them to particular starting points. However, when they had the pictures to explore within the context of a photo gallery, they selected the photos they found most suitable to start narrating the story. Without the constraints of a bound book, the digital transmediation process added the freedom to select pictures to tell their story. Collaboratively, students talked through the starting point for the story and later determined words that would accompany that picture in a story-telling composition. The clearest example of this was when Max and Evelyn so deeply discussed that starting point for the first reading of the story. Max was adamant that the narration should not begin until the first true pages of the book, which were those presented after the title page and dedication pages. Evelyn tried to convince him otherwise. However, once the constraints of the bound book were eliminated and Max got to select illustrations at will to start their own digital book, he did not hesitate to select both the title page and dedication page pictures to start their story. These pictures did, in fact, provide a logical starting point and helped them establish both the setting and characters in their own story.

As students continued on the path of reading and making meaning, the students often revisited text to clarify meaning or determine the importance of particular characters, settings, or events. An example of this included when students realized that the characters from the middle of the story were actually very small people. During the first reading, several sets of partners first referred to them as “kids” or “children”. However, as they continued through the pages, they noticed that the main character was quite large when standing right next to the “children”. This caused most partners to return to the page where the children first appeared, pick a new
word choice to describe them, and retell that part of the story. Word choices then ranged from “tiny people to “elves”. This form of navigation becomes intertwined with the interpretation of the pictures along with interrogating the meaning.

Collaborative Interpreters

It is impossible to read a wordless picturebook without taking on the role of an interpreter. The context of pictures without written words leaves all meaning left up to the interpretation of the reader. They were left to determine the narrative elements of the story – the settings, the characters, the events that take place, and the development that happens throughout the story. As students shared their thoughts and developed meaning, it became evident that their interpretations manifested in a literal stance or a more inferential interpretation. Key interpretations focused on determining main story elements such as the setting, characters, and events throughout the story.

Setting. The setting changed a few times throughout the course of the story. Essentially, the setting progresses from an underground train station, to the train ride, to a country setting, and then back to the train and train station again. Students often made basic comments or observations about the setting, but then tweaked these observations with more sophisticated vocabulary or fine-tuned details. Table 4.3 shows some examples of word choice that students explored when discussing the setting of the story:

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wyatt &amp; Cathy</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Tall buildings, small buildings</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td></td>
<td>Apple trees and houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A really cool place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characters. While reading through the story, students had to determine which people played important roles and determine names for important characters. Table 4.4 indicates the characters that received names by each set of students.

Table 4.4

Examples of Word Choice Used to Label Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main Female Character</th>
<th>Train Conductor</th>
<th>Tiny People in the Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wyatt &amp; Cathy</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>little kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max &amp; Evelyn</td>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>conductor</td>
<td>tiny humans/elves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark &amp; Katie</td>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>conductor</td>
<td>small people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen &amp; Maggie</td>
<td>Peyton</td>
<td>driver</td>
<td>little people/small people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam &amp; Scott</td>
<td>Sara/Sarah</td>
<td>bus driver</td>
<td>little kids</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the first reading of the story, students often commented on the surface observations. This might include where the character is and what the character is doing. As
students became more familiar with the pictures of the story and contemplated the possible meanings, their interpretations altered. Together, they questioned the character’s thoughts and actions as well as the various events of the story. One conversation between Katie and Clark illustrates how their interpretation grew slightly more detailed and sophisticated as they contemplated their interpretations and interrogated their own thoughts (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Example of How Meaning Changed from the First Reading to the Second Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1 Reading</th>
<th>Day 2 Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie: So they are sitting on the train and it looks like they are going somewhere.</td>
<td>Clark: Her mom and dad are reading a newspaper and she is looking out the window. “I wonder where I am going.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark: It looks like they are going to Los Angeles...What is that tunnel?</td>
<td>Katie: Yeah, let’s say that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie: It might be a way to get out of the city. And she’s looking out the window and they are getting ready to go into the tunnel. Hey... maybe we can do a little speech bubble here that says “I’m having fun going on the train.”</td>
<td>Clark: The train was deep into the tunnel... “I looked out the window, and I saw there was nothing to see.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie: So, she’s looking at the city, and she goes into the tunnel and Hey... another speech bubble...</td>
<td>Katie: The tunnel was long. It got dark and dark and dark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie: No... we are just looking right now. We don’t need speech bubbles yet. Ok? So she is looking out the window in the tunnel – looking at the black tunnel. Then it looks like she’s looking out the window again.</td>
<td>Clark: It got darker and darker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark: Maybe she’s dreaming.</td>
<td>Katie: Yeah. And then they came out of the tunnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie: No – she’s looking out the window again at some trees and some houses and some hot air balloons</td>
<td>Clark: And they saw... she saw something out the window... like these lines that look like raindrops. (Pointing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark: I think she’s dreaming.</td>
<td>Katie: Na... that can’t be rain. They are in a tunnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clark: Well, then they came out and there was a big field. “I wonder how that happened.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katie: She was just sitting and looking, and then all of the sudden she was in a country. I wondered how that happened. I mean, how are you just in a city and then go to a country?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clark: And then on this page (looking out window in the tunnel) she’s thinking, “I wonder where I am going. I wonder where I’m going.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Clark and Katie revisited the text, they added more depth to the thoughts of the character. She was not just daydreaming, but she was in contemplation of going to a mysterious place. They questioned the logical nature of the story, and they found a way to represent that questioning through the words and thoughts of their character.

**Events.** Once student determined the important characters and setting, it was only natural for them to begin interpreting the events of the story. They asked themselves, “What is happening?” and began to wonder what the characters were saying, thinking, or doing by interpreting the clues in the pictures. It is through these questions and interpretations that students started to transform into performers of the story. A prominent event that occurs in the climax of the story is the discovery that a plane has gotten stuck in a tree, and the pilot needs assistance getting down. As partners approached this event in the first readings, they simply noted a plane in the tree, a person in the tree, and the fact that they must be asking for help. This event transpired into the more details as illustrated in the progression of exchanges in Table 4.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Reading</th>
<th>Second Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>And she tries to get someone down from the tree. She reaches down and puts him on her hand and she holds him. And they are like, “Yay! Yay! Yay!”</em></td>
<td><em>“Hmmm. It looks like someone got stuck. I'll try to go on my tippy toes. Oh, I can’t reach him. Maybe I should pick up somebody. Oh. Hmmm. I can’t reach.”</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>“Ok.” (Pull. Pull. Pretend to whisper.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>“Ok. I’ll pick you up. Ok. Here you go.”</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>“Yay! We got him! Yay!”</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaborative Performers

The added element of social collaboration helped students become performers of the story as they interpreted the wordless picturebook. As students considered the actions, thoughts, and feelings of the characters, they picked words and actions to illustrate those ideas. In figure 4.71, a sample of snapshots illustrates how they assumed the role of the characters through body gestures and facial expressions.

![Snapshots of Performances through Gestures and Facial Expressions](image)

Figure 4.71: Snapshots of Performances through Gestures and Facial Expressions

In most cases, both students engaged in these performances. Even in situations when one partner took on role-playing, the other remained a part of the performance by either agreeing with the words, thoughts, and actions of his partner, by adding to the suggestive performance, or by offering feedback for changes or additions to be made. These sorts of conversations enticed the addition of details, the alteration of wording, or even the removal of ideas that lost their emphasis as scenes were discussed. As partners worked through the meaning of the story, some conversations led to conflicting views, whether between students or with the contents of the book itself. These exchanges allowed collaborative interrogating among the students.
**Collaborative Interrogations**

While it was apparent that some inferential thinking evolved from the multiple readings of the book and the reviewing of the digital version the students created, some meaning derived from interrogations the students presented. I categorized interrogations as any conversations where students questioned the author’s intentions or challenged the meaning another student presented. As previously discussed, some of the examples of this collaborative exchange focused on the logistical approach to reading a wordless picturebook. Others disputed about some of the narrative elements, such as word choice for the setting and characters’ names. Sometimes they disputed illogical events that occurred in the story, such as Katie’s correction to Clark that it could not be raining inside a tunnel or Max’s interrogation of Evelyn that the people only looked little as an artistic attempt to make them seem far away. With further investigation and discussion, these interrogations helped to formulate their stories.

Other times, students debated specific word choice used to best present meaning they created. For example, Scott was adamant that the passengers on the train were not sleeping. This did not make sense to him. As a compromise, they indicated in their final product that everyone was “tired”. This could imply that they were sleeping or just resting their eyes. They found their way through these simple interrogations to make logical decisions and word choices for their final product. These collaborative interrogations allowed these students to collaboratively design their story on an electronic platform with better ease.

**Collaborative Designers**

As discussed earlier in the chapter, students worked as collaborative designers to make decisions about how to best present their story in a digital format. They made decisions about picture placement, such as Wyatt and Cathy’s positioning of pictures to show character
movement on the train or as she exited the train into the station. They used various modes to show meaning, from voice recordings to using text in speech bubbles, thought bubbles, and general narration. Every aspect of their digital booklets, which can be viewed in Appendix D, involved decisions of design.

The following sections offer details about these collaborative exchanges, with detailed depictions of the paths of meaning each pair of students created. It highlights modes used to read and create meaning as well as how these modes blended to form their collaborative poems. When looking at these paths collectively, it is clear how modes of reading translated into modes of creation as students progressed through the transmediation of their stories.

**Collaborative Trends**

As each pair of students engaged in this intricate process of making meaning of the wordless picturebook, *Trainstop*, they assumed various blends of modes. As they read, discussed, and reread the book, they had to eventually blend their interpretations in order to create a collaborative digital version of their story – their collaborative poem. When these transactions are juxtaposed, as they are in Table 4.7, it is easier to visualize the prevalence of performance in the students’ reading. Every group assumed some form of performance at some point. Most groups needed to work through navigating the text, making interpretations, and interrogating each other’s ideas and word choices, but eventually all groups assumed the role of performers.

These flowcharts also show a relationship between the students’ performance and choice of final designs. Those students who included voice and gestures in their readings accounted for these features in their final designs. Likewise, those students who focused more on the path of the story without much expression created designs that mirrored that as well.
Table 4.7
Comparison of the Progressions of Roles

**Wyatt and Cathy**

**Max and Evelyn**

**Clark and Katie**
During a first attempt, one might anticipate that a digital platform may have stifled the performance of these readers as they created their digital stories and committed to the modes available to represent their stories. The digital platform changed the modes available to them, but they found ways to maintain their performances. Several students used voice to maintain the expression used to narrate the story and act out the characters’ exchanges. Sometimes this voice was captured within the context of thought bubbles or speech bubbles, which added an additional layer of action through the simple use of a two-dimensional figure. Sometimes this voice was demonstrated through the size or placement of the text. “STOP THE TRAIN!” offered an effect
of urgency, especially when those words lay within the context of a speech bubble. While students could not physically capture their movements and facial expression in their final products, they still offered means for their readers to sense their intended expression through their words and vocal recordings.

Just as those students who naturally added performance to their reading found ways to incorporate their performance into their digital book, those students who read the story more methodically also mimicked this style in their digital book. Several students relied on pointing to navigate through the text. These were the same students who then became very intentional about the placement of text in conjunction with the pictures on the page, as shown in the following example by Adam and Scott in Figure 4.72.

![Figure 4.72. Example of Particular Text Placement to Aid in Navigation of the Digital Story](image)

They narrated every action and every step individually instead of collectively as a summary of the page. Just as they navigated their own reading picture by picture, they provided that path for the readers of their book as well.

In the end, it is clear that examining this collective process was necessary in order to establish these trends of meaning-making and creating. Examining how the meaning-making
process altered through the stages of reading, rereading, and transmediating their stories offered means to examine how students make sense of stories and how they accommodate their natural tendencies through various modes without losing their intended meaning.

**Conclusion**

Throughout this process, and as I assumed the role of the classroom teacher, I was drawn to the language that my first graders were using and the strategies they were applying. They were making connections, inferring character feelings, and questioning events. These were all strategies that had been explicitly taught and practiced throughout the year. This culminating activity helped them apply these strategies collectively and authentically.

It was not until I put on my researcher’s hat that I began to find truly amazing findings about some of the patterns that took place throughout this process. I found that these first graders became performers through their reading, and they all found a way to translate that performance into digital form. By analyzing the different modes and different roles these pair of readers assumed throughout this process, I learned so much more about them as readers, thinkers, and makers of meaning. Through additional reflection, I also came to conclusions about my own pedagogy. The following chapter addresses these conclusions along with suggestions for teachers and researchers alike to further this practice.
A small moment within the context of a reading lesson sparked my curiosity to research the potential of my first graders to embrace the multimodality of literacy. With their natural tendency to rely on visual cues in picture books coupled with their inclination to share ideas and perform stories, the exploration of wordless picturebooks offered a perfect platform for such investigation. By capturing their collaborative reading, I was able to analyze the modes in which they read as well as the paths of collaboration that led to their meaning making. With the added expectation to transmeditate the story, students committed to reading and rereading the text to become the creators of their collaborative poems. This offered opportunities to track how they negotiated meaning, committed to ideas, and determined the best mode to portray their intended meaning.

Findings in this study support an awareness of the potential multimodal and collaborative efforts that first graders bring forth on their journeys of becoming thoughtful readers. While individual readers may engage with text through multiple roles, the added layer of collaboration challenges students to compromise and blend individual poems in efforts to create and construct collaborative and negotiated meaning. The added element of collaboration also highlighted the notion to view students not just as readers but also as performers of multimodal literature. This journey provided an avenue of reflection for a veteran first grade teacher to further enhance aspects of social constructivism in her classroom and foster the collaborative imaginations and meaning-making potential of her students. In addition, it offers insight for teachers to consider as they foster such paths of exploration in their own classrooms.
Reflections of a Researcher

This study centered on the multimodal literacy skills of young readers – both in the understanding and the creation of meaning. The following questions drove the research:

1. What modes of responses do first graders use during collaborative transactions with a wordless picturebook?

2. How do children make meaning through the process of multimodal transmediation of a wordless picturebook?

3. How do different modes of collaboration facilitate the construction of meaning?

As I reflected on the findings, I continued to focus on one common element – collaboration. The incorporation of student collaboration drastically impacted the process in its entirety. As my first graders read the wordless picturebook for the very first time, they did not have to rely on their own means of navigation or interpretations. They could discuss ideas, challenge each other’s thinking, and make thoughtful decisions about meaning. As they revisited the text and became more comfortable with the content of the story, they became collaborative performers through their making of meaning. The addition of collaboration in this reading response activity ultimately caused a shift in the creation of the students’ poems – it encouraged the creation of a collaborative poem.

Collaborative Poems

Individual readers assumed unique roles and developed their unique transactions when reading; however, when these individuals were expected to collaborate with a partner when reading, these transactions blended to form a collaborative transaction. Sipe (2000) recommends providing an extension of transactions beyond just the individual readers with the text. This includes providing collaboration between other readers and their transactions. With the added
The added aspect of collaboration created another important dimension to the process of meaning-making. Collaborative exchanges ensured that students stayed engaged with the book. Partners encouraged conversation; subsequently, these conversations led to a deeper contemplation about aspects of the story. Rosenblatt (1998) called the reader’s feelings and internal dialogues their evocations, and these wonders and thoughtful insight inspired rich verbal dialogue between students as they embarked on this multimodal journey. The presence of a reading partner offered a soundboard for students to talk out their ideas – to hear their words out loud, to negotiate meaning, and to bring prior experience to their understanding of words and text. Not only did it provide an audience for the performers who may not have translated their
stories with such expression on their own, but it also encouraged interrogations throughout the meaning-making process. These interrogations were most prevalent while sharing each other’s individual interpretations and while designing the digital book. As the students shared their individual interpretations of the picturebook, they shared personal connections that aided in their meaning-making. These personal connections often turned into conversations, which then subsequently affected their collaborative poem.

While the majority of the collaborative efforts rested on the students, an additional element of collaboration involved those exchanges with the teacher. In the context of a social constructivist classroom, where the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning, I had to also earn a place among this collaborative exchange. Hassett and Curwood (2009) suggest the teacher plays the role of a resource manager, design consultant, and co-constructor of knowledge in the context of reading multimodal literature with students. I found that my roles mimicked that of a resource manager as well as a design consultant. I also indirectly assumed the role of co-constructor of story meaning knowledge. I interacted with the students to guide them towards the collaborative poem, without actually altering the individual transactions. I remained open to their interpretations and offered guidance to deepen and organize those interpretations without inflicting my own interpretations on the students. Figure 5.2 shows the flow of exchanges as students collaboratively make meaning of the wordless picturebook with the teacher’s sideline guidance.
Throughout the context of this project, I stayed mindful of my interjections and collaborations with each pair of students. I tried to maintain a level of observation and only approached pairs when asked or when it was apparent that productivity had come to an extended halt and needed some encouragement to get back on track. I tried never to influence the meaning that students created in the story. With this level of collaboration, I found that my collaborative exchanges took on four different roles. This included the role of a coach, clarifier, technician, and time-keeper.

Coaching. At times during the project, students needed encouragement to get past an obstacle. Whether they got stuck in negotiation about particular details of the narration or determining the narrative elements, I sometimes interjected to help them resolve their issue. While my interjection affected their actions, I was very mindful not to have it affect their interpretations of the story or design of their products. I often referred back to the process that we used as a class when exploring the prior wordless picturebooks in the author study or prompted with the metalanguage used in prior minilessons. In reflection, I do feel coaching was
necessary in order to allow the students to engage in discussing the big ideas of the story and not get bogged down in the minute details that may not have as much impact on the interpretations they created. I do not feel that my coaching enhanced their interpretations, but rather it helped them stay on track and complete the task at hand.

**Clarification.** In a few cases, I interjected in the students’ conversation in order to probe for more clarification on a comment they made, and it appeared they were not going to elaborate on their own. Hassett and Curwood (2009) referred to this as being a resource manager, focused on guiding students to tap into their own cognitive strategies. In one case, a student made an “I wonder” statement, which is a key phrase that we explicitly practice through the year to question the meaning of a story read. The teacher side of me rejoiced in the application of our practiced skills, so I instinctively tuned into the conversation. When the students just turned the page to continue discussing narrative elements, I waited for a natural pause in their conversation to interject. As I approached the pair of students, I turned back to the particular page and stated, “I noticed your “I wonder” statement. What were you wondering?” She offered her wonders about events in the story, which were included with examples of interrogations. This small interjection offered a great example of students questioning the meaning of the story. Without being present to prompt this student to verbalize her thoughts, this deeper connection would have been lost for my reference.

**Technical support.** One of the most predominant roles that I played throughout this project was providing technical support, such as the reference to Hassatt and Curwood’s (2009) design consultant role. During the transmediation stage, students offered several “How to” questions as they needed assistance with iPad manipulation. This included retrieval of the photographs and the changing of design features. The most common request was for help with
the text. Typing is a tedious process for first graders, although some of these students had ample exposure to computers and have gained more advanced familiarity with keyboards than what is typical.

In response to the need for easier keyboarding, I introduced the students to an app titled Dragon Dictation. This application allowed the students to narrate the words that they wanted to include on the page and then copy and paste them easily into their digital book. This application came with its own obstacles. Students had to enunciate clearly and loudly enough for the application to translate the correct message. At times, I also provided support with typing or voice recording in order to capture the text phrases for which they planned. I made the intentional choice to interject in order to maintain flow of meaning in addition to complete the project in a reasonable amount of time. In this sense, I also maintained the role of timekeeper throughout this project.

**Timekeeping.** Advocates of wordless picturebooks insist that ample time is needed in order to fully explore the story, revisiting the text again and again in order to contemplate the story (Arizpe, 2013; Bosch & Duran, 2009). These students had multiple opportunities over a number of days to read and revisit the text before beginning the book creation. Realistically, I had to assume the role of a timekeeper in order to encourage students to maintain pace. In this particular case, we were quickly approaching the end of the school year; however, even if that were not the case, as the teacher, I have the responsibility of bringing curricular projects to a close. The paths of collaboration between students could continue to ebb and flow. Meaning could continue to change. I could provide more coaching and encourage more design aspects; however, there comes a time when I have to bring the project to an end.
While my role as the teacher played an impact on the students’ collaborative poems, I was careful not to offer overt ideas of my own about the text. I was merely another soundboard used to validate their ideas, keep them on track with their task, and fine-tune the process to help them establish their final product. In reference again to Figure 5.3, it shows that the teacher connects directly to the student readers to guide them towards their collaborative poem without direct contact with the text to avoid inflicting her own reading transaction on their collaborative poem. During this independent exploration phase, the students had to engage with the text themselves in order to establish their own meaning.

With the understanding that collaborative poems blend together the transactions of individual students, it was crucial to examine the various roles that students assumed while making meaning of Trainstop. Through this analysis, the discovery of a new approach to reading multimodal text transpired – reading as a performance.

**Performative reading through collaboration**

Each stage of this exploratory process offered new insight on the meaning-making tendencies of these first graders. Arizpe (2013) suggests examining how students determine the story as they explore wordless picturebooks and what aspects of the pictures creates meaning for them. With the added layer of collaboration, students were able to verbalize their thoughts as they explored the book together. This allowed me to better examine the roles they assumed and track their paths of meaning making.

Just as Serafini (2012) highlights, during the first reading of wordless picturebooks, students assumed different roles as they journeyed through the story. As navigators, they made decisions about where to start and what pictures to include in their story. As interpreters, they discussed pictures to determine particular settings, important characters, and noteworthy events.
As interrogators, they discussed deeper meanings, critiqued aspects of the story, and challenged each other’s views. As designers, they decided on placement of pictures and words in order to best represent the meaning they created. Within the context of a social constructivist classroom, the added element of collaboration had a big impact on this reading process. Partners turned into a private audience for those readers who assumed role-playing and performance modes of reading. They used voice and gestures to make their mental meaning come to life. It showed the natural performative role that children assume as they explore stories.

The performative meaning of Lehman’s wordless picturebook offered a variety of modes to make meaning of the story. Typically, good readers take on the role of the characters as they verbalize stories in regular picturebooks by reading with expression and good intonation (Walsh, 2010). In this study, without the constraints of written text, these students were able to openly explore the actions, thoughts, and feeling of the characters. They assumed the role of the narrator, the role of the characters, and even the role of inanimate aspects of the story. They put themselves in the story with the characters to naturally survey the scenes and discover what words best fit that situation. These students mimicked the facial expressions and body movements that were portrayed through the pictures, and in those movements they found the words to express the character’s thoughts or spoken words. They spoke these words through different pitches, different tones, and different volumes to help experience these discoveries. They also found the words to narrate the actions and happenings on each page.

With the opportunity to incorporate voice and gestures for an audience, the students assumed the role of the characters in the story. This helped them anticipate how the character was feeling, what reactions the character might have, and actions that the character would do next. While not every student engaged in these modes of reading, those that did relied heavily
on their performance to better comprehend the story. Their partners benefited from these performances of the story as they participated as active audience members – offering critiques or optional word choices to perfect the interpretation. After finding their story, the students then embarked on the next process – collaboratively transmediating their story into a digital form.

After collaborating meaning, students then had to collaborate in order to design their digital stories. This transmediated process pushed their levels of critical thinking as they engaged in both cognitive and affective thinking strategies to encourage their own creativity (Kress, 2003; Semali, 2002). They considered features such as picture placement, word choice, and text style to best create meaning.

As students revisited the text and contemplated their collaborative meaning, they negotiated about how to best capture their story on a digital platform. While Serafini (2011) might have discouraged this step for fear of compromising the authenticity of the intended process of reading wordless picturebooks, in the end I gained a great deal of insight through this method. Through this extended transmediation process, their prior voice and gestures translated into digital features through the use of speech bubbles, thought bubbles, text size, and page color. As with each pair’s final projects, further interrogations drove their picture placements, text placement, and narration of their story. A heightened purpose drove their conversations as decisions were made and meaning gradually unfolded in their digital books. The added aspect of collaboration offered a sounding board of ideas, an exchange of meaning, an audience for performers, and a means of creative thinking for the students.

Some of the students became so animated in their readings that I worried meaning may be lost as they translated their story to the digital application, Book Creator. However, as these students then took their verbal stories and committed them to a digital platform, they quite often
maintained their mode of reading. The performers found ways to preserve their performance. Likewise, the more procedural readers initiated ways to also attend to sequential details.

By closely examining the interactions of six and seven-year-olds and capturing their intricate conversations and actions used to create their story, I gained insight on the potential levels of meaning-making that are ready to be fostered at even such a beginning stage of learning. As their teacher, I found a sense of pride in the overall levels of deep thinking and focused collaboration. I found evidence of language and strategies that linked to prior lessons, but I also found paths of meaning-making that were unique to the students themselves. As I reflect on these findings, I reflected on my own practices. The following section shares these discoveries that have since altered my own pedagogy and classroom practices as I offer suggestions for other classroom teachers.

**Reflections of a Teacher for Teachers**

As I prepared to take my students on this journey, I anticipated having new understanding of them as readers. After all, the intended purpose of the study was to explore the meaning they created from wordless picturebooks and the paths they took as they transmediated their collaborative poems. What I did not anticipate was the new outlook that I would gain as their teacher. I have always prided myself in my tendencies to provide students with choice and to actively involve them in the teaching and learning process. Upon reflection of this study and the process of truly acting as a facilitator of learning, I have gained richer insight about my first grade learners that have influenced my pedagogy. This includes the new perspective I gained of my students as makers of meaning as opposed to just readers, and I have since actively sought ways to foster this notion. I also acquired an appreciation for the inclusion of genuine
collaboration in our lessons – providing students with rich and purposeful opportunities to teach each other.

**Students: Makers of meaning**

After completing this study, I now pay more attention to how the students and I both experience reading in my classroom. I make a point to read aloud as much as I can – both for the enjoyment of experiencing new stories, genres, and styles of writing as well as the beneficial act of modeling fluent, expressive reading for students. That is my opportunity to demonstrate reading through multiple modes, as I incorporate gestures, voice, and verbal thinking in the context of my reading. What I noticed was that the students’ opportunity to practice this type of reading was lacking. When they were reading independently, they were reading alone, working on a “goal book” and practicing the skill of monitoring their comprehension while reading or reading for another focused purpose. They had their reading phones that they could read aloud to themselves in order to help them better monitor their reading, but overall, their opportunity for performance while reading was stifled. Even when they read aloud to me, our focus was more on the fluidity of reading and strategies used to attend to the written words.

Our comprehension reflections focused more on the messages in the written words a well. It was clearly time to shift my own practices to broaden the opportunities of meaning-making each time we interacted with a story. Thus, I began to incorporate more partner reading and collaborating times with shared books. Students have the opportunity to read with a peer, either assigned or selected, in order to increase the opportunity to use various modes of reading and creating. While it was clear that students use different modes while reading and prefer different modes when creating, it also became evident that they also learn so much from experiencing
reading and creating with another student. This study encouraged me, and can encourage other teachers, to reflect upon collaboration as an integral part of daily reading practice.

**Collaboration: A necessary component**

To date, I have always been a big proponent of “turn and talk” sort of activities. Students are often given the opportunity to use a neighbor both as a soundboard of their own ideas and as a source of new insight or new perspective. However, when it came time to practice particular reading strategies or explore the current genre of reading, I often reverted back to an individual format. The traditional teacher in me insisted that I could only acquire an accurate account of their reading if they did their reading responses independently. There is also that instinctual fear that the weaker students will not apply their thinking and the stronger readers will dominate the activity and conversation. The close observation of all of my students altered this view. This collaborative reading setting actually gave just the right support for my weaker readers to take risks and share ideas with their classmates - to exchange and discuss ideas as well as voice opinions and share stories – equally.

Throughout this journey, collaborative exchanges aided the construction of meaning. Students had opportunities to share personal connections. The verbalization of connections helped the reader better visualize story events or better relate to the character. By having the opportunity to share these connections, partners gained the advantage of sharing in their partner’s background knowledge and perhaps enhanced their own understanding in the process. Students also enhanced meaning through the exchange of ideas. As one student created a poem and shared those ideas, the other student had the opportunity to accept, challenge, or alter those ideas. The constant give-and-take helped the students to contemplate other views and add to their
collaborative meaning-making process. With this new insight, I initiated an effort to establish collaboration as a constant presence in my classroom.

**Suggestions for Classroom Application**

As a classroom teacher, I am all too aware of the disconnect between the world of educational research and actual classroom practice. While staying abreast of the research and best practices, a teacher can get swept up in grandiose suggestions and research findings that she would ideally love to implement, but those with which the reality of classroom structures and time restraints hinder. As a teacher researcher, my hope is to bridge that divide and offer inspiration to those teachers who are willing to alter their static routine of reading instruction and would like to nurture the innate tendencies of their young students to explore, collaborate, and perform the meaning they create from stories.

I offer this insight with understanding that no two classrooms are alike, just as no two students are alike. Even in the context of my own classroom, this unit will fluctuate from year to year based on these notions. However, in reflection of this study experience and with the added experience of repeating this study with a new set of first graders currently, I have gained some awareness that may offer support to other teachers who try to replicate this process. These suggestions stem from reflections about considerations when planning for collaborative reading, the authenticity of reading response activities, and incorporation of technology as a means of creating meaning as a reading response with young students. I also consider how this process might fit within the context of a different classroom environment, where the constraints of standardized assessments and pacing guides often create the sense of limitation for such projects of literacy exploration.
Planning for collaborative reading

Kids are social beings. Even quiet, more introverted students tend to open up when they partner with a peer. As a teacher, why not use this natural phenomenon to my advantage? I found that I needed to extend this collaboration past the “turn and talk” activities that we conducted during our shared reading times. They needed opportunities to explore books and share reading responses as a collaborative journey. I began to reflect on how to make this type of exchange a standard in my classroom.

As illustrated in the description of my literacy instructional period that is outlined in Chapter 1, I already had an opportunity to “Read to Someone” within the context of our morning. This time was usually an open-ended time period in which students selected books from our partner basket that they read together to practice fluent reading. This year, I worked towards making that practice more purposeful. Students are now encouraged to question each other, discuss the story read, share their individual reactions, and mold their collaborative poem. This does take consistent involvement from the teacher as the routine is established, in the form of modeling, providing feedback, and monitoring discussions. However, once the routine is in place, students will subsequently have a daily time in which they get to experience this collaborative exploration.

After the routine is established, the teacher has other considerations to make these daily collaborative efforts successful. Students will play different roles in different partnerships, and thus it is important to thoughtfully consider how pairs are joined. Some books - some journeys – require less consideration than others. Weaker readers may yield to the stronger reader’s lead on one day but may take a more dominant role with another student on a different day. I am thoughtful about these partnerships on a daily basis, but I am careful to also allow them to have
voice in their partners at times. In the end, student exchanges vary with the day, the book, and the form of response they collaboratively create. While it is important to foster these collaborative opportunities and to be mindful of the value of these exchanges, it is equally important to consider the reading response activities they are asked to consider on a daily basis.

**Planning reading response activities**

As stated previously, I planned many of my reading response activities as independent application of reading strategies that we practiced as a class. Students would demonstrate strategies such as questioning, visualizing, making connections, and inferring as they managed new text. Each of these activities were purposefully planned to build strategies as readers and thinkers. After witnessing the genuine comprehension abilities of my students in such an open-ended exploration as this study allowed, I began to find that some of these other response activities stifled the students’ freedom to explore the text in the multiple modes that they did through this study. I needed to make a change to my own pedagogy in order to accommodate this void.

My first notion was to revisit Serafini’s (2014) series of questions to determine if each response activity was authentic in nature and had a place in my classroom. I concluded to still implement many of them as a means of isolated practice, especially for students who need the focused practice to build language and thinking behaviors. Not every student naturally visualizes or questions as they read, and they need exposure and practice with these strategies. I have, however, made one primary change in reflection of this study – I have adapted these response activities to involve multiple modes. No longer do I have my students rely solely on paper and pencil to show their understanding, and no longer do I strictly have them complete these activities entirely on their own. My solution to this involved an increase of technology use as a
tool for making meaning. By allowing students to use various programs that afford them the use of various modes to express their thoughts, they can express their understanding in the mode that suits them best. They can use voice recordings to capture their expression and natural language as they explain their ideas. They can use video to record their own gestures or expressions as well as recording any markings that they can make on the screen to emphasize their message. They can maintain their natural tendency to perform stories and actively demonstrate their understanding.

Technology also offers an avenue for teachers to capture their students’ poems digitally. This affords teachers the opportunity to gain concrete evidence of learning and thinking in order to provide formative feedback for students as well as live demonstrations to share with parents. This makes technology a beneficial tool to increase not only student learning but also to nurture the collaboration with the parents and help them to be aware of their child’s progress and current goals. The added element of technology comes with a plethora of benefits, but this does not come without its own list of considerations for effective implementation.

**Planning for the incorporation of technology**

Of course, using technology with first graders can be a daunting task in and of itself. It is a commitment that the teacher has to be willing to make – a commitment of time, training, and an added level of patience needed in order to integrate it successfully into your classroom. It is not news that kids are savvy when it comes to technology. Today’s youth have coined the term digital natives as they live in a world of technology and can easily adapt to new apps and new devices naturally. This makes it even more important for teachers to also become familiar with the applications that will be used in the context of instruction. With the slightest modeling of the process, students can typically guide themselves. As they explore the technology and stretch the
limits of given modes, they will inevitably ask for help and look to the teacher for guidance and for quick technical support. I find it helps to be able to provide that support quickly and easily. Going through the steps of learning the technology also helps the teacher prepare a purposeful introduction and scaffolded practice so that students can also become experts of the program.

The process of incorporating the use of technology in a primary classroom involves a blend of behaviorist and constructivist approaches. As much of a proponent I am of a more constructivist style, I have found that there is no way around having a series of directive lessons in order to teach the students the step-by-step process of manipulating the device. In fact, I find that taking the time to explicitly teach and practice these steps is vital to reach the constructivist part – when they get to use the technology to create their meaning.

It takes time to establish this open-ended use of technology in a safe and productive manner. Therefore, it is my advice to be selective about which applications a teacher chooses. Having a different platform for each reading response activity deters from the focus on meaning-making and creates a constant focus on the physical manipulation of the application. Teachers should consider the affordances and limitations of technology and limit to just a few selections for their instructional tools, such as I did in selecting Book Creator as described in Chapter 3.

Part of learning and exploring with the technology involves recognizing its limitations. This helps in preparation for use in response to various activities. Using Serafini’s (2014) outline to determine a beneficial reading response, a teacher can then consider what modes need to be available to help her students create meaning. Does the application allow for text, video, voice recording, drawing or photos? These types of considerations will help guide choice in which application to adopt in a teacher’s pedagogy.
Just as the applications themselves may have limitations, a primary teacher also needs to consider the limitations of her students. While they are technology savvy, they are not fluent in keyboarding—nor should they be expected to at this stage in their education. Their fine motor skills are building, and they need the practice of writing. In addition to this, their writing skills are still building. Each word written comes with a consideration to spelling, which is still a growing skill at this stage of learning. A teacher should keep this in mind when selecting an application for use when creating meaning and ensure there is a way for students to accommodate for this. Even with high consideration of limitations and affordances, at times, students may be hindered from expressing their creation in the way they envision. However, part of the learning process is seeing how they accommodate for these roadblocks, and could be a potential area for further research.

**Planning with standardized curriculum in mind**

With today’s focus on standardized assessments and strict pacing guides offered in numerous school systems, teachers may feel the burden to implement a more direct form of instruction that focuses explicitly on isolated literacy skills. They may avoid such exploratory literacy projects in fear of not having the time to complete this in addition to other mandated lessons. I must argue that this sort of literacy exploration incorporates a plethora of skills and strategies in an authentic, meaningful way for students. I challenged myself to compare the English standards as listed in the Common Core for first grade and highlighted the strands that were addressed in this process. I found that the majority of English standards were incorporated at some point. Table 5.1 offers a list of standards that were addressed collectively. I focused on first grade standards to consider those standards applicable to my concurrent grade level. Similar standards at other primary and elementary grades could equally be applied.
Table 5.1

*Common Core English Standards for First Grade*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>READING: LITERATURE</strong></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Ideas and Details:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RL.1.1</td>
<td>Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.1.2</td>
<td>Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.1.3</td>
<td>Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft and Structure:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.1.4</td>
<td>Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.1.6</td>
<td>Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.1.7</td>
<td>Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.1.9</td>
<td>Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WRITING</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.1.6</td>
<td>With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SPEAKING AND LISTENING</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension and Collaboration:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.1</td>
<td>Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.1.A</td>
<td>Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.1.B</td>
<td>Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.1.C</td>
<td>Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.2</td>
<td>Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.3</td>
<td>Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.4</td>
<td>Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.5</td>
<td>Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL.1.6</td>
<td>Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation. (See grade 1 Language standards 1 and 3 here for specific expectations.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many of these skills were addressed during the transmediation phase, when students were using voice and text to capture their stories. Their natural exploration of language use allowed a means of formative assessment as I noted what language skills were applied correctly and which ones needed further remediation. I then offered purposeful minilessons and coaching that focused on those specific skills. This format provides a means of flexible grouping to address skills as needed and to allow those students who have already acquired those skills to apply them and extend their learning.
Limitations and Future Considerations

A study of this nature does not come without its limitations. In reflection, I could argue that some of these limitations were also silver linings. This includes the time of year in which the study took place, the make-up of the participants, and the collective process.

For a number of reasons, this study took place during the last few weeks of school. These are the same last few weeks that we have field day, our last field trip, end of the year assemblies, and so on. It is a hectic time. While this could have some effect on the attention and motivation of my students, I honestly do not feel that it adversely affected this study. If anything, the fact that these first graders actively engaged in this process each day for several consecutive days with the amount of commitment they offered, I found to be very telling just how beneficial this unit of study could be to my yearly curriculum. In the end, I integrated this unit as the end of the subsequent year as well, with similar fascinating results.

While the time restrictions and distractions of schedules at the end of the year make for additional obstacles with which a teacher must contend, this time is also ideal for this style of engagement in first grade. By this time of year, students have built their stamina to engage in books and conversations for extended periods of time. Their sense of independence and responsibility has grown. Likewise, their exposure and focused practice with reading and thinking strategies has developed along with their practice in collaborative settings. They are also more familiar and independent with technology applications by this point, so their reliance on the teacher for modeling and support is less than earlier in the year. All of these aspects require practice and building throughout the year, and these pieces of the puzzle must be in place in order for such an intricate process to take place in the classroom. I find that it has been well worth the effort to get them to this pivotal point.
Qualitative research is quite an undertaking. It is a long process, and it involves careful consideration of many moving parts. While I am not unrealistic in asking every classroom teacher to gather and analyze hours of video, transcripts, and digital programs in order to capture growth and learning, I do recommend applying this unit of study in its entirety – from the first initial reading all the way to the final presentation of their digital books. The final product is just a small piece of the bigger package. Listening to the exchanges, the wavering ideas, and the collaboration of poems is priceless. Watching the performance of excited readers as they get to have full ownership of the story they read and give valid feeling to their characters is fascinating. Then watching them translate those ideas and that performance into a digital platform with a manner that accommodates their liking opens eyes to just how much these young readers have grown over the course of the year and how much they have to offer.

The exploration of wordless picturebooks as an opportunity to explore the meaning-making process has been beneficial. In this case, I built the students’ familiarity with one author’s works in order to scaffold their practice with this genre. There is a plethora of wordless picturebooks available to explore, which may offer different experiences for first graders or older learners. I find myself considering how their finished products would have looked if students did this process individually. Would aspects of performance be as grand in front of a video camera or without an audience at all? Would students include as many speech bubbles, thought bubbles, or use of voice had they not experienced the collaborative process to apply these modes during the stages of reading? Knowing that literacy skills are closely linked, it would also be beneficial to explore how this process may affect a student’s application of narrative writing - creating one’s own original stories.
The world of literacy is ever changing. As multimodal literacy becomes more prevalent in their lives, students need the practice to explore and utilize various modes of reading and creating in order to make meaning of the world around them. This particular journey of reading started in a simple first grade classroom. I can only hope that this process extends through the growth of my students and through the passion of other teachers and researchers to expand on these skills and promote these multimodal journeys.
REFERENCES


deepening comprehension through response activities during reading workshop. *Ohio Reading Teacher, 42*(1), 34-46.


Semali, L. M. (2002). Chapter one: Transmediation: Why study the semiotics of


Dear (Head of School),

This letter is to inform you of my intent to conduct research with your child at Norfolk Collegiate School. For a few weeks in May, I will be working with my class on a research project that includes observing, recording, sharing, and interpreting children’s comprehension. I am asking for your permission to conduct this study. All work will fall in the context of our everyday classroom activities, but I would also like to seek parents’ permission to record and observe the students’ learning to be included in the study.

As part of my research, I will record my students’ learning using audio voice recorders and cameras that can record both still pictures and brief video. I will use these recordings as a way to enhance understanding of my students in ways that can inform classroom teaching and curriculum. Additionally, I would like to ask parents’ permission to use the information that I collect for future educational purposes, to present at professional conferences, and for writing articles for professional journals. My students’ real names will not be used in any publication material and should they choose, I will insure anonymity by obscuring students’ identities through photo/video editing.

This research will not disrupt our daily activities. In fact, I would like to avoid bringing this study to their attention in order to maintain our natural learning environment as much as possible. Your consent will help me to secure important information regarding first graders’ thinking and learning as they independently read and interpret stories in wordless picturebooks. As they make meaning of these stories, they will also be creating a digital version of these books, which I will be able to email to parents to view and share at home. Since this is a component of our regular reading instruction, the entire class will conduct the activities; however, as with any research project, parents have the right to agree to decline their child’s involvement in the actual study. In other words, if they decline, I will consider their child’s work only through my typical role as his/her teacher, but I will not consider his/her involvement or final work as part of the study. Please see the attached consent forms for a more detailed description of both the project as well as the parent letters that I will provide that explain the study. Thank you for your consideration of this study that could benefit both my teaching as well as add to the research of best literacy practices.

With thanks,

Catherine Thomson
Doctoral Candidate
Old Dominion University
Dear Parents,

I am conducting a study involving the observation, recording, sharing, and interpretation of children’s learning through pedagogical documentation. To conduct this study, I need the participation of the children enrolled in my classroom. The attached “Permission for Child’s Participation” form describes the study and asks your permission for your child to participate.

Please carefully read the attached “Permission for Child’s Participation” form. It provides important information for you and your child. If you have any questions pertaining to the attached form or to the research study, please feel free to contact me for further explanation.

After reviewing the attached information, please return a signed copy of the “Permission for Child’s Participation” form if you are willing to allow your child to participate in the study. Keep the additional copy of the form for your records.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider your child’s participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Catherine Thomson
Doctoral Candidate
Old Dominion University
PERMISSION FOR CHILD’S PARTICIPATION DOCUMENT

The purposes of this form are to provide information that may affect decisions regarding your child’s participation and to record the consent of those who are willing for their child to participate in this study.

**TITLE OF RESEARCH:** Making Meaning with First Graders: A Journey through the Transmediation of Wordless Picturebooks.

**RESEARCHER:**
Catherine Thomson, Principle Investigator
Doctoral Candidate
Old Dominion University
Norfolk Collegiate School, First Grade Teacher
(Address, Phone Number)

**DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY:**

The purpose of this research is to study how first graders make meaning when reading a wordless picturebook. This type of reading requires students to attend to visual clues and graphics in order to infer meaning in a story. The students will be applying the many reading strategies that we have practiced throughout the year, including retelling the story, monitoring their comprehension, asking questions, and inferring meaning. As a class, we will read a number of wordless picturebooks together and convert these books into digital books. When we make a wordless picturebook into a digital book, we will have to make decisions about the best ways to add words to the story – through speech bubbles, traditional text, or even voice recordings. This act of taking the meaning of a story and creating it in a different form is called “transmediation”, and this is a sophisticated approach to applying comprehension strategies. After a few weeks of practicing this process as a class, the students will be asked to read a new wordless picturebook independently. This is the focal point of the study – observing how the students approach this new text, the process they go through in order to make meaning of the text, and how they make decisions about the new digital text that they create. Through observation, record keeping, and collaborative reflection, I hope to gain insight on the comprehension strategies these first graders are implementing independently and what aspects of our instructional environment best support this type of learning. This research will not only benefit my own teaching, but I hope to help teachers, researchers, and administrators consider new ways of encouraging independent application processes such as this as a means of applying comprehension strategies in primary classrooms.
If you decide to allow your child to participate, then your child will join a study involving research that asks your child to participate in a completely normal way. I have the unique opportunity to maintain my typical role as the teacher, so I will continue to monitor their learning and facilitate the process as usual. In order to best capture this process, I will be using a technique called pedagogical documentation. Pedagogical documentation uses observations, photography, video, and note taking to understand children’s learning in ways that make children’s thinking visible. Teachers use pedagogical documentation to develop curriculum, understand their students, and to improve their teaching. I will only be conducting this research during the portion of the morning that we will be working on these projects, and I anticipate the process will take approximately 2 weeks. During that time, I will watch and interact with the class as they create their projects. At the conclusion of their work, the students will present their digital books to the class, as we have with other final productions. During this process, I may offer some probing questions for students to explain their projects in order to determine some of the decisions they made when creating their projects, but this process is similar to how we usually conduct such presentations. My goal is to maintain as much normalcy during this project as usual, in order to capture a true depiction of the workings in this first grade classroom. All of the students in my class are invited to participate in the research study. Like usual, I will keep you informed of our progress through our weekly newsletter that provides the current curriculum and projects being conducted in the class.

**EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA:**
There are no criteria that would exclude your child from participating.

**RISKS:**
There are no risks of participating in this study outside the normal risks associated with coming to school.

**BENEFITS:**
The careful and systematic observation and documentation of your child’s experience will help me, as your child’s teacher, create and implement learning experiences that are responsive to your child’s interests and needs.

Others may benefit by this research by increasing understanding of the complex processes that contribute to children’s reading comprehension and meaning-making processes as well as how such factors are nurtured in primary classrooms. Additionally, this research will help build understanding about how teachers can establish positive learning environments that support they type of reading exploration.
COSTS AND PAYMENTS: There are no costs or payments associated with this research.

NEW INFORMATION: You will be contacted if new information is discovered that would reasonably change your decision about your child’s participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The records of this study will be kept private. Any use of information, in publication, professional conferences, and/or educational contexts, will not include any information that will make it possible to identify your child, or your child’s school. Research records will be kept on the researchers’ computer, in password-protected files. I do ask for permission to maintain selected segments of video, audio, and photographic data to serve as a foundation for further investigation on children’s experiences in school. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify your child. Of course, your records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE: Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is all right to refuse your child’s participation. Even if you agree now, you may withdraw your child from the study at any time. In addition, your child will be given a chance to withdraw at any time if he/she so chooses.

COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY: Agreeing to your child’s participation does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation. In the event that your child suffers harm as a result of participation in this research project, you may contact Catherine Thomson at (757) 625-0471 or Dr. David Swain, Chair of the Institutional Review Board at (757) 683-6028.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: By signing this form, you are saying 1) that you have read this form or have had it read to you, and 2) that you are satisfied you understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers will be happy to answer any questions you have about the research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Catherine Thomson by e-mail at cthomson@norfolkcollegiate.org, or by phone at (757) 625-0471. If at any time you feel pressured to allow your child to participate, or if you have any questions about your rights or this form, please call Dr. David Swain, Chair of the Institutional Review Board Chair (757-683-6028) or the Old Dominion University Office of Research (757-683-3460).
Note: By signing below, you are telling the researchers YES, that you will allow your child to participate in this study. Please keep one copy of this form for your records.

Your child’s name (please print): __________________________

Your child’s birth date: __________________________

Parent’s name (please print): __________________________

Parent’s Signature: __________________________

Date: __________________________

INVESTIGATOR’S STATEMENT: I certify that this form includes all information concerning the study relevant to the protection of the rights of the participants, including the nature and purpose of this research, benefits, risks, costs, and any experimental procedures. I have described the rights and protections afforded to human research participants and have done nothing to pressure, coerce, or falsely entice the parent to allowing this child to participate. I am available to answer the parent’s questions and have encouraged him/her to ask additional questions at any time during the course of the study.

Investigator’s Signature: __________________________

Date: __________________________
Before planning the lessons for this wordless picturebook unit, I had to put consideration into which books to include and in which order. As indicated in Chapter 3, I asked myself a number of questions in order to determine which books would be appropriate for my class. These included:

- Is the setting clear and recognizable to first graders?
- Are character emotions demonstrated through gestures and facial expressions?
- Is the sequence of events evident and understandable to first graders?
- Can character actions and/or events be interpreted in multiple ways?
- Is there opportunity for imagination?
- Is there opportunity for inner dialogue or dialogue between characters?

The following pages provide a progression of books is the order in which I decided to present them. I found this order grew in complexity as we had the opportunity to explore various themes, features, and styles. Following this suggested list of books, I have also provided the method that I used in preparation of these lessons. By exploring the books myself, I was able to better guide the students in an exploration of the books as well.
Book 1: Museum Trip:

Summary:

A boy gets separated from his class during a field trip to an art museum. As he looks around for them, he comes across a case that stores a series of drawings of mazes. As he looks at the first maze, he finds himself suddenly inside the maze. He gradually walks through the various mazes, completing one after the other. As he completes the last maze, he finds himself being awarded a medal of honor. As he soon reunites with his class and begins to exit the museum, he notices the same medal on the tour guide.

Justification: *I selected this to be our first story due to the simplicity of the nature of this story. While it does have some fantasy aspects to it, I anticipated that it would be relatable to first graders. They have all been on field trips to museums, and they have all had experience with mazes. The sequence of events in the story is linear and easy to follow, and the character feelings are pretty clear and relatable.*

Key learning experiences explored through mini-lessons:

- Reality vs. Fantasy: The reader is left wondering whether this really happened or whether the boy’s adventure happened in his imagination.
- Foreshadowing:
  - The boy’s shoe is untied in the picture on the title page of the book. He stops during the first few pages to tie his show, which is the primary cause of his separation from his class.
  - At the end of the book, the tour guide’s medal around his neck is very apparent to the viewer. After reading the story, the reader can go back to analyze the pictures closely and notice hints of the medal slightly showing in previous pictures.
- Character analysis:
  - Emotions: The main character has particular facial expressions and postures that indicate feelings.
  - Thoughts: There are opportunities to speculate about what the character must be thinking due to the events or situations presented.
- Visual Details:
  - Title: The title is part of the picture on the cover instead of a standalone heading.
  - Attention to the cover, book jacket, title page, and dedication page for pictures that establish the setting and beginning events.
  - Emphasis: Zooming in on just a portion of the picture emphasizes certain parts of pictures.
  - Point of view: We see the character at a distance in some pictures, but we are in the picture with the character in others.
  - Layout: Some pictures are isolated pictures while other pages include multiple pictures grouped together.
Book 2: The Red Book:

Summary:

A girl notices a red book sticking out of the snow by the sidewalk during her walk through the city on her way to school one morning. During class, she opens the book to find a special arrangement of pictures. It starts with a map of an island, but each picture gets progressively closer to the beach on this island, until the girl is looking at a little boy sitting on the beach looking through what looks like the same red book. The focus of the pictures then switches to the point of view of the boy, who is looking through his red book at a map of a city. His progression of pictures gets closer to the buildings and then to the very window next to which the little girl is sitting. They seem to come to the realization that these red books are somewhat magical and connect them through the pictures, even though they are in two different locations. As the girl leaves school, she buys two bunches of balloons that lift her off of the ground and head in the direction of the island. On her travel, she drops the book. The next portion of the story is told through the pages of the fallen book, whose pictures reveal the girl getting closer and closer to the little boy on the island. Eventually, the boy and girl are united on the beach. As they hug, the reader can notice that the boy’s book is getting ready to be washed away by the waves, and a mysterious bystander picks up the girl’s book from the location it fell. It leaves the reader with the feeling that the adventures this book provides will continue with new owners.

Justification: I selected this as the second story because while the story did build in complexity, the events and characters are still not too advanced for first graders to grasp. The settings include a city, a school, and a beach, all of which are easily identifiable. Some fantasy aspects are simple, such as flying through the air by holding a bunch of balloons; some fantasy aspects stretch the imagination, such as characters looking at each other through the pages in a book. These aren’t concepts beyond the understanding of first graders, though, so I found this book to be suitable to opening some of those discussions of interpretation.

Key learning experiences explored through mini-lessons:

- Reality vs. Fantasy: The reader is left wondering about the possibilities of the books being real if the characters really did find each other.
- Prediction: The pages in the red books give clues to events to come. The reader is also left with clues at the end as to how the story could continue.
- Character emotions: Both characters have particular facial expressions and postures that indicate feelings.
• Visual Details:
  o Title: There is no written title. It is simply a “red book”.
  o Attention to the cover, title page, and dedication page for pictures that establish the setting and beginning events. (There is no book jacket picture this time.)
  o Sequence and emphasis: A series of pictures establish different settings, with the first picture showing the setting at a distance and the other pictures gradually zooming in until the picture is zoomed in completely on the character.
  o Point of view: Sometimes we see the events unfold as a series of pictures on the page. Sometimes we see the events unfold through the pictures in the red books that the characters are holding.
  o Layout: Some pictures are isolated pictures while other pages include multiple pictures grouped together.
Book 3: The Secret Box:

Summary:

This book stretches the reader’s imagination to not only travel to a different place but also to a different time period. It starts by showing a boy hiding a secret box in the floorboard of the attic at what seems to be a boarding school. The pictures of the town in which this school exists gradually grow up until it appears to be present day. Some kids discover the hidden box in the attic of this boarding school. They discover pictures, a map, and other artifacts that send them on an adventure. They discover a path to secret and magical place on the boardwalk. Here, they become friends with several other kids who seem to be from different time periods as well. At the end, these kids become part of the pictures that are left for more kids to discover in the secret box in the attic.

Justification: This book is the most complex out of this series of wordless picturebooks. There are some picture clues on the first few pages that first graders would recognize in order to understand that the story starts off long ago. These include the horse carriages and the trolleys. The basic events of the story are clear, including discovering the map and following it to the shore. However, the context of time travel would most likely be beyond their understanding, without the background knowledge of some of the historical time periods represented through the children’s different clothes. I will need to prompt them and most likely provide this insight to the class in order for them to appreciate the time travel fantasy included in this story. The key focus I hope to accomplish with this book is the attention to the changes in the setting to illustrate the passing of time.

Key learning experiences explored through mini-lessons:

- Reality vs. Fantasy: The reader is left wondering the logistics of how this time travel could work.
- Character Analysis:
  - Emotions: The main character has particular facial expressions and postures that indicate feelings.
  - Thoughts: There are opportunities to speculate about what the character must be thinking due to the events or situations presented.
- Visual Details:
  - Title: The title is part of the picture on the cover instead of a standalone heading.
  - Attention to the front and back covers, book jacket, and title page for pictures that establish the setting and beginning events (There is no separate dedication page picture.)
  - Point of view: Some pictures are shaped differently to indicate that we are looking through a window in the attic to see what’s happening inside.
  - Layout: Some pictures are isolated pictures while other pages include multiple pictures grouped together.
Book 4: Rainstorm:

Summary:

This book starts with a boy looking out the window from a bedroom in a mansion by the coast. He is feeling bored on this rainy day. He opts to kick a ball around, but the ball bounces down the stairs and under a chair. As he reaches for it, he stumbles upon a mysterious key. He proceeds to try different keyholes around the house to try to find the match for this key. He tries different doors, drawers, and boxes, until he comes across a chest that finally opens. The opened chest reveals a ladder, which the boy decides to climb down to a tunnel. The tunnel leads him to a door and then to a grand staircase. As he opens the trapdoor at the top of the staircase, he finds himself standing on the balcony of a lighthouse in the middle of an island off the coast. The day is bright and sunny. Soon, a small group of children surprise him and invite them to a house for a snack. They play catch, fly kites, and build sandcastles until the sun starts to go down. The group escorts the boy back to the lighthouse so he can get home before dinner. At dinner, the boy seems to be sad and lonely, as he sits at a very fancy table with servers and no evidence of others in the room. Later as he goes to sleep, he seems happy to see the light from the lighthouse across the water. He is just as happy as he wakes to another rainy day, and he grabs the key and rushes towards the lighthouse. His group of friends, who have come to see him, meet him midway. They decide to play in his room today.

Justification: This book is the very relatable to first graders. They can all make connections to being bored on a rainy day. The events are also linear in nature, and the settings are easy to recognize. The initial setting could lend to a little more interpretation – whether it’s the boy’s home, a boarding school, or a mansion. The uncertainty extends opportunities for the class, as readers, to decide what we think makes the most sense and defend that meaning. This story also includes more character interaction, so students have an opportunity to explore dialogue. Visual layouts in the book also mirror portions of Trainspin, so that offers opportunities to explore how pictures are presented on the page to add to the meaning.

Key learning experiences explored through mini-lessons:

- Dialogue: When the boy meets the other children, they gather around a table to eat and also play outside together, offering opportunities for conversation.
- Character Analysis:
  - Emotions: The boy has particular facial expressions and postures that indicate feelings.
  - Thoughts: There are opportunities to speculate about what he must be thinking, such as looking out the window at the rain and sitting alone at the dinner table.
• Questioning: There are unanswered questions lead to our own interpretation, such as:
  o Where are his parents?
  o What sort of place is this?
  o Is there really a tunnel that stretches across the ocean to the island?
• Visual Details:
  o Title: The title is a standalone heading, but written in a way to represent rain.
  o Attention to the cover, book jacket, title page, and dedication page for important symbols used in the story as well as the establishment of the setting.
  o Layout: The isolated pictures vary: some take up both pages of the open book, some take up one whole size, others are in a frame in the middle of the page. There are also several pages with multiple pictures grouped together.
Book 5: Trainstop:

Summary:

This book starts with a girl heading to the train station with her parents. It appears that they have been shopping and are probably heading home. The train goes through the city and then through tunnel. When the train comes out of the tunnel, the girl is surprised to see a bright countryside. Suddenly, there is a man in the middle of the track, flagging down the train. The girl is surprised by this, and decides to take a peek outside. A group of little people, looking to be less than a foot tall, seems to ask her to come with them. They take her to a tree where a small friend is stuck in the tree with his airplane. She tries to reach him, but even she is not tall enough. One of the little friends suggests lifting her up, and together they rescue the boy. Everyone cheers. Soon the train’s horn indicates that it’s time to go. She returns to the train, says goodbye to the little people, and heads back through a tunnel. The tunnel opens up to the city, where the family then gets off at the train station. She seems to be thinking about what just happened as she gets off the train. The conductor speaks to her as she departs, leaving the reader with the sense that the conductor is validating what just happened to the girl. As the family arrives home, the little friends come to visit her in their airplane. They bring her a small apple tree to plant as a thank you for helping them. As the book ends, you notice several apple trees around the city and may leave wondering if these little people may have had something to do with those as well.

Justification: This book had all of the aspects that I thought would be beneficial to the collaborating meaning-making process. The settings were clear and recognizable. Even if my students hadn’t been on a train before, they are familiar with trains from books and movies we have seen in first grade, such as The Polar Express. The countryside was easily recognizable, but I liked how the sudden appearance of country could make the reader wonder if this section of the book is imagined. The story also offered opportunities for character feelings, inner dialogue, and exchanges between several different characters.
Planning for Whole Group Exploration

The act of sitting down in front of a group of first graders ready to hear a story feels awkward without the crutch of printed words. As teachers, we often turn into performers of the text, with natural animation in our voice and expressions as we read to entertain our young listeners. Without the words – it is a very different experience. It’s important to understand that you are not going to “read” it as a fluid story at first. In fact, I found it best to encourage just brainstorming and exploration during the first few readings. Once you revisit the text, the story-telling will become more natural.

The purpose of the following section is not to act as a script, but merely as an example of language and key points that could be made while exploring these books with young students. These were the previewing sessions I organized as I planned for this unit. I found it better prepared me to start with a stream of consciousness as I explored the book, and then I added in more thoughts as I revisited the text. I wanted to make sure I was prepared to point out certain details of the story, demonstrate needing to revisit pictures, and show how I considered actions in the story while also considering the character’s thoughts and feelings. Just as with any lesson, it was more effective for me to have familiarity with the flow of the pictures in order to effectively plan and guide this initial model lesson.

I tried to keep my questioning simple. I stuck to a few basic questions to entice thinking and exploration of meaning. These included the following:

- What are you thinking?
- What do you notice?
- What do you think is happening?
- How do you think the character is feeling?
- What do you think the character is thinking?
These questions encouraged the students to look for details in the illustrations and derive meaning from them without influencing their discoveries or meaning-making. In the first book, I heavily modeled my own thinking. In the subsequent books, I organized my own thinking, but I increasingly guided the students to share their thinking. The following plan demonstrates my stream of consciousness as I explored the book on my own and prepared for what I would say to my class. My goal was to demonstrate behaviors such as attending to details in the pictures, thinking of different meanings for different details, attending to character’s feelings and actions, and navigating back and forth through pictures.

**Lesson Plan Unit ~ Wordless Picturebook Author Study ~ Barbara Lehman**

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| Day 13-15 | **Trainstop** | Partner Transmediation process: picture placement  
Minilessons: Technical support – reminder of process for adding and manipulating pictures |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Day 16-17 | **Trainstop** | Partner completion of transmediation process: adding voice, text, and other features  
Minilessons: Technical support – using the voice to text feature |
| Day 18 | **Trainstop** | Sharing of final stories |

**Day 1:** Explore the pictures in the book, *The Museum Trip*, and discuss possible meaning throughout the story.

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**Cover**

**What are you thinking when you look at the cover?**

*I notice this little boy. He looks like he could maybe be a first grader, too. I notice that he’s lifting up the cover and showing what looks like a stamp that says “museum trip”. The stamp reminds me of a stamp in my passport. (Explain how people collect stamps in passports as they visit different countries around the world.) I wonder what this little part of the picture is showing. What does that make you think of? It reminds me a little bit of a maze.*

**Book Jacket**

**What do you notice about his expression? What do you think he’s thinking right now?**

*I notice how he’s holding his hand to his mouth. (Demonstrate). It makes me think that something surprising is going to happen. Maybe it’s something that might even be a little scary.*

**Title Page**

**What do we think is happening in this picture?**

*I notice that there are other kids, too, and the kids are getting onto a bus. This makes me think of going on a field trip. I also notice an adult that looks like she could be a teacher. She looks a little dressed up and has a clipboard in her hands. That reminds me of my field trip binder that I take on our field trips with important information. I wonder where they are going. (Recall some field trips we’ve been on during the year.) I remember the cover said “museum trip”. Maybe they are going to a museum. (Recall museums we have visited). I notice the last boy in the line is the same that was on the cover and the book jacket. (Some students may suggest giving him a name at this point.) What do we notice about this boy in this picture? I notice that he looks pretty happy with a smile on his face. I also notice that his shoe is untied but all of the other kids’ shoes are tied nicely.*
What do we think is happening in this picture? I notice that the bus is driving through a city. I can see tall buildings in the background and many houses along the road. I wonder if it’s fall or winter because I notice that the trees do not have any leaves on them. I also remember from the title page that some of the kids had jackets on. Maybe it’s fall time then. **Let’s look closely at the bus. What do you notice?** I notice how the boy’s hands are on the window, and he’s smiling as he looks out the window. He looks excited about what he sees or where he’s going.

What do we think is happening in this picture? I notice the sign on the building. They are visiting a museum. This man looks like he is standing and waiting for them to come in. I get the feeling that he works at the museum. The teacher is also watching her class as they go in the door. I notice the boy is last in line again, and I notice that his shoe is still untied. Hmmm… I also notice the trees in this picture. Now that we can see them closely, I notice little buds on the branches. Buds usually start popping up in the springtime, so I wonder now if it is actually starting spring. We still sometimes wear jackets in the springtime. I still am wondering what kind of museum this is. I can’t see any clues to let us know yet except that they are going inside.

What do we think is happening in this picture? I notice that the teacher is pointing to the picture on the wall. Maybe it’s a painting. I also notice the other paintings and the large statue in the middle of the picture. This must be an art museum. (Relate it to our field trip to the Chrysler Museum.) I also notice that the boy is finally tying his shoe. He seems a little far away from his class. I wonder if he can hear the teacher talking from over there.

What do we think is happening in this picture? Oh no. The class is not there anymore. That makes me think that he couldn’t hear the teacher after all, and they moved on in the museum without him noticing. He is still tying his shoes. I think he’s feeling a little surprised. His face looks like this.(Demonstrate). I wonder what is going to happen next. Will he find his class? Will he get lost in the museum? Will he ask someone for help?

How do you feel when you look at the pictures on these pages? These pages give me a bad feeling. Look how the boy is all by himself on this page. We can see his face and how he is touching his mouth like this. (Demonstrate). He looks pretty surprised. (Look back at the book jacket picture and note that it is the same one.) It makes me feel a little nervous for him. Look at the big open museum and he looks so small in the middle of it. I don’t see any other person in sight. Look at all of the different rooms and hallways. I even see stairs on both sides. There are so many places his class could have gone. I wonder if he can hear them. I wonder if he’ll find them.

What do we think he’s thinking on this page? Is he looking at the bear statue? Is he thinking? He does have his hand in a position on his chin. (Demonstrate) that might show that he’s thinking. Then I see in the next picture that he is going into another room. I think back on the first page he must be looking at that door wondering if he should go in there to look for
his class. Maybe he can hear them. Maybe he just thinks it’s a good idea. Either way, he decides to go into this room.

**Pages 11-12** What do we notice about this next room? I don’t see his class, but it is an interesting room. I see pictures on the wall and pictures in a case. They all look a little similar. Right now, they are so small; it’s a little hard to see what they are. They look a little like different designs with squiggly lines through them. I also notice an interesting statue in the corner. It looks a little like a gargoyle. Right now I’m wondering if he’s going to stay in this room or move on to keep looking for his class.

**Pages 13-14** What is happening in these pictures? I notice that these pictures are similar. This one shows him looking at the picture in the case, and this one zooms in on him looking at this picture. That makes me feel like this picture is really important. As I look at it, I notice that it is a picture of a maze. I wonder if it’s a real maze, like a photograph of a maze, or if it’s just a drawing of a maze. When I go back to the pictures on pages 11-12, I think that these might all be pictures of mazes. That’s what the squiggly lines might be inside each picture.

**Pages 15-16** Wow! What happened on this page? All of the sudden the boy is much smaller. Where is he? Look, as I turn back to the pictures on pages 13-14, I notice the small rounded door at the front of the maze. When I look on page 15, that looks like that same rounded door. Somehow, he must have gone into the picture. He’s now standing right in front of the rounded door. I’m predicting that he’s going to try to solve the maze. Look at the center of the maze. I notice a tree. I wonder if he’ll make it to the tree and I wonder what will happen if he does.

**Pages 17-18** It looks like he’s trying to solve the maze. I notice his hand is on his mouth again. What do you think he’s feeling at this time? I think maybe he’s feeling a little nervous, like maybe he’s lost in the maze. Maybe he can see the tree peeking over the top of the wall, and he’s excited that he’s getting close. When I look at the whole maze on page 18, it sure looks like he’s going to make it to the middle. I also notice the stamp in the bottom corner of the paper. That reminds me of the stamp that we saw on the cover of the book. (Flip back to cover to compare stamps.)

**Pages 19-20** Wow! I like how the pictures are set up on this page. Look how each picture shows what he does next. (Pointing). I can see that he did make it to the tree, and then he must have followed the maze back to the door because he is back to the rounded door with the tree back at the center of the maze. I notice that he’s walked over to the edge of the paper where the stamp is, and his hand is on his chin again. What to you think he is thinking this time? In this last picture, I notice a small corner of another paper, and then I see him running on the next page. (Flip back to pages 11-12). I remember in this picture that the glass case has several mazes in a row. I wonder if he started at this first rounded maze and now he’s thinking about moving onto the next one. (Back to 19-20). He sure looks happy in this picture. He is smiling and doesn’t look so nervous anymore. I think maybe he’s starting to have fun.
| Pages 21-22 | I notice that we have several pictures again on these two pages. I’m going to take a second to look at all of them. (Pause – When narrating on these 2 pages, use this opportunity to emphasize pointing to the pictures as you navigate). It does look like he went to the next map in the case. Here he is going into the map. We can see another small tree in the middle. This tree looks a little different – almost like an apple tree. The other one was taller and more pointed. Through these next pictures, I see that he is in the maze. This time I get the feeling that he is thinking about which way to go since he’s at the corner with a few different directions he could go. I see in the next picture that he makes his way to the center where the tree is, and here he has made it back to the door again. He’s looking off to the right again, like he’s looking again at the next maze. Finally he is walking across the counter to the next paper. I see it is another round maze. |
| Pages 23-24 | **What do you notice about these pictures?** When I first looked at them, I was thinking they were the same pictures that were going to show him at different places as he walked through the maze. Now I notice that they are actually two different mazes. I notice the stamps are in different places. (Pointing to these different stamps), and I notice that the mazes are also different shapes. They also have different trees in the middle. |
| Pages 25-26 | These pages show some different mazes as well. **What are some differences we see on these pages?** (The shapes, colors, stamps, doors.) Hmm... I notice that this maze has a tower in the middle. All of the others have had trees in the middle. I wonder what makes this one different. I notice that the tower also has a door. I wonder if he’ll peek inside. |
| Pages 27-28 | I’m going to take a second to look at these pictures. (Pause). It is interesting that these pictures show almost in slow motion what he’s going to do next. He sees the tower. He opens the door and peeks inside. He goes inside and then he closes the door behind him. **Why did the author/illustrator use this next picture? What does it show us?** I think she wanted us to know that he is still in the tower. I wonder what he sees in there? I wonder if it leads anywhere else. Do you think he might find his class in there? |
| Pages 29-30 | Let’s take a second to look at these pictures. (Pause). Look at how these pictures zoom in closer and closer until we can see what is happening through the keyhole. We see the tower again - then we get a little closer – and then we get close enough to only see the door – and now we can only see the door knob and keyhole. Now look at the next picture. I notice that this picture is the shape of a keyhole. I think she is showing us what is happening inside the tower. **What does it look like is happening in this picture?** It looks like he is getting a medal. Maybe he’s getting a medal for being able to solve all of the mazes. I wonder who is giving the medal to him, though. Where did this other person come from? |
| Pages 31-32 | **What do you think happened now?** It looks like he is back outside the map. I notice the tower in the center of the map, so I think this is the one he just finished. I wonder if he really was “in” the mazes, or if his was just imagining going through the mazes and following along with his eyes. |
I almost forgot that he was in the museum all by himself. I think he might have forgotten, too. I think he is deciding here that he needs to go look for his class again. He is leaving this room and heading to another hallway or other room to look for his classmates and teacher. He does look pretty happy with a smile on his face. Maybe he’s happy because he had so much fun in the maze room. Maybe he’s happy because he just won a medal or thought about winning a medal. Maybe he’s happy because he can hear his class.

What do you notice on these pages? I think he’s walking a little faster here. I think he’s glad to be back with his class. It looks like they are interested in the exhibit that the teacher is pointing out, and he can just walk right up without anyone noticing.

This page gives me lots of wonders. It must be time for the class to leave. They are walking back down the same steps that they walked up to get to the museum. I notice that the boy is admiring his medal around his neck. He really must have earned it by going through the mazes. I also notice the same man at the door, the one that I thought was a worker at the museum. I notice that he also has a matching medal around his neck. I wonder if he was the one in the tower who gave it to him. I wonder if the man solved the mazes before and earned his own medal that way. I wonder how many people get to try these mazes or if there was something special about this boy. I wonder if the man told the boy that he had a medal, too.

* Take note of some of the language and discoveries the students contributed during the exploration of *The Museum Trip*. Use this language and meaning as part of the second reading tomorrow.

**Day 2:** Reread *The Museum Trip* using more narration and character voice, including expressions and mannerisms.
**Day 3:** Explore the pictures in the book, *The Red Book*, and discuss possible meaning throughout the story. I anticipate that the students will feel more comfortable with the process of exploring wordless picturebooks and will take a more vocal role in our exploration process.

| Cover | **What are you thinking when you look at the cover?** Remember in *The Museum Trip* we had a little stamp in the corner with the title. *Where can we find the title for this book?* (Only on the spine of the book – otherwise the book cover is just red with a child carrying a red book). *Note:* This book does have a Caldecott Honor sticker on the front, so it also provides an opportunity to wonder what makes this book so special that it earned such an honor. |
| Book Jacket | N/A |
| Title Page | **What do you notice on this page?** Maybe the story takes place here in the city and near the water. It looks like it could be snowing in this picture. Possibly this story takes place in the wintertime as well. |
| Title Page (2) | **What are you thinking on these pages?** This looks like the same city but closer. Now you can really see that it is snowing. There are many buildings. |
| Dedication Pages | **What do you notice in this picture?** I see a child walking down the sidewalk. I notice a few other cars and trucks in the street, but I don’t see anyone else walking on the sidewalk. **What are you wondering?** I find myself wondering what time of day it is and where this child is going. Is he/she old enough to be walking around this city by his/herself? Maybe it’s a route that he/she does by his/herself a lot, so he/she can go alone now. Maybe he/she’s walking home. Maybe he/she’s walking to school. Maybe he/she’s visiting a friend. (I am not certain if it’s a boy or girl at this point.) |
| Pages 1-2 | **What do you notice in these pictures?** The first thing that I notice here is the second picture where there is a bright red book sticking out of the snow. When I go back and look at this first picture, I see just a small hint of it in the corner of the picture. Let’s flip back to the last picture on the dedication pages. Now I notice the book in the corner of this picture, too. I didn’t notice that before. (Reiterate the importance of revisiting pictures and rereading the book to notice something new or more details each time.) Looking at the picture on page 2, I also notice that this child is carrying a bag. I now wonder if this child is on the way to school. I get the feeling it is a girl. I have a few general picture clues – longer hair, purple boots – but I don’t know for sure yet. |
| Pages 3-4 | **What are you thinking on these pages?** My eyes jumped right to the second page where I can see she is sitting in a desk. I think we were right when we wondered if she was going to school. I see the rows of desks and the teacher writing on the board in the front of the classroom. It reminds me a little bit of what school was like when I went to school. It’s not much like our classroom, though, right? I do think it is a girl at this point. **How**
**Pages 5-6**

**What do you notice in these pictures?** I notice that she is looking at a map of some sort in the book. Maybe it is a book of maps. I see the same page (same map) in this picture on the next page. I notice the one island in the middle of the map (pointing to the picture) that we zoom in on in the next picture. (Pointing to the picture). Then we must look closer and closer to the island. As we get a closer look, it looks like a beach along the outside of the island (pointing to the picture) with a boy walking along that beach. (Pointing to the picture).

**Pages 7-8**

**What do you think is happening in these pictures?** It seems that the boy found a red book also hidden in the sand. When I look back on page 6, I do see a little hint of a red book poking out of the sand (pointing to the picture). He opens his red book, and he sees a picture of the city. **What does that picture remind you of?** (Flip back to the title pages). It looks like this same city picture that we saw earlier.

**Pages 9-10**

**What do you notice in these pictures?** I notice that we see the city again. I notice that when the page is designed like this with 4 pictures, that each picture gets closer and closer. (Pointing to the pictures as I talk…) We see the city, then we zoom in on this picture to look at this building, then we zoom in a little closer to this building, and then we zoom into the window in the building to see the girl looking at her red book. In this next picture, she looks out the window. I also notice that the boy in the book is looking out the picture in the book. He is also holding his book where we can see a picture of her looking out the window. They both have surprised looks on their faces. **What do you think is happening? What do you think they are thinking?** I wonder if they can see each other. How is this possible? I wonder if they are magical red books.

**Pages 11-12**

**How do you think the characters are feeling?** It looks to me like they must be happy to see each other. I notice they are smiling. It must be time for school to be over. I notice that other classmates are starting to leave, and she has also closed her book.

**Pages 13-14**

**What do you think is happening in these pictures?** I see that she has gotten her coat and scarf back on and grabbed her red book to head out the door. She’s outside again in this picture, so maybe she is going home now. **What else do we notice on this page?** I notice that we see some trucks and cars again, and we also see a vendor on the street corner who is selling balloons. It looks like it is still snowing.

**Pages 15-16**

**What do you think is happening in these pictures?** It looks like she is buying all of the balloons that she can. She has enough balloons to lift her up off of the ground. **What do you think she is feeling on this page?** She doesn’t look scared. She is smiling nicely, so I think she must be happy and having fun.

**Pages 17-18**

**What do you think is happening here?** She has lifted so far off the
ground. Look how she is higher than the buildings in the city. She looks like she is going away from the city. **Where do you think she is going?** I wonder if she is still going home. I wonder if she is going somewhere else. Maybe she is going to try to find that boy.

**Pages 19-20**

**What do you think is happening in these pictures?** It looks like she dropped the red book. We can see it falling all the way down towards the ground by the buildings in the city. **How do you think she is feeling?** Her face looks a little surprised or upset. I don’t think she meant to drop the book. **What else do you notice on this page?** (Pointing to where the book is dropping.) I notice that this looks like water at the bottom of the page. This street and sidewalk have water just nearby. (Look back at the city picture in the beginning.) I remember noticing water in this picture as well. She must be in a city that is very close to the water.

**Pages 21-22**

**What do you notice about these pictures?** I notice that we have more spall pictures that get closer and closer again. (Use pointing to help navigate.) I notice that we can still see the boy in her red book that fell. I see her flying off in the sky out over the water, but we see the boy still sitting on the sand. As we look closer and closer to him in the book, we can also see his book. In his book, she is drifting further and further away from the city until she isn’t in the picture anymore. But look… (Pointing)… we can start to see her in the background right behind him. He must be on an island not far from the city. She is taking the balloons to go see him.

**Pages 23-24**

**What do you notice about these pictures?** I notice that we are looking at the red book that she dropped. I can tell this because it’s sitting on the sidewalk bricks and there is still snow falling. In the pictures, I see that she is landing safely on the beach right next to the boy. They look so happy to see each other. Look how she is smiling and he has his arms up like this. (Demonstrate).

**What else do you notice in these pictures?** I notice that the boy put down his book, and what’s happening? The water seems to be coming in, and the book is getting washed away. The kids don’t seem to notice.

**Pages 25-26**

**What do you notice about these pictures?** It looks like the girl’s red book again. It has blown closed, and it looks like maybe someone else has stopped next to it. I see a shoe and part of a bicycle wheel. I wonder if someone was riding a bike and saw it lying in the middle of the sidewalk. I wonder if they will pick up the book, too.

**Pages 27**

The biker did pick it up and take it with him. **What do you wonder now?** I wonder if he will see the boy and girl in the pictures. I wonder if he will find a new friend in the picture. I wonder what will happen to the other red book. Will it get ruined in the water? Will someone else find it? Share wonders…

* Take note of some of the language and discoveries the students contributed during the exploration of *The Red Book*. Use this language and meaning as part of the second reading tomorrow.
**Day 4:** Reread *The Red Book* using more narration and character voice, including expressions and mannerisms. As part of our author study, discuss some similarities and differences between *The Museum Trip* and *The Red Book*.

**Day 5:** Explore the pictures in the book, *The Secret Box*, and discuss possible meaning throughout the story. By this time, the students should be more involved in the exploration process. I continued to plan my thoughts in preparation to identify some points to make during our first reading. I anticipated new views and observations to develop as we explored together. This book is a little more abstract. To get younger readers like first graders connected to this story, I recommend getting a box of saltwater taffy. They would enjoy the treat, but it will also help them visualize and connect to the box that is recreated on the cover. In addition, I showed a few pictures of some old-fashioned pier amusement parks where such saltwater taffy could be purchased. This would help connect them to later events in the story as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover</th>
<th>What are you thinking when you look at the cover and back cover?</th>
<th>I notice that it looks like a box of saltwater taffy. I also notice a picture, a four-leaf clover, and a token on the front with a ribbon tied all around the box. I see a picture of the Sea Horse Pier along with other sea pictures, such as a King Titan, a crab, a fish, a sea star, and some shells.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Jacket</td>
<td>What do you notice as we open up to the book jacket pages?</td>
<td>I notice that it now looks like we opened the box. Inside we see the inside lid, labeled “Seahorse Pier Saltwater Taffy”. We also see more tokens, ticket stubs, photographs, a red colored pencil, and a map. I wonder what these items have to do with the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title Page (Opposite the dedication page)</td>
<td>What do you notice in this picture?</td>
<td>I notice that a boy is closing the box with all of these items inside. He has short brown hair, and green suit jacket and tie on, and he has very round glasses. He doesn’t look like one of the kids in the picture from the front of the book. (Return to the cover picture.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages 1-2</td>
<td>What do you think is happening in these pictures?</td>
<td>I see the same boy from the last picture, and he seems to be hiding the box inside the floor. I notice that the picture is round, and I notice that the house on the next page has a round window at the top. I wonder if he is in that room and we are “looking” through the window at him. The house seems to be in the country. I see farmland in the background and train tracks running by the house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Pages 3-4 | What do you notice in this picture? Does anything in this picture change your thinking? | I notice that it does take place in the country, but I
also think it takes place long ago. I notice that there is a man driving a horse-drawn carriage. I also notice an old-fashioned water pump in a yard. I also wonder if that is actually just a house. I notice that there is a group of kids in the yard. They are all dressed alike and following the directions of an adult. It makes me think that maybe they are in school wearing uniforms. Maybe this is a boarding school where they all live and go to school together. Maybe they are doing PE right now.

What do you notice in this picture? What changes are you noticing? I notice that not much has changed about the house/school. The kids are still doing similar exercises in the yard following a teacher. It’s not the same group, though. They are more kids, and they have different uniforms. Around the building is very different, though. There are more buildings, but they still look different than our cities today. They are different from the cities in the Red Book and in the Museum Trip. Notice the street lamps, the trolley cars, the factories, and the old-timey trucks.

What do you notice in this picture? What changes are you noticing? I notice that not much has changed about the house/school. The filed next to it has been changed into a basketball court, and I notice that the kids are not in uniforms anymore. The teacher reminds me more of a PE teacher now. Looking around the school house, it looks more like a city now. There are cars and trucks, light posts, streetlights and signs, fire hydrants, TV antennas on rooftops.

What do you notice in this picture? I notice that the pictures are zooming into the top part of the schoolhouse and then inside the room with the round window. It looks like that room has rows of beds. Maybe it is a boarding school, and this is where the students sleep. I see three kids in the room. The way this boy (pointing) is putting his finger up to his mouth (demonstrate) makes me think they are trying to be quiet or sneaky. I think these are the kids that are in the picture on the cover. (Go back to examine that picture & compare – noting that their clothes match as well.)

What do you think is happening in this picture? It looks like they found the box that the other boy had put in the floorboard. They are opening the box. How do you think they are feeling? It looks like they are a bit surprised or curious about the box and what is inside. Look at their facial expressions and how they are holding their hands to their chins. (Demonstrate)

What do you notice in this picture? It looks like all of the items that were in the box. (Pointing) This first picture looks like the boy in the beginning of the story. (Turn back). It looks like this might be his class standing in these pictures in front of the schoolhouse. (Pointing). This picture looks like a little tower with a weather vane on top. (Go back to the pictures to locate that in all of the pictures. Note that in the picture with the city, that weather vane is hidden behind a new building, but you can see the tip of it.)

What do you notice about this red pencil? It seems that he drew directions in the pictures and in the map on the next page. I notice the red is following along a small river or stream. (Go back to the pictures of the
schoolhouse and growing towns to locate the river/stream). It looks like he put a star at the top of the map where the stream meets the ocean. I also see a picture of the Sea Horse Pier. That looks like the picture from the box of saltwater taffy. I notice the tickets and token as well. I wonder if he got those things at the pier and these are directions as to how to get there.

Pages 15-16

**What do you think they are thinking in these pictures?** What do you think this boy is saying as he points out the window? I can tell they are thinking about the pictures and trying to figure out the clues. Their hands are on their chins and scratching their heads, so I think they feel confused. This boy with the maps found the weather vane outside that matches the picture. He has a bit of a smile on his face, so I think he is feeling excited about finding that.

Pages 17-18

**What do you notice in these pictures?** We have a series of several pictures here. It doesn’t look like they are zooming into a picture, but it looks like all of the steps that the kids do next. (Point to the steps as we discuss them.) The boys go down the stairs, sneak quietly through the hallway, and go out the back doors. They run across the basketball court and climb over a fence. They sneak around the corner and climb through a gate.

Pages 19-20

**What do you notice in this picture?** They find the old tower with a weather vane. **What else do you see in this picture?** We see what might be a tunnel in the background. We can also note how this area looks old and cracked, maybe forgotten.

Pages 21-22

**What is happening in these pictures?** It looks like the stream still flows through this tunnel. **What do you think they might be saying to each other on this page?** They decide to follow it and run alongside the stream through the tunnel.

Pages 23-24

**What do you notice in this picture?** It looks like the tunnel opens up to where the ocean is. (Point to the stream). I notice how the stream runs down the side of this wall and into the ocean. I also notice how there are pilings all around. It looks like they may be under a pier. I notice houses in the background and a staircase over to the left side of the picture.

Pages 25-26

**What is happening now?** The boys decided to climb the stairs. It looks like the Sea Horse Pier carnival is above, and I think they are going to go explore. It looks like they are running and feeling happy with smiles on their faces as they start to climb the stairs.

Pages 27-28

**What do you notice in these pictures?** It is the Sea Horse Pier. I notice the boy from the picture in the box is looking out the window above the sign. He seems to be waving at them and maybe telling them to be quiet, since his finger is over his lips. I wonder why they need to be quiet. I think about carnivals as being places that are loud and fun.

Pages 29-30

**What is happening in these pictures?** It looks like the boy is opening a secret door. (Go back to the previous page to examine the typical entrance.) As they come in, he looks like he’s telling them again to be quiet, as his finger is on his lips again. They are following him up a ladder. It looks like the ladder leads to a room where lots of other kids are hanging
out. It looks like they are talking and having drinks and snacks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pages 31-32</th>
<th>*This is the part of this book that gets a little more abstract. I decided to leave the meaning up to the kids, but guided them through the possibility of kids connecting through history.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you think they are thinking or feeling on these pages?</strong></td>
<td><em>I get the feeling that they are surprised and feeling honored. I imagine they are saying, “Us? You want us to join you?” I notice that they are looking out the window, which looks like the same shape of the window at the top of the pier.</em> (Look back).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Pages 33-34 | **What do you notice in these pictures?** *It does look like they are looking out the window, and here we see the picture of the Sea Horse Pier like before. I wonder who is looking at this picture now?* |

| Pages 35-36 | **What do you notice in these pictures?** *I see that’s the same picture from the last page, but now we see that a new boy is looking at it. I notice that he also has the map and picture of the weather vane. Look at the next picture – he is with another friend in the attic of the school house. Except look out the window – the city looks different. I notice fancier buildings, like a city might look today.* |

| Pages 37-38 | **What do you notice in these pictures?** *I first notice the city again. I see fancier buses, taxis, trucks, and passenger trains. I notice that the schoolhouse has not changed a bit. The kids are running in the same direction again like the kids did last time.* |

| Page 39 | **What do you think is going to happen next?** *It looks like they are heading back into the tunnel and will go to the pier to meet all of the other kids, too.* |

| Thinking back: | *This is a bit of a trickier story. In the Museum Trip, the boy went into the pictures to complete the mazes. That was pretty magical. In The Red Book, the boy and girl found each other through a pretty magical set of books. What makes this story magical? Guide the discussion to make the connection that these kids lived in different time periods. Look back at the pictures when the first boy lived. Compare it to the three kids’ time period and to the last kids’ time periods. Look at the picture with all of the kids in the pier. Notice how their clothes look different. Talk about how styles change over the years and how this picture shows different kids from different times hanging out together. Ask again, What makes this story a little magical, too?* |

* Take note of some of the language and discoveries the students contributed during the exploration of *The Secret Box*. Use this language and meaning as part of the second reading tomorrow.
**Day 6:** Reread *The Secret Box* using more narration and character voice, including expressions and mannerisms. As part of our author study, discuss some similarities and differences between *The Museum Trip*, *The Red Book*, and *The Secret Box*.

**Day 7:** Explore the pictures in the book, *Rainstorm*, and discuss possible meaning throughout the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover</th>
<th><strong>What are you thinking when you look at the cover and back cover?</strong> I notice that it is raining. The title “Rainstorm” looks like rain coming out of the sky. It’s a rainy day, and it looks like a little boy is looking out the window – maybe wanting to go outside to play. <strong>Do you notice anything interesting?</strong> It looks like there is a blue sky with clouds reflected in his room window, but we can see that it is rainy outside. I wonder what that means.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Jacket</td>
<td><strong>What do you notice in this picture?</strong> I see a boy dressed in a tie holding a key in his hand. It looks like an old-fashioned key, and he looks a little surprised as he’s looking at this key.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td><strong>What do you notice in this picture?</strong> All we see is a red ball. I wonder what sort of meaning this picture has in the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication Page</td>
<td><strong>What do you notice on these pages?</strong> It looks like the story takes place at a house – maybe a mansion. It is located right by the ocean. You can see an island and a lighthouse off in the distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages 1-2</td>
<td><strong>What do you notice on these pages?</strong> It looks like this boy is looking out the window. He seems to be in his room, seeing the shelves of toys around the room. (Pointing to different toys around the room). I also notice the red ball that we saw on the earlier page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages 3-4</td>
<td><strong>How do you think he is feeling?</strong> He looks pretty sad and bored. Maybe he’s disappointed because it’s raining. It looks like he decides to play with the ball, or is at least dribbling it around as he walks out of boredom. The ball goes down the long staircase. He seems surprised by this since his eyes are wide and he has his hands over his mouth like this. (Demonstrate). <strong>What else do you notice on these pages?</strong> It looks to me like this is definitely a mansion. It’s almost museum-like. Look at the fancy paintings on the wall and the statue of the knight by the stairs. I wonder if he is part of a really rich family or if it might be a boarding house like we saw in <em>The Secret Box</em> but only fancier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages 5-6</td>
<td><strong>What do you this is happening on these pages?</strong> The ball seems to have rolled under a chair. He’s reaching to grab it. (Demonstrate). It looks like he finds a key under the chair. This is the picture from the book jacket. He does look surprised to have found the key.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages 7-8</td>
<td><strong>What do you notice on these pages?</strong> I notice the series of pictures again. These seem to show several steps in a row. First he is holding his hand to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
his chin, thinking about where the key belongs. (Demonstrate) Then he tries the key in different places, like this jewelry box, a few cabinets, a door, and a chest. (Pointing) On this other page, it looks like he is smiling. Maybe he found where the key fits.

**Pages 9-10**  
**What is happening on these pages?** He is able to open the chest and finds a ladder on the inside. He decides to climb in and down the ladder, which leads to an underground room. This room leads to a tunnel. This tunnel reminds me a lot of the tunnel in The Secret Box. It looks like he is trying to decide whether to follow the tunnel. (Demonstrate and pointing) It looks like he decides to go through the tunnel.

**Pages 11-12**  
**What is happening in these pictures?** (Pointing) It looks like he is walking through the tunnel, but then he starts running. He’s smiling, so I think he’s running because he’s excited to see where the tunnel leads. He sees a door at the end of the tunnel. As he gets to the tunnel, he opens it and looks a little surprised at what he sees. (Demonstrate) He sees a very, very high windy staircase.

**Pages 13-14**  
**What is happening on these pages?** He opens a door at the top of the stairs, and it opens up to the top of a lighthouse. He looks over the edge of the lighthouse, and it is a bright blue day. He seems very happy to be there, with a big smile on his face.

**Pages 15-16**  
**What do you notice on this page?** I notice that the lighthouse is on a small island. I remember seeing a lighthouse on an island in the ocean. (Look back). Maybe this is the same island. **What else is happening on these pages?** I notice that there are kids peeking around the corner.

**Pages 17-18**  
**What is happening on these pages?** It looks like the boy went to one of the other kid’s house. They are having a snack of bread and jam, and it looks like they are talking. I wonder what they might be saying to each other. I notice that they also have a dog. In the next picture, the dog is playing catch with them outside. They are running and playing, and it seems that everyone is having fun and smiling. The boy has unbuttoned his shirt and opened his tie. I think he must feel more relaxed. In the background, I notice sheep and a garden where some people are planting, and a clothesline.

**Pages 19-20**  
**What is happening on these pages?** They look like they are having fun flying kites and building a sand castle. The younger boy suddenly points at the sun. It looks like it is going down in the sky, so it must be getting late.

**Pages 21-22**  
**What is happening on these pages?** The kids all run back to the lighthouse. It looks like they are telling the boy something – maybe some kind of directions. As the older boy points to him, he points to himself as if to understand the directions. (Demonstrate) I wonder what they are saying to each other here.

**Pages 23-24**  
**What is happening on these pages?** Before he leaves, they show him the light in the lighthouse once more. They are all smiling at the light. Then he goes back into the door, down the stairs, and back through the tunnel. Before he climbs up the ladder, he gets himself dressed back up in his shirt and tie. Then he goes back up the ladder and opens the chest. He looks like he’s
looking around to see if anyone is there in the room and will notice him.

| Pages 25-26 | **What do you notice on this page?** I notice that he is at a dining room table. It looks very fancy with finer silverware, place settings, waiters and servers. He is also very dressed up in a nice shirt and bowtie. He has a funny expression on his face. (Demonstrate). **How do you think he is feeling?** I get the feeling that he is lonely. He doesn’t seem to fit in this big fancy room. It doesn’t seem very kid-friendly and comfortable. I wonder if anyone is there with him. Are his parents there? Could they be away on business? If it is a boarding school, where are the other kids? **What is happening in these pictures?** I notice another series of steps. It looks like it’s bedtime and he notices the lighthouse as he gets ready for bed. I think the lighthouse makes him happy as he goes to sleep smiling. I think he’s thinking about his new friends. When he wakes up in the morning, it looks like it’s another rainy day, but he grabs the key and is smiling. It looks like he heads to the chest again and is going to see his friends again. He looks like he’s running. I think he must be excited. |
| Pages 27-28 | **What do you think is happening on these pages?** It looks like he is smiling while he’s running through the tunnel. He’s happy and excited to see his friends. It looks like he’s only part of the way there when he runs into his friends. They look surprised as they cover their face and have surprised looks on their faces. (Demonstrate). |
| Pages 29 | **What do you notice on this page?** It looks like they have decided to stay and play in his room instead of going to the island. It looks like the rain has stopped outside through the window, but the kids are having fun playing together inside. They are all smiling while they play. |

* Take note of some of the language and discoveries the students contributed during the exploration of *Rainstorm*. Use this language and meaning as part of the second reading tomorrow.

**Day 8:** Reread *Rainstorm* using more narration and character voice, including expressions and mannerisms. As part of our author study, discuss some similarities and differences between *The Museum Trip*, *The Red Book*, *The Secret Box*, and *Rainstorm*.

**Day 9:** To model and explore the concept of transmediation, begin with picture placement. The purpose of this is to introduce some options to the students and help them to consider some ways to manipulate pictures to make meaning. This includes the following approaches:

- Isolating important pictures
- Combining pictures that tell about a similar action or event
- Placing pictures on the page with text in mind
- Placing pictures to show action

These particular picture placements are noted in the following section.
**Day 10:** To continue the process of transmediation, we have to commit to the story and tell it in words. To help model and explore this process, start with a few pages already completed, using word choices discussed during the previous day. Demonstrate decisions made about word choice as well as text placement and design. Make changes as necessary after reading through the completed text with the class. Made additions where needed. Complete the remainder of the text together, exploring with adding text and voice. In the following chart, I have outlined the completed version of *Rainstorm* as completed by my first grade class. I included any noteworthy considerations that we made to the picture placement, word choice, or design to better illustrate the thoughtfulness put into modeling and exploring these different affordances of the transmediation process.

| -Establishing the characters and setting | -Combining pictures to show full event |
| -Thought bubbles to help illustrate character’s thoughts and feelings |

| -Isolating a picture and then combining with other pictures | Picture placement (smaller picture leading to larger picture) |
| Text placement |

| -Text placement |

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*Retold by Mrs. Thomson's Class*

Peter glanced out the window on this rainy day. He was stuck inside his house with nothing to do. His dad and dad went away for the weekend, and the cat and caterer had no idea why.

Peter dribbled the ball around the house. Suddenly, it went bouncing down the stairs and rolled right under the chair in the living room.

Peter was very curious, so he climbed onto the ladder to see where it hid.

He found a door that led to a tunnel.

He paused for a minute, but then he decided to be brave. Peter walked into the tunnel.
He walked through the tunnel for a long time.

He almost gave up until he finally spotted an unexpected door.

Very quietly and carefully, Peter opened the door. He took a look inside. It was a room with a lot of stairs.

...until he found a trapped door. Again, Peter carefully opened the door.

Speech bubble – shouting from the top of the lighthouse

Picture placement to show the setting

Just then, Peter heard a sound. He turned to see a group of kids playing around the corner.

The kids invited Peter back to a house nearby for a snack.

Use of shapes and colors to show transition

They walked together to make up a new game.

Suddenly, Kevin cried out.

Use of voice as the characters (Each character introduces him or herself.)

And then, Kevin turned on the light to let it shine brightly over the ocean.

Picture and text placement:
Combining pictures but narrating each separately

As Peter got ready for bed, he looked out the window and across the ocean. He fell happy to see the light shine his way.

In the morning, he woke up to find it's raining once again. Peter quickly gathered his bag and headed for the lighthouse.

As he reached the light, he looked back at the lighthouse as it stood on a cliff.

Peter ran as fast as he could, but he came to a sudden stop.

Coming from the other side of the tower were Biff, Bob, Gus, and Kevin. They were so surprised.
Note an “ending” to the story

**Day 11**: Introduce *Trainstop* to the class. Provide them with the following directions:

- Explore the pictures and talk about what you think is happening.
- Remember to ask yourself our important story questions to guide your thinking through the story:
  
  **What do we notice in these pictures?**
  **What do we think is happening?**
  **How do you think the character is feeling?**

- Remind students of their cooperative manners: to listen to each other’s thoughts and respect each other’s opinions. Remember, today we are just exploring the story.

**Day 12**: Provide students with the following directions:

- As you read through the book again today, start making some decisions about what you think the story is about.
- Remember to ask yourself our important story questions to guide your thinking through the story:
  
  **Where?** - Where does the story take place?
  **When?** - When does the story take place (time, season, year)?
  **Who?** - Who is important in the story?
  **What?** - What are they doing? What is going on? What do you notice?
  **Why?** - Why is this happening? Why is this important to the story?
  **How?** - How is the character feeling?

- Remind students of their cooperative manners: to listen to each other’s thoughts and respect each other’s opinions. As you start making decisions about words you might use or how you will tell the story, you might have to make some compromises in order to make the story in a way that you both like.
**Day 13**: Minilesson: Technical support – Provide a reminder of the process for adding and manipulating pictures.

**Day 16**: Minilessons: Technical support – Provide reminders for the following processes:

(a) Adding text directly to the page
(b) Using “voice to text” app to cut and paste text to the page
(c) Manipulating text
(d) Adding voice recordings to the page

**Day 18**: Sharing of final stories: Present the final stories on the SMART board. Let the students have control of the iPad to turn pages and read the story aloud as needed. At the conclusion of each electronic book, ask the following questions:

- What did you notice that was the same as your own stories?
- What did you notice that was different from your stories?
- Did anything surprise you?
This section provides visuals of the final creations completed by each pair of students, presented in the order as the students were discussed in Chapter 4. For those pairs who included voice recording in their final product, a dictation of that recording is included alongside the page.
### Trainstop, as told by Wyatt and Cathy

**Transcript of Voice Recordings (When applicable)**

**Copy of Digital Pages**

**Transcript of Voice Recordings (When applicable)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thought Bubble:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Why is everybody else sleeping?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|  |
|  |

|  |
|  |

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|  |

|  |
|  |

Thought Bubble:

“I wonder if I can go out.”
Thought Bubble:
“I wonder why these kids are so small.”

Speech Bubble:
“Somebody help me here!”

Voice Recording
“Yay!”

Voice Recording
“Ehhhh”

Voice Recording:
“Honk!”
**Trainstop, as told by Max and Evelyn**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcript of Voice Recordings (When applicable)</th>
<th>Copy of Digital Pages</th>
<th>Transcript of Voice Recordings (When applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One day Liz was going to the train.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The train came and Liz got on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz was on the train and she sat and looked out the window.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liz was looking out the window for a while until she came towards a very dark tunnel. She got bored. Then the tunnel was done and she felt happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz was looking at the countryside and she never saw anything like it.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A boy stopped the train.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone fell asleep except for Liz. Then Liz noticed the train stopped.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liz got out of her seat and looked out the door. Then she saw tiny elves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Pick me up. I can reach my friend.”
Trainstop, as told by Clark and Katie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcript of Voice Recordings (When applicable)</th>
<th>Copy of Digital Pages</th>
<th>Transcript of Voice Recordings (When applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Train Image]</td>
<td>![Train Image]</td>
<td>![Train Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Speech Bubble Image]</td>
<td>![Speech Bubble Image]</td>
<td>![Speech Bubble Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Narration Image]</td>
<td>![Narration Image]</td>
<td>![Narration Image]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speech Bubble: “I’m going into a tunnel. I think it is a long tunnel.”

Narration: “It IS a long tunnel.”

Narration: “Look. There’s lots of apple trees out here. I hope my parents are taking me here so I can play in the fields. It’s a really pretty place. There are lots of apple trees and lots of room to run and play.”
Speech Bubble:
“Uh, excuse me, man. Can you get out of the way? We’re trying to go somewhere important. My passengers are begging me to go. Can you move out of the way, please? Please?”

Narration:
“Look! We stopped!”

Narration:
“Look! I see some friends. I hope I can play with them. I wonder where they’re going. I wonder if I can help them.”

Narration:
“Hey! Where are you guys going? Can I go with you, you small people? Where are you going?”

Narration:
“Oh! This is where you are taking me. So what can I do for you? Your friend is stuck in the tree? Let’s see if I can reach him on my tippy toes. (Pause) Hmmmm… I can’t reach him. Hmmmm… what should I do? Hmmmm… Oh, I know! Maybe I can pick up a little person and maybe we can get him down together. How about that? Yeah! I got him down and here’s your plane. Yay! Yay!”

Narration:
“I wonder where my friends are. I hope they don’t go on an adventure without me. Mom, Dad, where are we going?”

Honk! Honk!
“Bye, Conductor!”
“Bye! I hope I can see you again in the train!”
“Bye!”
Narration:

“Mom, are we going home?”
“Yes, we are.”
“Bye, train! It was fun riding!”
### Trainstop, as told by Ellen and Maggie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcript of Voice Recordings (When applicable)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peyton was walking down holding the parents’ hand. Then she stopped and they went down to the trainstop place and then she peeked over at the side and saw a train.</td>
<td><img src="trainstop.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Peyton was sitting and she looked out the window and she saw some buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peyton’s train turned (/tuuurrrrned/) to the right.</td>
<td><img src="train1.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Peyton looks out and she sees some buildings and then the train goes inside of a tunnel. And then she looks again at this side and she sees something outside. (Said with some mysterious expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peyton looked out the window and she saw houses and windmills and a farm out the window.</td>
<td><img src="train2.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Peyton looked out the window and she saw little tiny people or a surprise. And she liked it, whatever it was. And she thought it was her stop. And so she peeked outside and was wondering and thinking if it was her stop or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainstop guy looked out and saw a boy waving his flag and his hat. And then Peyton looked around and saw everyone was sleeping. She still wondered if this was her stop. And sooooo…</td>
<td><img src="train3.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>So Peyton thought, “How is there so small people?” And so she went out and she thought they were telling her something.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Peyton looked out and she thought it was her stop and so a boy was like “Come, we need help!” And so she went out the door and she was playing with them.  

Peyton was running with her little friends and then they all pointed and then she looked up and she saw there was a boy with his airplane stuck up in the tree.

Peyton reached and reached and then she thought. And then a lady, pulled on her pants. And then she told her something. And she kept on telling her. And then they got up. And then she reached up and the lady reached. And then they got him down. And then “That’s a good point” everyone said.

The train honked and then she knew it was time to go so she shook people’s hands and then she waved goodbye. She went on the train and then she looked for her seat and then she found it.

Peyton waved goodbye and the train went in the tunnel. And the train was in the tunnel and it was long.

Peyton waved goodbye to everyone and they waved back.

Peyton looked over at the side and didn’t see them. Then she looked out and she saw the buildings. Then she looked at the brakes and she saw they were almost there. Then they got out and her parents held her hand.

Peyton thought and she thought and she said, “How could there be so small people? I mean how?”

The train honked and then she looked up and then the guy was honking the horn she saw. Then Peyton waved to the driver of the train. Then the train was going back around to where it was before. Then they got off.

Peyton looked up and she saw something. She saw her friends and the person she helped get down. She waved to them. They gave her a present of water, and a spoon, and a plant.

The little people drove around and they gave everyone apple trees.
### Trainstop, as told by Scott and Adam

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<tr>
<td>[Image]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara was waiting for the train and then the train came.</td>
<td>It took a long time but now we're in the city.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The train is getting in the tunnel right now.</td>
<td>It took a long long time in the tunnel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara was looking at her window and she saw apple trees and homes.</td>
<td>Stop the train!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everybody is tired. Except for Sarah!</td>
<td>Sarah was thinking for a second - should I get out of the train?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Sarah was chasing the little kids.

Sarah was thinking for a second how to get this guy out of the tree.

Sara was reaching for the guy.

The little kids were saying hooray for Sara!

Sara said, “Bye!”

Sara was waving to the little kids.

The train left.

Sara was thinking.
They closed their door when they went home.

Sara was sitting in her front door.
VITA

Catherine Todd Thomson

Education

Old Dominion University 2017
Doctor of Philosophy in Education
Curriculum & Instruction ~ Literacy Leadership

University of Virginia 2005
Masters of Education in Reading

James Madison University 1998
Bachelors of Science in Psychology; Minor in Early Childhood Education

Professional Experience

K-2 Lead Teacher 2013 - Present
Norfolk Collegiate, Norfolk, VA

Teacher, First Grade 2012- Present
Norfolk Collegiate, Norfolk, VA

Communication Skills Specialist 2007 - 2011
Willoughby Elementary School, Norfolk, VA

Literacy Specialist 2005 - 2007
Willoughby Elementary School, Norfolk, VA

Teacher, First Grade 1999 - 2005
Larchmont Elementary School, Norfolk, VA
Tanners Creek Elementary School, Norfolk, VA

Related Experience:

Strategic Planning Committee 2016 – Present
Norfolk Collegiate, Norfolk, VA
Learning Spaces Committee, Chair

Leadership Team 2013 - Present
Norfolk Collegiate, Norfolk, VA

Curriculum Committee 2013 - Present
Norfolk Collegiate, Norfolk, VA

Awards:

Betty Yarborough Outstanding Graduate Student in Reading, Old Dominion May 2016
Hackney Award (Lower School Teacher of the Year), Norfolk Collegiate School May 2015
Teacher of the Year, Norfolk Public Schools May 2009