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From Page to Place: Wordless Picture Books and Field Trips for a 21st Century Curriculum

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**From Page to Place:
Wordless Picture Books and Field Trips for a 21st Century Curriculum**

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Abstract

Margaret Stein

From Page to Place:

Wordless Picture Books and Field Trips for a 21st Century Curriculum

With the purpose of education being to produce successful world citizens, the educational system must grow with the changing economic and social climate. Operating in a creative and knowledge-based economy, students educated in the 21st Century must be in an environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and recognition of complex patterns in order to thrive in the new economic structures. Proposing a curricular sequence using wordless picture books and field trips to develop and strengthen these skills, this paper focuses on the growth of literacy in all forms as the strongest foundation for creating curious and life-long learners. Utilizing the same skillsets, elementary aged children use wordless picture books in the same fashion that older children use field trips: to closely observe details, engage in discourse with peers, and connect curiosity for their own world with their academic discoveries.

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Introduction

Living at the turn of the 20th Century, John Dewey, philosopher and educational reformer, saw an increase in industrialization to society. The mechanization of industry brought with it huge social change and technological advancements that Dewey realized would make the traditional way of education less relevant in the ever-changing world. The turn of the 21st Century has brought more incredible and inescapable changes to life. Rather than an economy that is manufacturing and labor centered, the Digital Revolution has generated new forms of economic models and social structures that rely heavily on connectivity and communication. No longer an economy based on manufacturing with workers performing rote jobs, the United States increasingly operates in an environment with a currency of change, invention, and curiosity (Arizpe, 2013). Traditional education processes, designed to prepare students for a slower and more regimented world, are no longer equipping students for the new age. In order to properly ready students for the complexity of the 21st Century, nurturing curiosity must be at the core of the education system. Inspiring inquisitiveness allows students to broaden their worlds, develop problem-solving skills, literacy skills, and social communication skills in order to become life-long learners. To prepare students to become thriving citizens, schools must foster and support students' recognition of complex patterns, critical thinking, and analytical skills; both in academic and social aspects where students are able to connect multiple disciplines, solve complex problems creatively, engage effectively in communication with peers, observe closely and critically, and are highly skilled in literacy.

Changing with the times, schools should seek supports that aid in this societal change. By incorporating wordless picture books into the elementary academic

curriculum, students of all reading levels will be able to access the same information while building a foundation in essential skills. As students grow older, they will transition from using wordless picture books to participating in rich and fulfilling field trips that require the same teaching *and* learning proficiencies. Using wordless picture books, teachers will support students' reading comprehension and language development while reinforcing reading skills, critical thinking, recognition of complex patterns, and creativity in the classroom. Wordless picture books introduce such skills to pre-readers, and allow them to practice intense contemplation while becoming strong readers. Field trips, used more frequently as children grow older, allow students to apply the same skills that wordless picture books foster to a real life scenario while making communication and social interaction a part of learning in school. Augmenting the educational process with the sequential use of wordless picture books and field trips as students get older, students are more able to develop, explore, and utilize essential intellectual and social skills. These two teaching tools require students to conceive and comprehend multiple perceptions of the same object/experience at the same time; they invite cultural interpretations and conflicting ideas to be discussed, while students are thrown into intellectual and social discourse in a natural way that flows directly into the skills needed to effectively use field trips. Simultaneously growing and flexing critical parts of their brain, students will gain and practice skills that are needed to succeed in the 21st Century economy and world while building a curiosity for learning that is the foundation of life-long learners. Through showing students the interwoven aspects of their academic, intellectual, and social lives, wordless picture books and field trips inherently bring about curious inquiry for academic subjects through such experiences.

Disclaimer

This paper deals with building the foundational work of comprehension and inferential skills through language and literacy development. While wordless picture books and field trips have many uses in education, this paper deals only with the development of literacy and language skills in a mainstream classroom. However, the processes that are discussed throughout this paper can easily be extended to many different types of learning styles, abilities, and situations.

State of Education Today

Recognizing that the purpose of education is not only to prepare students for a *career* but also for the adaptability in a new form of society “where change is the rule, not the exception”, Dewey sought to find a way to allow students of all ages to use the world around them as their educational text (Dewey, 1938, 19). Transitioning from a farming and manufacturing society, Dewey witnessed the dramatic shift to a service-based industry that worked through ideas and people rather than assembly lines (Wyatt, 2006, 37). Surrounded by movements in science, literature, and social structures that challenged traditional societal behaviors and interactions, Dewey sought to create not only farmers and laborers but also creators and thinkers. Dewey’s work crafted educational experiences through investigative learning that would allow students to use these experiences and be innovative and creative in the new era.

Experiencing another major move, we are currently “shifting from an economy based on physical inputs to an economy based on intellectual inputs, or human creativity” (Florida, 2005). Rather than being the global manufacturing powerhouse, today we lead

the “creative sector of economy, [where] science, technology, design, culture, and knowledge based professions” are the main factors in this new knowledge-based economy (Florida, 2006). New demands from existing occupations, and entirely new work roles, require the ability for adapting knowledge and creativity to produce innovative solutions to new problems.

In today’s climate, “using knowledge creatively is central to realizing economic and social value”, and while it is impossible to know what the future holds, we are part of “a changing society whose future shape we cannot foresee” (Seltzer, 1999, 7; Bruner, 1986, 121). However, our lives are *more* social and connected than Dewey’s audience. Not only is the world more virtually connected but physically connected as well. Along with cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom, a constant stream of visual and written communication also intimately connects students. Citizens today are not barred by their physical distance but rather by the strength of their Internet connection.

By fostering creative and innovative practices and thinking, an education process is needed to prepare students for the current and future economy by cultivating life long learners with the skills for critically analyzing and recognizing complex patterns. Creative thinking has not only come to the forefront of the professional world, but has even replaced ‘Evaluation’ in Benjamin Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956). A popular framework for organizing educational expertise, Bloom’s original Taxonomy, revised in 2001 partially due to the societal need, identifies and defines six educational objectives and lists them in hierarchical order of complexity. With the understanding that all skills and processes stem from the basis of knowledge, ‘Knowledge’ is, then, the first (lowest) tier of the pyramid. Moving up the Taxonomy,

Bloom's work culminates in 'Evaluation': defined in the 1956 work as the ability to make "judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes" (Bloom, 1984, 207).

Recently revised by a group of cognitive psychologists, curriculum theorists, and instructional researchers, the revised work reflects the values of the current educational system. The change in name to *Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* reflects perhaps the most influential change in thinking. Originally categorized by nouns, such as 'Application' and 'Synthesis', the revised taxonomy is organized by verbs, such as "Understand' and 'Create'. This simple organizational change shows the growth in understanding that learning is not static, as a noun, but rather is in constant motion, as a verb. Such "'action words' describe the cognitive processes by which thinkers encounter and work with knowledge" instead of describing benchmarks to pass (Armstrong, n.d.).

'Create' has been added as the sixth and most complex requirement for a successful education. Reflecting the thinking diversity and flexibility needed as the most complex skill, the mere *addition* of 'Create' describes a need for the skill in order to be successful in the new economy. Many colleges are now even offering courses in creative thinking and creative studies (Pappano, 2014). The fact that universities feel the need to train (or retrain) their adult students in the ability to think "outside the box" shows a great failing in our school systems leading up to the university level. If creativity is so sought out, why should teachers have art funding and time for creative projects sucked from their curriculum to only be replaced with testing and filling *in* test boxes?

The proposed curricular sequence of using wordless picture books (pre-readers to 3rd grade) followed by the use of rich field trips (proficient readers and older students)

seeks to foster a curiosity for the world, while building and strengthening critical and creative skills that are required in all social and academic situations. Creating creative thinkers, problem solvers, and life-long learners, students improve upon their skills developed while using wordless picture books during their experiences in rich field trips that supplement their classroom learning.

Due to the shift in the focus of the economy, education is no longer what students should *know*, but rather what they should be *able to do* with their knowledge (Seltzer, 1999, 17). The key is to connect disciplines while noticing details and differences, asking questions, and creating answers that solve many facets of a given problem. Such strong creativity cannot occur in a vacuum but rather within an environment that fosters and praises social connections, dialogue with peers, and verbal problem solving. Through a creative and experiential educative process, students will participate in the act of problem solving, hearing other opinions, and engage in meaningful discourse that is the basis of learning. In order to provide a strong base of education, teachers must allow children to explore their critical thinking, analysis, comprehension, and application skills by participating in creative, immersive, and thought provoking experiences.

Creativity in the Solution

One way to shape such a learning environment is to teach by using creative and inquiry based classroom work to create educative experiences. An educative experience can be loosely defined as a single experience that is connected to past and present material *and* personal experience. This single moment can be intellectually connected to both past and future experiences by using factual and emotional knowledge to create continuity in the learning process. These educative experiences fit on the continuous, or

progressive, timeline of an individual's life: the "educative process" is the idea of growth and change in the "active participle" of the word that is *growing* as an intellectual and moral human being (Dewey, 1938, 36). If we are to grow with the world around us, educators must "prepare the young for future responsibilities" and skills to be effective citizens in the presently globalized world by curating such experiences and discourse (Dewey, 1938, 18).

This world, rapidly changing and intimately connected as it is today through technology and social awareness, is becoming harder to navigate based solely on textbooks; rather it is a vivid and complex world that must be experienced first hand. Educational theorists have long agreed that the most effective way for students to learn is to be learning within their environment. Environment, in this sense, must include not only the physical space but also the people, objects, and ideas that populate said space. By utilizing the physical and social surroundings of the child, educators can fully incorporate life with education and only then can the *whole* child learn (Dewey, 1938, 40). In order to teach to the whole child and develop the creative and critical thinking and problem solving skills, it must be recognized that "creativity is an interaction between the learner and their environment" (Seltzer, 1999, 25). If we expect our students to connect their knowledge to their life, they must participate in circumstances that allow them to do so.

Learning must incorporate all aspects of the environment. Activities that accompany the use of wordless picture books and field trips offer students the ability to construct their own knowledge through discovery and invention rather than the recall of facts and figures from a lecture (Mooney, 2000, 92). By introducing and supporting curricular units with inquiry, literary, and analytically based work with wordless picture

books at a young age, teachers can then provide real world examples and experiences: the abstractness of information is therefore solidified by the concreteness of experience.

There is no educational value to abstract facts. The value lies in a situation where students can extract the full meaning of the experience for themselves (Dewey, 1938, 46).

Put in the context of our current global and economic climate, education should aim to teach important skills in a creative and inquiry-based way in order to provide the methods and tools for curious and continual learning that will benefit them in the future. With the understanding that the purpose of progressive education is to prepare students for a future that depends on the development of human beings, educators should cultivate a student's understanding of the self and their place in the world while learning how to *look* and address the world at large using critical skills and pattern recognition. By highlighting the use of literacy and experiential learning, an educational system that uses wordless picture books to seamlessly flow into the use of field trips throughout a student's educational life provides educative experiences while simultaneously creating creative thinking skills that will allow students to thrive in an interconnected world.

Literacy Defined

Literacy is one of the core values of an education system. In teaching literacy, educators “give [students] the gift of powerful language processes, which they can use to communicate with others and expand and enhance their understandings of themselves and their world” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998, 23). To be literate, simply, is “to be able to read and write” and to “have knowledge” (Literate, 2018, In *Merriam-Webster.com*). Visual literacy is defined as “the ability to create visual messages and to ‘read’ messages contained in visual communication; to perceive, understand, interpret, and, ultimately, to

evaluate one's visual environment" (Bryce, 2012, 180-81). Consequentially, visual literacy is a skill that transcends all academic and social disciplines. Literacy as a whole, then, requires the same strategies and skills for reading a book, reading a data set, reading a painting, and reading a situation: it is the process of recognizing and gaining information from a text and being able to *do* something with said information. "Literacy" will here on be used to discuss and describe literate and visual literate processes together.

By recognizing *visual* literacy as part of the understanding of literacy in general, schools will allow students to gain reading skills as well as critical thinking, close looking and observation skills, while seeing the connections of topics threaded through academic disciplines. However, the process of *learning* literacy in any form is much more complex than a simple definition. To be able to read and write, one must typically be able to derive meaning from a type of print or text. This meaning resides in the words, sentences, structure, and context of said communication style (Moats, 2000, 111). Such sentiments within the print or text can come from written words, pictograms, or pictures themselves; anything used to represent ideas and words (Moats, 2000, 82). Because 'print' is specifically the marks on the page, it does not carry with it meaning (Print, 2018, In *Merriam-Webster.com*). Text, rather, is more than the printed words: it is specifically "a source of information" or "something considered as an object to be examined, explicated, or deconstructed" (Text, 2018, In *Merriam-Webster.com*). Perhaps more succinctly, a text is any source of information that can be examined through an understanding of a set of coherent symbols. Print, then, composes literary text, but text carries meaning in other ways: these symbols can be letters that form into words, numbers in a data set, symbolism that appears in visual art, or camera angles in film

(Bryce, 2012). Literacy, therefore, is not only the ability to read and write a printed language, but the capability to navigate through a textual world of literature, artwork, and communication.

By focusing on the *process* of education, of how students actually think and act versus how the information is to be memorized, literacy is easily incorporated into the school curriculum. Students will gain the skills to become stronger readers and writers, greater social citizens, and creative thinkers that can solve new types of problems in the modern era (Seltzer, 1999, 10). Beginning with pre-readers, literacy is a skill that grows and develops with the child and is able to become more complex as the child ages throughout their academic career and life. Teaching by using wordless picture books will enhance students' thinking and language skills. Bringing these skills a step further, moving from the page to real life experience, field trips provide the real life application of all pieces of literacy for proficient readers and show students how education is a connective cord through life that incorporates all topics and aspects of learning.

Language as Foundation

Utilizing mediums for both in and outside of the classroom, wordless picture books and field trips facilitate the use and understanding of social experiences or, as Nina Simon (2010) defines, social objects. A social object is an artifact and/or experience that has the innate ability to spark a conversation. These social objects shift the focus from the *self* to the *object*, which opens a doorway for communication. Curating social objects is a most effective teaching tool because of the need for opinion and personal reflection within the discussion that revolves around the object (or book or experience). The act and facilitation of conversation is perhaps the most important part of language development:

developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky believed that language is an inherently interactive experience and should be encouraged through meaningful conversation. In order for children to truly see growth in their own language, they must continue questioning, thinking, joking, and sharing their opinions with one another (Mooney, 2000, 107; Vygotsky, 1978, 88). The interactions that wordless picture books and field trips facilitate are a priceless asset to the growth of students' mind and academic ability.

In a classroom with young children, wordless picture books provide this exact contact point between literacy and experience. Humans naturally have a desire for making sense of our environment and for creating narratives that go along with those experiences; we seem to emit a longing for our own words (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995, 35). Our thought processes and language, then, must be grown within a social and stimulating environment. A part of building an educative experience, this stimulating environment is required for a successful education and enables "natural curiosity, intelligence, and creativity" (Noam Chomsky, interviewed by Putnam, 1995, 332). "Contact and communication" is crucial for the growth of the mind and is what creates an educative experience for students working with literacy and any academic discipline (Dewey, 1938, 38). Wordless picture books invite students to engage with their peers emotionally and verbally: relating their thoughts, wishes, and experiences together with the same illustration, thereby creating a story (and experience) together.

Language is the basis of most communication and is the basis of education as well: there can be no learning without understanding a language at some level. Verbal communication is perhaps the most influential on a child's learning and language development because it requires *contextual* learning (Trelease, 2006, 4). The auditory

function of language is included in Fountas and Pinnell's (1998) eight principles of literacy. Declaring that "children need to hear written language so they can learn its structure and take in new information and ideas" (3). By creating a narrative using wordless picture books, students not only learn new vocabulary but also the structure of 'book talk' and conversation simultaneously. "A reader has to know quite a lot about language to articulate the story the pictures represent" and they cannot gain such knowledge alone, but rather with practice from language in verbal *and* printed forms (Jalongo, 2002, 168).

Reading stories aloud to children, teachers give students the opportunity to listen and soak in new vocabulary while also presenting them with new ideas (Blachowicz, 2005, 263-64). Reading aloud not only nurtures a child's listening comprehension, but also provides background knowledge for unfamiliar, non-everyday topics and words. In several studies done in 2009 by Hammett-Price, van Kleeck, and Huberty, it was found that fictional works read by parents elicited "a greater number of extra-textual utterances", longer sentences, more variety in verbal tenses, and more references to mental and emotional states (Chaparro-Moreno, 2017, 53). If such books and topics allow adult readers to elaborate on their prior knowledge, use more complex sentence structures and words, and unconsciously use language in a more creative way, then children hearing such language use will mimic it. Children, after all, can begin to make sense of the written word only after hearing and understanding a greater variety of words, tenses, and emotions in spoken language. Reading is not a rote process, but rather a process of translating the spoken word to the printed word to derive meaning (Moats, 2000, 2).

In this sense wordless picture books provide the deepest possibilities for storytelling and creative use of language, acting as the largest access point for any level of vocabulary and ability. Hearing language, then, provides the situational context in which language exists. Hearing words from conversations, stories, and discussions after a read-a-loud allows the child to adjust to the situation and introduces them to situational meaning and code switching (Moats, 2000, 125). Exploring and reading wordless picture books, therefore, becomes more than an auditory experience but an experience of solving a puzzle and the process of own creation. Because the story can be told in infinite ways (of course following a general thread set forth by the illustrations), the books invite students to create their own narratives by simply looking at the pages and finding something new. Wordless picture books are by no means meant to replace traditional book reading but instead are meant to provide support and further practice of reading, writing, social, and thinking skills that accompany auditory recognition and practice of language in literacy.

Listening to or creating their own narratives allows students to experiment with their new ideas and vocabulary by participating in active discussions with their peers that allow for more thinking through a social experience of understanding. Such discussion and content creation allows the students to explore in a different and deeper way because creative work *requires* communication. By incorporating reading comprehension with the social and creative aspect of learning, students are introduced to learning as a life-long practice rather than one confined to the walls of a classroom. Progressive Education, after all, is the intersection between intellectual and social learning. What Dewey (1938) suggests is to conduct a classroom where the teaching happens between the teachers *and*

the students together: a give and take on both sides. Such a process would also include the growth of “social intelligence” as well as intellectual organization of thought and relationships in academics (72). Due to the sociability of language, students must be stimulated in a variety of ways in order to truly promote and develop their language.

In such a classroom shaped by these exposures, the students themselves are able to ask questions, create a deeper meaning through their inquiry and hypotheses, and are able to use their social interactions to think and work through their ideas. Students hone skills in creative language use to create and play with the language. Linguist Noam Chomsky insists that the actual use of language is a creative process: “the use of language is creative, in the sense that it constantly involves the production and interpretation of new forms, new in the experience of the language user or even in the history of language” (Interviewed by Putnam, 1995, 328). To foster such a creative process that is the playfulness of language, visual signs—such as those provided in illustrations, art, dioramas, and even in city streets— “elicit a wider range of interpretations compared to spelled ones, therefore demanding more of a meaning construction process from the reader” (Chaparro-Moreno, 2017, 58). The idea of “constructing meaning” is itself a creative and intellectual process, one that requires thought and building upon ideas. This type of thinking is what needs to be taught in schools in order to successfully ready students for mastery of language and problem solving in the modern era.

A Cross-Culture Language

Due to the freedom in interpretation and the ability for growth, wordless picture books are the perfect entry points for those just beginning to enter into the realm of literacy. Without getting caught up in deciphering the printed language or in the authority

of print, students (and their families) can participate in the literacy work equally. Such social language processes also happen in the lived experiences of field trips. One does not need to be able to read, or in some cases speak the same language, to glean valuable experience and information from a field trip. Using background knowledge from literature *and* personal life, students are able to further their understanding of a topic through the actuality of experiencing it for themselves. The narratives, then, that children invent while investigating a museum's diorama or studying a wordless picture book's illustrations can be constructed from their own cultural and familial stories that more substantially allows them an entry point into literacy. Naturally more inclusive, such social objects as wordless picture books and field trips create pathways for child-directed learning that heavily influences a child's intellectual and social development. Language, after all, "is purposeful and learned through use"; simply by experimenting and using the language with their peers, students are learning vocabulary and how the language operates (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998, 58).

Requiring deep contemplation, illustrations allow students to use their interpretive and inferential skills to connect to an overarching theme or 'big idea'. Inventing narratives that relate to their *own* story has a very powerful effect on the confidence a reader at any level. Thus, families with limited English proficiency are also able to enjoy the stories with their children, as there are no language boundaries in an image. Imagine a language diverse classroom where children are able to bring their work home to their family and come up with different yet completely relevant narratives from the same book! (Jalongo, 2002, 169). Bringing more communication and understanding of education and culture into the classroom, the teacher automatically makes their classroom

(and education as a whole) more accessible. This socially and culturally connective process harkens to Piaget's theories of social learning, where learning is a process of constructing knowledge from experience and environmental interactions (Mooney, 2000, 79-81). Using these social objects as the basis of knowledge construction in turn creates an understanding of the world that the self inhabits and an understanding of the larger world because of the learner's direct involvement with it.

In honoring the diverse cultural and lingual environment in classrooms, all children (no matter language ability) will be able to thrive and enjoy the learning process that they are so fundamentally a part of. Easily integrating different perspectives and cultures into the literacy work, children are welcomed to *ask* questions and comment during discussions because they feel that their own stories count (Spencer, 2014, 67). Involving "the reader in the construction of the stories within" the illustrations, wordless picture books are a truly global medium (Lukens, 2007, p.34-35). Students who are struggling with reading can still participate in these discussions because such discourse requires the same comprehension skills that are required while reading a book: a medium where the images carry the weight of meaning perhaps requires *more* comprehension skills (Arizpe, 2017, 53). Equalizing the educational field, wordless picture books provide the foundational skills for young students while staying appropriately complex for students who have stronger abilities. As students grow older, the same discussions and format can be utilized for debriefs after field trips, as it takes no knowledge other than the experience to participate in such discussions.

Class discussions around wordless picture books and field trips, therefore, are some of the most fruitful discussions because they allow each student to participate fully.

Rather than being bystanders to their own education, students can use their imaginations and creative ideas to fully participate in their language development, social development, and literacy skills. No student should be silent during these valuable discussions because of the accessibility of the content: each child can remember a detail from an image, the smells and sounds during the walk around the block, and add that to a knowledge and interpretation based discussion. Language is inherently part of literacy. It is the way humans relate to their world, regardless of use of different languages or dialects. We crave this language in order to communicate our thoughts and connections with the world, no matter how large our own world is, and is then one of the first things humans learn to do. The secondary skills we learn of translating our speech into the physical realm of reading and writing happen *through* language.

Literacy in a Wordless Space

With the onslaught of technology at a young age, students currently must be able to navigate throughout the visual world and glean more information than was necessary in previous generations. By introducing wordless picture books into classrooms, educators have the ideal tools for investigating storytelling, language development, and fluency in reading and writing (Arizpe, 2013, 164). Inherently cinematic and interactive due to the lack of printed narrative, the richness in the text is still very much alive in pictures themselves. Wordless picture books allow adults and children alike to freely construct their own meaning in a devised space, by telling detailed stories in complex and interesting ways that allows readers to gain complex understandings of literary structure and skill. These works further explore the relationship between text and meaning and the possibilities of human imagination when given the same textual impetus (Aylesworth,

2015). Similar to the demands of burgeoning occupations in the modern age, this exploration will prepare students to apply such skills.

Creative, social, and linguistic human nature is what makes lingual and literacy skills so integral to education. “An effective literacy program promotes curiosity about and interest in words and the sounds of language” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998, 14).

Language and reading are intertwined: reading is recognition of another’s words on a page and comprehending meaning from that written language. Using wordless picture books, then, may seem like the opposite of this task, however they provide greater support for students to comprehend meaning and recognize complex patterns. The creative nature of wordless picture books is the key to their success as social objects. The absence of words does not make students shy away from the texts, but rather leaves them with a longing to create the print and text itself (Arizpe, 2013, 173). Students using wordless picture books are able to create their own worlds and narratives due to the freedom and support the books offer.

Rooted in literacy and lingual knowledge, the use of wordless picture books is in no way meant to *replace* reading books with words. Rather, wordless picture books should be used to strengthen a student’s literacy in ways that broaden their understanding linguistically, socially, and intellectually. Using such books in the classroom provides the opportunity for students to delve deeper into the literacy process due to the interactive and meticulous nature of the form. Among the eight principles of literacy laid out by Fountas and Pinnell (1998) are: “learn the conventions of print and how books work so they can use this knowledge as readers and writers” and “develop flexibility and fluency to enhance comprehension and enjoyment of reading and writing” (Fountas & Pinnell,

1998, 3). Beginning exposure to a variety of situations and adaptability of thought at a young age would only further prepare students for the academic and social worlds they are to grow into.

Wordless picture books are, in fact, books: books with covers, pages, and a story sequence where children can familiarize themselves with story and book sense. Children will be constructing a story with these picture books and will be using the same construction and prediction strategies used with printed text (Arizpe, 2013, 169; Fountas & Pinnell, 1998, 9). The illustrations require close observation, the noticing of details and patterns in order to predict next steps and construct meaning. To fully practice reading fluency, students are fully able to get lost within the story, the beauty and intricacy of the illustrations, while beginning to construct their own verbal or written narrative.

Illustrations are able to convey a complex and detailed narrative without students being intimidated by the amount and length of words on each page. By exploring the detailed and multifaceted illustrations, students are automatically working on literacy skills: due to the lack of words, wordless picture books have more intricate illustrations so that an elaborate narrative is possible from the pages

Wordless picture books show the power of illustration in communication, as the storyline of the book relies completely on the style and tone of the illustrations to carry on the message and tale of the author. The illustrations, therefore, are very detailed and include linking structures (such as insets) that allow for the pages to easily connect.

Students, then, are able to get comfortable with making assumptions, noticing and describing place and character emotion, while simultaneously noticing the detailed artwork and narrative of the story at hand. Students are also asked to take more time per

page to actually comprehend the sequence and narrative. Rather than rushing through the words and using them as a cue to turn the page, students must instead fully gain an understanding of events and patterns in order to gain a story sequence and proceed.

For pre-readers, those who do not yet make marks on a page and may or may not recognize letters, utilizing wordless picture books will therefore level the field for academic ability and success throughout the classroom. Requiring the development of skills that go farther than word recognition, students can equally participate in the work due to the flexible nature of wordless picture books. Students can seamlessly grow and develop with these books because of their fluid quality that creates a basis in storytelling, story sequence, visual discrimination, and higher levels of verbalization that supports the same skills needed as they grow into readers and writers (Chaparro-Moreno, 2017, 53). For pre-readers, the best experiences come from lessons that are “structured and exploratory” and allow them to become engrossed in the details of construction” (Wood, 2007, 58). By using wordless picture books with pre-reader students, they are able to do tasks that are developmentally sound, but that are able to expand into advanced realms when they have completed a developmental cycle (Vygotsky, 1978, 85).

As students grow older and more proficient in their reading and comprehension skills, the more they are able to enjoy the *process* of learning rather than the *product*. The process of literacy includes reasoning, identifying patterns and differences, asking questions, and elaborating information in representational ways. (Wood, 2007, 76). Such cognitive changes are accompanied by higher leveled books with longer words and more complex storylines, but also should be complemented with wordless picture books that are equally as appropriate. These have intricate illustrations, more characters, and

complex worlds in which students must deeply examine and connect within their “processes of meaning-making” (Arizpe, 2013, 172).

Using wordless picture books forces students to use their creative brains to fabricate a story with characters, descriptions, major events, and dialogue. Because the illustrations are there, students can be as creative or literal as they like: some children may create entire worlds while some children may simply iterate what is shown on the page. However creative they choose to be, the mere act of *creation* is enough to stimulate the brain. Practicing in this way, students will become more confident in their storytelling over time, just as a child would become more comfortable with the discussion and writing process in a usual book. Learning and utilizing such problem solving skills pushes students to look closer at details and patterns within the illustrations in order to make a coherent tale. While students are learning these observational, analysis, and recognition skills, they are unconsciously preparing themselves for other disciplines as well. Identical to the work of an art historian or scientist, readers observe evidence, symbols, and contextual understanding to arrive at their own conclusions. Academic disciplines like science and math that require problem solving skills and data and graph interpretation require close observational skills and a firm grasp on language and writing.

Just like other disciplines, wordless picture books get more abstract and complex as the user grows and develops: therefore students can use *and* practice these imaginative, problem solving, and sequencing skills throughout their life. Not only do the illustrations become more detailed, and perhaps more abstract, but they also illustrate a more complex narrative that appropriately develops with the students. For students who remain interested in wordless picture books when they are no longer consistently used in the

classroom, more complex wordless books contain mixed timelines, more characters, alternating narrators, more advanced symbolism, and longer page counts that are also appropriate. The same skills that students are learning using such books are easily equated to the skills needed in a profession: occupations that require flexible thinking, inquiry, problem solving while working in uncertainty, and interpretation skills that can be transferred to data and equations.

Literacy is an active and participative venture where readers are constantly “in investigation of the underlying principles that govern how letters, sounds, and words work together to communicate meaning” on the written page (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998, 23). This investigation is comprised mostly of pattern recognition (arrangements of letters and sounds) but also involves using different *sources* of information. Prior experience and language knowledge must be used in a coordinated way to derive any meaning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998, 25). These interpretive strategies are imperative to readers’ comprehension; by combining several strategies of accessing information, a student is able to then summarize, ask questions, and monitor their own understanding (Moats, 2000, 9). Examining the relationship, and differences, between the presence of print and meaning in a text, wordless picture books act in specific ways to simulate textual realness without any print at all. For early and young readers, this investigation usually relies on illustrations to derive meaning. Using the pictures, a young child can easily tell the emotion of the character depicted on the page without the words explicitly telling them. While combining this visual cue with the auditory cues heard during the telling of the story, the student can mentally (or perhaps physically!) attach vocabulary to the images,

thus creating connection between the senses *and* an experience while simultaneously linking to the written word to create a triumvirate of communication skills.

Literacy Through Experience

These complex skills of the mind are honed not only through work with wordless picture books, but are actualized through real life experiences. Using field trips to facilitate this venture, students gain the intellectual skills that allow them to interpret the vastness of information the world provides and transform it to malleable sizes and purposes. Practice with literacy fosters the ability to understand knowledge and apply it through an analytical process for a real purpose.

Truly catering to the increasing knowledge economy, experiential learning fosters not only a deeper understanding of language and literacy, but also provides students with new ways of organizing their thinking. Field trips are able to delve deeper and combine disciplinary realms more seamlessly (and realistically) than any other teaching tool. Participating in differentiated experiences gives students “opportunities to inquire into themselves and their worlds as well as develop a range of visual” cues that support different forms of learning and relate to a variation of disciplines (Atkinson, 2006, in Bryce, 2012, 181). In providing the chance to explore their world and express their thoughts through different mediums— such as drawing, poems, dancing, writing, performing, interpreting—the children practice and flex the brain in different and perhaps completely new ways. This activation of new ways of thinking allows students to utilize communication, analytical, and ingenuity skills that are needed to thrive in a quickly changing economic and social structure.

The interactive and experiential nature of field trips, akin to the classroom use of wordless picture books, allows students “with different prior knowledge and varied talents to access information and to learn by interacting with the same exhibit” (Pumpian, 2010, 13). By providing more entry points, the discussions and conversations among peers are apt to be fuller, more content focused, and will allow students to connect not only with each other but also more fully with their educational and personal lives. In this way students “are able to see how knowledge fits into a broader world-[view]” (Pumpian, 2010, 24). Children will interact with their educational process more if they can use their prior knowledge, a way to connect the contextual content to their personal experience, and are able to make connections through academic disciplines and environments.

To fully master the creative and hands-on educational experiences, teachers must give students room to use their literacy skills and explore the world first hand in real situations. As discussed with the process of learning through wordless picture books, learning does not happen in a vacuum but rather within the *experience* of one’s world. With the assumption that *all* learners, regardless of age and ability, thrive and learn best in an “environment where they can ponder and question while experiencing a creative, complex, and developmentally appropriate” teaching approach, field trips are the perfect point of contact with the experiential world and the literacy world (Spencer, 2014, 71). Literacy is “a creative experience around *comprehension* and communication” that focuses on the application of reading the world and understanding the function of objects in the social spheres of society (Freire, 2005, 35).

This triad connection to the self, the world, and learning is, after all, the purpose of education: “to awaken persons to a sense of presentness, to a critical consciousness of

what is ordinarily obscured” (Greene, 1984, 132). Striving to produce academically literate citizens for the modern economy equipped with critical thinking skills, all forms of literacy, and organizational skills, field trips provide the opportunity for students to gain social literacy skills simultaneously. Social literacy, greatly sought in a modern economy driven by increased interpersonal interaction, includes an understanding of social norms, appreciation for arts and culture, for science and technology, social tolerance, and historical empathy (Greene, 2014, 80). Unfortunately, field trips, for many schools, have fallen to the wayside. Instead of seeing them as an integral educational experience to be weaved into the curriculum, field trips have instead come to be seen as part of a reward system. Instead of the fear of taking time out of the school day to go on a trip, field trips should be seen as a precious part of the school day and learning experience. Treating field trips as part of a greater scope of learning, trips provide a different physical context that is stocked with new and different teaching styles and materials. While each moment does not need to be a ‘teaching moment’, introducing students to interpretative skills will show them such opportunities to gather knowledge. “The physical context includes the architecture and ‘feel’ of the situation” at hand, and is able to create an experience for learning simply by being a space for discourse: a space that sparks inquiry at different levels for each learner (Dierking, 2000, 6).

Creating Citizens and Learners for Life

By creating an interest in the everyday world, field trips thus influence a student’s intrinsic motivation for learning. Learning must act on an intrinsic value system. If a person does not see the value in tending to their curiosity, they cannot truly *learn*. Field trips, such as museums or site-based learning, are the most important places for fostering

intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic learning can be promoted by “supportive environments, meaningful activities...[and] an open process of interaction with the environment” (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995, 35). Interaction with a students’ whole environment is essential for academic education to enter the intellectual and social sphere. An experiential environment in a museum, for example, must “inspire visitors to see the relationship between the exhibits and their own” interests and life: even going so far as to inspire artistic *creation*, scientific *pursuits*, and social *bonding* (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995, 37). The more practice that a student has with this connective experience, the more information they will be able to glean, thus developing higher habits of mind (Falk & Dierking, 2000, 120). By showing students such educational frameworks, students are prepared to see that “learning does not occur isolated from the objects and experiences of the real world” but rather their prior knowledge gained within the classroom and among peers prepares them for the lived experience, and vice versa (Dierking, 2000, 6). Built on previous experiences, a students’ own life provides a scaffold for their learning: knowledge and experience “intercept and unite in the way of knowledge and skills [learned] in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with situations to follow. [Learning] can be built up only as a world of related objects is constructed” (Dewey, 1938, 44).

In order to truly support a student’s learning process, educators must draw upon and inspire *all* skills and experiences. Solidifying experiences with literacy skills, field trips often provide brand new experiences for students. Encountering different vocabulary, students are automatically exposed to related, and perhaps repeated, vocabulary throughout their time on the trip (Blachowicz, 2005, 267). In requiring

observational and inferential skills to be used, field trips have led students to create more expansive written compositions, pay more attention to punctuation while reading, have better organized thoughts, have more confidence in trying new tasks, and generate 50% more words than students who do not go on field trips (Halperin, Smith, & Smith, 2013, 918-919). In addition to influencing academic skills, an ongoing study at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas has seen huge differences made in their school trips there. Families of students who went to Crystal Bridges on a school trip were 18% more likely to return to the museum on their own time (Greene, 2014, 85). This study suggests the field trips do, in fact, make a difference in the curiosity and desires of students to participate in lifelong learning. Field trips, therefore, do not only influence students' academic ability but also greatly influences students' personal lives. Field trips are an equalizer of education, allowing some students the opportunity to experience culture, sometimes seen as "high art", that often seems inaccessible if not provided by their schooling (Booth, 1995, 4).

Field trips and museum visits do not only influence a student's learning process and literacy skills, but they also affect cultural tolerance and appreciation, something extremely valuable in the current globalized and diverse world. Culture, while a broad idea that encompasses many aspects (some tangible, others not) of a person's life, can be defined as "the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts, and depends upon [hu]man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations" (Culture, 2018, In *Merriam-Webster.com*). In bringing students on field trips, teachers not only require an understanding of the importance of their own community (a trip to a local business) but also inspire them to

wonder about other cultures and (art or history museums). As Rika Burnham (2005) states, such experience, driven by creative thought, is meant to provide “an investigation that [brings] observations, thoughts, and feeling together into a whole, with a sense of having reached a point of knowledge and understanding” (10). Only with an appreciation in the lived and experienced can dialogue truly occur. The goal of field trips, then, “is not to replicated classroom instruction, but rather to connect reading to the world beyond the classroom” (Pumpian, 2010, 46). In the classroom, students and teachers engage in observations and discussions combined with the social and personal exploration using wordless picture books. Field trips then provide the physical context of education, where students can immerse themselves with their classroom knowledge and practice bubbling in their minds.

In creating this meaningful dialogue between the individual and the environment, educators can truly build a community of learners. The goal of field trips is not only to extend learning from inside to outside of the classroom, but also to “*extend* the dialogue, to make the understanding of the work deeper” by *connecting* a students’ academic experience to their lived one (Burnham, 2005, 13). Such an experience requires all involved to be motivated through bringing their own thoughts and feelings into the process: education should be an emotional expansion where the whole self is involved to be able to connect to all aspects of education (Csikszentimihalyi, 1995, 59). The “language” of learning, therefore, is motivated by incorporating the self into the content, which facilitates the connection between skills and knowledge in other aspects of life into a cohesive set of knowledge: truly working through social objects.

Field trips are inherently connected to social skills, as they require understanding how to comport and adapt oneself in different environmental situations and with different personnel. As one school district superintendent, Keith Kelly, says: field trips offer students the opportunity “to access real-world, applied learning experience that empower them to gain the skills they need to thrive” by placing them in situations where they are “involved in inquiry, in solving problems, [and] in partnerships” (Hanc, 2018). By incorporating both students’ social and academic skills, they become better able to “appreciate the breadth of human accomplishments” throughout their connections between the zones of their own learning (Greene, 2014, 84).

Field trips accomplish such a goal by stimulating the senses and emotions of a student through a clear content focus. Field trips are not a random act of leaving the classroom, but rather they provide students with an anchor for new knowledge acquisition. Knowledge cannot be acquired arbitrarily, but rather must be connected to something that the student already knows: ideas they understand, familiar vocabulary, or a place they recognize (Blachowicz, 2005, 262). Therefore, combining reading, creative experiences, social experiences, and field trips is the most effective way to teach in such a diverse and vibrant world.

Writing Through Social Objects

Not stopping at reading and comprehension abilities, wordless picture books and field trips inherently provide pathways for students to want to *write* and put their ideas into the physical world. By developing the verbal creativity and expression of language, wordless picture books naturally develop the written expression of language. One way to equalize education within the classroom in the Elementary levels is through the use of

writing about wordless picture books. Beginning with writing labels and dialogue boxes for wordless picture books, non-proficient readers can begin to organize and envision the writing process, the use of written language versus spoken language, and the structure of writing (Tomkins, 1984, 75). Students in Elementary school who are slower to pick up reading can stay within the analytical, visual, and discussion based world literacy that wordless picture books provide. Those students who have grasped reading can proceed to write more fully about their thoughts, questions, and points of view while still participating in the general class observations and discussions. Developing the same skills and pattern recognition, students are able to use the same information and work through it in developmentally appropriate ways without getting left behind in the classroom (Tompkins, 1984, 79). Engaging in lively and detailed discussions on wordless picture books, students are effectively doing the same things that writers do: “opportunities to think, to remember, to get ideas, to observe, and to record” (Halperin, Smith, & Smith, 2013, 902). By noticing details within the illustrations and narratives in the wordless picture books, students have more information to write about, therefore diminishing the anxiety that many students experience by looking at a blank sheet of paper.

Given the ability of creating their own narrative, students are exposed to a “network of ideas” that aims to “teach the relationships that exist among words” in the spoken *and* written worlds (Moats, 2000, 126). The thought and organizational processes that are required to become great writers happen naturally alongside the skills cultivated during wordless picture book exploration, and even further in the discovery process during field trips. Much like wordless picture books, field trips open the opportunity for

creation through the communication aspect of storytelling to create a more rounded narrative through their experience. Naturally having a desire to create narratives and impart opinions and expression, some students yet face great difficulty in putting their words on paper. However, if students are in the midst of verbally creating their own stories, learning vocabulary, and learning book structure, it will be more lucrative for them to share their stories with peers if there is a solid and known foundation existing in illustrations. Children up to 3rd grade write best from experiences and pictures, exactly what wordless picture books are providing. As students develop their thought organization and writing skills, they can build upon the thinking skills developed at a young age to begin writing personal and analytical pieces by the time they are in 4th grade (Wood, 2007, 81; 100). Students in these upper grades will have the background knowledge and practice from wordless picture books to further their written expression and thinking by using their place-based experiences to provide richer observations and analysis.

Implications for Educators

In proposing this curriculum sequence, it may seem that more demands are put on the teacher to facilitate these experiences. The aim, however, is not to make school day more hectic by adding literacy work and field trips. The purpose of using wordless picture books in the classroom is to support the literacy work that is already happening, not replace it. While wordless picture books require preparation in the sense of the teacher reading the book in advance in order to come up with appropriate and stimulating questions, they require no more time than in planning a usual curricular lesson. While field trips for the older grades require a little more planning and preparing, the outcome

of the field trip provides much richer fodder for teaching than anything else. The longevity of the students' memories from the trip will also far outlive any textbook they receive, ultimately creating an educative experience. The discussions during and following the wordless books or field trips should be focused on a theme or topic related to the unit of study, however the discussion should be mostly student led based on their own observations and inquiries. The questions generated by the teacher should either be that of narrative assistance, providing clarity, (for both wordless books and field trips) or pushing the children a little further into their discovery zones. By posing open ended and discovery-based questions, students are forced to use their observations, inferential thinking, and self-experience to answer the questions. Offering different interpretations for the narrative's purpose, students can then build off of each other or disagree and explicate themselves in a confident and collaborative discourse that is organic to the set of children.

There are a plethora of wordless picture books in print, and due to the complexity of the books it is also possible to use only certain pages rather than spend a significant amount of time going in depth through the entire book. While students would gain even more from experiencing an entire narrative, it is enough to practice the work with some key pages and let the book live in the classroom so that students have the ability to further explore the entire book on their own. By allowing students to explore the books on their own during choice time or quiet reading, they are even more apt (and more naturally able) to discuss, create, and wonder aloud with their peers. For older students, a trip around the block can be just as fulfilling as a full day trip to a museum. If supported by the appropriate investigative activities, a short trip can provide an incredible amount

of information and questions. Of course depending on the topic of study, more complicated field trips may be necessary.

Conclusion

In order to properly ready students to become thriving citizens, schools must foster and support students' recognition of complex patterns, critical thinking, and analytical skills. Learning how to solve complex problems creatively, engage effectively in communication with peers, and observe closely and critically, students must have the opportunities to think and create in ways that connect literacy with the world. Achieving these goals, the educative system can more fully connect the skills and topics with wordless picture books used at a young age. Using wordless picture books to develop and foster pattern recognition, close observation, and language skills, students are easily able to continue and grow these skills through rich field trips as they grow older. By transitioning from the study of details on the page to the study of observing life and artifacts, older students can use the skills developed in elementary school more thoroughly to be insightful learners. Not only honing the same skill sets by studying in this manner, students will also further their exploration of living art, history, and science if they are truly able to see a concrete connection between their classroom work and their lives.

Through this process, students are more likely to use these skills in their professional and adult lives because they recognize the observational and lingual process as one they have been through before. If students are taught such processes and skills at a young age, as they grow through higher grades they will be able to recognize patterns, connect disciplines, connect historic events, and mathematical and scientific reasoning

with their lived experience. Academic content advances just as society does, and by building a strong foundation, students are able to proceed effectively from wordless picture books to field trips to professional lives. Achieving the same types of engagements in a real world setting as they did through picture books, students can more fully interact with their peers, participate in a physical learning experience, and strengthen the skills developed at a young age to become stronger readers of text and the world. Seeing the connectivity between all aspects of life, students will cherish curiosity as a skill and power throughout all aspects of their world. This successive educative process proposed allows students to develop the creative language skills foundational for thinking, problem solving, pattern recognition, and literacy in the new world to stay curious learners for life.

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Appendix A

Example Lessons

Example lessons incorporating wordless picture books into curriculum are attached for Kindergarten and second grade. Followed by a recommended field trip, the lessons are meant as basic examples of the strategies that teachers can use to implement this process into their classrooms and how the same strategies can be used for both teaching methods. The field trip is longer for the second grade lesson plan as they should be phasing out of wordless picture books and into the application of skills to real life experiences and learning. Sharpening the same skill set in a different setting, students will practice their skills and gain a richer educative experience because of this teaching style. Already trained in close observation, critical and analytical thinking skills, and have the mindset to naturally connect disciplines and experiences, students will get a fuller and more rounded education from a single trip.

Kindergarten Lesson 1: Read Aloud

Reading of *Sidewalk Circus* by Paul Fleischman and Kevin Hawkes

Guiding Question(s):

What kinds of people, jobs, and material things does the neighborhood have?

Who/what gets turned into the circus? How?

Pre Reading:

- What is a circus? (*Company of performers that perform stunts, physical tricks and skills, and illusions; animals doing tricks; wonders; tent; traveling*)
- Who runs a circus? (*The ringmaster*) Who is in a circus? (*Talented performers/stunt masters/acrobats/athletes*)
- Can we have a circus on our streets? (*Circus usually happen in a specified place, get the kids talking about what it would take for a circus to happen in your own neighborhood*)
- What is our neighborhood usually like?

Heavily scaffolded, this is meant to be an exposure lesson that begins to teach students the techniques and process of using a wordless picture book. Some kids may already be familiar with them. To begin this process, it might be useful to start with an isolated page at a time, rather than tackling the entire book and narrative at once. The book and story line should not be random, but rather integrated into the classroom and curriculum to allow the students to truly understand the process. Illustrations in this book are very clear and direct. It is important to start with a book like this so students can start at surface level and dig deeper through time. The teacher must create a basic story line or thread

through the book in order to keep the students' attention. Something as simple as "next, what she saw...." Adding verbs and adjectives is essential (ex. Teetering, tossing, balancing, heaving, soaring, staring). Focus on exactly what is seen in the illustrations. Be sure to describe what is on the page and ask guiding questions throughout to get the students looking closer. (Ex. What do you think they are feeling? Why do you think that?) Circus-related words are an added bonus for their vocabulary and also for them to learn how to talk about this subject.

During Reading:

- Where does the circus start? *On the street in front of the bus stop*
- Who is the Ringmaster? *(Poster hanger)*
- Who is watching the circus? *(The little girl in the bus stop)*
- Where does the circus seem to be taking place? *(In the shadows)*
- What is happening in her neighborhood in the beginning? *(Lots of construction and deliveries being made early in the morning)*
- What does she see in the shadows? What is happening in real life? *(Changes per page)*
- Who are the circus "performers"? *(People in the neighborhood starting their day)*
- What kinds of job does this "performers" have? Do you recognize any of these jobs? *(Changes per page)*
- What happens when her bus arrives? *(Another child comes to the stop to watch)*
- What would *you* want to see walking down your street?

After Reading Discussion:

A chart is often helpful to track topics and examples of what to look for during the trip. Perhaps one that talks about the smells, the jobs, the performances, and the actions that each character is doing (circus or not).

- Who gets to watch the circus next? (*A little boy arrives at the bus stop*)
- What are the kinds of jobs are there in their neighborhood (*Go through each page and see if they think those same jobs are relevant in their own community. If not, why? Why would they want/need them?*)
- What kinds of people would be seeing the circus, like the little girl, in our own neighborhood? (*Are there bus stops where people wait? Coffee shops with windows to look out of?, etc.*)
- If we were to walk around our neighborhood, what kinds of circus acts would you want to see? (*Possible after-book activity: Draw what kind of performance you would want to see walking down the street in your community*)

Lesson Extensions from Isolated Pages:

- Shadow study
- Circus study
- Neighborhood job study
- “Our Block” Study (the book happens in front of a bus stop)

Relevant Standards:**New York City Social Studies Scope and Sequence Standards:**

Unit 3: Geography, People, and the Environment

Essential Question: What makes a community?

- Features of Communities K.6b, K.6c
- People and Neighborhoods K.6

Common Core State Standards of Reading for Literature:

Reading Standards for Literature/Informal Texts

K.1: With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text

K.2: With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

K.3: With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

K.4: Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

K.5: Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

K.6: With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

K.7: With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

K.9: With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

Kindergarten Lesson 2: Field Trip

Field trip around the school block or neighborhood

Guiding Question(s):

What kinds of people, jobs, and material things does the neighborhood have?

What do the things we see, smell, and hear teach us about what is in our neighborhood?

Pre Trip:

- Revisit the charts (and/or drawings) made after the reading of *Sidewalk Circus*. Remind each other what neighborhoods *need* and what they often *have*.
- This trip is about observing closely; remind them to pay attention to the things they think will be important for their community.
 - They will notice specific objects, jobs, and events (such as trash collecting, pizza making, mail delivery) and focus on colors, sounds, smells, nature, stores, people, etc. throughout the walk.
- Remind them of *Sidewalk Circus* and other books read about the community.

What kinds of things would they *like* to see during their community walk?

 - Perhaps you ask them what kinds of jobs/people could be “performers” in a neighborhood circus

During Trip:

Students will have their own papers and clipboards so they feel like investigators. They can draw anything they like. Perhaps a few students are in charge of tallying things they see (or have pre-chosen things to tally). Allow for discovery time, close looking, perhaps

an interview with a local worker (exciting/busiest points throughout your day, what is your job, etc.).

- Is it loud in our neighborhood or quiet? What are the things that make noise?
- Don't forget to notice the *natural* things as well as *man-made* things. Why do we have natural places in our neighborhood? (*Parks, trees, etc.*)

After Trip:

Make lists of things that students saw *as a group*. It is important that students get the chance to talk about what they saw, smelled, and heard with their peers.

- How many students noticed the same things?
- Who noticed a smell? A sound? (*Talk about what these things could mean for the neighborhood, for the time of day. What do the children know about these things in their own lives?*)
- What kinds of jobs do we have in our neighborhood? What are the most popular jobs/people/things to do/places to go?

Relevant Standards:**New York City Social Studies Scope and Sequence Standards:**

Unit 3: Geography, People, and the Environment

Essential Question: What makes a community?

- Features of Communities K.6b, K.6c
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K.1: With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text

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K.3: With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

K.7: With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

Second Grade Lesson 1: Read Aloud

Reading of *The Secret Box* by Barbara Lehman

Guiding Question(s):

Why does a city/town change over time?

How do the changes tell us about what the community needs or wants?

Pre Reading:

- What does the title make you think of? (*Discussion of secrets and what would go into a box, from whom is it secret, etc.*)
- Cities are always growing, what kinds of things grow with them? (*Industry, buildings, population*)
- What is a mystery? (*Something unknown that needs to be found/solved*)
- What would you leave in a secret box if you had one? (*Perhaps make a list of these, perhaps extended to a mini-lesson post-reading*)

The teacher must create a basic story line or thread through the book in order to keep the narrative line going. Something as simple as “next, what she saw...” Adding verbs and adjectives is essential, especially in a mystery-type book like this. It is not necessary to add emotions, focus on exactly what is seen in the illustrations. Be sure to describe what is on the page and ask guiding questions throughout to get the students looking closer. (Ex. What do you think they are feeling? How do you know?)

During Reading:

- What kind of place does the little boy live in? (*Rural*) What do we see? (*Nature*)
- What is added to the landscape? (*Industry*) What kinds of transportation are added? What happens to the house?
- What kinds of things do the children find in the secret box? (*Pictures, tokens/tickets, a map. Recommended to photocopy this page so that each child can closely look at the pictures and map, as they are essential for the rest of the reading*)
- What does the map show? (*2 pictures and an actual map create the course, including a **stream***)
- Where does the map end? (“*Seahorse Pier*”) How do we know?
- Look at your own maps (photocopied). Where should the kids go next? (*Have them looking at their own maps as well as the pages in the book to make this more interactive*)
- Was the stream always there? (*May need to go back to the beginning 2 pages of the book to look at what happened to the stream*)
- Who do the children see at the Pier? (*The original little boy, and friends?*)
- What happens at the end of the book? (*More kids find the box*)
- What does the city look like now? (*Modern day city with skyscrapers*) How did it change throughout the story?

After Reading Discussion:

Listing or charting the sequence of events might be helpful in this case.

Topics to focus on:

- Changes in the community/landscape
- Following a map
- The timeline of the children

Whichever main topic chosen to talk about, each conversation should talk about:

- What happened to the place the original child lived in? (*Changed over time*)
- What do these changes say about the city as a whole? (*Industry changed, times changed, jobs changed, wanted different things from the community*)
- Where did you think the map would lead the three kids?
- Have you ever used a map before? What/where do maps usually take you?
- Would you have followed the map in the box?
- Why do you think the original little boy left the map and pictures in his box?

Relevant Standards:**New York City Social Studies Scope and Sequence Standards:**

Unit 3: Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities

Essential Question: How are communities the same and different?

- Kinds of Communities 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.1c, 2.1d
- 2.2 People share similarities and differences with others in their own community and with other communities. 2.2a, 2.2b (Standards 1, 2, 3)
- FOCUS: Comparative case study of urban, suburban, and rural communities 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.1c

Common Core State Standards of Reading for Literature:*Reading Standards for Literature/Informal Texts*

2.1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

2.2: Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

2.3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

2.4: Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

2.5: Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

2.6: Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Second Grade Lesson 2: Field Trip

Field trip to Castle Clinton in Battery Park City in Manhattan, New York City.

Guiding Question(s):

What are the reasons that cities change over time?

How do the changes tell us about what the community needs or wants?

Pre Trip:

- Revisit the charts/lists made from the read aloud or previous discussions on changing landscapes in communities.
 - What kinds of things in a community change and for what purpose?
- What is the process of changing from a rural place to an urban place?
(Industrialization, immigration, entertainment are some key reasons that should rise from this)
- What are some things that you think our own city, New York City, may have changed throughout the years?
 - Connected to the discussion of New York City, a brief discussion of the New York harbor and waterfront is necessary to understand where the trip will be.
- This trip is about observing closely; remind students to pay attention to the things they think will be important for the understanding/timeline of a changing New York City.
- Explain their scavenger hunt briefly so they are ready to begin upon arrival.

During Trip:

Students will have their own scavenger hunt sheets, with a map of the harbor, and a timeline of Castle Clinton included that might help them focus their study. Pictures of the aquarium and Castle Garden concert hall may need to be printed and shown to students for a closer look as they are displayed high up in the small museum. Before leaving make sure children have completed their scavenger hunt.

- What used to be here? (*Military fort, immigration center, concert hall, aquarium*)
- Why might the New York community have wanted/needed these things have to exist for the community of New York? (*Need for different purposes depending on the time. Entertainment, immigration organization, military safety, large space for music to be played, education*)
- Students will be in a historic building, museum, and park all in one trip. What does this say about our community now? What do we value?
- How can we follow our map of the harbor to find important landmarks for us today, as the children in the Lehman's *The Secret Box* did?
- What are important pieces in our map that we should look for? (*Subway stops, Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, etc.*)
- What is it like to look for clues in a museum vs. an actual historic building?

After Trip:

Make lists of things that students saw *as a group*. It is important that students get the chance to talk about what they saw, smelled, and heard with their peers.

- What might the kids in Lehman's book have felt during their adventure to Seahorse Pier? How was this feeling similar to your adventure to Castle Clinton?

- What types of things did you discover at Castle Clinton? (*Make a list of all the discoveries*)
- What questions do you still have? (*Make a separate list of questions to be answered*)
- How did we use a map like the children in Lehman's book? (*Followed maps to a historic/old place*)
- What kinds of things did we learn there? How did Castle Clinton change over time to keep up with the changing New York City?
- What would you have Castle Clinton be today? (*Perhaps other than a museum, this can be turned into a mini lesson/activity. Have them write and/or draw what the monument was (they will need to pick 1 form), what it is today, and what they think it might be like in the future*)

Relevant Standards:**New York City Social Studies Scope and Sequence Standards:**

Unit 3: Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities

Essential Question: How are communities the same and different?

- Kinds of Communities 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.1c, 2.1d
- 2.2 People share similarities and differences with others in their own community and with other communities. 2.2a, 2.2b (Standards 1, 2, 3)
- FOCUS: Comparative case study of urban, suburban, and rural communities 2.1a, 2.1b, 2.1c

Common Core State Standards of Reading for Literature:*Reading Standards for Informational Texts*

2.3: Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

2.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 2 topic or subject area*.

2.5: Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.

2.6: Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.

2.7: Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.

2.8: Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.

Appendix B

Wordless Picture Book Resource List for Teachers

- Allsburg, C. Van., (1984). *The mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Houghton Mifflin
- Anno, M. (1982) *Anno's Britain*. Puffin Books.
- Anno, M. (1983) *Anno's U.S.A.* Puffin Books.
- Anno, M. (1997). *Anno's Journey*. Puffin Books.
- Anno, M. (2004). *Anno's Spain*. Puffin Books.
- Anno, M. (2016) *Anno's China*. Puffin Books.
- Baker, J. (2010). *Mirror*. Candlewick Press.
- Banyai, I. (1998a). *Zoom*. Picture Puffins.
- Banyai, I. (1998b) *Re-zoom*. Picture Puffins.
- Becker, A. (2013). *Journey*. Candlewick Press.
- Becker, A. (2014). *Quest*. Candlewick Press.
- Becker, A. (2016). *Return*. Candlewick Press.
- Carl, E. (1995). *Do you want to be my friend?*. Harperfestival.
- Day, A. (1992a). *Good dog, Carl*. Aladdin paperbacks.
- Day, A. (1992b). *Carl's afternoon in the park*. Aladdin paperbacks.
- Day, A. (1989). *Carl goes shopping*. Aladdin paperbacks.
- dePaola, T. (1978). *Pancakes for breakfast*. Sandpiper.
- Fleischman, P., & Hawkes, K. (2007). *Sidewalk circus*. Candlewick Press.
- Halverson, L. (1992). *The animal's ballgame: A Cherokee story from the eastern band of the Cherokee nation* (L. Arneach, Ed.). Children Press.
- Lawson, J., & Smith, S. (2015). *Sidewalk flowers*. Groundwood Books.

- Lehman, B. (2001). *The secret box*. HMH Books for Young Readers.
- Lehman, B. (2004). *Red book*. HMH Books for Young Readers.
- Lehman, B. (2008). *Trainstop*. HMH Books for Young Readers.
- Lehman, B. (2017). *Museum trip*. HMH Books for Young Readers.
- Miyares, D. (2015). *Float*. Simon Schuster Books for Young Readers.
- Mizielińska, M., & Mizielińska, D. (2014). *The world of Mamoko in the time of dragons*.
Big Picture Press.
- Pinkney, J. (2009). *The Lion and the Mouse*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Pinkney, J. (2013). *The Tortoise and the Hare*. Little Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Pet, M. (2013) *The boy and the airplane*. Simon & Shuster.
- Pet, M. (2014). *The girl and the bicycle*. Simon & Shuster.
- Rodriguez, B. (2009). *Chicken thief*. Gecko Press.
- Rohmann, E. (1997). *Time flies*. Dragonfly Books.
- Rosales, M., & Washington, D. L., (1991). *Double Dutch and the Voodoo Shoes: An
Urban Folktale*. Children's Press.
- Tan, S. (2007). *The Arrival*. Arthur A. Levine Books.
- Thompson, B. (2010). *Chalk*. Two Lions.
- Turkle, B. (1992). *Deep in the forest*. Picture Puffins.
- Villa, A. F., (2013). *Flood*. Capstone Younger Readers.
- Ward, L., & Hogrogian, N. (1987). *I Am Eyes, Ni Macho*. Blue Ribbon Book.
- Weitzman, J. P., & Glasser, R. (2001). *You can't take a balloon into the Metropolitan
Museum*. Puffin Books.
- Weitzman, J. P., & Glasser, R. (2002). *You can't take a balloon into the Museum of Fine*

Arts. Puffin Books.

Wiesner, D. (1991). *Tuesday*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wiesner, D. (1992). *June 29, 1999*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wiesner, D. (1999). *Sector 7*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wiesner, D. (2001). *The three pigs*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wiesner, D. (2006). *Flotsam*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wiesner, D. (2008). *Freefall*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wiesner, D. (2013). *Mr. Wuffles*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.