12-2012

How Do Wordless Picture Books Help Develop Writing For All Students?

Shannon Marble
St. John Fisher College

Recommended Citation

Please note that the Recommended Citation provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations.

This document is posted at http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters/228 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
How Do Wordless Picture Books Help Develop Writing For All Students?

Abstract
This action research paper asked the question, “How do wordless picture books help develop writing for all students?” Through the results, there were mixed findings on how wordless picture books can help students with writing. Data was collected through student writing samples, field notes based off of the student writing, and two interviews. The findings section presents writing samples and tables based off of the writing samples, as well as data from the interviews. The data showed three recurring themes during the study: wordless picture books encourage students to write, provide a writing tool for older students, and develop written language for ESL students. The results from the data indicate that wordless picture books can help develop a student’s writing process and should be used with a variety of students.

Document Type
Thesis

Degree Name
MS in Literacy Education

Department
Education

Subject Categories
Education
How Do Wordless Picture Books Help Develop Writing For All Students?

By

Shannon Marble

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

M.S. Literacy Education Supervised by

Dr. Joellen Maples

School of Arts and Sciences
St. John Fisher College

December 2012
Abstract

This action research paper asked the question, “How do wordless picture books help develop writing for all students?” Through the results, there were mixed findings on how wordless picture books can help students with writing. Data was collected through student writing samples, field notes based off of the student writing, and two interviews. The findings section presents writing samples and tables based off of the writing samples, as well as data from the interviews. The data showed three recurring themes during the study: wordless picture books encourage students to write, provide a writing tool for older students, and develop written language for ESL students. The results from the data indicate that wordless picture books can help develop a student’s writing process and should be used with a variety of students.
Wordless Picture Books Impact on the Writing Process

For many years, wordless picture books have been a tool used within the classroom for several different reasons. These books consist of many images that are arranged in a way that a story line is formed, but there are no actual written words. It is within these wordless story books that true creativity and imagination is created. Wordless picture books can be a positive teaching tool, whether it is helping young students learn to read, or using the books as a model for the formation of written language.

If this topic is not explored, teachers may not use wordless picture books as a teaching tool to help struggling students develop writing skills. However, if this topic is explored then students who are reluctant writers, or struggling writers, may find the motivation, and creativity they need to become successful writers. It is apparent that picture books of any kind help young children develop literacy skills based off of several researchers throughout the years. Researchers such as Cassady (1998), Reese (1996) and Hu and Commeyras (2008), have completed studies on ways that wordless picture books have helped with reading and writing for a variety of students. Although picture books can help the literacy rate of a child, it is not always possible for children to have these books accessible to them. Some school districts lack the funds to support these books to the classrooms, and some families do not have the ability to purchase a wide array of books for their own children.

The resources that are available to students can impact their development in specific areas, such as writing and reading. When a school districts budget does not allow for spending on extra materials to help students succeed, the students become victims. Wordless picture books are tools that schools may not feel are necessary to have within the classroom, and therefore teachers do not use them as teaching tools. However, wordless picture books can help
a young child develop skills to begin to read, or be used as a prompt for students who struggle with writing.

When the resources are not available to students then there is no way for them to succeed. Outside of school the student may not be exposed to wordless picture books either. Depending on the family’s financial situation and economy of a student’s community, extra spending on wordless picture books may not be possible. The use of wordless picture books can be used to help students, no matter their age, develop reading and writing skills based off of the images that are present within the books (Cassady, 1998).

Many young children struggle with writing and expressing their ideas or organizing a story line. The use of wordless picture books can help a child see how a story line flows and also allows for a student’s creativity and imagination to be used to create their own written script of what is occurring within the story. Once a child feels comfortable with wordless picture books and can read through them, they can then be used as a type of writing prompt. It is during this time where a child’s creativity will spark and the teacher may see what the thinking process is like for that child. The writing that a child may do with these wordless picture books may also be impacted based off of the child’s home environment (Hsiu-Chih, 2008). For example, being able to relate to the images within the wordless picture book may help spark more details in that child’s writing.

Differentiation within the classroom is important, and by using developmentally appropriate wordless picture books for writing tasks, more specific student needs may occur. There are several genres and levels of wordless picture books that are available to meet the needs of the students reading levels within a classroom. Using these books can open up a new way of thinking about reading and writing for a child.
This action research asked how wordless picture books can help develop the writing process for all students. The data was collected through student writing samples, recorded field notes and two interviewers. The findings revealed that wordless picture books helped improve the writing process for a variety of students. Therefore, wordless picture books should be a tool used in a variety of classrooms to help encourage and motivate students to write. Wordless picture books should also be implemented into the curriculum to help guide the writing process for students and help build successful writers.

**Theoretical Framework**

The term “literacy” can have several different definitions that contribute to the actual meaning of being literate within society. One specific definition is that of Freebody and Luke (1990), which defines literacy as; “a social practice, with political and economic potentials and ramifications” (p. 15). In other words, literacy is acquired through social interactions which have roles that impact how one can become literate. This definition of literacy can also connect with the sociocultural theory of literacy, which entails that learning occurs through a social, cultural and historical context (Larson & Marsh, 2009).

Sociocultural theory states that children learn best through social interaction and with members of their own community. Children also learn by participating in sociocultural activities, which can be in everyday formal and informal interactions. Literacy knowledge is created through different tools teachers and students use in everyday life both in and out of school (Larson & Marsh, 2009). Wordless picture books may benefit children, but without the knowledge of their usefulness it is unlikely that children will develop into using them.

Children learn through the culture and community that they are raised around, which can also influence their development of specific literacy skills. If a child does not see members of
his/her community using wordless picture books as a tool for learning and engaging in specific literacy skills, then it is likely that he/she will also grow up to not use them. Writing is one skill in which wordless picture books can be used to help develop details, ideas, or sequences of the story. If more children are exposed to different types of wordless picture books, such as fiction, non-fiction, or graphic novels, then they could incorporate them into their academics.

As adult’s model and repeat actions, children may choose to carry out a literacy skill based on what they observed from the adult. What a child might see their community members engaging in as far as literacy skills may lead to their development of these skills as well. One major skill which all children acquire through social interaction is the use of written language, which is important because it allows for the process of thinking and reflecting (Kucer, 2005). The members of a child’s community can play an impact on the type of writing style that child may use. This can allow success for some students’ writing who come from a community with powerful examples, or it can hurt those students who do not have the proper support from their community members.

Besides the role of social interaction on a student’s literacy knowledge, the school environment can also impact in a positive or negative way. What a teacher wants a child to perform and accomplish within the classroom may not be familiar to them based off of their home environment. Heath (1983) has stated,

- schools have specific rules or norms for how language is to be used and how texts are to be formed. These rules and forms may affirm, build on, and extend the way in which language is used in the child’s home; may require adaptation in language rules and forms; or may directly contradict home language patterns (p. 209).
Therefore, if a child is asked to perform a specific task or use certain materials in school, but outside of school he/she does not have access to such materials, than chances are there will be a gap for that student.

Depending on the culture and community that a student may come from will determine their familiarity not only with certain literacy skills, but also with materials being used. Written language can vary especially different elements of the writing process. To ask students to complete an assigned task on writing might become difficult if they are lacking the prior knowledge to complete it.

Children who come from homes and communities that do not use wordless picture books may be at a disadvantage when it comes to doing written work based off of these books within the classroom. If students are at a disadvantage then the theory of culture as a disability is present, because the students who come from communities that cannot afford to supply these books will not be familiar with the use of them. McDermott and Varenne (1998) state that culture as a disability is when a community sets up goals and ideas for their citizens to obtain which may be out of their comfort levels. The knowledge of each person and the work that is done together makes up the culture of a community. A community is made up of many voices brought to life by others. The culture of a community is mutually constructed and is not done individually (McDermott & Varenne, 1998). The community that these children have grown up in might be denying them their rightful knowledge of how to use wordless picture books. Through the use of wordless picture books students who may otherwise struggle with writing, may now find a way to succeed in the task.

**Research Question**
Given that literacy is a social interaction seen through the involvement of community and familiarity with certain materials this research project asks, how can wordless picture books help develop the writing process for students?

**Literature Review**

The following literature review synthesizes research based off of wordless picture books and the writing process for a variety of students. To start off, I will discuss wordless picture books and the benefits of using them within the classroom. Then there will be three themes which will discuss the research discovered about wordless picture books and their influence within the classroom. The first section will discuss an in-depth look at the writing process through wordless picture books. The second section will explore the use of wordless picture books in the middle school and high school classrooms. The third section will discuss how students who are English Language Learners can benefit from wordless picture books. The conclusion of this review will give instructional support to carry out the usage of wordless picture books within the classroom. Research has been done that proves how effective wordless picture books can be within the classroom; however many teachers are not utilizing them.

**Wordless Picture Books Impact on Literacy**

Many teachers look at a wordless picture book and decide that it is not of any use in their classroom. The fact is, teachers do not know how to successfully implement them into their curriculum, so they push them to the back and forget about them (Miller, 1998). Understanding the definition of a wordless picture book would be a good starting point to comprehending the literature. A wordless picture book is defined by Miller (1998) as; “a book whose story can be understood only with the illustrations supplementing the written text.” (p. 376). Reading of wordless picture books goes beyond looking at the pictures; they are an “open-ended process” in
which readers can apply what they are viewing to their prior knowledge to create a written story (Arif, 2008).

The pictures within wordless picture books are amazing and tell their own story, but these books can also analyze a child’s emergent literacy skills based on how they hold the book and interact with the book. Wordless picture books also connect different literacies such as visual, cultural, and literacy with print (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad & Zhang, 2002). There are many different uses for wordless picture books in the classroom, but first the barrier of how to use them needs to be broken. When a teacher picks up a wordless picture book, it is important to put themselves in the child’s shoes and think of the imagination that would go into that book and the background knowledge that will be pulled from the images alone (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad & Zhang, 2002). From there, teachers must create a variety of activities that can be done using wordless picture books for students who may benefit from them.

Research done by Ekpe and Egbe (2005) discusses how picture story books are a good resource for “promoting sociocultural integration” (p. 27). Students can share their cultural background with their peers, and gain more insight to the book being read. Similarly, Omotoso and Lamme (1979) claim that wordless picture books can help stimulate all children to tell a story, and these stories can lead to the sharing of different cultures. By not having any written text on the page, wordless picture books are open for interpretation, and can help bridge the gap for many diverse students. Reading and writing are both literacy skills that can be taught and learned through the use of wordless picture books (Crawford & Hade, 2000). Through wordless picture books, children are reading the images but then can also construct their own meanings or written narratives from their own background knowledge as well.
When wordless picture books are mentioned most often, they are connected with young children who are not yet ready to read written text. The thought process that wordless picture books are only for young children could be the limiting factor in their usage within the classroom. However, struggling readers, or students who find ordinary curriculum redundant can benefit from wordless picture books (Cassady, 1998). Cassady explains that “virtually every objective in the language arts curriculum at every grade level can be developed and enhanced through the use of wordless books.” (p. 428). The misconception that wordless picture books are just for young, non-reader, students is one that needs to be diminished because there are many uses for them with older students.

The research of Dallacqua (2012) showed that students can be taught many different literacy devices through the use of wordless picture books. Creative writing, point of view, theme, and visual literacies are just a few of the different literary devices that a wordless picture book can help develop. Along with literary devices wordless picture books can aid as a model for students, whether they are young, old or from a different culture. By teachers “reading” wordless picture books aloud to their students they are modeling the correct foundation of reading, they are creating a story and can even begin to model writing for a written text off the images (Booker, 2012). In a study done by Booker, she used a wordless picture book every day with her fifth grade class and found that it was a successful tool for modeling good reading and writing. The students were motivated to write stories because they were able to make connections to the images in the wordless picture books or the books met their interests.

Wordless picture books have been researched and used for a variety of activities, and literacy skills for many years. The emergent literacy skills that can come from using wordless picture books with young children is endless (Lysaker, 2006). Young children can simply pick
up a wordless picture book and look through the illustrations and learn a lot about the literature. Since there is no written text on the page, wordless picture books are thought to be a good resource for young children who are non-readers. However, wordless picture books are not just for young children, they can also benefit students whose second language is English and students in secondary grades (Cassady, 1998). Wordless picture books are still limited in a lot of classrooms because of the unfamiliarity of their use with school curriculums. The following sections will discuss the different research found on wordless picture books.

The Writing Process through Wordless Picture Books

“Good” writing can vary depending on the individual or the task at hand. In order for an individual to write, he/she must have a good understanding of the writing process which starts off by students finding a topic, and then investigate further into that topic to begin writing (Dean, 2005). While finding a topic, teachers have the option of allowing their students to choose their own or to choose one for them, all while remembering that their written pieces will have to follow the process of good writing. Within the writing process, there are six themes that the reader looks for: ideas, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency and conventions (Paquette, 2007). For a student to be successful at the writing process, students must have a good model and understanding of it. In a study conducted by Paquette (2007), she observed a second grade class learning each of the writing traits by connecting them to a piece of children’s literature. She found that children applied skills that they were learning in all avenues of the language arts, especially writing because of the unique experiences with picture books.

When it comes to modeling good writing techniques, wordless picture books can be an effective tool (Murphy, 2009). The images within the books can be used as entertainment, information, and can create a better understanding of literature and the world (Murphy). The
wordless picture book can hold the interest of students and keep them engaged while learning different writing strategies. Also, by having students choose their own writing topic they are creating personal pieces of work and this will gain their interests. On top of that, the writing must not only be intriguing to students, but it must also be purposeful. Paquette (2007) describes purposeful writing as “real-life uses” that “help children see the indispensable function of writing” (p. 156). It is important to allow students to see that what they are writing will have an impact later on in their lives, and to show students that there are different types of writing that can be completed. The writing that students are doing while in school will help them significantly when they become adults. Some examples of purposeful writing are post-cards, book recommendations, menus, brochures and newspapers, which children can learn a great deal of authentic material from (Paquette, 2007).

The process of reading and the process of writing have been viewed as two different tasks; however, that is a misconception. Researchers have stated that combining reading and writing together can actually improve writing skills for many students (Ekpe and Egbe, 2005). If reading can help facilitate writing then it makes sense to integrate wordless picture books into the writing process. Writing is a skill which is utilized greatly in the curriculum of schools and as with any subject students can acquire difficulties with writing skills. Ekpe and Egbe suggest that “reading wordless books and sharing the stories with and among children offer a strong motivation for reading and writing among all children” (p. 27). Through the reading of wordless picture books, and in general any type of reading, the acquisition of writing can occur. Half the battle of writing is finding an interesting approach for the students and to draw in their attention. Paquette (2007) discusses how “children’s literature can be an effective avenue to motivate and engage student writers.” (p. 156). Through the use of different kinds of literature students are
being exposed to new ideas that they can use with their own writing. Similarly, Swan (1992) argues that since wordless picture books are so enjoyable children are more likely to use them as a tool for writing.

Swan (1992) believed that buddying up to learn the writing process through wordless picture books would be even more beneficial for young children because they “alternate writing the story,” and one child will not fall behind in the writing task (p. 655). Students are taking turns and branching ideas off of one another to help with their own writing. However, often wordless picture books are overlooked by teachers to help young children develop their literacy concepts. Swan studied a teacher who took on the buddy approach for writing using wordless picture books. She found that the teachers continued to model how to effectively use a wordless picture book and then the students were ready to begin the process of writing their own text for the images. Children were buddied up once their own individual work was completed and during their time together the children came up with entire stories for the wordless picture book. Teachers are unaware that wordless picture books can lead to more contradictory types of reading and can expand the interpretations of the images within the texts (Arif, 2008).

Writing for some students is difficult, and a part of it can be the lack of an interesting topic to write about or that they are just not engaged in the whole process. By integrating literature, specifically wordless picture books, into the writing process students’ may start using their creativity and branch more ideas (Paquette, 2007). Typically a teacher will use a writing prompt to encourage students to write, but these writing prompts are not always appealing to students. When it comes to writing prompts, there should be some creativity involved. In a study done by Miller (1998), the students used the images within the picture books to stimulate their imagination and creativity. With these images, students were able to create their own story,
character names, and plots. From there, the students can manipulate the story their peers created or begin to change the story in their own way. Students were beginning to use different writing strategies to create their own pieces of work.

As previously stated, writing and reading should be taught hand in hand because of the many ideas that can be created between the two (Ekpe & Egbe, 2005). In order for writing to be successful, there must be good ideas and details within the written piece. A major struggle for students when it comes to writing is the amount of details included within their written pieces. Reese (1996) found that her students were having a hard time coming up with good writing topics and adding to their writing to make it stronger. In her second grade classroom, she decided to start using wordless picture books to brainstorm good writing. First, her students had to create sentences to go along with each illustration. This type of activity was creating higher level thinking and allowing students to develop their own writing skills. Reese (1996) continued this activity with her class for six months with a total of eight wordless picture books. By the eighth book, the children’s writing greatly improved, the students had learned to “write stories in complete sentences, to expand their ideas to better describe the pictures and to produce a meaningful story” (p. 173). Similar to Reese’s (1996) study, another researcher, Booker (2012), found that by using wordless picture books his students were creating new forms of written text.

When writing a narrative text, different tenses can be used to create written pieces pick up a wordless picture book and look through the illustrations and learn a lot about the literature. Since there is no written text on the page, wordless picture books are thought to be a good resource for young children who are non-readers. However, wordless picture books are not just for young children, they can also benefit students whose second language is English and students in secondary grades (Cassady, 1998). Wordless picture books are still limited in a lot of
classrooms because of the unfamiliarity of their use with school curriculums. The following sections will discuss the different research found on wordless picture books.

**The Writing Process through Wordless Picture Books**

“Good” writing can vary depending on the individual or the task at hand. In order for an individual to write, he/she must have a good understanding of the writing process which starts off by students finding a topic, and then investigate further into that topic to begin writing (Dean, 2005). While finding a topic, teachers have the option of allowing their students to choose their own or to choose one for them, all while remembering that their written pieces will have to follow the process of good writing. Within the writing process, there are six themes that the reader looks for: ideas, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency and conventions (Paquette, 2007). For a student to be successful at the writing process students must have a good model and understanding of it. In a study conducted by Paquette (2007), she observed a second grade class learning each of the writing traits by connecting them to a piece of children’s literature. She found that children applied skills that they were learning in all avenues of the language arts, especially writing because of the unique experiences with picture books.

When it comes to modeling good writing techniques, wordless picture books can be an effective tool (Murphy, 2009). The images within the books can be used as entertainment, information, and can create a better understanding of literature and the world (Murphy). The wordless picture book can hold the interest of students and keep them engaged while learning different writing strategies. Also, by having students choose their own writing topic they are creating personal pieces of work and this will gain their interests. On top of that, the writing must not only be intriguing to students, but it must also be purposeful. Paquette (2007) describes purposeful writing as “real-life uses” that “help children see the indispensable function of
writing” (p. 156). It is important to allow students to see that what they are writing will have an impact later on in their lives, and to show students that there are different types of writing that can be completed. The writing that students are doing while in school will help them significantly when they become adults. Some examples of purposeful writing are post-cards, book recommendations, menus, brochures and newspapers, which children can learn a great deal of authentic material from (Paquette, 2007).

The process of reading and the process of writing have been viewed as two different tasks; however, that is a misconception. Researchers have stated that combining reading and writing together can actually improve writing skills for many students (Ekpe and Egbe, 2005). If reading can help facilitate writing then it makes sense to integrate wordless picture books into the writing process. Writing is a skill which is utilized greatly in the curriculum of schools and as with any subject students can acquire difficulties with writing skills. Ekpe and Egbe suggest that “’reading wordless books and sharing the stories with and among children offer a strong motivation for reading and writing among all children” (p. 27). Through the reading of wordless picture books, and in general any type of reading, the acquisition of writing can occur. Half the battle of writing is finding an interesting approach for the students and to draw in their attention. Paquette (2007) discusses how “children’s literature can be an effective avenue to motivate and engage student writers” (p. 156). Through the use of different kinds of literature students are being exposed to new ideas that they can use with their own writing. Similarly, Swan (1992) argues that since wordless picture books are so enjoyable children are more likely to use them as a tool for writing.

Swan (1992) believed that buddying up to learn the writing process through wordless picture books would be even more beneficial for young children because they “alternate writing
the story”, and one child will not fall behind in the writing task (p. 655). Students are taking turns and branching ideas off of one another to help with their own writing. However, often wordless picture books are overlooked by teachers to help young children develop their literacy concepts. Swan studied a teacher who took on the buddy approach for writing using wordless picture books. She found that the teachers continued to model how to effectively use a wordless picture book and then the students were ready to begin the process of writing their own text for the images. Children were buddied up once their own individual work was completed and during their time together the children came up with entire stories for the wordless picture book. Teachers are unaware that wordless picture books can lead to more contradictory types of reading and can expand the interpretations of the images within the texts (Arif, 2008).

Writing for some students is difficult, and a part of it can be the lack of an interesting topic to write about or that they are just not engaged in the whole process. By integrating literature, specifically wordless picture books, into the writing process students’ may start using their creativity and branch more ideas (Paquette, 2007). Typically a teacher will use a writing prompt to encourage students to write, but these writing prompts are not always appealing to students. When it comes to writing prompts, there should be some creativity involved. In a study done by Miller (1998), the students used the images within the picture books to stimulate their imagination and creativity. With these images, students were able to create their own story, character names, and plots. From there, the students can manipulate the story their peers created or begin to change the story in their own way. Students were beginning to use different writing strategies to create their own pieces of work.

As previously stated, writing and reading should be taught hand in hand because of the many ideas that can be created between the two (Ekpe & Egbe, 2005). In order for writing to be
successful, there must be good ideas and details within the written piece. A major struggle for students when it comes to writing is the amount of details included within their written pieces. Reese (1996) found that her students were having a hard time coming up with good writing topics and adding to their writing to make it stronger. In her second grade classroom, she decided to start using wordless picture books to brainstorm good writing. First, her students had to create sentences to go along with each illustration. This type of activity was creating higher level thinking and allowing students to develop their own writing skills. Reese (1996) continued this activity with her class for six months with a total of eight wordless picture books. By the eighth book, the children’s writing greatly improved, the students had learned to “write stories in complete sentences, to expand their ideas to better describe the pictures and to produce a meaningful story” (p. 173). Similar to Reese’s (1996) study, another researcher, Booker (2012), found that by using wordless picture books his students were creating new forms of written text.

When writing a narrative text, different tenses can be used to create written pieces of work (Reese, 1996). Creating written text for wordless picture books allowed students to write in the first and third person tense. Besides using different tenses students were also able to add more details based off of the images that they were seeing. Reese (1996) and Booker (2012) both found similar results in their studies. They found that their students writing ideas improved and students were even more willing to revise their writing. The writing process became a little easier for students because they had a solid model to recall back to. Booker (2012) even decided to being reading a picture book to her class every morning, because it aided comprehension, vocabulary and overall enjoyment for students. Since reading picture books to the class was gaining popularity, she decided integrating wordless and word-full picture books into her curriculum could help with the writing, and reading, skills of her students.
The combination of expository texts and narrative texts were also used for written pieces based off of the wordless picture books chosen for students. Certain images within a variety of picture books can lead to actual events and facts, or a narrative form of writing can be created (Dean, 2005). By exploring the different types of writing, both expository and narrative, students were also getting ideas of how to create different writing passages. The use of wordless picture books for Dean in the classroom concluded that writing was being re-envisioned because of the combination between text and pictures. Illustrations in the wordless picture books were creating ideas for students writing and were helping with reading strategies such as comprehension as well because of the writing that went along with the text.

The concept of writing can be challenging for students because of their lack of creative thinking which is missing in classrooms (Smith, 2004). There is a lot of pressure to perform well on tests, and reading or writing for an end result. It is through the pressure that students face that their lack of creativity begins. Teachers should begin to “develop their students’ critical thinking skills.” (Smith, p. 75). By providing more resources to students, or incorporating more “free” work time, the level of creativity may increase and teachers may see improvement. However, in order for critical thinking skills to be developed children’s confidence as writers has to increase (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad & Zhang, 2002). Students can become more confident when they are inventing their own narratives and developing their own sense of story and story sequencing. In a study by Smith (2004), her students had to discuss their writing and how it formed from the illustrations in the books. From there, the students were able to link their observations and prior knowledge to the story. Smith found that wordless picture books allowed students to think critically in relations to their own work and build off of their prior knowledge of the writing process. Students were beginning to understand that stories were not just written but were told
through a specific sequence, and within a story, there are plots and characters which are identified within the illustrations. Concluding the study, Smith (2004) found that wordless picture books were beneficial because the critical thinking that was occurring with the texts was also expanding the child’s knowledge.

Knowledge of wordless picture books has to be established before the books can be used as a model or prompt for creative writing. Jalongo et al (2002) believe that before a wordless book can be chosen, a teacher must first decide what type of background knowledge needs to be known. If students have the proper knowledge on wordless picture books, creating activities to go along with the books will be simple. Students may also begin to think critically about the information they are reading from other subject areas and make a connection to their creative writing (Smith, 2004). When critical thinking is occurring more ideas are being developed for the writing process. Students writing pieces may become more detailed or involve different areas that normally they would not add to a written piece of work. In Jalongo, et al’s study, children were encouraged and invited to create their own written texts based off of a variety of wordless picture books. The written text had introduced characters, a main idea, and have a sequenced story line. The students were able to work individually or with a partner/ small group to meet the child’s needs. By laying down guidelines for the writing piece the teachers found that an activity with wordless books could be inviting to students (Jalongo, et al, 2002).

Creative writing is a type of writing that might need modeling which can also be done through wordless picture books as Miller (1998) stated. However, wordless picture books cannot be the only form of modeling a student sees in order to become a successful writer. Patterson, Schaller & Clemens (2008) describe a process called interactive writing which “provides powerful demonstrations of writing that help young children make progress in their
own writing” (p. 496). Teachers will share in the writing process with the students to come up with ideas together, and also write the piece together. When interactive writing is used within the classroom, it enhances engagement for the writing process. Interactive writing can also bridge the gap between the writing process and different areas of the curriculum. This engaging writing technique allows for students to get an understanding of the writing process in connection with subject material and can lead to success in students (Patterson, et. al, 2008).

With young children, wordless picture books can be used as a tool to create ideas, and interactive writing can be the writing model tool. Once again, using wordless picture books during interactive writing can stimulate creative thinking (Patterson, Schaller & Clemens, 2008). Interactive writing is done with the teacher and the student, and is where the writing process is shared between the two. Both writers can share their ideas and give input on what should go into a writing piece. Adding creativity to a student’s writing through the use of wordless picture books will greatly improve certain writing skills such as adding details and expanding ideas (Jalongo, Dragich, Conrad & Zhang, 2002). The details in a writing piece can be limited, and the ideas behind a writing piece may be scattered, which is why the use of a wordless picture book as a guide for writing may be beneficial. In Patterson, Schaller and Clemens’ (2008) study, the students were introduced to a wordless picture book and then created their own individual sentences to go along with the images. Once students created sentences they were eager to begin writing the text for the entire book. This activity not only encouraged writing for the students but it also created social skills because students were working together and brainstorming ideas off of one another.

For younger students who are not as familiar with the writing process because they are still emergent learners, having a system that allows them to communicate their ideas and get
materials from other students could be successful (Swan, 1992). The use of a wordless picture book can act as a communication tool between students, and they can start to share ideas that they may have. While looking through wordless picture books nine third grade students from a study done by Liu, Akrofi, Janisch & Napoli (2011), decide to create an oral composition of the text. Once the students had tried completing this task independently, they were then able to collaborate with their peers to attempt to create a broader story line for the wordless picture book. The children all wrote in a narrative form and had grammatical mistakes but showed areas of development in their writing. Through the wordless picture book and discussions with peers, these students were able to expand their writing. However, Liu et al (2011) did realize that some of the students did not have prior knowledge on wordless picture books. Those students had to rely more heavily on their peers to engage in the activity.

**Wordless Picture Books Impact on Middle and High School Students**

Middle school and high school students are so involved with technology and are surrounded by visual stimuli (Henry & Simpson, 2001). Knowing this fact, it is hard to find materials that will draw the attention of these older students and motivate them to complete good quality work. By integrating picture books into the classroom as a resource for older students many benefits will occur. Henry & Simpson state that picture books “combine visual appeal with dynamic writing, a short venue with meaningful ideas, and, above all, are accessible and enjoyable to everyone.” (p. 30). Therefore, picture books should not be a tool that is just used with younger students; they have benefits for an array of ages. Studying the images with written language can be of great references for students who are in older grades. There are many different strategies that can be used with older students for writing. The writing process in older students can become difficult because students interests vary. However, one belief for all
students, no matter their age, is that seeing something will allow for them to remember it longer (Murphy, 2009). The information presented within picture books, specifically wordless picture books, is strictly based off of their illustrations and the images presented within the book. Students imaginations create the written text based off of the illustrations that they are finding in the picture books.

Curriculum for students in middle and high school starts to become filled with heavy content and material which many students become confused and lost about. Before a student falls so far behind that they cannot resurface, a different approach should be practiced. Integrating picture books into any content area can easily be done and can be an effective tool (Murphy, 2009). Students may be able to relate better to the information presented to them in a picture book then if it is given to them from a text book. Picture books make the content seem lighter and make learning fun as well. In a middle school classroom, Murphy used picture books to make connections to different subject areas. She found that picture books helped students get the “big picture” and were also used as a teaching tool for both reading and writing. Likewise, Crawford and Hade (2000) found that picture books helped older students with a variety of literacy skills, such as comprehension, visual literacy and story development. Through the use of wordless picture books, the students in Crawford & Hade’s study were able to become story makers and they built narratives that had meaning behind them.

Certain students need more support in not only subject areas, but with tasks involved in those subject areas, such as reading and writing. The use of picture books can give students ideas for writing and can make for a unique writing experience (Wood & Shea-Bischoff, 1997). When students struggle with reading written text they tend to struggle with other subjects. The use of wordless picture books eliminates the intensity of an overwhelming amount of words, and
allows for students to create their own written text instead (Wood & Shea-Bischoff). Motivation is another key area that is lacking for students as writers. As students enter into secondary grades they begin to gain experiences in their life that they can connect to as writers. As a teacher, it is important to connect those real experiences with the writing of the students (Booker, 2012).

Connecting content to picture books is a useful tool for teachers to use and can benefit a variety of students. Students in middle school and high school, who begin to struggle in their content courses and with reading and writing, can benefit from the uses of wordless picture books. Since wordless picture books do not have any written text, Wood and Shea-Bischoff (1997) stated that these books are found to be “less intimidating to students who struggle daily to make sense of the printed word” (p. 50). Students do not need to worry if they are uncertain of a word on the page, or if they do not comprehend the story. The wordless picture books story is being created by the reader through the illustrations. The students foundation of writing is beginning to form as well through the use of the images within the books (Miller, 1998). Therefore, wordless picture books are appealing to middle school and high school students who are ashamed of their struggles in writing, and who need to work on strategies for successful writing.

Cassady (1998) began a study with the use of wordless picture books with her middle school students who were struggling. One student in particular, Robert, was a non-reader who benefited from activities done with the wordless picture books. Robert created sentences based off of what he believed was occurring within the illustrations. From there, he was able to manipulate the sentences and create his own written text, which he could read because he created the story. Cassady found that “the creativity stimulated by wordless books encourages older students to look more closely at story details, to carefully consider all story elements, and to
more clearly understand how text is organized so that a story develops.” (p. 429). Simple writing strategies are being focused on because of wordless picture books which are helping the development of the students writing. Older students who are struggling also find wordless picture books to be valuable because the lack of written text allows for an open interpretation. Similarly, Early (1991), found that using wordless picture books with struggling students allowed for more creative thinking because there was not a solid “right or wrong” answer. The story behind the illustrations was open to the writer, and the creativity behind the story became unique.

Cassady (1998) also witnessed her struggling students working together with other students to create written pieces based off of these wordless books. The lack of text allowed the students to bring their own ideas and by working with a partner, the struggling student could gain writing support from the peers. A final thought of Cassady’s brought attention to the “visual appeal and lack of words, these little books ensure successful interaction with text—reading and writing experiences—for middle-grade students.” (p. 432). Not only did the writing improve of struggling students but so did the over-all reading ability. Crawford & Hade (2000) found that wordless picture books helped a wide range of age level children with their reading skills, which ended up helping their writing skills as well. Illustrations without words allow for a students imagination to work to its fullest, and stories that are created become special to those students.

Miller (1998) conducted a study with middle school students who used wordless picture books and found that independent writing activities could be created for these older students because more critical and creative thinking was being involved. An example of a wordless text that was successfully used by middle school students was The Mysteries of Harris Burdick which has a written caption on one page, and a picture on the opposite page. The students in the Miller
A (1998) study had to come up with a story based off of the image and any clues that were created through the caption. During this activity, students created new characters and created detailed stories based off of the images. The foundation of writing was being created for middle and high school students through the use of wordless picture books (Booker, 2012).

Writing ability for middle and high school students is critical in this stage of life as are the various literacy skills such as: decoding, point of view, allusions, and visual literacy skills (Dallacqua, 2012). In order to get the most out of wordless picture books, especially for middle school students who may not be familiar with them, they must have the proper background knowledge. Before teaching points can be made, students must know the basics on wordless picture books (Ekpe & Egbe, 2005). Once the basics have been laid down, teachers may then use wordless picture books to integrate literacy devices to middle school students.

One type of wordless picture book that is becoming more popular with middle and high school students are graphic novels. Graphic novels are defined as a “book-length sequential art narrative featuring an anthology-style collection of the comic art, a collection of reprinted comic book issues comprising a single story line” (Dallacqua, 2012, p. 365). In other words graphic novels are a mixture of images and print text used to tell a story. Dallacqua (2012) states that “graphic novels call on many complex literacy skills to decode images and print text” (p. 365). These literacy skills need to be known prior to a student being able to be successful with the images and print found within graphic novels. For middle school and high school students whose writing styles may be developing more intensely, they may benefit from graphic novels as models. Text features such as dialogue, point of view, tone, and mood are shown through these wordless books, as well as, helping students explore with written text. Wordless books are tools
that interest and inspire older students to use techniques demonstrated within the text, or modeling from teachers, into their own writing pieces (Murphy, 2009).

Many pictures books illustrate a variety of literary elements that are found in more difficult text which is why they are beneficial for middle school and high school students. For those teachers who do choose to use wordless picture books in the classroom with young adolescents, they notice an increase in depth of writing, and the interests from students (Murphy, 2009). However, writing activities need to be done frequently and therefore wordless picture books cannot be a resource to use once in a while. If reading is done every day, writing should be as well because they are both a process that go together (Wood & Shea-Bischoff, 1997). Middle and high school students have so much stress placed on them to be good readers and writers, so effective tools should be used.

Literary elements that are examined in wordless picture books are good for younger children to encourage their reading and writing and give them examples to branch off from (Arif, 2008). However, many themes and issues that are exposed in picture books are easier to understand by middle and high school students (Henry & Simpson, 2001). Picture books in general can have hidden meanings behind them, and wordless picture books are read by younger readers based solely on the images, and no creative thought process. In contrast, older students find benefits from wordless picture books because they are excellent writing prompts and a way for them to express their creativity without having a definite right or wrong answer (Henry & Simpson, 2001). Other skills that go along with wordless picture books and creative writing is the process of pre-writing skills, such as brainstorming, which many middle school aged children find difficult to explore on their own (Miller, 1998).
Miller (1998) suggested that her middle school students work individually, or with a partner/small group to compose creative writing pieces. Through the use of wordless picture books as writing prompts her students were developing richer stories. The stories written with wordless picture books were filled with details and had a creative aspect that had been missing with other writing pieces (Smith, 2004). Students were beginning to think critically with wordless picture books because of the images within the books. Miller’s (1998) students would also use single pictures to begin using their imagination in a way that they had not done in a long time. The writing skills that were developed through the use of wordless picture books were then carried over to other subject areas such as math, science and social studies (Miller).

In order to make middle school and high school students better readers and writers, Henry and Simpson (2001) decided to do a study based on pairing a class novel with a picture book. The first step in this process was to find a picture book to introduce the theme that would also be presented in the novel. Once students had been presented with the picture book, the ideas presented within the novel were found to be easier for the middle school students to understand. Similar to the study carried out by Henry and Simpson, another researcher, Dallacqua (2012) found that once graphic novels were presented to her students, discussions based around this story developed, and these discussions lead to a better understanding of major literacy devices and skills pertinent to the students grade level.

**Wordless Picture Books Effect on Students Whose Second Language is English**

Reading and writing are two skills which are difficult for young readers to pick up on and become successful. Students must be aware of the foundations of books, story structure, nature of written language and the comprehension process (Lysaker, 2006). Seeing as how reading and writing are skills which are difficult for emergent students to learn, just imagine if a child is not
fluent with the English language. Students whose second language is English have a harder time comprehending texts and composing their own written texts. Wordless picture books are an excellent resource for all students, but specifically can help English Second Language (ESL) students because of the simplicity behind the texts (Arif, 2008).

Emergent literacy is defined by Marie Clay (1967) as being the long and gradual process that children go through to become literate. Through this process, children acquire the knowledge they need about reading and writing. For students who are ESL learners, they have to acquire language through their primary and secondary languages (Hu & Commeyras, 2008). The languages are not the same and therefore children will take longer to learn the literacy skills needed to become successful readers and writers. A child’s surrounding can play a role in their development as well, Young (2001) states, “early childhood settings can provide positive literacy learning environments that support the development of emergent literacy understandings” (p. 165). The importance of combining the child’s home language with English will determine if that child can become “literate” in society.

In a study of a U.S. born Chinese girl by Hu and Commeyras (2008), a wordless picture book was chosen as a viable resource tool for teaching the English language. From there, the child was taught literacy skills such as pre-reading, during reading, and post reading activities, as well as, sentence fluency and oral and written language. Hu and Commeyras state that, “wordless picture books are particularly promising for students learning to read in a new language such as English because of the absence of print” (p. 4). The Chinese- American girl had an understanding of the alphabet before going through this study, but throughout the study she had gained oral vocabulary skills and the amount of written words she could read had doubled. Using print based picture books and wordless picture books can build emergent
literacy skills for ESL students because they are able to compare and contrast what they are seeing between the two types of books (Canizares, 2001). By using wordless picture books the child was able to participate in reading and writing activities to strengthen their literacy skills with the English language and connect it to their home language.

Any confusion that ESL students face with literacy skills such as reading and writing will be gained through the images of wordless picture books. The images within the books are so detailed and engaging that young children draw a connection to them, and are more willing to work with the wordless picture books (Smith, 1992). Besides having detailed illustrations, which are fun for the eye, these images can help with the reading process later on through the use of vocabulary words and conventions of reading and writing (Canizares). Since ESL students are unfamiliar with literacy elements, wordless books can help aide for success in the future.

As it is critical for students whose second language is English to learn the literacy skills to become literate, it is also important for teachers to be aware of different strategies for allowing the students to learn the skills. Picture books allow for communication of language learning, and can be more effective and efficient for teachers (Hsiu-Chih, 2008). Exposure to picture books motivates students to learn the reading process, and engages interests into both reading and writing. Similarly, wordless picture books eliminate the unfamiliarity of the written text and can create a comfortable learning environment for ESL students (Hu & Commeyras, 2008). The students do not have to worry if they have the correct answer, or if they are understanding the story correctly. The open interpretation of the wordless picture books allows for the students to view the book through their own point of view. Wordless picture books can help with the development of oral language, specifically by “reading” these texts because there is no right or
wrong answer (Early, 1991). Having that open interpretation allows for students from diverse cultures to use their prior knowledge to “read” the text.

Taking a deeper look at the writing process for students whose second language is English goes beyond the conventions of writing. Teachers can act as scribes for writing in the beginning of the writing process, so students do not become frustrated and see that they are creating their own writing pieces (Early, 1991). By creating their own writing pieces, students will be writing on topics that are meaningful and unique to their own lives. In a study conducted by Early, the teachers gave ESL students the option of writing their own work or having a scribe. No matter if the child had a scribe or not, they were still responsible for choosing a character to describe or a subplot. When the student had finished with their description a narrative piece would be composed based off of the ideas that the student had created. Branching off of this activity is the notion that once ESL students become comfortable with the writing process they will gain a profound interest into telling their own story, reading more books and taking a more complex look at the images of wordless picture books (Hu & Commeryras, 2008). When ESL students do become more comfortable, they are more likely to start writing their own pieces, and not using a scribe.

Further on in a study done by Early (1991), she walked her group of students through the different processes of reading; pre-reading, during reading and post reading activities. Following the “reading” of the wordless picture book The Angel and the Soldier Boy she jumped into writing exercises. With assistance from the teacher the students were able to create their own sentences or descriptions of the images presented within the text. Once the students created their own descriptions, they were able to discuss with their classmates and start brainstorming ideas off of one another. At the end, the students combined their written pieces based off of the
images in the wordless picture book and created their own class version of that book. Early found that through this activity, wordless picture books “stimulate thinking and language use across modes and text-types” (p. 250). In other words, the students were able to expand their ideas and create a wide variety of texts to match the images within the book. Her study also supports the evidence found by Hsiu-Chih (2008), who found that wordless picture books helped stimulate students and expanded their imagination.

When ten teachers were observed in their classroom by Hsiu-Chih (2008), she reported that picture books motivated children to learn. The pictures within the books also helped students to understand other cultures which they were not as familiar with. For many of the teachers and students that were observed by Hsiu-Chih, it was concluded that the use of picture books by teachers helped students develop their own means of thinking and they were able to convey the messages within the books that they were unfamiliar with before because of their background knowledge. Similarly, Liu, Akrofi, Janisch & Napoli (2011) found that wordless picture books gave excellent examples of characterization, sequencing and a sense of story which were unfamiliar to ESL students. Depending on the students’ background knowledge, their writing composition may differ from their peers.

Cultural differences are a leading factor in ESL students when they enter into a classroom and through the use of wordless picture books cross-cultural differences can be accessed (Omotoso & Lamme, 1979). When it comes time to learn literacy skills, students who have a diverse cultural background may have different background knowledge to support their learning. The wordless picture books help students learn new literacy skills while still having that connection to their own culture (Hsiu-Chih, 2008). By connecting the two languages, literacy skills for the English language may become easier for the students. In a study done by Omotoso
& Lamme, with randomly chosen seven year olds from a variety of countries, they learned that children learned their second language, which was English, through the use of wordless picture books. Throughout the study wordless picture books were used with the simple statement “I can see a ______” in which the children would fill in the word of what they saw. While engaging in this activity, the children were able to integrate their native language and background information to create their own story.

Although wordless picture books can help connect cultural differences through their many illustrations, some may say that reading illustrations from a different culture could cause challenges to students (Hsiu-Chih, 2008). Hsiu-Chih argues that illustrations from another country may be different from illustrations from their own country, and the differences might cause a challenge when it comes to reading. Also, by creating a “free” story based off of pictures a lot of children may find this unfamiliar and find that relying on their imagination is unacceptable (Liu, Akrofi, Janisch & Napoli, 2011). Creating a story based off of the students own ideas through illustrations may cause issues for students who come from a culture that is not used to the “openness” of wordless picture books. However, the challenge could also be seen as “an excellent opportunity for them to raise their cultural awareness” (Hsiu-Chih, 2008, p. 54). In other words, students will be able to see the different types of writing styles that can be done in the English language. Not only will wordless picture books help ESL students become culturally aware but it may also help bridge the gap between the oral storytelling that takes place with wordless books and reading of actual written text (Omotoso & Lamme, 1979).

Conclusion

Literature is an avenue for encouraging and motivating children to become writers (Paquette, 2007). According to several researchers, wordless picture books are one type of
literature that can draw the interests, and needs of a variety of students. Picture books are no longer secluded to young children, middle school and high school students along with ESL students can benefit from these texts (Cassady, 1998). In order to create successful readers and writers, materials need to be utilized that engage and interest the learner. Development of oral and written language occurs through wordless picture books and the array of activities that go along with them (Early, 1991). Wordless picture books have many positive qualities and value for a diverse group of learners. No matter the culture or the learner, wordless picture books have been found to motivate and increase writing skills among students (Omotoso & Lamme, 1979).

Method

Context

Research for this study took place during a literacy program held at a small local college in Western New York. The literacy program has around 60 students ranging from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The students who attend the literacy program attend different schools from the surrounding districts. The literacy ability of the students also ranges from reading levels A-Z according to the Fountas & Pinnell (2012) assessments. The demographics of the students are varied as well a third of the students come from suburban neighborhoods, a third come from rural neighborhoods, and another third come from urban neighborhoods.

The students who attend the literacy program typically work one on one with a tutor or in a group no larger than three students. During the program, students are working on their guided reading skills, writing ability, and word study. A variety of lessons are completed with the students to help them become successful readers and writers. Assessments are done with the students before the tutoring begins to attain the level that child is at. At the end of the literacy program the students are re-assessed to see if they improved in their literacy skills. Students
meet with their tutor every week for an hour and 45 minutes, this occurs over a 12 week time frame.

**Participants**

Within this study, there was one student from the literacy program, an elementary teacher, and a college professor. The student, Jacob (a pseudonym), is a fourth grade student who attends Fancy (a pseudonym) Elementary School. Jacob is an above grade level reader and is advanced in many subject areas in school; however, he struggles with the task of writing. When he is not in school, he enjoys playing sports and is in the advanced tennis group at his local tennis club. He also loves playing flag football and watching professional football with his family. Jacob enjoys reading, especially on his free time, and likes non-fiction books. Although he is an advanced reader for his age, his mother is worried about his writing ability and fears he may fall behind.

Kristen (a pseudonym) is an elementary teacher at Penny Elementary School (a pseudonym). Kristen has a Bachelor’s degree in General Education grades K-6 and in Special Education grades K-6. She has also completed her Master’s Degree in Literacy Education Birth-6. She is a very organized and structured individual who helps herself and others stay on task.

Julia (a pseudonym) is a college professor who was a teacher for over thirty five years. She taught in a general education classroom for many years before becoming a teacher for students whose second language was English. Besides being a teacher for 35 years, she was also a literacy coach in a city in Western New York. Julia has been involved in many different literacy programs and has attended several presentations on the development of literacy. She is also very involved in helping and promoting literacy programs in the local school districts.

**Researcher Stance**
I am currently a graduate student at St. John Fisher College finishing my Master’s degree in Literacy Education Birth-6th grade. I currently am certified as a General Education teacher for grades 1-6 and Special Education teacher in grades 1-6. In this study, I will act as an active participant observer, according to Mills (2011). Mills defines an active participant observer as a teacher who is “actively engaged in teaching, teachers observe the outcomes of their teaching” (p. 75). In this study I will be teaching as well as taking observational notes and monitoring the outcomes. Through my observations, I hope to adjust my teaching with wordless picture books to help my student with his writing techniques.

**Method**

Throughout this study, I conducted both qualitative and quantitative data to determine if the use of wordless picture books can help develop writing for children. Collecting data was done through field notes and writing samples of the participating student as well as informal interviews. A wordless picture book was continuously used as a writing prompt for the student. The wordless picture book that was used is called *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* and it is a collection of 13 images that only have a caption. Harris Burdick met with a publisher to create a book, but before he went back to the publishers he disappeared, and the publishers only had the illustrations with captions. The book was made up of the different illustrations with the captions, and is up to the reader to decide the story.

A writing sample was collected before the use of a wordless picture book to assess the student’s writing ability based off of a 6+1 writing traits rubric. Several more writing samples were collected and analyzed according to the 6 + 1 rubric while always having the use of a wordless picture book. At the end of the study the student was given a post-assessment to see if his writing had changed at all through the use of wordless picture books. While observing the
student using wordless picture books, I also collected field notes that allowed me to record any changes I saw or struggles that the student had faced while using a wordless picture books.

Two interviews (Appendix D) were conducted as a way of collecting data as well. The interviewees were asked questions based off of the use of wordless picture books in their teaching experiences or through their observations in their teaching. The teachers were also asked a variety of questions that went along with the topic of writing and wordless picture books and were asked to expand their answers if necessary.

**Quality and Credibility of Research**

When conducting action research, it is critical that the study is credible. Mills (2011) has identified four components to ensure that a study is trustworthy. The four components are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Within this research, the four components have been examined to ensure that the study is trustworthy.

Credibility is defined by Mills (2011), as a “researcher’s ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained” (p. 104). The research in this study has credibility because of the different data collections. First, I persistently observed a student and composed field notes based off of these observations. Secondly, I have the triangulation approach which Mill’s (2011) defines as using multiple forms of data collection and different methods. Throughout the study, I observed a student one on one who used a wordless picture book as a writing prompt. From the observations, I collected field notes that helped with this study, as well as collected multiple writing samples to show any progress that the student had made. Since the data being collected was based on writing, I also performed both a pre and post assessments. Finally, form
interviews were conducted from professional teachers on their knowledge of wordless picture books to help with the study.

Transferability is also ensured within my research which means that the information that is presented is not “truth” statements that can be generalized to larger groups of people” (Mills, 2011, p. 104). In this study, there is transferability through the detailed descriptive data that I collected. The data collected allowed me to make comparisons to other contexts.

Additionally, my study certified dependability which Mills (2011) refers to as the stability of the data on the study. In my study, I showed dependability through my variety of data collections. I conducted formal interviews on professional teachers where I asked questions based on the use of wordless picture books. I also observed a student use wordless picture books and created field notes based on his use with wordless picture books. On top of that, I collected multiple writing samples which helped in assessing how wordless picture books could help develop a student’s writing ability. The different forms of data collection allowed for overlap of information and helped eliminate any weak material (Mills, 2011).

Finally, my study ensures confirmability which Mills (2011) has defined as “neutrality or objectivity of the data that has been collected” (p. 105). Confirmability is shown in my study through the variety of data collections. The different data collected allowed me to compare and cross-check the data (Mills, 2011). Through the four components of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, my study is trustworthy. In knowing the study is trustworthy, the information that is presented gives a closer examination on how wordless picture books can be a good tool for the writing process.

Informed Consent and Protecting the Right of the Participants
Prior to conducting my research for this study, I had to receive assent and consent from my participants. I gave the student I will be observing an assent form to read and sign because he is in the fourth grade as well as discussed with him the details of the study. I also had to provide his parent with a permission form to be signed before I could actually perform any research on that student. Additionally, I had to receive signed consent forms from the professor, and the teacher in which I conducted the interviews with. For each participant, I explained the research I would be conducting and ensured them that their names would not be used and that they would be assigned a pseudonym to protect their privacy.

**Data Collection**

Throughout my research, I conducted different data collections. One form of data collection I will be doing is observing a student using wordless picture books as a writing prompt. While the student is writing, I will be taking field notes that will allow me to go back and look at any struggles he has had with using wordless picture books, or see how they benefited his writing. I have also been collecting writing samples from the student so I can see the progress that has been made with the use of wordless picture books. A pre-assessment, which can be found in the appendices, was given to the student so that I could see where the student was at with his writing. From there, I have collected different writing samples from the images within the wordless picture book. At the end of the study, I will collect a post-assessment that will show me the results of wordless picture books on the students writing ability.

Besides the student work samples and observations of the student using wordless picture books, I also conducted two formal interviews. The first interviewee is an elementary teacher who has used wordless picture books as a teaching tool before. The interview was approximately 20 minutes long and the questions that were asked were based off of wordless picture book as a
teaching tool and the interviewees’ opinions and success with them. While interviewing the teacher, I had a video recorded so that I could play back the interview for any information that may have been missed the first time through.

The second interviewee is a retired teacher and current literacy professor. I interviewed her using the same questions as the first interviewee. During the interview, I set up a recorder again so that I could play back the information. The interviewee knew that they were being recorded but their face was not shown and it was only being recorded for my personal use.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected from this action research included a student’s writing samples which were scored using the 6 + 1 Writing Traits Rubric, field notes based off of the students writing samples, and teacher interviews. While the student was writing based off of a wordless picture book, field notes were being recorded into a notebook. During the teacher interviews, a set of designated questions were asked, the interviews were recorded using a Flip camcorder and later on transcribed. Once the data was collected and read through several times, codes were created. After each data piece was coded, they were reexamined to find three common themes. The student work samples were copied to show evidence of the students writing ability as well as copies of the field notes and interview questions.

**Findings and Discussion**

The data collected through the research were student writing samples, field notes based on the students writing, and teacher interviews. While examining the data three main themes began to form. The first theme showed that wordless picture books helped encourage students to write more. The second theme revealed that wordless picture books were a good teaching tool
for writing for older students. The final theme that emerged demonstrated that wordless picture books could help ESL learners with their writing skills.

**Wordless Picture Books Encouraging Students to Write**

Many students find the task of writing to be difficult and often cannot find ideas to begin the writing process. Based off of the student writing samples, field notes, and teacher interviews it appears that wordless picture books can help branch students ideas for writing and encourage them to write more. For example, Jacob’s (a pseudonym) student work was examined using the 6 + 1 Writing Trait Rubric. His first writing sample was a pre-assessment where he was to write about his favorite sport. Below you will find the writing sample along with the table that shows Jacob’s score in the 6 different writing traits.

*Figure 1. Pre-Assessment*

![Writing Sample](image)

*Figure 1. Jacob’s writing sample from his pre-assessment which he wrote about his favorite sport; tennis.*

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6+1 Writing Traits Rubric Pre-assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 + 1 Writing Trait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I play tennis at Harley. My coach is [redacted] Dave Stebel. My rank in [redacted] is 5. I'm in advance-beginners. The reason I like tennis is because I enjoy the game.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ideas 3
Organization 3
Voice 2
Word Choice 3
Sentence Fluency 3
Conventions 4
Presentation 3

Notes: Scores of Jacob’s writing from his pre-assessment which was based on the sport of tennis. His scores ranged from a 2 to a 4.

Jacob’s original writing piece did not have details to support his topic, and was a very basic piece of writing. He answered the question of what his favorite sport was, but was very basic and did not expand his thoughts which is how he scored a 3 for the Ideas part of the rubric. Jacob’s writing piece has structure but his ideas do not completely flow together and therefore his organization score was only a 3. When it comes to voice in his writing piece Jacob is not using engaging text and the tone does not fit the actual writing. The choices of words Jacob choses when writing are very basic and he is not expanding his vocabulary usage which scored him a 3. Jacob’s sentences are short and choppy; they could be extended to tell a more compelling story therefore he scored a 3 for sentence fluency. Jacob’s stronger writing trait appears to occur in spelling. Many of the words in his writing piece are spelled correctly, and he is consistent when he misspells a word which made his over-all score a 4. Finally, the overall presentation of his
writing sample only scored a 3 because his hand writing is generally neat but it is not inviting for the reader.

The next step of the research included the introduction of a wordless picture book, *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, which has an illustration on one page and a caption on the opposite page. First Jacob went through the entire wordless picture book and added post-it notes to the images, these were simple sentences, or questions about the illustration. An illustration within the book showed a big lump under a carpet, on the post-it note he had wrote “what could it be under the rug?” Another post-it note read; “Bed Time, Zzzzzz!” to describe a picture of a girl sleeping in bed with a book. Jacob used the post-it notes to ask a question about the picture within the wordless picture book or to add a written description on what he was seeing. Once again, the sentences on the post-it notes were very short and basic and were used to express the thoughts he was having about the illustrations within the book.

Once the post-it notes were complete Jacob was ready to begin the writing process.

Several different writing samples were taken from Jacob and with each writing sample came improvement in his writing. Details were added into his writing which supported his main ideas and drew in the reader. The amount that Jacob was writing also increased from a few sentences to a solid paragraph which consisted of an introductory sentence, five detailed sentences and a concluding sentence. By the time the post-assessment was taken Jacob’s writing had improved to the point where he was writing large, detailed paragraphs and adding illustrations to explain his writing. Figure 2 is the writing sample from Jacob’s post assessment where he chose to write about his family’s summer trip and the activities that he did on this trip.
Figure 2. Post-assessment Writing Sample

Figure 2. Jacob’s post-assessment writing sample about his families summer vacation
When Jacob was writing about his family’s summer trip to Chautauqua he wrote many detailed sentences and even added illustrations to support his writing. It appears that through the use of the wordless picture book to help Jacob’s writing he decided to include illustrations in his own writing piece to give the reader a visual as to what he was meaning behind his writing. His story flows in a way that was missing from his pre-assessment piece and this specific writing piece was much longer than any other writing piece he had completed throughout the entire research. The table below shows the post-assessment 6+1 Writing Rubric score of Jacob’s.

Table 2  

*6+1 Writing Traits Rubric Post-assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 + 1 Writing Trait</th>
<th>Pre- Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: Scores of Jacob’s from his post-assessment writing sample about his families summer trip. His scores improved to 4’s and 5’s.*
The scores from above show that Jacob’s writing improved from the pre-assessment to the post-assessment writing sample. Jacob scored a 5 for his ideas because his writing piece stuck to one main idea and had several supporting details. His organization improved to a 4 because his writing piece had structure and it was easy to follow, although some of the events he discussed were not presented in an organized way. In the writing piece Jacob used voice better, he was writing in a communicative way and engaged the reader through his excited writing which raised his score to a 5. The word choices that Jacob chose were beginning to expand and he was using vocabulary to support his idea so his word choice score improved to 4. Jacob’s score for sentence fluency raised to a 4 because he was beginning to use flowing sentences but some of his sentences were still choppy and incomplete. Jacob was using the correct conventions for his grade level and attempted to sound out words he was unsure how to spell which raised his score to a 5. Finally, Jacob’s presentation score improved to a 5 because his hand writing was clear and neat and he even added visuals to help the reader understand his writing. Jacob improved his writing skills a tremendous amount after using a wordless picture book. Murphy (2009) suggests that wordless picture books be used to teach the writing process because they can be a modeling tool to show how good writing should be done. It appears that through the use of a wordless picture book Jacob was able to improve his own writing skills and become a successful writer.

Wordless picture books helped Jacob add details to his writing and expand it so that readers would be more interested in the piece of work. Jacob is not the only student who has had success when using wordless picture books. Similar to Jacob’s success with writing, Kristen (pseudonym), an elementary teacher, found wordless picture books to be successful for teaching writing to a fourth grade student. Kristen states, “we used it to encourage his writing because he
was a reluctant writer” (Interview 2012). Since Kristen’s student did not like to write she believed that by using a wordless picture book he would be more willing to write. Once she started using a wordless picture book with her student she found that, “he started to enjoy writing, I actually had to stop him after about a half hour of writing” (Interview, 2012). While incorporating a wordless picture book into her teaching Kristen found that her student had so many ideas that he did not want to stop writing; he finally liked to write for fun. When Kristen introduced a wordless picture book to her student who otherwise struggled with writing she found that he was able to compose his ideas more freely. Wordless picture books encourage children to write because they are full of illustrations which are lacking written text. When presenting a wordless picture book to Jacob he was able to use the illustrations to create a story that he would have otherwise not been able to write. Miller (1998) stated that by using wordless picture books for writing purposes students would become more inspired to do the actual process of writing. Through the research and data collected, wordless picture books gave students an extra boost to build their creativity in writing and encourage them to write more. Jacob was able to add details to his writing through the use of a wordless picture book and Kristen saw improvements in her students writing as well.

The field notes recorded during Jacob’s writing sessions also show how his overall feelings on writing changed through the use of a wordless picture book. It the beginning of his sessions the field notes state that “he would sit and stare at the paper for ideas” (Field Notes-2012). Jacob could not write quickly to answer a writing prompt question because he could not create enough details to continue to write. Once the wordless picture book was introduced to Jacob he started “asking more questions to himself while still writing” and he would get excited about his writing and want to talk about it more (Field-Notes, 2012). Now that Jacob found
motivation to write he was more engaged and was eager to share his ideas. From the first writing sample to the last writing sample Jacob’s attitude towards writing changed, this could be seen through his eagerness to write during each meeting session and through his expressions while writing. He would verbalize his thoughts because he could not write fast enough and continuously wanted to add illustrations to his writing to make it more engaging (Field-Notes, 2012). After using a wordless picture book ideas were becoming easier to write about and creativity was being created; writing was no longer a struggle. Reese (1996) believes that when a wordless picture book is incorporated with students ideas are more likely to branch and writing will become a success. It is apparent that wordless picture books can help build the writing skills needed to become a successful writing through the illustrations present within the books.

**Wordless Picture Books as a Writing Tool For Older Students**

My second theme discusses how wordless picture books can be used with older students and act as a tool to help them become successful writers. Younger children are attracted to wordless picture books because the lack of written text allows for the child to interpret the book however they choose to. Wordless picture books are not solely for younger children; older students can benefit from using wordless picture books just as much as younger students. When it comes to using wordless picture books with older students the books become a teaching tool that can help with the writing process. Many older students need guidance when it comes to writing, and brainstorming ideas. Through the use of a wordless picture book an older student’s imagination can begin to run free.

During an interview with Julia (pseudonym), a retired teacher and current college professor, she explained the different ways that she incorporated wordless picture books into her own teaching. Julia had her college students do “write ups about how they could use them
(wordless picture books) in their classrooms and a few (students) even made a wordless book themselves” (Interview, 2012). College students were benefiting from browsing through wordless picture books because it gave them ideas for their future classrooms and even allowed them to use their own creativity to make a wordless book themselves. Wordless picture books are a break from the typical reading material presented to older students and therefore they are more likely to become interested in using the books. Kristen, the elementary teacher, believes that “when you get into the middle and high school grades it is always essays and about books” (Interview, 2012). As students get older their curriculum becomes more focused around long novels, and writing essays based off of those novels, there is no time for free writing. By incorporating wordless picture books into the curriculum of older students they are getting a new form of text usage and are getting more writing ideas (Booker, 2012). Kristen also states that wordless picture books work well with older students to promote writing because “a student that wouldn’t necessarily come up with a story on their own, (a wordless picture book is) giving them the picture to go off of” (Interview). Wordless picture books are giving older students a new look on writing and is giving the students encouragement to start writing their own story to go along with the illustrations within the text. By using the illustration the student is able to create their own written text and make it their own book. In return the illustrations within the book are triggering the older students creativity which they can use towards their writing. Through the use of the wordless picture book as a writing tool older students are getting a unique writing experience which they are not normally exposed to (Wood & Shea-Bischoff, 1997).

Wordless picture books can also be used as a graphic organizer to help older students guide their ideas for writing. Julia considers wordless picture books “like graphic organizers because there is an organization to them, and if students begin to see the organization, they begin
to write” (Interview, 2012). The illustrations in the book are sequenced so that they tell a story, which in return can help a student write a story in a sequential order. By first looking through the illustrations and seeing the order the students will begin to see an outline for writing; the wordless picture books are scaffolding the writing process. Crawford & Hade (2000) believe that a wordless picture book can help with writing skills because it promotes the concept of story structure, which is similar to Julia’s belief. An activity that Julia found to be beneficial for her older students was when she had “actually given them (her students) ‘stickys’ (post-its) where they can stick the words right on the page and then from that they take those stick-ums and lay them out and start writing sentences, and they are actually writing the story” (Interview). Older students enjoy the hands on approach when it comes to writing, and wordless picture books allow for a child to explore his imagination, and create a story through the use of a manipulative such as post-its, their own drawings, etc.

Additionally, wordless picture books can help older students begin to explore different literary elements that they are learning about in school. When older students are creating written pieces of work they need to have plenty of detail and are writing in different tenses. Students are also writing essays, biographies, short stories, poetry, and other forms. The illustrations within a wordless picture book can add a spark of creativity to a child’s typical writing. Julia explained how her older students would use graphic novels, a more mature form of wordless book, and create writing pieces based off of their illustrations. The books would have characters presented within the books which her students were “actually putting stickums (post-its) on there (the wordless book) of things people would actually say, or what they think people would say in the books” (Interview, 2012). The students were creating dialogue for the characters that were present within the wordless picture book and creating their own story through those characters.
By creating dialogue within the wordless picture books older students were working on a different form of writing, and changing the tenses from first or third person. Dallacqua (2012) stated that graphic novels helped her older students work on different types of literacy devices which helped improve their writing skills. Julia found the same results as Dallacqua with her students when she did her dialogue activity. The use of a wordless picture book helped older students create unique writing pieces through a new form of literature that was not commonly seen within their curriculum. By adding a new writing tool students were becoming successful writers, and the wordless picture book helped that success.

**The Use of Wordless Picture Books with ESL Students**

The third and final theme explains how wordless picture books can be used to help ESL students learn written English. Writing is a hard skill to learn, especially if your primary language is not English. Many students who are ESL learners have limited English skills to the point where they cannot read or comprehend it. When a wordless picture book is incorporated into the curriculum for ESL learners the stress of knowing what the words within the book are is eliminated. The lack of written text within wordless picture books allows for the student to become more comfortable with the text. Kristen, the elementary teacher, believes wordless picture books work well with ESL students because they are “something that students don’t have to have pressure while reading. You don’t have to get it right, there is no right answer” (Interview, 2012). When using a wordless picture book ESL students do not have to worry about reading the book correctly, therefore they are more likely to create their own story, and write it. Wordless picture books can be used to teach reading or writing because there is no pressure in knowing what the book says. Hsiu-Chih (2008) believed that the use of a wordless picture book with ESL learners improved their overall language skills and stimulated their imagination to
WORDLESS PICTURE BOOKS HELP DEVELOP WRITING FOR ALL STUDENTS

write about the story. ESL students can relate to the illustrations within the wordless picture book and follow the story before writing about it themselves.

Speaking is one of the first skills that can be used while reading a wordless picture book. ESL students “actually get to speak what they see, then they write what they see” says Julia, the college professor (Interview, 2012). First students are verbalizing what is occurring within the wordless picture book and expressing their ideas. Once they have spoken about the illustrations they can then begin to write what they see. Julia has been working with ESL students for a long time and has done several activities that help promote writing for the students. Julia states “labeling is also important for ESL students because often they speak in only one word and they give you one word for the picture” (Interview, 2012). Since ESL students often give one word responses it is important to use this skill to have them label the pictures within the wordless picture book and begin the writing process through their labeling of the pictures. Once the students have labeled the pictures with one words Julia also “had them drawing the pictures from the wordless picture book. Seeing the pictures, drawing the picture and then labeling it themselves and having them create their own wordless book” (Interview, 2012). Through the students seeing the illustrations and labeling them their creativity was beginning to build their very own wordless picture book. It appears Julia used wordless picture books as a scaffolding strategy to get her ESL students to write in English. The lack of written words in wordless picture books work well with ESL learners who are learning to write because the books can improve the students English language skills (Hu & Cammeyras, 2008). By adding labels to the illustrations ESL students are working on their English writing skills.

When reading a wordless picture book, ESL students will most likely tell the story in their first language and then will translate it to English. If students are writing a story from the
Wordless picture books typically their stories will be different when translated from their first language to English. When Julia used wordless picture books with her students she found that “the more they have it in their own language the better it is going to be to learn English” (Interview, 2012). When students are writing the story to a wordless picture book in their primary language, it will help them understand the story line and the transition to English would be simpler. ESL students will typically connect what they are writing in English to their knowledge of their own culture so when they write a story in their primary language first it is actually to their benefit. Omotoso (1979) found that wordless picture books connected students culture with their reading and writing skills and overall helped bridge the gap between the two languages. By using wordless picture books and incorporating both the students primary language and English language the students were more comfortable with creating their own written stories.

Wordless picture books can be a useful tool to have within the classroom to promote writing for all students. The illustrations are not only engaging for students but they can begin to encourage students to become creative thinkers and incorporate the creativity into their own writing. The books can also give students an outline for their ideas and act as an organization method for their writing. Teachers are often under the belief that wordless picture books are only for younger children but through the data collected there is evidence that older students, struggling students, and ESL students can benefit from wordless picture books because they have less words, and more illustrations. Therefore, if more teachers were to implement wordless picture books into their curriculum more students would become successful in the writing process.

Implications and Conclusion
This action research project asked, how can wordless picture books help develop writing for students? There were different themes that emerged based off of the data collected and the findings. The findings suggest that wordless picture books can benefit a child’s writing process by giving the student ideas and modeling good writing, as well as becoming a teaching tool to help older students create detailed writing. Finally, the findings suggest that English Language Learning students can benefit from the use of wordless picture books because it helps promote both written and oral language.

Through a student’s writing samples, field-notes, and interviews several implications can be made. The first implication presents the notion that wordless picture books can help children develop writing skills through the illustrations within the text. The writing process can be difficult for children to learn, but through the use of a wordless picture book writing can become an easier task to learn. Young children work well with wordless picture books because the illustrations make the book more enjoyable according to Swan (1992). Wordless picture books allow for the imagination to run free, and ideas can form that a child may not have thought of without using the illustrations within these books. The findings were discovered by examining Jacob, the student involved in the studies, writing before using a wordless picture book and after using a wordless picture book. The child’s writing became filled with details that were lacking in writing samples taken prior to the use of a wordless picture book.

Younger children enjoyed using wordless picture books to examine their illustrations and create stories based off of the images. However, older students could use wordless picture books to form new ideas of their own writing, as well as add details. Wordless picture books were found to be a useful teaching tool for writing because the illustrations and lack of words made the book a form of graphic organizer (Interview, 2012). The books were also found to be a good
tool to model what good writing should look like, and could be used as writing prompts for older students. Miller’s (1998) findings revealed that wordless picture books built a foundation for writing and were a good source to use as writing prompts because a student’s ideas could be endless. Therefore, by incorporating wordless picture books into the curriculum of older students their writing would begin to expand, and the students would be more successful in writing.

Finally, the data revealed that wordless picture books should be used for ELL students because the books promote language, both written and oral. The lack of written text within wordless picture books allow for students to have a conversation about the illustrations, which in turn is promoting oral language. While discussing the book, students are talking in their primary language or can be working on practicing English. Hu and Commeyras (2008) stated in their findings that because there is an absence of words in wordless picture books, students become more comfortable to learn the English language and the written print. A wordless picture book can be used as a teaching tool to help promote language for ELL students and get them to actually think about their own writing.

In addition, wordless picture books should be a teaching tool used in a variety of classrooms. Although there is a lack of written text within the books there is not a lack of language. Oral language and written language are still being used within the wordless picture books. Wordless picture books are excellent writing prompts for students and different from typical writing prompts. The books can also help guide students writing and organize their thoughts through the illustrations. For older students wordless picture books are something new that they may not have been exposed to, and this may make them more enjoyable. Lastly, the lack of written text allows for all students to find success in using them. Looking at the
Illustrations can create writing ideas, oral stories, and can begin to expand the creativity and imagination for a student.

**Conclusion**

Furthermore, this action research did lead to further questions that did not get answered. The first limitation of this study was that throughout the study one wordless picture book was used for writing samples from the student because of time restraints. If a variety of wordless picture books were used the outcome of the research could have very well changed.

Also, the research showed that wordless picture books were beneficial for the writing process, but only one student was examined. If a child is not willing to work with wordless picture books because they are unfamiliar with the text would their writing improve or not? If this action research could be done again, I would suggest more than one student be examined through their writing samples. By having more students’ writing samples, a comparison chart could be created to see if wordless picture books help with the writing process. The final limitation of this action research was through the interviews. One of the interviewees used to teach ESL but that was several years ago. Interviewing a current ESL teacher and seeing how wordless picture books could be implemented into their curriculum could give further insight into how well wordless picture books do truly help these students.

To conclude, this research explored the use of wordless picture books and how they can benefit students writing process. Students were able to create ideas and add details to their writing based on the illustrations found within the wordless picture books. Older students could use wordless picture books to expand their ideas for writing and become more creative with their writing pieces. While older students benefitted from using the illustrations they also could use the layout of the wordless picture book as a graphic organizer, and organize their writing through
the illustrations. Lastly, students whose second language was English could benefit from using wordless picture books through the use of oral and written language. The absence of written text allowed for ELL students to create their own story lines, and could be based off of their primary language and eventually turned into English. Wordless picture books are not utilized to their full potential in classrooms because of the thought that the books are only good for younger children. Incorporating wordless picture books into the curriculum across grade levels can expand students’ ideas and lead to successful writers.
References


Appendix A

Student Writing Samples

Tennis

I play tennis at Harley. My coach is Wally Dave Stebel. My rank in further is 5. I'm in advance-beginners. The reason I like tennis is because I enjoy the game.
What is under the rug?
How did the 3rd stone skip? "Back"

How did this happen?

"Bed time. " ZZZZZZZZZZ

"News. Get your news."
Bay finds hidden harp

What is this?
Stone?
He walked down the stairs.
He saw a little dog. "Hunt!" when did this get here? He thought.

One day on Oak Street a house went "Whoosh!" up to the sky. Though the atmosphere on to the moon! But how did this happen? The only light on was in the attic. The clipping must be in there! "Go get him!"

As the house lands on the moon, the police come in and look for the crook of this disaster. They find 6 suspects: Mom, Grammy, Dad, papa, me, and Nates. They easily eliminate 2 mom and me.
Some day in the summer....

I threw a rock it skipped like, I did it again. The next rock I threw it skipped back. "Scream!" shouted my sister Natale, who is 5 1/2 like me. She ran home like the pigs running from a wolf. "Ha" I said as she ran away. Then I went home too.

I came back later with my underwater-telescope. Before I put a cage right where the rock skipped back. I looked in the cage and you'll never guess what, I saw a string! I looked under the string. I saw my older brother Cole. My sister came to see what the heck was going on.
The second to last day in Chautauqua, I went tubing with my cousins Alex and Abby. We rented a boat, put on our life jackets, and got on the boat. My parents stayed and went to a friend of theirs and we picked them up there. When we went to get them there was a bunch of seaweed! Harmless right? Wrong! We had to go around so are boat didn’t get stuck! We finally picked up my parents. Now the fun begins! We start tubing and I go first. The faster and a ready sign is thumbs up. Done is thumbs up and slower is thumbs down.

Along the way we find some of Alex and Abby’s parents friends. Their daughter comes along and rides the boat and tubes with us. And their mom (Abby and Alex’s mom) goes with her friend. I go with their daughter first. Then Alex did. She liked going Alex more because he liked to go faster than me. When we dropped her off my dad drove the boat. During that time we went swimming. It was cold since it was my first time going in. Then it got warmer and I started to jump in. Soon we got back on the boat. We used a ladder to do it, since there wasn’t another way. We went tubing for awhile.
### Appendix B

6 + 1 Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 + 1 Writing Trait</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Post-Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>3- Main Idea is present but very broad. Lacks specific details to support the idea of the writing piece.</td>
<td>5- Main idea is marked with several more details. Although some details vary away from main idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>3- Writing piece has structure although it is weak. Ideas do not flow completely.</td>
<td>4- Structure of the piece is easy to read through. Sequencing of events lacks some structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>2- Does not use engaging text. The tone of the piece does not support the actual writing.</td>
<td>5- Writing in a communicative way. Is engaging the reader and using excitement while writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>3- Begins to use advance vocabulary although could begin using more complex words.</td>
<td>4- Although basic vocabulary is used his word choices are beginning to expand to add details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>3- Sentences are created although are very choppy.</td>
<td>4- Sentence structure is formed and flows correctly through the piece, although some sentences remain choppy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>4- Spelling is consistent. Misspelled words are typically harder/ longer words but still close to correct.</td>
<td>5- Spelling is correct for grade level words and student is attempting to sound out more complex words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>3- Handwriting is generally neat, can be read but the overall look is not inviting.</td>
<td>5- Handwriting is clear and neat. Visuals help distinguish what is being written.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Field Notes

Writing Observations

- Using a writing prompt instead of wordless picture book
- "I hope to see how his writing is doing now."
- He knows he needs topic sentence, details
  - Concluding = says (concl he needs)
- Finding it hard to come up w/ ideas.
  - No introduction
- Becoming distracted
- Needs to use the article that was read about the presidential debate
- Keep being reminded of topic
  - Distractions
- Cannot come up w/ a lot of details
- When using the article writing becomes easier
- Graphic organizer first?
- He looked through pictures & read captions
  - Wrote off each picture w/ post-its
  - Used the captions as a prompt
  - Covered up the captions
  - Post its had questions, ideas, predictions
  - Very basic = not much detail
  - Started writing sentences from the post it notes made

- Brainstorm everything from the picture
  - Eliminate the obvious from writing tool
  - Uses information from the post-its first
  - Created
    - Begins writing by creating a "title" to the page
  - Tells story through 3rd person
  - Adds details / uses his imagination
  - Creating different elements in the writing piece
  - Getting excited about his writing w/ high voice
• Reminds him self about oodly details
• Brainstorms his ideas about his summer vacation
• He is writing an introduction & using characters
• Laughing while writing and showing me the writing
• Gets to a point where he begins to draw illustrations to represent his picture
Appendix D

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1) When have you used wordless picture books in your teaching, or have you?

2) Did you find them to be successful or difficult?

3) Did you find his creativity level start going up or his ideas? Or Did he just like to write more?

4) How do you think wordless picture books can help with a child’s writing process?

5) Are wordless picture books a tool you would only use with Elementary students or would you use them, or what age range?

6) And what other literacy skills do you think wordless picture books could help besides writing?

7) For the older students, and how you said they could use the pictures to help with creativity, do you think this is a beneficial tool for them or….?

8) When might you pull out a wordless picture book as a teaching tool? And why?

9) What about for students who are struggling readers and writers, how could you incorporate wordless picture books into your teaching?

10) Now, for ESL students what ways do wordless picture books, or how could they help develop the literacy skills needed to become a successful reader and writer?

11) What ways could you incorporate a child’s first language in with wordless picture books?
12) What about for like culture differences, how do you think they could work?
13) What benefits do you think wordless picture books have in the classroom?

14) For students who have not been exposed to wordless picture books, how would you introduce them?

15) What if you had a student who just did not like wordless picture books?

16) What advice would you give teachers who are not familiar with wordless picture books as a teaching tool? How often do you see them being used in the classroom?

17) When you were younger do you remember using wordless picture books in school?