Storytelling's Impact on School Library Circulation

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This study examined the impact of a storytelling intervention on reading motivation as measured by school library book circulation. World folktales were orally told in four first-grade classrooms once per week for 15 minutes for a total of 22 weeks during the 2015-2016 school year. The folktale was told, and then the source book was shown to the children at the end of the storytelling session. Results indicated as great as a 1800% increase in circulation of the stories that were used in the storytelling intervention, suggesting that storytelling combined with display of the source book aids in reading motivation.

Introduction

Storytelling in schools in the United States has a long tradition dating back to the middle 1800s, when the kindergarten movement from Germany introduced the practice. Based on the work of German educator Friedrich Froebel, the kindergarten classrooms gave particular attention to several subjects of instruction, including "narration of stories and legends, fables and fairy tales, etc." (Parker, 1912, p. 437) Children's author Nora Archibald Smith wrote that "the value of storytelling is appreciated in the kindergarten" for "its importance as an introduction to literature, [and for] its bearing upon the development of imagination." (1912, p. 110) While reading instruction was not part of the curriculum, storytelling seems to have been "the central component of the 'morning talks,' the half-hour gatherings of the kindergarten teacher and students to begin the day with stories, songs, and activities." (Gregor, 2010, p. 58)

In 1905, kindergarten teacher Sara Cone Bryant authored the first storytelling manual published in the United States entitled *How to Tell Stories to Children* (Greene & Del Negro, 2010) In this manual, Bryant (1905) explained the value of storytelling in the school was primarily "to give joy; in and through the joy to stir and feed the life of the spirit: is not this the legitimate function of the story in education?" (p. 3) She also stressed the accompanying benefits of "a relaxation of the tense school-room atmosphere, valuable for its refreshing recreative power….[and] establishing a happy relation between teacher and children, and one of the most effective methods of forming the habit of fixed attention in the latter" (p. 5-6).

William Byron Forbush, a minister, school principal, and president of the American Institute of Child Life in Philadelphia, published *A Manual of Stories* in 1915. In it, he stressed the value of storytelling for children as "one of the most effective doorways unto life and knowledge" (p. 3). Mirroring Bryant's perspective, Forbush (1915) explained that with stories, "a child becomes completely immersed in the present...[and storytelling] charms the mind, rests the perturbed spirit

and even helps prepare the body either for sleep or for renewed energy" (p.4). Storytelling has educational value in that it is "the very language of childhood;" it offers the child "vicarious experience in the lives of others," it "trains the memory," and it gives children "a larger vocabulary and a wider range of intelligence and recollection than the child whose storytelling has been neglected" (pp. 5-6).

Modern storyteller, librarian, and folklorist, Margaret Read MacDonald (2013) detailed the myriad ways storytelling had value in the classroom. She divided her book into "seven C's" to categorize these various benefits: developing Community, building Character, facilitating Communication, exploring Curriculum, engendering Cultural Connections, sparking Creativity, and bolstering Confidence. She then explored each "C" is explored more deeply and provided examples of folktales that illustrated the benefits related to each "C".

Folktale storytelling in American public libraries owed its origins to schools in a different way when in 1900 Marie Shedlock, an English schoolteacher and storyteller, gave a storytelling public library tour that ignited children's librarians' passion for the art and cemented it as fundamental to children's public library programming. In the early 1900s, storytelling was used primarily to dramatize folk epic poetry (e.g., *The Iliad, The Odyssey, Beowulf, Chanson de Roland*). Folktales also quickly became a popular source of stories (viz. the list of stories in Sara Cone Bryant's 1907 book entitled *Stories to tell to children: Fifty-one stories with some suggestions for telling).* Storytelling performances motivated children to find the books on the library shelves and read them. In 1905, children's librarian May Quigley emphatically stated that "the primary object of story-telling to children is to…cultivate a taste for good literature and direct them to those books which they would not otherwise read if left to themselves" (p. 351). Alice Blanchard mirrored this sentiment in 1917, saying, "Library reports show that it [storytelling] has interested thousands of children in the library, increased greatly the general circulation of books from the children's shelves, and created popularity for the books from which the stories were selected" (p. 291).

Today, storytelling remains a means to promote reading motivation and book circulation in school and public libraries, but little data have been collected beyond the anecdotal evidence children's librarians have provided over the last century. Our purpose in this study purpose was to examine the question, "What is the actual impact storytelling could have on school library circulation, and, by extension, on reading motivation?"

Review of Relevant Literature

Reading Motivation

The word "motivation" stems from the Latin *movere*, meaning "to move." Fundamentally, motivation is a forward movement – a drive or impulse – to accomplish something. Applied to reading, motivation becomes anything that encourages someone to engage in the act of reading.
What motivates children to read has been well-studied over the years, and, as research continues, the results show that reading motivation is a complex and uniquely individual process associated with issues of attitude (McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth, 1995), reading competence (Harter, 1982), task value (Eccles, 1983), or goal orientation (Ames & Archer, 1988). Wigfield & Guthrie (1997) proposed 11 aspects of reading motivation: reading efficacy (successful accomplishment), reading challenge (mastery), reading curiosity (learning about a topic), reading involvement (enjoyment), importance of reading (task value), reading work avoidance (effortfulness), competition in reading (outperforming others), recognition for reading (tangible rewards), reading for grades (favorable teacher evaluation), social reasons for reading (sharing experiences with friends), and compliance (external requirements). Other scholars have focused children's reading motivation into two primary categories: intrinsic and extrinsic (Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck, 2010; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala & Cox, 1999). In this context, intrinsic motivation refers to reading for its own

sake or to satisfy an internal need such as a desire to learn something new, to lose oneself in a story world, or to challenge oneself with difficult texts; extrinsic motivation refers to reading for external rewards, such as praise, prizes, or good grades.

What Influences Children's Reading Motivation?

Preferences. There are hundreds of research studies that assess the topics, genres, or styles of literature that children choose for pleasure reading, dating as far back as the late 1800s (McKay, 1968). Most of these studies focused on older children who read more widely and more fluently than younger children. While reading preferences are individual (and socially influenced), taken in aggregate, these studies showed some recurring themes in children's reading choices:

- Children like books about animals, fantasy, and humor;
- Young children tend to enjoy fairy tales and folklore more than older children (Awais & Ameen, 2014; Chiu, 1984; Grant & White, 1925; Kirsch, 1976; Robinson, Larsen, Haupt & Mohlman, 1997; Smith, 1962); and
- Older children gravitate toward mysteries, adventure, fantasy, and scary stories (Ashley, 1970; Carsley, 1957; Moorman & Turner, 1999; Shores, 1954; Ujie & Krashen, 2002; Watson, 1985).

Scholars who have studied gender differences in children's reading preferences have found that they do exist, but the differences tend to be subtle and evident only across multiple studies, as Table 1 suggests.

Table 1. Gender Preference Studies

Study	Child Age (years)	Male	Female
Kirsch (1976)	7-8	imaginative fiction, information 1970s, information scientific	imaginative fiction, information scientific, realistic fiction
Watson (1985)	8-11	animals, science	family stories, romance, historical fiction
Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer (1997)	10-11	fantasy	realistic fiction
Coles & Hall (2002)	10-14	sports, war, sci-fi/fantasy, humor	romance, school, poetry, horror/ghost
Sturm (2003)	6-14	animals, science, sports, fiction, transportation	animals, science, fiction, sports, biography
Clark & Foster (2005)	5-17	adventure, humor, horror, mystery, war	adventure, humor, horror, realistic fiction, romance

As Table 1 indicates, boys tend to read information books and stories about transportation and war more than girls do, while girls are more likely to read realistic fiction and romance than boys are. Gendered reading preferences have also been linked to books with same-gendered protagonists (Kropp & Halverson, 1983).

Book Attributes. The physical qualities of books can help motivate children to select certain titles to read. The following studies suggest that children rely heavily on the cover of the book when making reading decisions. They also tend to flip through the book to assess its length and complexity, and examine illustrations and textual features.

Fleener, Morrison, Linek, & Rasinski (1997) interviewed 32 fifth and sixth grade students to determine their book selection habits and shadowed the students during library visits. Their data showed that students "relied heavily on the surface features of books…[including] book covers, length, illustrations, and descriptions" (p. 77). Book covers were particularly important because they attracted students' attention and gave them an idea of the book's content. Type size,

perceived difficulty of the text, and TV recommendations were considered of little importance to these students.

Reutzel & Gali (1998) observed and videotaped 18 children (evenly divided between first, third, and fifth graders) as they talked through their library book selection processes over a six-week period. Verbal prompts – such as "Tell me what you are thinking" – were given when students lapsed into silence as they searched. The authors developed a process model of book selection that included children:

> a) pulling books from the shelf, b) looking at the cover, c) reading the title, d) opening the book, e) flipping through the pages, f) read inside the book, g) look at pages inside the book, h) look at illustrations in the book, i) make a judgment, and j) select or reject the book (p. 32).

Williams (2008) recorded the spontaneous talk of 40 black students while they selected reading material during a book fair in Florida then interviewed 30 of those students to gather information on why these youth selected certain books to read. She found that "participants not stating the previous sources of familiarity [media exposure, other people, read before, or prior life experience] appeared to rely solely on a book's physical features, typically the cover, when selecting a particular book," and "80% of the interview participants, with both genders equally represented, acknowledged outside or inside characteristics for at least one book selection" (p. 60).

Exposure and marketing. Himmelsteib (1982) examined the impact of preschool story hours on public library circulation. She surveyed children's librarians and library directors around Ohio asking them to compare total library circulation during two, two-hour periods for three consecutive weeks; the first two-hour count was during a story hour program, while the second was during the same two-hour period on a non-story-hour day. One hundred and sixty-one usable surveys were returned, and analysis revealed that the "average (statewide) increase in circulation for the two-hour preschool story time was an impressive 92%, almost double what it was on comparable days when there were no pre-school programs" (p. 24).

Reading aloud. Cosgrove (1987) assessed the impact of teachers' reading aloud on 221 fourth and sixth graders' reading comprehension and attitudes. To assess reader attitudes, she used the *Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes Toward Reading* and interviewed participants to complement her quantitative findings. Cosgrove found that students who received the reading aloud intervention had better attitudes toward reading and read significantly more than the students to whom teachers did not read aloud. Her interview data showed that

> [M]any students described in elaborate detail their favorite books when asked this question ["After listening to a story or poem, did you want to read the same story or poem over again to yourself?"], and they continued to say that by hearing the story they became interested in the topic. (pp. 25-26)

Morrow (1987) examined the impact of eight weeks of teacher-directed literature activities (reading aloud, literature discussions, viewing *Reading Rainbow* television program recordings, and storytelling using a variety of techniques) on children's reading. Her data showed that "while the children read 300 books during the first 4 weeks, they read 521 during the second. In the first 4 weeks, 20% of the children chose book reading during Free Choice Time; in the second 4 weeks, 45% did so," and she concluded that "a teacher's presentation is a strong motivator for book selection, as are TV presentations like those on *Reading Rainbow*" (pp. 270-271).

Corcoran & Mamalakis (2009) surveyed 26 fifth-grade students about their perceptions of several reading and teaching techniques used in their classrooms to motivate reading. Eighty-eight percent of the children "expressed a desire for their teachers to read aloud daily," and "96% wished that their teacher would discuss books he or she has read with the class more often" (p. 140).

Booktalking. Booktalks are informal presentations, often done in classrooms or libraries, designed to inspire others to read a particular book. Bodart (1986) found that booktalking to high school students increased the circulation of school library books used in the study between six and 17 times over the books' prior circulation records,. Nollen (1992) found that booktalking increased elementary school library circulation as much as 900% in the six weeks following the booktalk, when compared to the six weeks prior. Clower (2010) found that booktalking increased circulation of booktalked titles and that "the booktalks did impact the circulation of other books in the same series of books as well" (p. 33).

Storytelling. Zikrayanti (2015) provided three storytelling workshops in public libraries for 7-8-year-old children in Indonesia. The researcher found that attending children checked out 2-4 times as many books after the third workshop as after the first, and concluded that storytelling "presents a favorable impact on library use" (p. 62).

Summary

Reading motivation research has suggested that "more is better"; that is, surrounding children with a print-rich environment in which reading is made fun and involves adults as reading models and interactants is a vital approach to improving reading motivation. Most children tend to love animals as characters, hence the proliferation of them in children's literature, and children's folklore in particular. Early elementary aged children tend to enjoy fairy tales and make-believe stories but grow away from these stories as they age, while older children enjoy sports and mysteries, perhaps due to their increasing coordination and their developmental growth in deductive reasoning. Hearing stories is an activity children seem to crave, and it appears to increase their desire to read the books, from which the stories come, for themselves. Finally, because children make book selection decisions based heavily on the cover and illustrations, sharing the covers of books and selected pictures is a good strategy for connecting children to books.

Method

Presenting stories to children should be a valuable approach to motivating them to read. Children's preferences for folktales and fairy tales is most prominent in the early elementary age, so we selected first grade (ages 6-7 years) as selected as our target participants. With this in mind, in this study, we used storytelling as the intervention and world folktales as the content. Permission was received from the School Board, the principal, the teachers, and the school librarian to conduct research on the site.

The School

The school selected for this study was Estes Hills Elementary School, a K-5 school in central North Carolina, USA. In 2015-2016, the school had 480 students in all grades and had more White, Asian and mixed-race students, and significantly fewer Black or African American students, than the state average, Table 2 indicates.

Table 2. School Racial Profile Compared to State Average

Race	School[1]	State Average[2]
White	55.6%	50%
Hispanic/Latino	15.2%	14%
Black or African American	12.3%	26%
Asian	8.1%	3%
Two or more races	8.3%	4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4%	1%

Note:

[1] Source: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11IzFqY_XzWqRPFgiNgny3bJDmimatTMzReAylqWRM68/edit#gid=1893101092

[2] Source: http://www.greatschools.org/north-carolina/chapel-hill/466-Estes-Hills-Elementary-School/details/

Eighty-four children in the four, first-grade classes listened to stories. Forty-four of them (52.3%) were White, 13 (15.5%) were Hispanic, 8 (9.5%) were Black or African American, 13 (15.5%) were Asian, 6 (7.1%) were of two or more races, and none were American Indian or Alaska Native. The school also had more male students (57.1%) than female students (42.9%).

The School Library

The school library operated on a flexible schedule. "Students may come to the library anytime during school hours for check out, quiet reading, research, and project work" ("Our Library Program," 2008). Students tended to visit the library individually, though classes could schedule time for more structured library experiences. First graders were permitted to check out two books at a time for a period of two weeks; kindergarteners were permitted to check out one book, and second through fifth graders were permitted to check out three books.

The entire collection of 11,926 print and digital items was housed in one room with bookshelves lining the walls and several freestanding shelves for overflow books and much of the picture book collection. The folktale collection occupied nine shelves of the collection. There was also a small folktale collection of the easiest folktale picture books (one shelf) located near the picture books, particularly to facilitate first-grade children finding the stories told in their classrooms.

The Intervention

The researcher/storyteller told one world folktale in each of four, first-grade classrooms every Monday between 9:00am and 10:00am, for 15 minutes each week. Because the data were collected in April 2016, and several dates were missed due to national holidays and sickness, 22 weeks of storytelling were included in this assessment.

Each day, the researcher/storyteller made an explicit connection between oral tale and written text. The stories to be told in the classrooms were selected only from picture books or folktale anthologies in the school library collection that were appropriate for first graders (i.e., picture books or collections with limited text). After the researcher/storyteller completed telling the story, the book cover was displayed and the title read aloud. The researcher/storyteller then showed the children several of the book's illustrations that depicted key moments in the story. The researcher/storyteller concluded storytelling performance with the statement, "If you want to find this book, it is in your school library in the 398.2 section; if you can't find it, just ask your librarian."

Circulation data were culled in April 2016 from the online library management system (LMS) for the entire folklore collection, including the number of circulations for each item for the current year (This Year), the prior year (Last Year), and total circulation. The LMS defined "This

Year" as the present school year (i.e., beginning in August 2015 and ending in June 2016); "Last Year" as the previous school year (August 2014-June 2015); and "total circulation" as the number of circulations since 2006, when the current LMS was initiated; all data prior to that software installation were lost in the transition, so the current circulation data can be traced back only to June 2006.

At the conclusion of the 22-week storytelling period, the researchers calculated the percentage of the total circulation attributable to the books showcased during the storytelling episodes. The highest circulating items for the current year were also examined to assess whether they were part of the storytelling intervention.

Limitations

The validity of circulation as a measure for reading motivation has been questioned because the numerical data provide no insight into the actual *use* of the book (i.e., whether it was actually read or whether it was merely checked out), and circulation also do not account for informal uses of the book, such as when it is used in the library or passed among friends. (Szwed, 1981). Despite this concern, circulation has been used as a measure of reading motivation in many studies, including those mentioned in the literature review section of this report, and it has also been used to assess reading motivation programs (Everhart, Angelos, & McGriff, 2002)

Findings and Discussion

The Estes Hills Elementary School library's folklore collection was a sizable portion of the entire nonfiction collection; although its 486 items make up 10% of the 4,839 items on the nonfiction shelves, they are dramatically underutilized. Table 3 below provides an overview of the entire folklore collection and as Table 3 depicts, nearly 67% of the folklore titles circulate less than the folklore collection's average of 5.4 circulations.

Table 3. Folklore Collection Overview

Descriptor	Number
Number of Books	486
Unique Titles	453
Total Circulation (since 2005)	2625
Ave. Total Circulation of each book	5.4
Number of books with less than average circulation	325
Percentage of collection with less than average circulation	66.87%
Total Circulation This Year	500
Ave. Circulation This Year	1.03
Total Circulation Last Year	258
Ave. Circulation Last Year	0.53

As Table 3 shows, the 161 titles with above-average circulation circulated a mean of 12.7 times, while the 325 books with lower-than-average circulation circulated only a mean of 1.8 times. Thus, the popular items tend to be very popular (more than twice the average circulation), while the unpopular ones are very unpopular (one third of the average circulation). Also of note in Table 3, the total circulation and the average circulation for the intervention year (This Year) were twice those of the prior year (Last Year).

Table 4 depicts the influence of the storytelling intervention on the folklore collection circulation during the storytelling sessions (This Year).

Table 4. Percentage of Total Circulation Attributable to Books Told in Class

Descriptor	Number
Total circulation this year of any folktale title	500
Circulation this year of books that were performed	234
Percentage of total circulation of books performed this year	46.8%
Circulation of books this year that were unperformed 'Anansi tales'	29
Total circulation of books "influenced" by performances (this year + unperformed Anansi tales)	263
Percentage of circulation "influenced" by performances	52.6%

Forty-seven percent of the total folktale circulation during the intervention was of books used in storytelling performances. When stories with similar characters were included, more than half (52.6%) of this year's circulation of folktales coincided with the storytelling intervention, and the enthusiasm generated in the students for this collection may have accounted for much of the circulation of the remaining folktale collection.

Table 5 shows the titles in the folklore collection with the highest circulation for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Table 5. Folktale Items with Highest Circulation for This Year

Title	Circulation This Year	Used in Storytelling
Anansi and the moss-covered rock. Kimmel, Eric	34	✓
Stone soup. Brown, Marcia	22	✓
Anansi and the talking melon. Kimmel, Eric	21	✓
Crocodile and hen: A Bakongo folktale. Lexau, Joan M.	19	✓
Anansi goes fishing. Kimmel, Eric	19	✓
The empty pot. Demi	17	✓
Abiyoyo: Based on a South African lullaby and folk story. Seeger, Pete	15	✓
Borreguita and the coyote: A tale from Ayutla, Mexico. Aardema, Verna.	15	✓
Anansi and the magic stick. Kimmel, Eric	13	
The green gourd: a North Carolina folktale, Hunter, C. W.	12	✓
Two of everything: A Chinese folktale. Hong, Lily Toy	12	✓
Clay boy. Ginsburg, Mirra	11	
It could always be worse. Zemach, Margot	10	✓
The stonecutter: A Japanese folk tale. McDermott, Gerald	10	✓
Anansi does the impossible: An Ashanti tale. Aardema, Verna	10	
The badger and the magic fan: A Japanese folktale. Johnston, Tony	10	✓
The tortoise and the hare: an Aesop fable. Stevens, Janet	8	
The mitten. Brett, Jan	8	✓

Seventy-eight percent of the highest circulating titles were ones that were told in the storytelling sessions. Of the four that were not told, two (*Anansi and the Magic Stick* and *Anansi Does the Impossible*) feature the trickster character Anansi, whom the children quickly grew to love in storytelling sessions. Just as children get attached to characters in series books, so, too, they seem to "follow" particular characters in folklore, once they have been exposed to them.

In talking with the Estes Hills Elementary School librarian about *The Tortoise and the Hare* and the *Clay Boy* titles' popularity, the researcher discovered they were read aloud by classroom teachers this year and had seen a concomitant rise in popularity due to this exposure. Table 6 shows the item circulation data related to the stories told in the classrooms. Table 6 makes evident the dramatic rise in circulation (as high as 1800%) during the storytelling intervention when compared to the prior year without storytelling.

Table 6. Circulation of Books Used in Storytelling

Story	Circ Last Year	Circ This Year	Total Circ
Abiyoyo: based on a South African lullaby and folk story. Seeger, Pete	0	15	19
African mythology: Anansi. Herdling, Glenn	2	0	15
Anansi and the moss-covered rock. Kimmel, Eric	2	20	35
Anansi and the moss-covered rock. Kimmel, Eric	1	14	25
Anansi and the talking melon. Kimmel, Eric	1	10	21
Anansi and the talking melon. Kimmel, Eric	1	11	17
Anansi goes fishing. Kimmel, Eric	1	19	26
Borreguita and the coyote: a tale from Ayutla, Mexico. Aardema, Verna	0	15	20
Coyote steals the blanket: an Ute tale. Stevens, Janet	0	0	3
Crocodile and hen: a Bakongo folktale. Lexau, Joan M.	1	19	21
It could always be worse. Zemach, Margot	0	10	10
Stone soup. Brown, Marcia	0	12	15
Stone soup. Brown, Marcia	0	5	11
Stone soup. McGovern, Ann	0	0	1
The badger and the magic fan: a Japanese folktale. Johnston, Tony	0	10	13
The empty pot. Demi	0	11	20
The empty pot. Demi	2	6	15
The green gourd: a North Carolina folktale. Hunter, C. W.	0	4	10
The green gourd: a North Carolina folktale. Hunter, C. W.	0	8	13
The hatseller and the monkeys: a West African folktale. Diakité, Baba Wagué	1	3	9
The legend of the lady slipper: an Ojibwe tale. Lunge-Larsen, Lise	0	4	7
The mitten. Aylesworth, Jim	0	6	7
The mitten. Brett, Jan	1	8	20
The name of the tree: a Bantu folktale. Lottridge, Celia Barker	0	5	6
The rabbit's tail: a story from Korea. Han, Suzanne Crowder	2	5	11
The stonecutter: a Japanese folk tale. McDermott, Gerald	0	10	11
The stonecutter: an Indian folktale. Newton, Patricia Montgomery	0	4	4
Tikki Tikki Tembo. Mosel, Arlene	0	3	5
Tikki Tikki Tembo. Mosel, Arlene	0	1	1
Two of everything: a Chinese folktale. Hong, Lily Toy	2	12	21
Two ways to count to ten. Dee, Ruby	2	1	8

Table 6 also lists some titles twice. These duplicate listings illustrate that the stories of *Stone Soup* and *The Stonecutter* were told, but that the versions by Ann McGovern and by Patricia Montgomery were not displayed in the classroom after the story was performed (the ones by

Marcia Brown and Gerald McDermott *were* displayed). Children may not have known that these alternate versions were available in the library. The story of *The Mitten,* on the other hand, was told in the classroom and *both* versions of the book (Aylesworth and Brett) were displayed after the performance. In this instance, both titles showed similar increases in circulation. This would seem to indicate that displaying the actual book after the storytelling is important to its circulation so that children recognize the cover; children often select books based on their covers, (Kirk, 1985; Raqi & Zainab, 2008; Smith, 1994) and prior exposure to the book would enhance memory of, and facilitate retrieval of, the book from the library collection.

The *Coyote Steals the Blanket* story was told two days before the data were collected, so children had had little time to get to the library and check this title out. The *Two Ways to Count to Ten* story was also told the week prior to data collection.

Conclusions and Implications

Using storytelling to showcase school library books in the classroom setting had a dramatic and positive impact on those books' circulation. Children who heard the story and saw the book, went to the library and checked out the title. Upon entering the classroom, the storyteller often heard children exclaim delightedly, "I have the Anansi book you told," or "I have the Mitten story." There was a real sense of pride and excitement in "owning" the stories that had been told. Anecdotal evidence from the school librarian and parents of the children indicated that children who did not find the book in the school library because it was already checked out, went to the nearby public library to search further afield for the story. This raises the possibility, at least for schools and public libraries that are in close geographic proximity, of collaborative collection development and programming for young children based on folktale picture books and easy-reading anthologies. While the storytelling was enjoyed and valued for its own sake, its impact on circulation appears to be at least partially dependent on explicitly showcasing the book from which the story comes, as the children seem to need a visual connection with the book to stimulate interest in checking it out of the library.

This study corroborates the general findings of other studies mentioned in this study's literature review that performing children's literature increases the likelihood that the listening children will be motivated to check the book out of the library and, presumably, to interact with it and read it. Reading aloud has the book's presence "built in" to the interaction, and so it should be fundamental to the literature sharing techniques of early elementary school teachers and librarians. Hall's (1971) research on the practices of student teachers in the Washington-Baltimore area showed that only 48% read to the children on a daily basis. Hoffman, Roser, & Battle's (1993) study of elementary teachers asked pre-service college education students to observe their classroom teaching mentors for one day. Results of this study showed that 80% of first grade teachers read aloud to their children on the day of the observation.

Booktalking has also been linked to increased circulation. Bodart (1986) found that circulation of titles increased 6-17 times after being booktalked, and Nollen (1992) showed a 900% increase in circulation of booktalked books. Storytelling appears to have a similar impact as booktalking on circulation.

Future Research

Because the purpose of this study was not to document students' use of the titles they checked out, a follow-up to this study could be to replicate the method used in this study but additionally track students' use of the titles once they have checked them out. We need to continue to explore the best ways to share literature with children and the most powerful methods of motivating them to read.

In subsequent studies, researchers may wish to explore the value of performing books from other parts of the collection to determine whether they too could benefit from storytelling exposure, and, if so, to what degree. Researchers may also consider comparing various forms of book performance (reading aloud, storytelling, booktalking, or video) to assess their relative merits and impacts on library circulation. It may be possible to tie measures of effectiveness, such as children's vocabulary growth or reading skill development, to book performance interventions, and the value of in-person storytelling versus videotaped storytelling could be examined.

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