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Fostering Creativity Within the Classroom

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A project in

Creative Studies

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

May 2013

Buffalo State College

State University of New York

Department of Creative Studies

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ABSTRACT

This project focuses deliberately bringing humor, magic, and Creative Problem Solving (CPS) tools into the classroom. The author aims to encourage creative talent by providing children with a refuge from the conventional limitations of the world and accepting their divergence while embracing their creative talents. The underlying techniques and skills for stimulating creativity within the classroom are examined and best ways to foster creativity within the educational systems are identified. The author focused on the following questions: (a) How might humor create a classroom community? (b) How might magic engage and create a positive learning environment for second grade children? (c) What benefits are there to using CPS with second grade students? In order to answer these questions information was gathered by the second grade students, dean, and the teacher in the form of various feedback forms, pictures, and logs used as part of the regular classroom experience. This was examined in light of the current literature and best practices. The author found that humor, magic, and using CPS tools was a good way to assist with creating a positive learning environment. It is my hope that the creative use of this project will support educators with the techniques that unleash the potentialities and creative abilities of their students.

Donna Crossman
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April 29, 2013_____
Date

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Acknowledgments

In this section, I will try to mention all of the people who have supported me during this project. First of all, I would like to thank my Mom and Dad for the constant support and for always believing in me. To my Dad, thank you for encouraging me to follow my heart and pursue my degree in Creative Studies. Thank you for all of the words of reinforcement. I always looked forward to your voice messages that were filled with words of encouragement. To my Mom, thank you for your positivity, patience, and reassuring heart. I will never forget the verse that you shared with me when I was facing a difficult time: "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able" (2 Timothy 1:12). To my sister and best friend, Gail, I would have never moved to Buffalo if it weren't for you. Thank you for always being there for me along the way and for the support. Thank you for always being truthful and always looking out for my best interest.

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Susan M. Keller-Mathers for her patience and belief in me. When I took over the second grade class mid-year I doubted that I wouldn't be able to finish my project and successfully take on the new class. However, her words of encouragement allowed me to accept the challenge and finish the project. The passion that she has towards creativity and teaching has inspired me to forever encourage creativity within my classroom. She has been my role model and inspiration while completing my masters here at Buffalo State College.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my second grade students who have made this project possible. They have changed me in a profound way. Their creative spirit and energy fills my heart with joy. It has been my pleasure watching them grow into creative individuals.

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Section One: Background to the Project

Purpose and Description

Children are born into this world as mere intricate masses of human potentialities; their chances to unleash their inner creativity depend to a great extend upon the kind of teachers who shape their lives and destinies. Many individuals possess unrecognized and untapped potentialities that will amount to little unless someone first encourages them to unleash their inner creativity. Simply put, children are curious and multifaceted beings. Teachers have the power to peel back each layer of their students in aims to unlock the realm of possibilities that exist within them. However, creativity has been suffering due to teachers who solely base their pedagogy upon text-books and teaching to the standardized tests. For years, children have been taught to think in concrete terms rather than conceptual or creative ways. The prevalent desperation of our time lies in a paralysis of creative imagination. Based upon the examination of literature and research related to creativity, we emphatically take notice that creativity cannot transpire in a vacuum, but can be fostered through the interaction of several enabling aspects. These factors include deliberately teaching learning strategies that encourage a culture of open-mindedness, and risk taking that foster creative learning. The goal of this project, therefore, focuses on deliberately bringing humor, magic, and CPS tools into my classroom to develop rapport with my second grade students.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

As a second grade teacher, I am currently in a unique position to encourage creative talent by providing my students with a refuge from the conventional limitations of the world and accepting their divergence while embracing their creative talents. I recently took over this second grade class mid-year and I have been faced with many challenges. These challenges include developing rapport and a positive classroom environment to have a successful learning year. My goal is to create a personal connection with each student with the intention to break down the barriers that naturally exist between the teacher and the student. It is my goal to transform the entire atmosphere by using humor, magic, and CPS tools. With my given situation, I believe that it is both important and necessary to tie my project into my current circumstance at work.

My project focused on the using techniques and skills for stimulating creativity within the classroom to foster a more creative environment. Completing my project gave me the opportunity to explore my understanding of the nature of creativity and its application to daily instruction in my classroom. Additionally, the significance of creating a relaxed, fun, playful, but also intellectually stimulating environment conductive to learning is stressed.

It is important to examine the positive effects of fostering creativity in the classroom. By implementing various creativity techniques in the classroom, I provided rich opportunities for students to express and use their creativity. In order to encourage creativity within my classroom, I nurture creative properties such as openness, flexibility, risk-taking, and the tolerance for ambiguity, to develop my student's creative problem solving skills. Even though there are a number of methods, strategies, and programs for teaching creativity, I chose a major well-known method called Creative Problem Solving (CPS) to utilize in my project.

From my experience, many educators would rather teach for convergent thinking or as many call it, *critical thinking*. This is because the standardized tests do not ask any questions that are related to divergent thinking. Since teachers are accountable to their students testing scores, they feel highly pressured and base their pedagogy upon asking students to remember facts or practice reading comprehension strategies. At the end of the year, my students will be taking the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) test. If my students do not do well, I could possibly lose my position. With this pressure in the back of my mind, my project will give me the ability to really teach my students how to use their creative problem solving skills when taking the test. My students will greatly benefit from the CPS tools because it involves both divergent and convergent thinking. Many teachers fail to give their students the opportunity to think of many varied solutions for certain problems. However, we cannot ignore that divergent thinking has long-term value and sets each student up for success to live in our complex world. I believe the best way to teach the knowledge-based curriculum and divergent skills are to interconnect them into the lessons. For example, if the students are working on using adjectives to describe a characters feeling in a story, I can direct students to use a CPS tool called *Brainstorming* in order to help students generate all of the possible adjectives to describe the character. My project allowed me to use the CPS tools, as well as, humor and magic to make the learning enjoyable and fun. Using humor and magic created a positive learning environment and set the foundations for more complex applications such as CPS.

I chose to use creativity deliberately in my classroom and reflect on my experience with using creativity as my project because I believe that using creativity will allow me to develop a personal relationship with my students and will permit me to have a successful year with my new second graders. I strongly believe that creativity is so important and has been suffering due to

teachers who solely base their pedagogy upon text-books and teaching to the standardized tests. For years, children have been taught to think in concrete terms rather than conceptual or creative ways. However, I want to be that one teacher who gives my students the power to use their creativity. My project allowed me to document my experiences in my new classroom and allowed me to develop rapport that is needed to have a fruitful year.

Sternberg and Lubart (1999) stated that "Creativity is a topic of wide scope that is important at both the individual and societal levels for a wide range of task domains" (p.3). The power of creativity enables individuals to make a positive difference in society. Many educators strive to develop well-rounded citizens of society. However, our society's chance of reaching this ambition is to have outstanding teachers who can unleash the creativity within their students.

Creativity is Essential

Sir Ken Robinson (2006), an international leader in the fields of creative education, has stated that: "Creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status" (n.p.). Our society needs exceptional teachers who go against the norm by making it a priority to foster creativity within their classroom. In an era filled of change with processes and technologies by which information is captured and manipulated, it is imperative that educators are setting their students up to face the multifaceted workforce. Validating the philosophy of the importance of creative problem solving skills is explored by Daniel Pink in his bestselling book, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (2006). Pink stated the following:

We are moving from an economy and a society built on the logical, linear, computer like

capabilities of the Information Age to an economy and a society built on the inventive,

empathic, big-picture capabilities of what's rising in its place, the Conceptual Age. (p.1)

Clearly, it is crucial that educators give their students rich opportunities to analyze and

assess problems that involve imagining and building new models to overcome complex

situations. If our highest desire is to develop citizens that are ready to face the complex business,

political, and cultural issues, than our teachers must give their students the chances to use

creative problem solving within the classroom. Building from this thought, it would be logical

for our educational systems to evaluate whether our current system is adequately setting our

students up to effectively function in this new era. Considering the significance of creativity, it is

rational to declare that creativity should be taught and fostered in education. Guilford (1992), one

of the seminal scholars in the field of creativity, proclaimed that, "That of all the consequences

of various actions on creativity, those related to education undoubtedly have the greatest and

most enduring social impact" (p.72). It is meaningful, therefore, that educators foster and

encourage creativity within their classrooms. In order for them to do so it is imperative for

educators to know what creativity is and how to use Creative Problem Solving (CPS) in the

classroom. My project provided the opportunity to use CPS, humor, and magic in the classroom

to promote a positive and creative atmosphere.

Questions To Consider

The author is curious about the ways utilizing magic, humor, and CPS tools within the

classroom affect second grade students. The following questions were considered as part of

reflecting on the use of deliberate creativity techniques:

- How might humor create a classroom community?

- How might magic engage and create a positive learning environment for second grade children?

- What benefits are there to using CPS with second grade students?

Section Two: Review of Related Literature

Creativity is Important

The creative experience itself is very complex and therefore can accommodate many diverse definitions and approaches. The terminology behind creativity has perplexed psychologists, philosophers, and educationists for centuries. There are vast definitions, philosophies, and theories related to creativity. Many educators strive to develop independent creative problem solvers. However, our society's chance of reaching this goal is to have outstanding teachers who encourage creativity within their classrooms.

There have been many debates in designing the right curriculum and education for our era. Frequent references have been made to the notion that educating to the "whole being" is significant. For example, in his book *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*, Sir Ken Robinson (2001) stated the following:

A report on primary school education in the UK in 1931 said that education has to look to the whole child. It emphasizes the importance of play, self-expression and creative activities which, it said 'if the psychologists are right, are closely associated with the development of perceptions and feelings'. The dominant tendency to see the school curriculum as a jigsaw of separate subjects had to be questioned. So did presenting work to children simply as lessons to be mastered. Education had to start from the experience, curiosity and the awakening powers of children themselves. (p.158)

Educating to the whole child means that teachers need to give their students rich learning experiences. Just like adults, children need to be given the chance to step away from the ridged workload. Incorporating humor and magic are ways to allow the students to relax and develop

positive feelings. Educating to the whole child also means that education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge, but must take a new path that gives children engaging learning experiences. Educators are always thinking of new ways to engage their students. I immediately think of the many late nights and early mornings I spend trying to decide how to improve, build rapport, manage behaviors, reach goals, engage students-all of this within the constraints of my schools and state's curriculum. The curriculum and teacher resources are not sufficient in regards to unleashing the creative potential of my students, as well as, developing meaningful relationships. However, bringing humor and magic in the classroom engages students and makes them want to learn. It creates a playful environment where children feel comfortable to laugh and build positive relationships with their classmates.

Creating a Comfortable Atmosphere

Student engagement is a key factor in learning. My second grade students enter my classroom with their own baggage of personal distractions. I don't know what is on their minds and what might be happening in their lives. However, it is my job as their teacher to snap them to attention and set them up to be fully engaged in learning activities. Among all of the instructional reasons for using humor in the classroom, there are two that have bubbled to the surface. According to Berk (2002), humor "Builds the professor-student connection, and it engages students in the learning process" (p.56). Berk makes it clear that humor does indeed have positive side effectives to student engagement. Berk (2002) states that, "Humor can chop down, smash, demolish, even vaporize the pre-existing barriers that separate you from your students. It opens up communication that's not based on fear or intimidation" (p.4). Clearly, using humor in the classroom creates a positive, constructive, and a relaxed learning environment. A bonding or rapport develops between you and your students that is founded on respect, trust, and fun.

(Lowman, 1995). There is research support for the essential connection between humor and positive student learning, satisfaction, and retention (Astin, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

There is psychological evidence has found that laughter increases catecholamine levels in the brain, which improve overall mental functioning (Fry, 1984). These positive effects can have a direct impact on learning. Therefore, implementing humor prior to or during lessons can prime students' brains so they have increased motivation and memory. Humor has also been adopted by psychiatrists in their therapeutic treatment of people with a variety of mental disorders. One technique that they have used in the past is called, "paradoxical therapy." Berk (2002) states that "It has been used with people who are primarily focused on their problems and unable to detach themselves from their current situation or challenge" (p.53). The psychiatrist uses hyperbole, or they exaggerate their client's problem so such an extreme that he or she will laugh at their problem. This technique creates the detachment between the person and their problem which is necessary to begin working toward a solution. Psychological theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Gordon Allport, Rollo May, have concluded several theories about humor. Freuds theories imply that humor helps alleviate the individuals current challenge while Allport makes it known that one who laughs at their self may be more prone to manage their problems. May indicates that humor is healthy because it helps an individual look at the bigger picture of the problem by standing at a distance. Their theories include the following:

- Humor is "the highest of the defensive processes" (Freud, 1960, p. 233).
- "The essence of humor is that one spares oneself the affects to which the situation would naturally give rise and overrides with a jest the possibility of such an emotional display" (Freud, 1959, p. 216).

- "The neurotic who learns to laugh at himself may be on the way to self-management, perhaps to cure" (Allport, 1950, p. 92).

- Humor has the function of "preserving the sense of self…It is the healthy way of feeling a 'distance' between one's self and the problem, a way of standing off and looking at one's problem with perspective" (May, 1953, p.61).

Clearly, using humor in the classroom allows one to distance themselves from the immediate threat of a problem situation. Using humor allows one to view the given problem in a different way and it reduces the negative feelings that normally occur. It is obvious that humor can be a powerful antidote. It is obvious that humor can create a sense of control and superiority over a problem stimulus or an uncomfortable situation.

Educators are always trying to find ways to hook their students. The hook pulls students into the learning process to engage their emotions and focus their minds. This is imperative not to just open class, but throughout the class to continue engagement because students especially at the primary level can start squirming in their seats and become restless. Using humor can bring students back to life and will draw them to the lesson. The tone and the mood of the teacher can transform students. Berk (2002) stated the benefits of humor and laughter and mentioned that, "The benefits can have an impact in five areas: (1) Professor-student connection, (2) classroom atmosphere, (3) student responsiveness, (4) test performance, and (5) student attendance" (p. 58). One of humors most significant benefits is to create a relaxed, playful, and fun environment conductive to learning. This is accomplished by its stress and anxiety reduction effects on both the students and the teacher. Even though many students walk in with baggage from their home lives, humor can detach their focus from their baggage and redirect it to the learning that is being conducted in the classroom.

The teacher is the number one person in the classroom that sets the atmosphere up for creative thinking and learning. Educators have a tremendous responsibility to not only create well-rounded citizens of society, but to also become more effective in bringing their students to their fullest creative potential. Our society tends to assume that good teachers are those who are authoritative and assertive. However, according to his book, *Creativity: Its Educational Implications*, John Gowan, makes it clear that authoritarianism stifles creativity and represses imaginary. Gowan makes it clear that children will not take risks if they do not feel safe and encouraged to do so. How might we make children feel safe? Incorporating magic and humor allows them to feel as if they are working in a safe environment where they are free to laugh. Education and knowledge can benefit the individual to achieve their fullest potential. However, our culture tends to suppress the proper skills and nourishment for further creative development. Gowan (1967) stated that:

> One way to promote the use of creative thinking as an aid to conceptual growth is to make the teacher's role less directive and more responsive, to have the learner focus on a problem, and allow him to gather data freely with the help but not the direction of the teacher. (p.55)

Teachers must make their instruction more student-centered rather than teacher centered. However, incorporating humor and magic in the classroom does not mean chaotic conditions that allow students total freedom. Nor does it apply the teacher as the person always in charge and the sole supplier of information. In reality, creative productively imposes upon an individual when they feel at ease in the classroom and when they are provided with enough structure to feel secure. Incorporating humor and magic makes the learning environment comfortable.

Many of our educational systems solely focus on developing well-rounded individuals and tend to ignore the creative growth that is necessary. It takes little imagination to recognize that the future of our civilization depends upon the quality of the creative imagination of our next generation. An awareness has been discovered that we are all creative yet lack the techniques to master the creativity from within. However, before teachers unleash their students' creativity, they must set forth a culture that encourages openness to internal and external experience. Students need to learn to take risks in an open and comfortable atmosphere. With this being said, educators need to make sure that they limit harsh authoritarianism in aims to make the learning environment comfortable. When there is humor and magic in the classroom, the students feel more at ease and comfortable. In his book, *How to Become More Creative,* Alex Osborn (1964) stated:

> Creativity is like another heart. No one has found the sources of its power, but no one doubts that the source is within us. It will keep us alive if we give it a chance to beat for us. If we let it be stilled, there is then no more life. It needs continual exercise. If we keep going strong, it can help us more and more to emit the needs of living. (p.1)

Like Osborn, I agree that creativity needs to be exercised in order for it to continue to grow and live. However, if the teacher continuously plays the harsh authoritarian role, this will ultimately silent their students creativity. It is perfectly obvious that teachers have a great deal to do with fostering a child's creativity and the type of evaluations and the climate which encourages risk-taking in search of creativity. Teachers can do this by welcoming their students' ideas and by giving them rich opportunities to use their divergent thinking skills. In brief, a creative-friendly classroom provides experiences with choice, provides informational feedback in assessment,

encourages independence, and inspires experimentation and questioning. Like Gowan, I believe that educators need to have a balance between the teacher-role and the facilitator role.

History of CPS

The CPS model has changed and expanded in many ways since its origins. The original work of Alex Osborn has made the creative process more lucid, following fifty years of research and further development on creative problem solving.

Alex Osborn was an advertising executive and found that traditional business meetings were inhibiting the creation of novel ideas. He was eager for his colleagues to generate more ideas. As a result, he invented Brainstorming and the idea Checklist to help stimulate and guide his colleagues in producing more original ideas. is recognized for developing the original description of CPS. He was ecstatic that deliberate use of creativity tools resulted in inspiring more ideas. He was eager to proclaim his theories and dig deeper into the process of creativity and if it could be taught. Osborn began making the creative process more deliberate and clear. In 1953, Osborn wrote the book, *Applied Imagination,* and initiated Creative Problem Solving as a seven-step process. His seven original steps include the following:

1. Orientation: Pointing up the problem

2. Preparation: Gathering pertinent data

3. Analysis: Breaking down the relevant material

4. Hypothesis: Pilling up alternative by way of ideas

5. Incubation: Letting up to invite illumination

6. Synthesis: Putting the pieces together

7. Verification: Judging the resultant ideas (Osborn, 1953)

Ten years later, Osborn published his third edition of Applied Imagination, and condensed his original seven steps into three stages. These stages included: fact-finding, idea-finding, and solution-finding. Osborn was not only interested in enhancing his colleagues at his advertising business, but he took interest in developing the creative talent in both teachers and their students. He "breathed" curiosity into the world and steered away from the conventional way of thinking. His extraordinary work planted the seeds in the minds of individuals who wanted to escape the traditional way of thinking.

Parnes Steps in the Picture

Pursing his work, Osborn worked closely with Sidney Parnes to continue the enrichment of creativity in the lives of individuals. Alex Osborn passed away in 1966, leaving Parnes and his colleagues continuing his work with CPS. Parnes modified Osborns approach and it became known as the "Osborn-Parnes" approach. The new Osborn-Parnes CPS model demonstrated the following five steps:

1. *Fact-Finding*

2. *Problem-Finding*

3. *Idea-Finding*

4. *Solution-Finding*

5. *Acceptance-Finding*

Parnes continued to work and revise the model. He kept an open mind and drew from other programs to help him enhance the CPS model. By doing this, the CPS model was developed by renowned researches and thinkers. In time, Parnes added a sixth step at the beginning of the process called Objective-Finding.

Creativity Courses

Between 1969 and 1971, Sidney Parnes and Ruth Noller conducted a research study called the Creative Studies Project. The study included freshmen students who took creativity classes over the course of four semesters. Consequently, the students performed significantly better in numerous creativity assessments compared to the students who were not enrolled in the creativity classes. Parnes and Noller are well recognized for opening the door to the creation of a Creative Studies graduate program

In 1982, Dr. Scott Isaksen began developing the model further. In 1985, Isaksen and Treffinger enhanced the model in aims to make the model more flexible and explicit. According to Isasken and Treffinger *"*The new description, Version 4.0 of CPS, organized the six CPS stages into three main components of problem solving activity based on how people behaved naturally. The three components were: Understanding the Problem (Mess-Finding, Data-Finding, and Problem-Finding), Generating Ideas (Idea-Finding), and Planning for Action (Solution-Finding and Acceptance-Finding)" (2005, p.5).

Plain Language

Dr. Gerard Puccio took over in 1997 and desired to make the model more vibrant and appealing. The purpose of plain language was to be able to teach others so they would be able to easily grasp the concept of the CPS model. They changed the CPS process to depict that it is an

interrelated cycle. They wanted to make it clear that the phases of the process overlapped each other. A vibrant venn diagram captures how Osborn's three phases correspondence one another.

Models Go Circular!

Leaders at the CPSI conference continued to teach the 6-step Osborn-Parnes model but created a visual graphic that represented a circular model. The circular model symbolizes that the phases overlap and intersect one another. Treffinger and Isasksen modified their model into a circular one in their 6.1 version. According to Isasksen and Treffinger , "In CPS Version 6.1, we expanded our emphasis on CPS as a system-a broadly applicable framework for process that provides an organizing system for specific tools to help design and develop new and useful outcomes" (2004, p.94).

The Thinking Skills Model

The Thinking Skills Model is the newest version of the development of the CPS model. In 2007, Puccio, Murdock, and Mance introduced the Thinking Skills model that incorporated both affective and thinking skills. It demonstrates the unique essence of each stage and the starting point depends on the problem and the need.

Research Study on the Benefits of CPS Training with Students

Kristen Puccio (1994) investigated the effectiveness of CPS training with primary age children. She specially looked at how CPS might help children with the real-life problems that they face. Kristen collected various feedback forms, logs, and video tapes. Qualitative data was collected from the teacher, two observers, and the first grade students. Her research indicated that the primary age children were able to apply CPS on their real life problems. Her research also showed that the children could apply seven out of the right divergent and convergent tools.

The children could also share their thoughts through drawing and they were able to recognize the stages. Her findings indicated that young children can indeed apply CPS to solve real problems.

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Summary

This section discussed the reasons why creativity should be encouraged in the classroom. The section argued that the best way to teach creative thinking in the classroom is CPS. The first part of the session demonstrated then nature and purpose of this study. The second part of the session discusses how creativity is important. The third section examines how to limit harsh authoritarianism through magic and humor. The fourth part of this section discusses the history of CPS. The fifth part of the section discusses that children can indeed learn CPS. Finally, additional literature that has informed my thinking is included.

Section Three: Process Plan

Introduction

This section reviews the process used in this project. First, it described the rationale for

methodology first and gives a description of the participations. The section goes into detail how I

brought humor, magic, and CPS tools within the classroom. I utilized the following CPS tools:

Brainwriting, Storyboard, Forced Connections, Stick-em up Brainstorming, and Card Sort.

Rational for Process Design

This project was designed to implement some aspects of creativity in the classroom and

examined how they work. The questions I was interested in looking at were (a) How might

humor create a classroom community? (b) How might magic engage and create a positive

learning environment for second grade children? (c) What benefits are there to using CPS with

second grade students?

Throughout the project I collected student feedback on the sessions and I kept a

communication log of my observations. The data that I collected helped me to better understand

the benefits and affects humor, magic, and CPS tools had with second grade students.

Participants

The project focused on using humor, magic, and CPS tools with my second grade

students. The applicants are proficient second graders, (meaning that they are fluent readers and

are mostly above their grade level) who attend an urban charter school in the city of Buffalo. The

majority of my students live in an impoverished community. The particular charter school that

they attend practices school leveling. This indicates that the students are separated into three

different classes based on their perceived ability. The different classes include novice, middle, and proficient. Recently, I was introduced as a new teacher to the second grade students. In addition to having a new teacher, the majority of the students were having difficulties already because they did not meet their Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) goals. The NWEA was developed from the common goals to improve the education systems. The data that the school receives from the students NWEA scores are meant to inform instruction. It guides teacher's professional development and validates their assessments. The majority of the participants are at their second grade level score but did not have fall to spring growth. The students take their last NWEA test in May and strive to surpass their goals. It is my goal, as their teacher, to use magic, humor, and CPS to create rapport with each child, as well as, push them to grow in aims to meet their NWEA goals.

Teaching in the Classroom

February 25th-March 1st, 2013

Described next is documentation of use of humor, magic, and one CPS tool (Stick-em up Brainstorming). Throughout the week I began the day with the "joke of the day." I noticed a difference in students' behavior. All of my students were engaged and eager to hear my joke. Before I gave the answer, I went around the room and called on students to guess the answer to my joke. I noticed that all of the students were eager to participate. I noticed that the energy changed. When I announced the joke of the day, the energy was high in the room. After I said the joke of the day, I observed the atmosphere to be more relaxed. After we transitioned from the joke of the day to English Language Arts (ELA), the students still had high energy between transitions. I also implemented the pepper magic trick. I used water, soap, pepper, and a cup. I directed a volunteer to try to separate the pepper from the water. I called on three volunteers to

attempt to separate the pepper from the water. However, all of the volunteers were unable to separate the pepper from the water. When I stuck my finger in the water, the pepper magically separated from the water. I secretly had some soap on my finger which made the pepper separate from the water. The students loved this trick! All of the students were engaged and the atmosphere was filled with energy. I also implemented a CPS tool. We worked on the challenge statement: *What might be all of the predictions for weather?* I taught my students the rules behind brainstorming and made it clear we were deferring judgment. I went over the ground rules of deferring judgment, striving for quantity, freewheeling, and seeking combination. The student's goal was to come up with 20 ideas within three minutes since it was their first time. However, the students came up with 60 ideas within three minutes! They were all motivated to be a part of the session and the energy was high.

March 4th-8th, 2013

Throughout the week, I documented using humor, magic, and CPS within the classroom. I did the "joke of the day" throughout the week and the students enjoyed it. I noticed that the students' behavior changed after I implemented the joke of the day. Before the joke they were unengaged and were not participating. After implementation of the joke, the students all were sitting up and eager to hear the answer to the joke. It hooked the students for the lesson after it. I also implemented a magic trick. I used a coloring book that was filled with colored pictures. Then all of a sudden there were blank pages in the book. The students really enjoyed this trick and looked forward to it. Throughout the day they were on task and there were minimum behavior problems because they wanted to be a part of the magic trick. I also implemented forced connections. Forced connections are unique because they provide a force fit between the pictures to the problem to generate more ideas. When they students were slowing down with

ideas when they were writing, I walked around the room and asked the question, "What are all the ideas you get form looking at this picture?" I used forced connections because the students were really struggling with generating ideas for their introduction. The students were assigned to write a movie review and to really grab the reader's attention in the beginning of the introduction. The students were also assigned to really persuade the audience to either watch the movie to not to watch the movie. There were three students in particular who were very frustrated with the assignment. However, when they were introduced to forced connections, they were able to easily generate more ideas. It was amazing to observe the students going from being frustrated to becoming confident writers, all because of forced connections. The students really enjoyed forced connections and it helped them generate more ideas when they were writing. I look forward to use this took in the future, especially when it comes to writing.

March 11th-15th, 2013

Throughout the week I implemented the joke of the day. It was nice to see the students participating and engaged. The humor set up a positive learning atmosphere. I also implemented Brainwriting which is an excellent CPS tool that gave my students time to reflect on their ideas and deliberately build on other thoughts. It is different than Stick-em up Brainstorming because it is more of a private individualistic form of brainstorming. This worked so well with the students who are shy and are overshadowed from the more vocal students. While I was observing, I noticed that my shyer students did not have a problem expressing their thoughts on paper. They generated as many ideas as my more vocal students. As a class, we worked on the challenge statement, "What might be all the ways we could stay calm during the NWEA test?" Each student began with a Brainwriting worksheet and wrote down three ideas in separate boxes. The students did an outstanding job keeping silent and generating ideas. When they were

finished, they would pass the sheet to me and I would give them a new sheet. They did this until the five minutes was up. The students came up with 100 ideas in five minutes. In their exit slips all of the students stated that they now have more ideas on how to stay calm during the test. They said that they enjoyed the activity and enjoyed building upon other ideas. Another student noted that she liked Brainwriting because no one was shouting out their ideas and she could focus. Overall, the session went very well and the students really enjoyed it.

March 18th-22nd, 2013

Throughout the week I implemented the joke of the day. My students really enjoy the joke of the day and look forward to it. I usually implement the joke of the day between transitions to get the students motivated again. If I noticed that the students are distracted by something or unengaged in my lesson I quickly change things up. Bringing humor in the classroom creates a comfortable and safe atmosphere. It is a quick way to draw them back in. I also implemented a CPS tool called storyboarding into my English Language Art (ELA) lesson. My class recently just finished the book, *Nate the Great* so I created a storyboard they were assigned to finish. The storyboard contained six boxes. I directed the students to draw a picture for each box to capture the challenges the main characters in the story overcame. The first box of the storyboard asked students to identify the main characters. The next three boxes of the storyboard asked students to draw and identify challenges that the main characters experiences. The last box directed students to draw a picture of how the main characters solved their challenges. The students really enjoyed this CPS tool because it had them create a depiction of how they envisioned the story. They not only were given the change to identify the main characters, challenges, and solutions, but they were able to artistically share their thoughts. Not only did this activity capture higher level thinking skills, but the students were also very

engaged. I was very impressed with the students' illustrations and I look forward to use this again in the future. I also implemented a magic trick. This magic trick I implemented was a card trick. I asked a volunteer to pick a card from the deck. A student then was directed to show the card to the audience. Then the student was directed to put the card back in the deck. I ended up revealing that his card was the card that he chose. I knew this because I divided the card deck into all of the red cards on one side and all of the black cards on the other side. This trick is called a "force" because the student was almost forced to put his black card that he picked in the red pile. I was able to identify his card because it was a black card amongst the red ones. The students really enjoyed this trick and were very engaged.

March 25th-29th, 2013

Throughout the week I was given the opportunity to implement the joke of the day. From my observations I have described that humor opens up communication that's not based on fear of intimidation. Instead, I have noticed that using humor allows communication to be positive, constructive, and relaxed. My students are participating more because they desire to share their own jokes with the class. This sets up the day for a positive learning day. Just by using humor, I feel that I am connected to my students on a whole different level. In the beginning of my new position, the students rarely participated and never raised their hand to tell their own joke. Now, all of my students are eager to share. I also implemented the CPS tool called Card Sort. Card Sort is a convergent tool that helps people compare and rank options. My second grade class was learning about bar graphs in math so I thought it would be perfect for them to rank their favorite desserts by using the CPS tool, Card Sort. Every one of my students received five index cards. Each index card has a specific kind of dessert on it. The students were directed to identify the option that they liked the least. Next, the students were directed to write the number 5 on that

card since it equals the total number of cards they had. Then, the students were directed to pick

the dessert they liked the best and put a 1 on it. Then the students were directed to identify the

next dessert that they liked the least and put the number four on it. As a class, we continued this

process until all the cards were ranked. As a class, the students shared their results with me. I

created a tally mark table from their rankings. Then we used the tally marks to create a bar graph.

It was amazing to see the amount of participation that I received from using card sort in my math

lesson. Since the students were taking ownership in their learning, they were eager to share their

results.

Section Four: Tangible Outcomes of the Project

Introduction

One of my goals of this project was to transform each child to develop a group of children that are able to work together. By implementing my project, my students have developed into individuals who are not afraid to share their ideas and communicate comfortably with one another. I used deliberate ways to foster a classroom community of openness, taking risks, and not judging one another. The end product is the growth of my second grade students. They were given the opportunity to be in a comfortable atmosphere where they are able to unleash their creativity. During the project, I kept a communication log where I wrote down notes of my observations of bringing in humor, magic, and CPS tools within my classroom. I also collected Exit Slips from the students that shared their personal attitudes towards the sessions. Below are some examples of my communication log that I kept. I also took photos and video taped some of the humor, magic, and CPS tools that I brought into the classroom.

An examination of the various feedback forms and EXIT slips were collected. Tentative linkages are developed between the author's theoretical core concepts and information gathered from the students, as well as, observations from the author. The author recorded her written reflection through a communication log and found that humor, magic, and CPS does indeed have positive affects. CPS sessions, magic, and humor took place to pull all of the details together and to help make sense of the data with respect to the emerging theory. This theory entails that humor, magic, and CPS have positive impacts towards second grade students.

EXIT slips were used to assess the students' attitudes towards using humor, magic, and CPS within the classroom. The EXIT slips indicate that the students did in fact enjoy humor, magic, and CPS tools. The current project also used a communication log that was used by the author. Anecdotal record sheets were used by the author. The communication log was used to record the author's observations pertaining to the students' reactions to humor, magic, and CPS tools. The author found that there were many positive effects from using humor, magic, and CPS tools in the classroom. The author observed that the students were motivated to learn and became more enthusiastic in learning.

The following communication log provides great insight into my observations of my students' attitudes and results of implementing humor, magic, and creativity within my classroom.

Communication Log

Perceived Impact on Students' Attitudes

Implementing humor, magic, and CPS tools within my classroom has had a positive effect on both me and my students. There are five topic themes included in this category. I have taken quotes from my communication log to demonstrate the authentic ways humor, magic, and CPS tools affected my students.

Improved Participation in Class

Overall, my students' participation has improved in class due to utilizing humor, magic, and CPS tools.

Quotes:

- "Utilizing CPS tools has improved my students' participation and interest in the challenge statement."

- "My students are eager to share their joke of the day to the class and are willing to give ideas on magic tricks."

- "During brainstorming, all of my students are willing to share their ideas without hesitation."

Impact on the Attitudes Toward Ideas

During my observations I have taken notice that the use of CPS tools have impacted my students' ways to dealing with ideas.

Quotes:

- "All of my students love to share their ideas and their thoughts. They are excited and enjoy sharing crazy ideas."

- "All of my students feel free to share their ideas even if they are unusual ones. They are comfortable enough to tell me their ideas whether it be writing me a letter or sharing them out loud in class."

- "My students never judge their ideas. They are excellent at striving for quantity."

- "If they have an idea for the joke of the day, they are always willing to share"

Impact on the Attitudes Toward Learning

Using humor, magic, and CPS tools within my classroom has made my students more motivated to learn. They look forward to the joke of the day, the magic trick, and using a CPS

tool. I have seen my students take more ownership in their learning because they are willing and enjoy sharing their ides.

Quotes:

- "My students are engaged in the lesson because of the humor that we bring to it."
- "My students extend their learning by building off each other's ideas."
- "My student's enthusiasm of learning has increased. They desire to learn because they know they will be able to share their ideas."
- "My students' energy level has increased because they look forward to the joke of the day, magic, and CPS tools."

Impact on the Attitudes Toward Problem-Solving

Through my documentation I have noted that using CPS tools within my classroom has changed my students' attitudes toward problem-solving. Through all of my CPS sessions, I have noted a positive impact.

Quotes:

- "They are learning that there can be more than one answer to a problem"
- "They have learned the power behind divergent thinking and to work together as a team."
- "They are aware to state problems with challenge statements such as *How to…?"*
- "My students are excited to solve a challenge through brainstorming."
- "My students are now thinking more for themselves when approached with a challenge."
- "My students are willing to build upon each other's ideas and seek wild and crazy ones."

Students like Humor, Magic, and CPS

My students like humor, magic, and CPS and look forward to it. They always remind me to implement the joke of the day because they are eager to hear it. They look forward to the magic trick and CPS tool.

Quotes:

- "Students show excitement when I am implementing a magic trick."
- "Students show that they enjoy humor through their body language and laughter."
- "They love CPS tools because they get to share their thoughts and idea."

Perceived Affect on Student Behavior

Through my communication log I also have noted perceived influence on student behavior from utilizing humor, magic, and CPS tools within the classroom. There are three topic themes in this category.

More Cooperation

I have observed students to be more cooperative with each other. For example, I have observed students building on each other's ideas and asking one another for help when they needed calcification.

Quotes:

- "Students have found good recourses in each other and will ask others for ideas or help."

- "They are willing to share their ideas out loud and build on each other's ideas."

- "By using humor in the classroom, my students have a closer connection with me. They have been more willing to share their feelings, thoughts, and ideas with me."

- "My students understand how to use each other when faced with a difficult challenge."

More Relaxed Students

I have observed the positive effects that humor, magic, and CPS tools have had on my students. I have noted through my log that my students are more at-ease and confident to share their ideas.

Quotes:

- "Humor improves my students' confidence and motivation."

- "Laughter has maintained and grabbed my students' attention."

- "My students are now more prone to share their ideas and thoughts."

- "Now students will tell me how they feel without hesitating. If they are unable to share out loud in class, they write their feelings down on paper and put it on my desk to read. "

- "I am now constantly getting notes or letters throughout the day that have my students' thoughts, ideas, or jokes on them."

- "My students are more relaxed and comfortable to share their ideas."

Perceived Affect on Students' Feelings

I have noted the impact CPS tools, humor, and magic has influenced my students' feelings. This category includes two topic themes.

Impact on the Students' Motivation

My students' motivation has increased due to the use of humor, magic, and CPS tools within the classroom.

Quotes:

- "The more the students use their divergent thinking, the level of motivation of my students increase."
- "Their motivation to solve the challenge increases the energy level within the classroom."
- "Because CPS allows opportunities for students to share their ideas, students are motivated to put in greater effort."
- "Because I allow my students to share a joke, the students are more motivated to participate."
- "My students are now more motivated to complete all of their work during the day so they can participate in the magic trick."

Increased Confidence

From my observations I have saw that students showed an increase in confidence. Giving my students opportunities to share their ideas by bringing in humor, magic, and CPS tools has overall increased their confidence.

Quotes:

- "The shy children in my classroom have broken out of their shell and are eager to share their ideas."

- "My students are more confident in expressing themselves. If an idea comes to them but they are not able to share right away in class, many of my students write it down and put it on my desk."

- "The CPS tools, humor, and magic has overall increased my students' confidence."

Perceived Affect on Students' Thinking

Utilizing CPS tools and humor in the classroom has had a positive effect on my students thinking. This category does not have any topic theme because the items belonging here are too independent.

Quotes:

- "I am so impressed with my students' ability to brainstorm. They never needed me to stop and ask them not to judge their ideas and just to go with it."

- "A more creative and fun environment allows them to be more expressive in their thinking."

- "I have watched my student's deliberately use both convergent and divergent thinking."

- "They are willing to think "outside of the box."

- "My students' fluency in generating ideas amazes me."

Perceived Affect on Classroom Climate

Over the course of this project, I have observed the positive impact humor, magic, and CPS tools have on the classroom climate. This category contains two topic themes.

Promoting a Safe Learning Environment

Using humor, magic, and CPS tools have helped developed an environment in which students feel safe.

Quotes:

- "My students' fear of sharing their feelings, thoughts, and ideas has decreased."

- "My students trust their peers enough to willingly share their ideas."

- "By class is open and safe because I embrace my students' feelings, ideas, and thoughts."

Change of Classroom Climate

I have observed a change in the classroom climate of my class. I recently took on this second grade class right before implementing my Master's project. I have witnessed a change in the climate as I slowly started to interweave humor, magic, and CPS tools within my classroom.

Quotes:

- "Bringing in humor, magic, and CPS has made a huge difference in the climate of the classroom."

- "A more positive and relaxed atmosphere is the most noticeable result."

- "Students are now more comfortable with sharing any of their feelings and ideas with me."

- "I would describe the climate of the classroom as being contagious because we are always laughing and laugher can be contagious."

Photos

Next are the pictures that were taken when implementing magic and CPS tools within my classroom. Just by looking at the students' facial expressions and body language in the photos is evidence that they took great pleasure and enjoyed the magic tricks and CPS tools. More specifically the photos capture my students using Brainwriting (Figures 1-15) , Stick-em Up Brainstorming (Figures 21-23), Forced Connections (Figure 24), Story Board (Figures 25-28) , and Card Sort (Figures 29-30). It also shows the students conducting a magic trick (Figures 16-20) where they attempted to separate pepper from the water.

Brainwriting in the Classroom

Figures 1-15 demonstrate the second grade students being determined and focused to generate ideas. The students were given the chance to use the CPS tools called Brainwriting. This allowed the students to reflect on their ideas and deliberately build on each other's thoughts. Brainwriting also gave the shyer students the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas without being overshadowed from the other students in the classroom who are more vocal. The student in Figure 1 was overjoyed because the class came up with 100 ideas when the session ended. The student in Figure 2 was very focused during the session and really enjoyed the time to quietly express his ideas.

I can see myself using Brainwriting more in my future lessons because it gives the quieter students a chance to express their voice. I have several students in my classroom who are introverts and would rather work alone. To embrace the introverts in my classroom, I believe that

using Brainwriting encourages the shyer students to share their thoughts and ideas. Below are

picture that capture the second grade students generating many ideas.

Figure 1. Brainwriting #1   *Figure 2*. Brainwriting #2
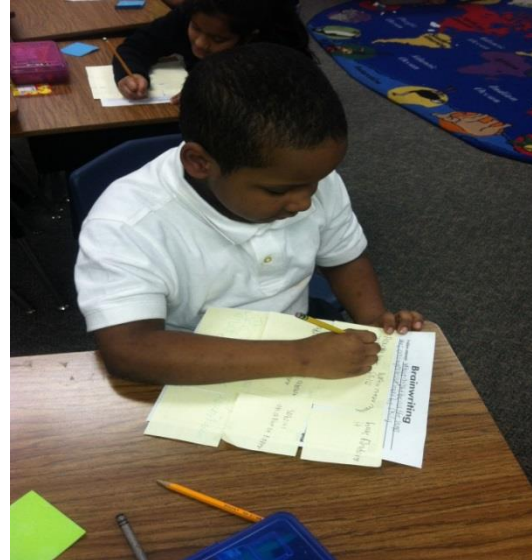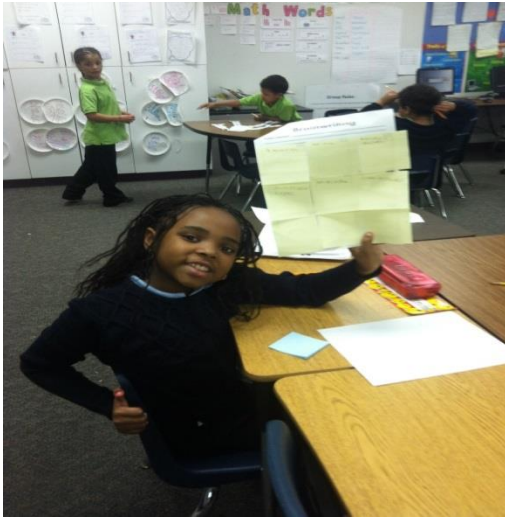
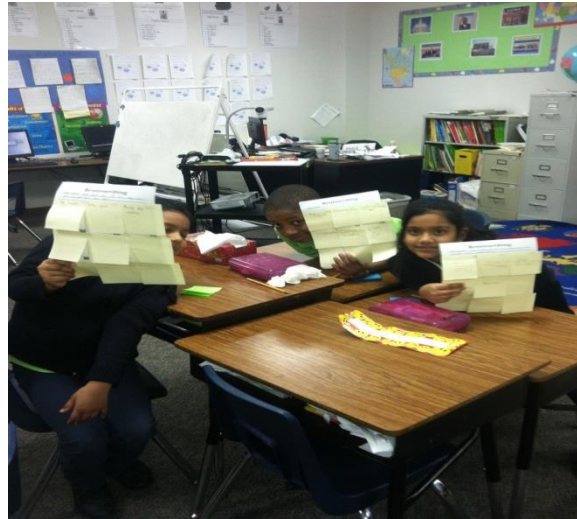*Figure 3.* Brainwriting #3   *Figure 4.* Brainwriting #4
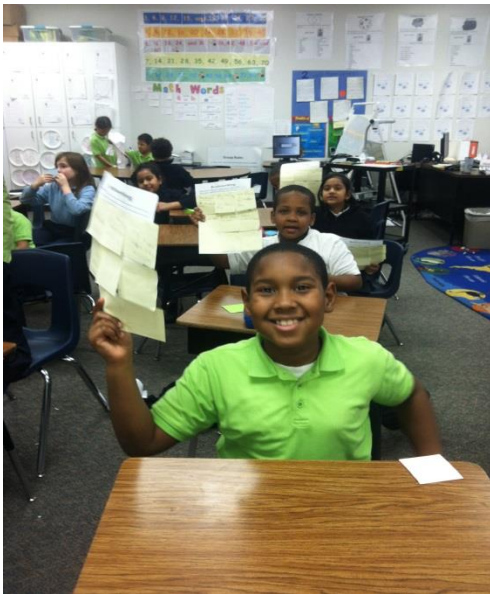

Figure 5. Brainwriting #5   *Figure 6.* Brainwriting #6
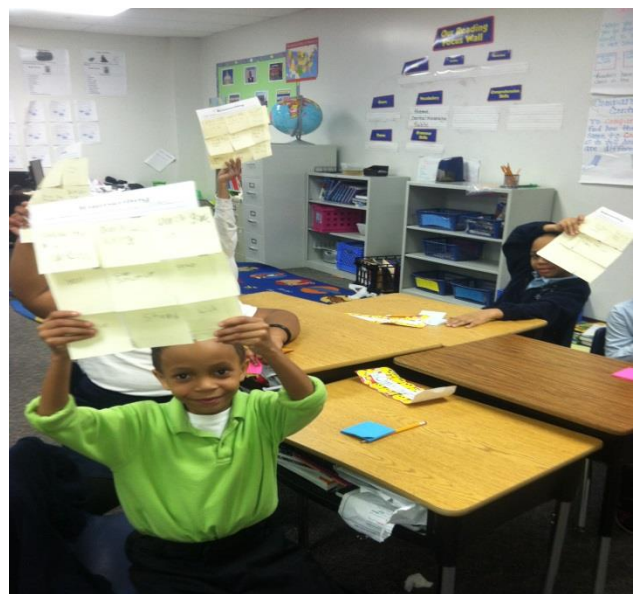

Figure 7. Brainwriting #7   *Figure 8.* Brainwriting #8

Figure 9. Brainwriting #9

Figure 10. Brainwriting #10
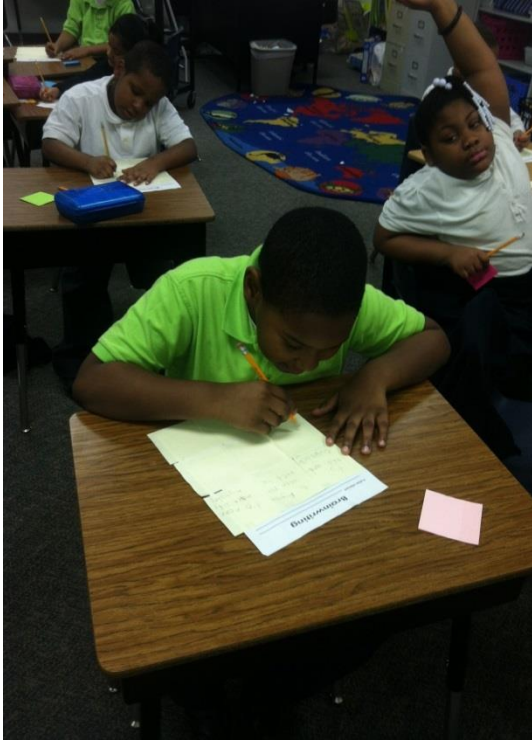

Figure 11. Brainwriting # 11
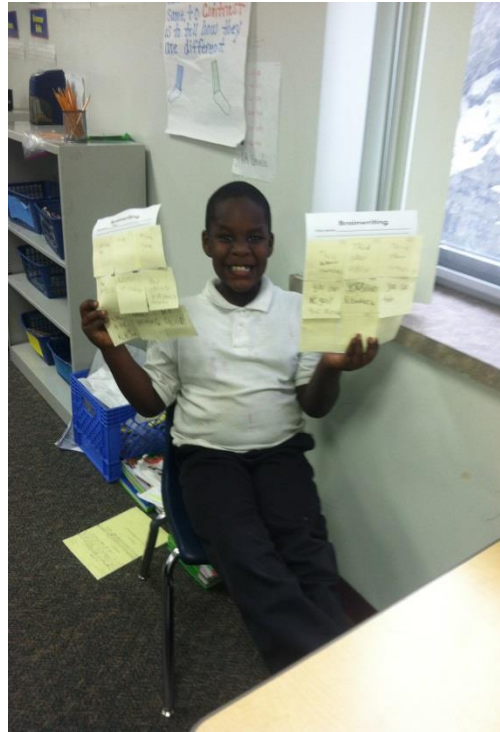
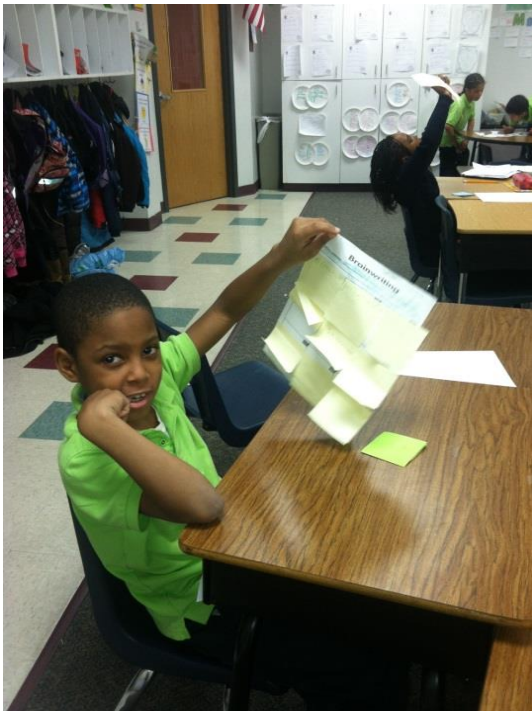*Figure 12.* Brainwriting #12

Figure 13. Brainwriting # 13

Figure 14. Brainwriting #14

Figure 15. Brainwriting #15

The Pepper Magic Trick

Figures 16-20 show how engaged the second grade students were while participating in a magic trick. The students were given the chance to see if they could separate pepper from water. Each student was given the opportunity to stick their finger in the bowl to see if they were able to separate the pepper from the water. However, none of the students were able to separate the pepper from the water. However, when I stuck my finger into the water, the pepper magically separated from the water. When this occurred, the students were amazed and the room filled with laughter and excitement.

I can see myself incorporating more magic into my classroom to heighten my students' anticipation. I have notice that my students look forward to the magic tricks and there are less behavior problems because the students are eager to be a part of the magic. Implementing magic into the classroom creates a positive learning environment and heightens my students' curiosity.

Figure 16. Pepper Trick #1

Figure 17. Pepper Trick #2

Figure 18. Pepper Trick # 3

Figure 19. Pepper Trick #4   *Figure 20.* Pepper Trick #5

Stick-em Up Brainstorming

Figures 21-23 demonstrate how the second grade class generated many ideas within three minutes. The students were given the change to use Stick-em Up Brainstorming. The students were first introduced to the ground rules for diverging. These rules included to defer judgment, strive for quantity, seek wild and unusual ideas, and build on other ideas. The students were eager to express their ideas and the room was filled with energy. The students did not have a problem with deferring judgment. In fact, the students came up with 60 ideas within three minutes. However, the students became so eager to share their ideas that some were shouting out their idea so loud that it distracting others to share their ideas. I also noticed that the students were sharing their ideas so fast that I did not have time to collect everyone's idea because of the fast speed of generation. I have learned that it is important to have a facilitation buddy even if next time a student helps me. Overall, the students really enjoyed this session. I have noticed that students are more involved when they have ownership over their ideas. I look forward to continue using this CPS tool within the future.

In the future I look forward to using Stick-em Up Brainstorming with more of my lessons. Before teaching a new skill, I now see myself using Stick-em Up Brainstorming to see what my students already know about the topic. I also see myself using this tool to help my students generate ideas around the real life challenges that they may face. As previously mentioned, many of my students come from an unstable environment and are in poverty. Teaching my students how to brainstorm around the challenges that they face might allow them to develop into independent and confident problem solvers.
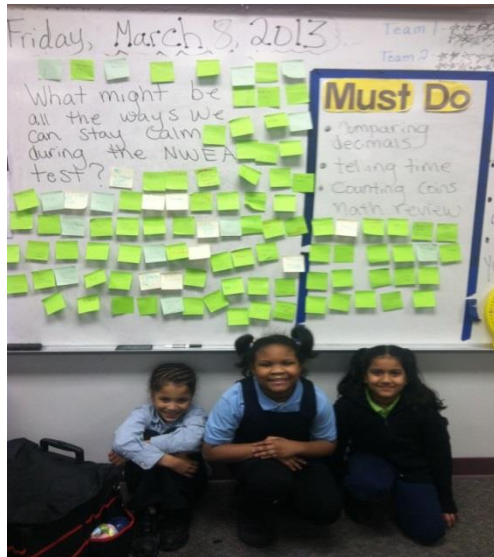
Figure 21. Brainstorming #1   *Figure 22.* Brainstorming #2
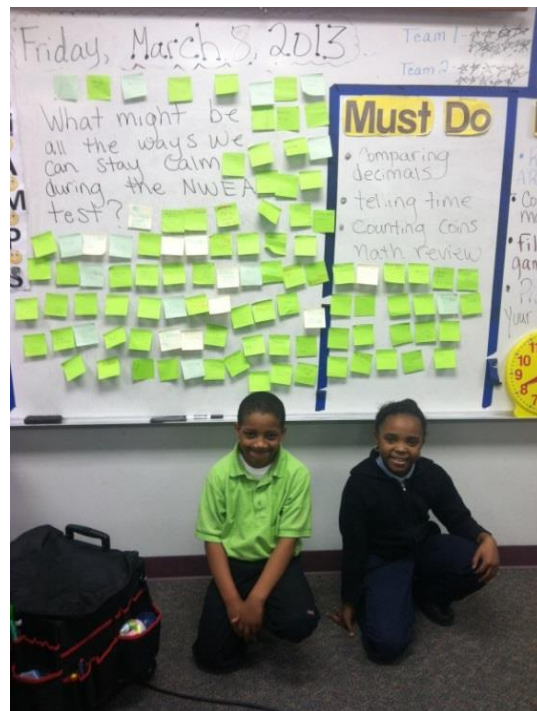

Figure 23. Brainstorming #3

Forced Connections

Figure 24 shows how the second grade students looked at pictures to get more ideas. I introduced forced connections to my students because I noticed that many run out of ideas during writing and sometimes when they are brainstorming. I have used Forced Connections during Brainstorming, Brainwriting, as well as specific writing assignments. In Figure 24 I am showing my students pictures and asking them, "When you look at this picture, what ideas do you get for your writing assignment?" The students above were stuck on their introduction essay. However, the students were easier able to generate more ideas for their introduction. According to the students, they loved using forced connections and it really helped them come up with more ideas. Over all, their writing pieces turned out so well that I invited their parents to come in and celebrate their writing success.
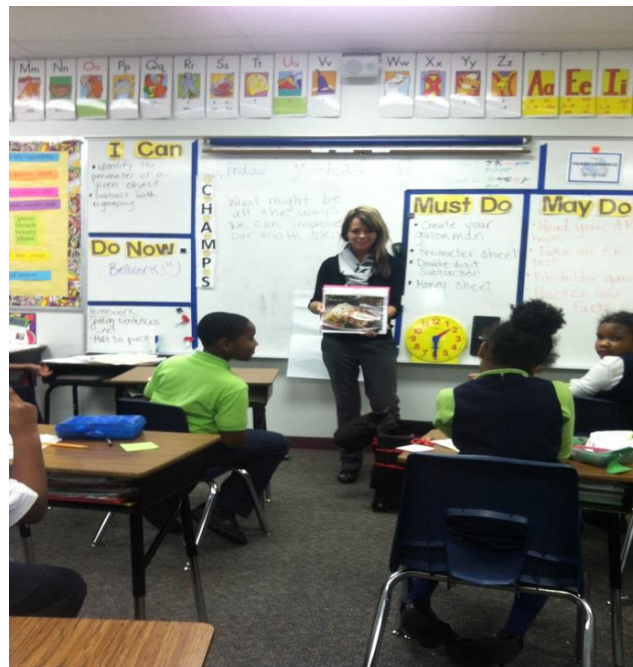

Figure 24. Forced Connections #1

Story Board

Figures 25-28 demonstrate the students creating their own story board using the book, *Nate the Great.* The students were directed to fill in each box with an illustration that depicted the characters from the story, *Nate the Great.* In the first box of the story board, the students were directed to illustrate and write a caption for the main characters of the story. For the second, third, and fourth box, the students were directed to create an illustration that portrayed the characters challenges. In the last box, the students were directed to create an illustration and a caption that portrayed how the characters overcame their challenge. This was my favorite CPS tool that I used in the classroom because it really gave the students to show their artistic ability. Utilizing the Story Board allowed my students to use their higher level thinking skills. They not only were able to identify the characters, their problems, and how they overcame their challenges, but they were able to show their answer in an artistic way. The students were also motivated to complete the task. As you can see from Figures 25-28, the students really brought their Story Boards to life by adding vibrant colors. Overall, the students did an excellent job and were motivated to complete the assignment.

Figure 25. Story Board #1

Figure 26. Story Board #2
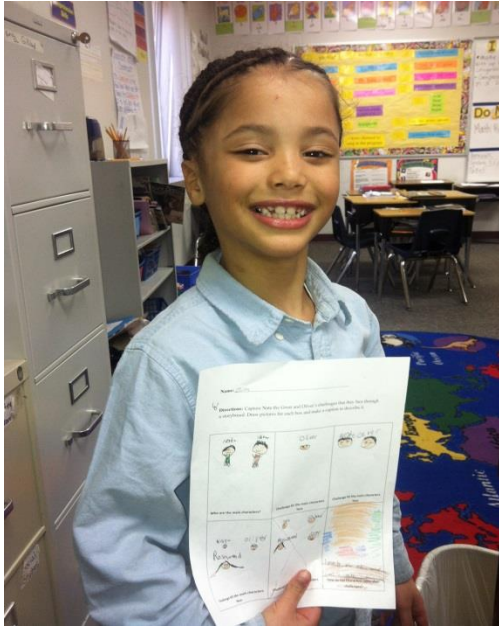
*Figure 27.* Story Board #3   *Figure 28.* Story Board #4

Card Sort

Figure 29 and Figure 30 show how focused and motivated the students were to complete the Card Sort activity. The students were given the opportunity to use Card Sort to rank their favorite desserts. The students were given five cards that had five different desserts on them. They were directed to write the number 5 on the card that they liked the least and a number one on the card that they liked the best. Of the remaining cards left the students were directed to identify the option that they liked the least and write the second highest number on it. Of the remaining cards left, the students were advised to write the one they like the best and write 2 on it. After the students finished ranking their desserts, I collected the cards and we then created a tally chart based upon their rankings. After I created a tally chart, we then created a bar graph to show the results. Our results indicated that the students liked ice cream the best and liked

crackers the least. Overall, this was a great tool and the students really enjoyed it. It was nice that I was able to easily incorporate it in my math lesson.
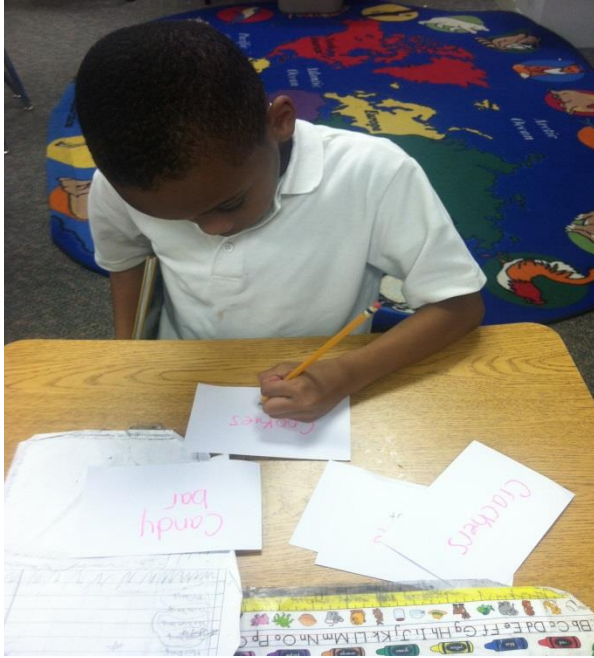
Figure 29. Card Sort #1   *Figure 30.* Card Sort #2

Reflection on Implementation of Fostering Creativity

EXIT slips were used to assess the students' attitudes towards using humor, magic, and CPS within the classroom. The EXIT slips indicate that the students did in fact enjoy humor, magic, and CPS tools. The current project also used a communication log that was used by the author. The communication log was used to record the author's observations pertaining to the students' reactions to humor, magic, and CPS tools. The author found that there were many

positive effects from using humor, magic, and CPS tools in the classroom. The author observed that the students were motivated to learn and became more enthusiastic in learning.

Summary

This section presents the observational data that I collected when bringing in humor, magic, and CPS tools within my classroom. This section also provides real pictures that demonstrate the positive effects of humor, magic, and CPS tools within the classroom. The CPS tools included, *Stick-em up Brainstorming, Brainwriting, Forced Connections, Card Sort,* and *Story Board.* Figures 1-15 include photos of students writing down their thoughts and ideas using the CPS tool Brainwriting. Figures 1-15 demonstrate the power behind Brainwriting. The figures demonstrate how students were focused and determined to put their ideas down on paper. Figures 16-20 include photos of the Pepper Trick. The figures portray how students were engaged and how their curiosity was heightened. Each student was eager to find out if they could separate the pepper from the water. Figures 21-23 demonstrate the tool Stick-em Up Brainstorming. The figures illustrate how the students were able to work together to generate many ideas. Figure 24 shows Forced Connections and how the students were able to generate more ideas in their writing. Figures 25-28 shows students creating their Story Board. The students used the book *Nate the Great* and were able to successfully illustrate the characters, problem, and solution through using the Story Board. Finally, Figures 29-30 show students ranking desserts using the CPS tool Card Sort. After they ranked their favorite and least favorite desserts, they were able to create their own bar graph based upon the data. The students said that they enjoyed using the CPS tools and really liked the magic trick. In each session they were eager and motivated to learn. In sum, incorporating humor, magic, and CPS tools within the classroom has had positive effects.

Section Five: **Key Learnings**

Introduction

Before conducting the project, I always knew in my heart that encouraging creativity within my classroom was the best practice. When I told my co-workers about my project many of them laughed at me and thought it would serve no purpose. In the perception of many teachers, the elementary school curriculum consists of the major subjects which are the knowledge based. Before this project, I was a teacher who got caught up in convergent thinking and teaching solely to the NWEA test. Even though my philosophy followed a constructivism and creative approach, I found myself not practicing my theory. This project gave me the chance to truly bring creativity within my classroom and document the experience. Some of the things that I have learned from conducting this project include: the importance of bringing in humor and magic and using CPS tools to improve the interest and motivations of students. I plan to forever use CPS tools within my classroom, as well as, magic and humor.

The Importance of Bringing Humor and Magic within the Classroom

Implementing humor and magic in my classroom has set a positive atmosphere. I have learned that the tone and mood I set by my own demeanor will transform my students. The anxiety, tension, and stress that my students face on a daily basis have been decreased due to using humor and magic in the classroom. When I sensed that some of my students were stressed out I would stop and I would then tell the joke of the day. All of a sudden, the atmosphere would change and it would be filled with laughter. I have learned that using humor in the classroom enables my students to detach or disengage mentally to temporarily escape from reality. Many of my students come from impoverished homes and carry a lot of baggage to school. I have observed that using humor in the classroom is the healthy way for them to feel a distance

between one's self and their current problem or challenge. Within this context, I have learned that humor serves both as a response to a problem stimulus and a as a stimulus to trigger an emotional response. According to the book *Humor as an Instructional Defibrillator*, Berk (2002) states the following:

> This psychological interpretation of humor consists of three components: (1) the problem stimulus, which is the problem situation or external stressor, (2) the humor response, which is the cognitive shift in perspective or cerebral process that enables one to separate mentally from the problem, and (3) the emotional response, which is the outcome feeling from that separation. (p.41)

Teaching in an urban school, I have taken notice that many of my students come to school with feelings of depression, loneness, anxiety, anger, etc. Some students may not get the chance to eat breakfast resulting in a lack of motivation in my morning lessons. Many of my students stay up late and don't get enough sleep. Others may come to school feeling sad because they haven't seen their father in several months. The baggage that my students carry is often times due to living in poverty, experiencing hunger, family tension, lack of structure at home, etc. This affects their behavior and motivation towards my instruction. However, incorporating humor in the classroom, allows my students to detach from their current challenge or problem and deal more effectively with their problem. Through this project I have observed that using humor in the classroom can significantly reduce the impact of the negative feelings and challenges that my students may be facing. I look forward to forever using humor in the classroom to creative a positive learning atmosphere.

CPS Tools Improve the Interest of Students

In conducting this project, I have learned that CPS tools truly do improve the interest and participation in my classroom. I have learned that all of my students love to express and share their ideas and thoughts. When I announced the rules for divergent thinking, all of my students naturally followed them. It was natural for my students to give crazy ideas and build on each other's ideas without judgment. During all of the CPS tool sessions, all of my students were enthusiastic in learning and I witnessed my students taking more ownership of learning. Over the course of the project, my students learned how to be open to many possibilities and to approach problems in a positive way. By having my students take part in CPS for general classroom issues, I observed them having ownership and tried everything in their power to solve the problem. During all of the CPS sessions, my students showed excitement, laughter, and pleasure. I also have learned that utilizing CPS in my classroom promotes an environment which students feel safe. I felt that my class was more open and safe because my students had more say in how we learn in our environment. Overall, using CPS tools within my classroom has had a positive and energetic impact.

Section Six: Conclusion

In essence, I have been given the opportunity to encourage creativity within my classroom and I have been able to develop a deep relationship with every one of my students. I have experienced the positive effects of humor and magic in the classroom, as well as, CPS tools. I have learned that bringing creativity in the classroom allows students to be excited about learning and gives them the opportunity to take ownership in the learning. As far as being a leader of change, I have learned the importance of relationships. I have learned that the deeper relationships I have with my students, the stronger the potential for leadership. I no longer want to be a classroom manager; I desire to be a classroom leader. I also have learned the value of my intuition. Leadership requires more than just a command of data. I have learned that leaders seek to recognize intangibles such as energy in the classroom, timing, and momentum. When I would recognize that my students were unenthusiastic, I would immediately do a joke of the day or a quick magic trick to increase their motivation and energy level. I have learned that the teacher is the number one person who has the power to influence his or her students to want to participate. I look forward to continue to influence my students in such a profound way that they will desire to participate.

In the Future

In the future I will continue bringing humor, magic, and CPS tools within my classroom. I will continue to do the "joke of the day" and incorporate CPS tools within my lessons. I look forward to continue to modify the process and incorporate CPS tools within all of the subjects that I teach as I gain more experience. I will continue to share my ideas of bringing creativity within the classroom with my colleagues and dean. Future work, suggests by this exploratory

project, might include looking more closely at CPS attitude levels as they relate to creative functioning.

With this Master's Project I have been exposed to the positive effects of bringing creativity within the classroom. As an educator and creative learner, I will continue to revise and improve my pedagogy. In the future, I will continue to reflect and document the rich experiences that my students encounter in my classroom. Continuing to reflect and ask what I can do differently as well as what is holding me back will help me improve as an educator. I have learned through this project that as humans, we naturally have internal constraints or restrictions that limit us from reaching our fullest creative potential. Just like an onion that has many layers, my students have many coatings to them. Peeling back each layer to discover their individuality is creativity. I will forever continue to self-analyze my habits, behavior, in order to improve. I am on the road to change and look forward to forever positively impact the lives of children and unleashing their creativity.

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SECTION 7: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION

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I hereby grant permission to the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State college permission to place a digital copy of this master's Project (Commercializing Creative Products) in an online resource.

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