

**Sparing Time for *Sharing Time*:
Negotiating the Potential and Power of *Show & Tell*.**

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ABSTRACT:

In an already busy first grade classroom, how can I make show-and-tell (sharing) most beneficial to students while budgeting instructional time effectively? This inquiry reflects an exploration of relevant research, a philosophical attempt to honor student choice, meaningful consideration of parent survey feedback, and a commitment to curricular integration. It also traces the changes in one particularly, reluctant sharer!

Background Information

Description of my teaching context:

- ✚ What led me to this particular inquiry and why it is important
 - ✚ What others think/know about this topic (literature/experts/teachers/interns)
 - ✚ Clearly stated wonderings/questions

What Led Me to this Particular Inquiry and Why it is Important?

“This doll has been passed down the family. It (it) is from (from) my great-grandmother. My mom won a prize for the smallest doll with it.” These are the exact words, mistakes and all (I must have asked for help at the end of it!) that I wrote to help me present a coveted sharing item while in first grade. I have few memories of first grade, I remember crying because I had the chicken pox and could not go to school, I remember my teacher reading the *Trumpet of the Swan* to all the first grade classes, and taking a trip to the Philadelphia Zoo to donate a trumpet to the swan lake in honor of the book. I remember being excited to start my first chapter book. Finally, I remember searching my house for a really special sharing one day until finding the little doll. I find it surprising that I remember so little of first grade when I know I enjoyed it so much. In fact, I am surprised I remember such a small aspect of first grade- sharing. It is partly because of this memory and the fact that my mom and I still hold onto that coveted doll I shared, that I realized inquiring into sharing/show-and-tell was worthwhile.

As an intern at Gray’s Woods Elementary within the State College Area School District, I teach twenty-three excited first graders. In my classroom, my mentor assigned each student a sharing day. Hence, about 5 students shared each day of the week. For sharing time, students would select any item to bring in (but were encouraged to not bring a toy), sit in the rocker on the front carpet, and share his/her item to his/her peers who were all sitting on the front carpet in rows. After the sharer presented the sharing, the audience had the opportunity to ask a question or make a comment. The sharer made the choice in who made the comment or asked the question. The class then gave the sharer “quiet pats” (claps on the thighs) and the next sharer came to the rocker.

Sharing was one of the first things in the classroom that I fully took over as an intern, and I quickly became dissatisfied. Instead of feeling as though it was a beneficial and worthwhile part of the day, I felt it had become tedious. The audience would become frustrated because they could not see the sharing item well, and I found myself constantly reminding them to sit quietly and only let the sharer talk. The students were fidgety and seemed to constantly want to interact with the sharing. When I did try to allow everyone a good look at the sharing, the other students would begin talking (although it was usually about the sharing). Furthermore, the questions/comments the audience made became mundane with “I think it’s cool” being uttered after almost every sharing item. A student opening up a “Happy Meal” toy for sharing that she was obviously unfamiliar with was the epiphany that something needed to be done about sharing! Sharing had become a tedious part of the day for me as a teacher, and I began to wonder if it was worth squeezing in sharing when there was so much curriculum to be covered.

Yet, I knew that in my heart that sharing was important and helpful in a primary classroom to sustain a caring classroom community. I remembered my sharing memory and could not stop picturing my students entering the classroom so excited to share that they had to show me their item in the morning. This is how my inquiry sprung, I wanted to look into the benefits of sharing, other’s opinions of sharing, and investigate how I could better the sharing program in my classroom. I wanted to make it more of a worthwhile aspect of the day, instead of a monotonous part of it. Basically, I wanted to see if it was worthwhile to spare time for sharing time! Fortunately, researching the topic taught me that show-and-tell has an even greater educational impact than I imagined.

What others think/know about this topic (literature/experts/teachers/interns)

Research overwhelmingly supports show-and-tell as a positive learning experience for children, but there are also negative reports on how sharing is typically conducted in the classroom.

One of the main benefits of show-and-tell is its aid in the development of language skills; it is “language learning made easy” (Dailey, 1997). Show-and-tell requires that the speaker elaborate to communicate an experience or describe an object, maintain continuity about a topic, and sequence information, it serves as a potent educational tool (Edwards, 1995). Show-and-tell is so powerful because it provides an opportunity for children to learn new knowledge and extend their knowledge as they share. It helps students’ expressive language develop as they learn to create and construct language (Dailey, 1997). Show-and-tell also encourages the development of oral narrative, which plays a crucial role in our thinking and language development (Cusworth, 1995). Accordingly, “the oral language and thinking abilities that are developed during show-and-tell enhance success in reading.” Formulating and presenting ideas during show-and-tell provides students with the necessary practice to help build continuity of thought and extension of concepts. All of these skills are essential components for successful reading.

One of the most obvious advantages of show-and-tell is the presence of an audience. Feedback is vital to any language development and at the same time students also gain listening skills through show and tell. It provides the teacher audience with a window into children’s thoughts and feelings. As a teacher, I can notice any special interests of my students and incorporate them into the classroom and discuss them with my students to show that I care about them. Knowing students’ interests can also help teachers prompt writing when children become

stuck and do not know what to write about for a story. Teachers can also use show-and-tell as an opportunity to informally assess students' language abilities while being "kid watchers" (Dailey, 1997). Speaking and listening are also components of the state standards that we are obliged to follow as teachers. The following are examples of these standards that match show-and-tell:

1.6.3 A. Listen to others.

- Ask questions as an aid to understanding.

1.6.3 C. Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.

- Use appropriate volume.
- Pronounce most words accurately.
- Pace speech so that is understandable.
- Demonstrate an awareness of audience.

1.6.3 D. Contribute to discussions.

- Ask relevant questions.
- Respond with appropriate information or opinions to questions asked.
- Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.
- Display appropriate turn-taking behaviors. (PA State Speaking and Listening Standards, 2005)

Research also states that show-and-tell is also a good way to draw children together during the day as a group to talk, which results in better work time at other times during the day. This also helps develop a sense of community throughout the school year (Cusworth, 1995).

Finally, show-and-tell helps link home and school, and any school home connections play a large and positive role in a child's education (Spangler, 1997). This then helps enhance the self concept of the speaker. "As they (children) share something of themselves with one another, they gain confidence in becoming the focus of the group's attention... they find out that others are interested in them, they discover that there are things they know about, and they feel good about themselves doing it..." (qtd. in Cusworth, 1995). At its best, show-and-tell can provide an opportunity for students to seek and construct meaningful communication as they attempt to make sense of their world, and represent their learning through spoken language (Dailey, 1997).

Yet, a number of limitations exist, which can negatively impact sharing/show-and-tell. For example, according to Kathleen Dailey, total group instruction is not as effective as small groups in facilitating the development of communication skills. In show-and-tell, discipline problems can arise as children become restless from sitting for long periods of time (1997). Also, show-and-tell can promote envy as children try to surpass each other with the latest “fad” toy and it can cause increasing competition among students and jealousy over toys. This can result in some students feeling upset (Spangler, 1997 & Dailey, 1997). These were the same concerns that I was facing in my classroom.

Bearing it all in mind, sharing/show-and-tell can be tedious and stressful for children and teachers, or it can provide an opportunity for everyone to grow and learn (Oken-Wright, 1988). Hence, “show-and-tell can become an opportunity for ‘show and teach’ as children learn from one another (which often has the most positive impact on children) (Oken-Wright, 1988).

When thinking about sharing, I wanted to look into why teachers do not conduct sharing in the classroom or are unhappy with show-and-tell when research says it is so beneficial. I found that teachers typically want to have sharing time in the classroom, but do not because they do not know how to fit it in and do not how to make it best work in the classroom. In talking with an intern who teaches kindergarten at Park Forest Annex, I found that many of the teachers even disliked leading sharing time, and bickered over who would lead sharing. Yet, they still incorporated it in the classroom due to the children’s excitement (Appendix A). I also interviewed another first grade teacher at my building to gather her thoughts on show-and-tell and why she choose to not incorporate it in her first grade classroom when she did conduct show-and-tell when teaching kindergarten. She cited reasons such as not having a way to make it connect with the curriculum (in kindergarten it was related to the letter of the week) and the

lack of time to do it with the heavy the first grade curriculum (Appendix A). I wanted to see if I could solve some of these quandaries involving show-and-tell!

Clearly Stated Wonderings/ Questions

Overall, I am wondering if sharing is worth the limited classroom time, and if so how I can incorporate sharing/show-and-tell time in a time frugal manner, while simultaneously improving its educational impact? Within this I am questioning the following:

- *Is it plausible to do sharing well, without giving up too much content area time?*
 - *Do large or small groups work best?*
- *Would students and parents follow and try to comply with sharing guidelines when related to specific curriculum ideas?*
- *Is there any way I can increase the excitement of sharing time and increase non-sharers involvement?*
 - *Is there a way I can better child preparedness for show-and-tell?*
 - *Is there a way I can encourage reluctant sharers to share?*
 - *Is there a way that I can better questioning skills with sharing?*

Within these questions, I am hoping to keep students engagement at its already high level, or increase it.

My Inquiry Plan

What I did to carry out the inquiry in my classroom:

- + How I began
- + All of the ways I collected data/ How I analyzed the data

How I Began

To begin my inquiry, I surveyed my students' parents to gather their thoughts and feelings about sharing/show-and-tell in the classroom. I sent home a parent questionnaire and the results gave me feedback that they approved of sharing in the classroom and were willing to follow sharing suggestions. While looking at this data, I graphed each question to give me a clear picture of where my parental support fell in terms of sharing (Appendix B). The results of this survey let me know that my inquiry had a path to go with parent support, which is an essential component of successful classroom sharing.

To begin, I also surveyed my class to gather their feelings about the topic. I choose to orally survey my class due to their young age. I felt as though I could better record their thoughts and opinions if they could freely talk instead writing. From experience, I recognized that writing at times hinders my class's expression. I first asked students what they liked about sharing. I received feedback that they liked "their turn," "that everyone gets to share," and they liked the sharing wheel, which is an implementation to the sharing program that I had already implemented. I then asked if there was anything my students disliked about sharing. They stated that they did not like it when other people talked while the sharer shared, that they "can't see the sharing," and that "it's hard to be patient." I received the best feedback from my students when I asked if they had any suggestions to help make sharing time better. They came up with many ideas and the ideas matched changes I was already considering. They suggested the following: "Do it in a circle," "Have the back row stand (to improve visibility), get things ready for sharing at their desks to decrease preparation time, break sharing time up during the day, and split sharing up into groups. My final opening sharing question was "Would you mind if I offered suggestions for items to bring in for sharing?" Not all of my students were willing to raise their

hands but eight answered yes and ten answered no (Appendix B). This let me know that they had mixed feelings about this. I primarily used the students' comments from this survey to help me develop my plan.

After reviewing this data, I was more convinced that I wanted to further pursue sharing and see if I could make it more academic and engaging for all students. Once I analyzed the results of both groups, I weighed the comments I received and made the decision that I would pursue having guidelines but be careful to not make them too specific. I also decided to keep open sharing days after assigned sharing weeks to still allow freedom of choice and to experiment with their suggestions and some of my own. Their comments about sharing helped give me direction to follow to capitalize on their likes and minimize their dislikes.

All of the ways I collected data
-How I analyzed the data

To begin to *change* sharing in my classroom, I sent a letter home to parents (Appendix C). This letter informed them that I would be experimenting with sharing for the next few weeks and asked for their cooperation in looking for any assignments or changes to the sharing program. I informed them that I would communicate sharing information through the "First Grade Flash," which is my classroom's weekly communication method (Appendix C). This also helped me record changes to my inquiry project. I also charted how sharing was conducted on calendars to record the changes throughout (Appendix D).

During my inquiry, I made changes to the sharing program and surveyed my students throughout to make further changes based on their input and feelings about the changes. This allowed me to keep student choice in mind and make a nice blend of teacher decision and student voice/choice. I changed the format of sharing in the following ways, following survey results.

- whole group format versus small groups with teachers,
- experimenting with sharing at different times throughout the day,
- assignments versus no assignments,
- row versus circle seating formats,
- different methods to allow students to see the sharing,
- the continued incorporation of the question wheel,
- and the incorporation of a “Mystery Bag” to the sharing process.

To gather these survey results, I surveyed my students throughout my inquiry. I verbally asked them questions, whole group, and asked students to raise their hand to vote for choices. I would then record the number of students who voted in favor of each choice. After this I asked for any comments. At home, I would graph then this data using bar graphs to help paint me a clear picture of my students' preferences (Appendix F). Of course, some students did not participate in voting, but I did not want to force any of my students to do so in front of the group. I also made it very clear that they would not be hurting my feelings, and that I was attempting to make sharing better for them. I feel as though they followed my advice and I received helpful feedback from my students. Therefore, after trying new methods I would quickly orally survey my students to see what methods I should continue to incorporate and which I should no longer try to implement.

Before I made changes and after, I collected sharing data by recording what student's shared, questions asked, and whether the sharing was curriculum related and whether the student seemed prepared. This form also allowed me to record the time of the sharing and the format of

the sharing such as whole group, small groups, and in a circle format or rows. This gave me baseline data and helped show if my implementations created any changes. It also served as a way to record whether guidelines were followed. I used different colored highlighters to note any patterns in the sharing, such as when assignments were followed, when a reluctant sharer shared, and when the sharing was educationally related.

I also photocopied all of the “First Grade Flashes” from the beginning of the year and highlighted all the instances where my students asked my mentor or me to record what a classmate shared that day. I then was able to compare the numbers of references to sharing before my inquiry, and the number of references after my implementations and found that pre-changes there were thirty-eight references to sharing over a period of twenty weeks and I later found twenty-seven references over seven weeks once my implementations were in place (Appendix C). During my inquiry, I also took time to reflect at the bottom of sharing data sheets (Appendix G) and sometimes after taking surveys with my students (Appendix F).

At the end of my inquiry, I surveyed the parents again and this time I surveyed my students in written form due to their growth as students and to increase survey participation. I also graphed this information to help paint a clear picture of the successes and shortcomings of my changes. Graphing the surveys and data collection and highlighting different components to notice any changes left me with positive strategies/claims for conducting sharing in my first grade classroom (Appendix E).

What I Learned and Now Know

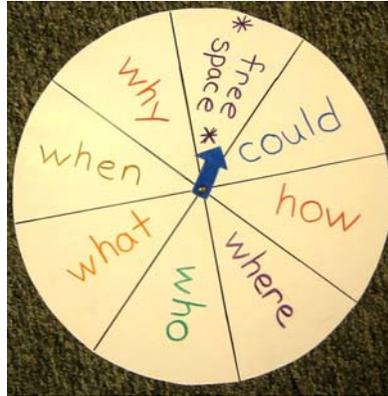
- + A clear list of claims on what I think I now know
- + Evidence to support these claims from my data and literature/research

Claim 1: Sharing/Show-and-tell is an aspect of first grade that parents find important to the development of their child.

After analyzing the parent survey, I found that 17 out of the 21 parents who responded felt as though their child got excited for his/her sharing day. I was surprised to see such favor of sharing, because I felt as though many parents might feel as though it was just a “filler” in the classroom. One parent cited that to her son sharing was “equal with PE as his two favorite activities in school,” and another stated that sharing “makes [students feel] happy and feel special.” One parent who showed special interest in my topic stated that “Sharing is a very positive way for children to socialize and interact with one another; it enables them to get to know one another and connect with other classmates with similar interests!” Another parent stated that “I like having sharing so each child becomes comfortable speaking in front of a group. It is their moment ‘to shine’” (Appendix B).

Claim 2: Good questioning is an essential component of the sharing structure to glean the most positive educational impact.

Before my formal inquiry even began I had made a change to the sharing program. Because my students were not asking good questions during sharing time, and because many students were struggling with reading question words, I created a “Question Wheel,” which is shown below.



The “Question Wheel” allows the questioner to move the arrow onto the right question word that he/she wants to use to ask the question. This means the student needs to recognize the question words, and then use the word in a question. There is also a “free space” to allow students to make a comment. The incorporation of good questioning is an essential element to sharing because it helps members of the audience feel as much a part of sharing as those who are speaking. It also helps to increase active listening and encourages the asking of pertinent questions (Oken-Wright, 1988). Good questioning options also help the speaker anticipate likely question and present more information without waiting for the audience to question him/her (Edwards, 1996). This increases sharing’s educational impact.

Claim 3: After being accustomed to whole group sharing, my class preferred it over small group sharing

After trying small group sharing with both a theme related sharing, and open-ended sharing (where they could bring in any item), my students indicated that they preferred whole group sharing. I encountered a short busy week of school and decided to try group sharing because it would take too long for my class to all share in one day in front of the whole group. Thus, I split sharing up into groups between my mentor teacher, paraprofessional, and I. We each conducted sharing with our small group of students for about fifteen minutes, while

encouraging conversation in the groups. While I really enjoyed the small group sharing, only 10 students liked having sharing in small groups (while 9 did not). When I asked my class why they felt this way I found that they disliked small group sharing because they didn't get the opportunity to see everyone's sharing. Yet some students were in favor of small groups because they could see more and they "don't feel as nervous" (Appendix F). Because this sharing involved following an assignment (teddy bear sharing), I decided have an open sharing with small groups later as well.

This time students brought in any item from home but we again split into three groups for sharing. This time nineteen of my students cited that they preferred whole group sharing, and four stated that they preferred small group sharing. They informed me that they liked small group sharing this time because "it goes quicker," and "you can pass the item around." Yet, they preferred whole group sharing because they could see everyone's sharing, there was more space to spread out (Appendix F). These results indicated to me that they really preferred whole-group sharing.

Claim 4: My students seemed to enjoy sharing themes at the beginning of new units when the theme was broad; yet still enjoyed weeks without guidance.

I decided to assign a theme for sharing that was unit related to see if I could further increase the educational benefits of sharing. According to research, teachers should help create environments that promote meaningful learning by guiding children and parents in their choice of items by suggesting a theme that supports a current study (Dailey, 1997). Yet, this does have its problems including the increased demand upon the parents (Edwards, 1996). From my initial survey I found large support (16/21 parents) for me creating sharing guidelines for my students

when it came to sharing. Parents were, for the most part, excited about this proposal. Yet some stated that while they would like guidelines, they were unsure if their child would. One parent with emphasis wrote about guidelines, “This would help **A LOT!**” and that it “would be a great way to help them with learning.” One parent wrote “I think it would be good for my child to focus on a certain educational topic. It could be a fun activity for me to do with him and we could learn together about many subjects each week”

Yet, parents cited slight hesitation about the assignment being too specific, stating that it then might be difficult to find an item. Parents not in favor of guidelines stated this as a concern saying that not having a sharing item to match the sharing puts stress on the child and the parent and that sharing “is a great time for the children to pick out what is important and interesting to them and be in charge of the discussion. They need this freedom. Choosing what they want to bring in and seeing what others bring in is a great learning experience” (Appendix B). Hence, I decided to try I blend of the two with the incorporation of broad sharing themes and weeks where students were still free to choose any sharing item.

I was able to easily tie sharing into a study of the Teddy Bear, for our learning about Teddy Roosevelt and the bear he could not shoot (American Album Unit- informal symbol of America). I felt as though having “Teddy Bear Day” would be a fun way to ease into sharing assignments. When the assignment was for teddy bear sharing, all but 2 students brought in sharing. Yet, I wanted to see if students followed my future guidelines. When I asked my class to bring in an item from their spring break, to show a place they went or a movie ticket and then any item from a trip in the US (even if it was local) few students brought in items which fulfilled the assignments (Appendix G).

When I again orally surveyed my class I again asked my students again whether they preferred to have a suggestion/theme for sharing or whether they liked open sharing. Fifteen students replied that they preferred open sharing, and eight stated that they liked an assignment. However, I did not want to give up on theme related sharing yet.

These numbers were not encouraging, but just as I was about to give up hope on assigning themes, I decided to ask my students to bring in a pioneer related/old fashioned sharing item to help increase excitement for the start of our new unit- Pioneers. I kept data for everyday this week, in a final attempt and found that fifteen out of seventeen students who remembered sharing that week fulfilled the assignment (Appendix G). Here are some examples of their sharing.

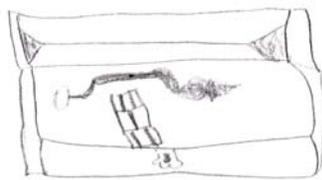


An old quilt- they noticed that it had fabric with a wagon print on it!



A coonskin cap!

Students excitedly shared coonskin caps, bonnets, old dolls, old handkerchiefs, aprons, old pictures, quilts, and an old hand drill. In fact, the old hand drill was the mystery sharer and the student was so excited that he drew the item in his Pioneer Journal later that day.



I found that my students were learning from each other, and I was learning from them. One typically struggling student even confidently shared his dad's old penny collection that had silver pennies. He informed us that some of the pennies were silver because during the war they did not want to use copper for pennies because it was needed for bullets. I did not even know this and his mom was there as a helper for his sharing and shared with my mentor that this was a fact his dad had told him months ago. This showed evidence that his sharing was helping him retain knowledge and make connections!



Yet, on my final written survey, only five students stated that that they liked theme suggestions, seven said that they sometimes liked them, and fourteen said that they did not like them. However, with the final parent survey, fifteen of the nineteen parents who responded said that they enjoyed the weeks where I suggested sharing items. Interestingly, and in contrast to my student sharing results twelve of the nineteen also replied that their child seemed to enjoy the suggested item weeks and two replied that their child sometimes liked them. This is in contrast to the five who stated that they liked it on their own survey (Appendix E).

Thinking about which sharing themes brought the most participation, like the pioneer related sharing, I decided that broad suggestions that come near the beginning of a new unit bolster excitement. Yet, it is crucial to intertwine assignment weeks with open ended sharing days to still allow freedom of choice in sharing.

Claim 5: Sharing works best in a whole group circle format with another student walking the sharing item around the circle allowing a close-up view of the item.

During my inquiry, I tried sharing in a different sitting format. We simply changed from sharing in rows on the carpet, to sitting in a “sharing circle.” I surveyed my students as to whether they preferred a circle seating arrangement to rows and twenty-two preferred a circle and one preferred rows. This helped me easily decide to continue to share in a circle formation. The students cited reasons for liking the circle better because they “can see better,” and they claimed that they didn’t talk as much in the circle, and made good choices as to where they sat within the circle (Appendix F).

Claim 6: My students prefer to have sharing in the morning and it fit within a 15 minute time frame.

The next survey I conducted, asked students about their preference in terms of the time of day for sharing. They had the choices of in the morning, right after lunch, or at the end of day (all of which were times we had experimented with sharing). I learned that fourteen preferred sharing in the morning, three right after lunch, and four at the end of the day. They informed me that they liked sharing in the morning because “sometimes their sharing gets lost in their desk

during the day,” if the sharing is fragile they worry about it, and because they think it is better to not have to wait when you are excited to share (Appendix F). I was surprised with these results because I had rarely held sharing at the beginning of the day, but after this survey, I decided to incorporate show-and-tell as part of our morning meeting.

I was worried about the time involved in sharing and I found that in the morning I could fit in sharing within a fifteen minute time frame. With the set structure with the sharing wheel, and another student walking the sharing around, sharing now had developed a nice flow. My student showed me that they enjoyed this method with their responses to the final sharing survey question “Do you like sharing time in the classroom more now than you did at the beginning of the school year?” where eighteen said yes and only four said no. I also liked sharing in the morning better because at the end of the day I always felt as though I was rushing them so we would not be late for the busses. However, in the morning we could wrap up sharing and then transition to our next activity with fewer worries.

Claim 7: The implementation of a “Mystery Bag” for sharing increases excitement, preparedness for sharing, and audience participation.

At this point, following student choice, sharing was conducted in the morning, in a circle whole group format, with a friend walking the item around, and a question wheel in the middle to promote good questioning skills. However, I still was not satisfied and wanted to increase preparedness of my shares and incorporate even more language learning and critical thinking skills, and further increase audience participation to engage more students. Hence, I developed a “Mystery Bag” component for sharing. I first modeled how the “Mystery Bag” worked by putting my own mystery sharing in a canvas drawstring bag labeled “Mystery Bag.” I included

pictures of me surfing with a surfing certification and within a journal that I put in the bag, I wrote 3 clues about my sharing. The students then had to use critical thinking skills to guess what was inside my bag. I told me students that everyone would eventually get a turn to write good clues and that a new person would have the bag each day. I developed a system for drawing the name for the next child to have the “Mystery Bag.” I took 6 paper cups and labeled them with the days of the week and then a cup marked “Used” for student’s names who already had a turn. I then labeled poker chips with my students’ names and sorted them into cups according to their sharing day (all the Monday sharers’ chips went into the Monday cup). Then, after the mystery sharer presents, I hand him/her the cup labeled for the next sharing day (if it was Monday, I would grab the Tuesday cup so a Tuesday sharer was selected) and the student draws a chip from the cup. The drawn student then gets to prepare the “Mystery Bag” overnight.

I immediately liked the “Mystery Bag” because it encouraged a writing component, guaranteed preparedness, increased critical thinking, and it related to the mystery boxes and objects we had been dealing with in mathematics. Also, my students showed me even before the survey that they enjoyed the “Mystery Bag” by crossing their fingers in hopes of getting the bag, when the chip was pulled out of the cup for the next student to have a turn. When I did survey my students about the “Mystery Bag” I found that sixteen enjoyed it and seven did not. I was honestly surprised that so many students said they disliked because this did not match my in classroom observances. For instance, when the “Mystery Sharer” was absent one morning, all the next day sharers verbally announced their disappointment. Yet, when she showed up a little bit later, she was immediately questioned as to whether she had the “Mystery Bag.” She stopped in her tracks and said that she left it in the car. Again the students were visibly disappointed. Fortunately, her mom brought the bag in later and spirits were restored. Parents showed

excitement about the mystery bag when surveyed stating that “It was fun to look at the other children’s clues and to have (child’s name) tell me about the other items that were shared,” and “It was fun to come up with the clues.” Another parent thought that it was “fun to use as a writing opportunity,” and I as a teacher agree! Student’s whose parents still needed a turn with the bag but who had spoke to their parents about it cited that they who still needed a turn with the bag cited that they were “anxiously awaiting (their) turn!” Please see Appendix H for copies of clues written by my first graders about their mystery sharing.



This student gives her clues about her Mystery Sharing!

Claim 8: The implementation of theme suggestions and the “Mystery Bag” encourages reluctant sharers by providing them with added guidance.

Over the course of my inquiry data collection, and parent survey responses, I realized I had a student who was particularly reluctant to share. His mom indicated that she wished her son would “bring in more things to share but he puts up so much resistance.” She also indicated that she felt it would be good to have “more direction to help think of ideas [for sharing].” After reviewing my baseline sharing data and inquiry implementation sharing data I found that I never had record of him sharing before any implementations. After my implementations, he did bring in sharing, although not every time. He was very excited to bring in a fork art sculpture from a trip to New York City. He also was sick for his sharing day a later week, but when he came back

he brought in a huge pine cone from California. His mother even sent an e-mail stating “Thank you... (child’s name) said his sharing went perfectly today- which he is always very hesitant about.” (Appendix I). Within the final parent survey his mom mentioned that she noticed a slight positive change in his attitude towards sharing since my implementations. She stated that “The added guidance gives (child’s name) ideas that he then knows are ‘OK.’” She also liked the suggested sharing theme because “Anything that encourages (child’s name) and supports confidence is terrific with us.” Also, when responding about the “Mystery Bag” she stated that “(Child’s name) had a mystery bag in kindergarten and enjoyed it so it brought back good memories” (Appendix E).

Where Do I Go From Here?

Conclusions and Future Directions:

- ✚ The implications for my future practice as a teacher/ New wonderings that I have developed

The implications for my future practice as a teacher/ new wonderings

This inquiry is not over. I will continue to experiment in my classroom to see how sharing themes/suggestions work and whether reluctant sharers increase participation. Yet, with these many claims in mind, I still have many questions about show-and-tell/sharing, but also have some answers about how I will run my future classroom.

After conducting this inquiry project, I have come to the conclusion that if I teach kindergarten or primary grade students, I will most certainly incorporate sharing/show-and-tell into my classroom. I feel that at this young age the students need practice for presentation in later grades and that a sharing a piece of home while at school helps them feel more comfortable. I also do believe in its great educational benefits in terms of language development and as I teacher, I enjoy learning about my students as they share. I do not think I would know my students nearly as well without sharing.

However, I am unsure as to whether I will set-up sharing to be everyday of the week or just once a week with students sharing perhaps once a month instead of once a week. Because I did not want to change the reestablished routine too much and cut sharing time, I did not try this. Yet, in my classroom as a new teacher struggling to fit in everything, I can likely see myself reducing the number of times each child has sharing. I will definitely incorporate a questioning system such as the question wheel to guide students.

I am also wondering how my students would have reacted to small group sharing if we had tried both at the beginning of the year. Because research states that small group sharing is better for sharing, I would like to experiment with this method at the beginning of the year. I think I might have gotten different results from my students. I am considering the possibility

that they had become too accustomed to whole group sharing and hence missed seeing all the sharing items.

Furthermore, I am wondering if the novelty of the “Mystery Bag” will wear off after each student has a turn, or whether they would enjoy having multiple turns with the “Mystery Bag.” I am currently thinking that with having sharing everyday they would still like to use the “Mystery Bag” because sometimes they would still be sharing without the bag. However, if I made sharing once a week and had the sharer use the bag every time, I think it would lose its uniqueness!

I look forward to many years of teaching to help me discover the answers and further inquire into sharing in the primary classroom! I hope that my future classrooms and other teachers can spare time for sharing time creating opportunities for “show-and-teach!”

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