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Storytelling and Emotional Response to Conflict

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Abstract

This research was conducted to assess the impact of daily oral storytelling and emotional response to conflict in preschool aged children. Research was done in a Montessori primary classroom with 23 students between the ages of two-and a-half and six years old. Quantitative data included tallies and averages of the total number of conflicts per week and per child and a conflict checklist to monitor any changes in language and behavior used in times of conflict. Qualitative data included observational field notes to evaluate children's responses to and repetition of oral storytelling and a reflective journal to record any changes in the environment or daily routine. The study took place over a five-week period. Results were inconclusive and did not show a noticeable impact of emotional response to conflict, however, the research reiterated the importance of oral storytelling and spoken language activities in early childhood education.

Keywords: Montessori, primary, emotional, conflict, oral storytelling, spoken language, early childhood, preschool

"Let me tell you a story." This statement conveys so much more than six small words. It holds the power to evoke critical thought, create or express intense emotion, build community, link generations, and serve as common bond to humankind. When families gather around a table, friends share a humorous memory, siblings reminisce over a photograph, a writer puts thoughts onto paper, or a student reads a history textbook, all are experiencing the impact of others' thoughts, words, ideas, or culture. Some stories are about personal experiences and some chronicle the life, works and experiences of others. Stories can be the product of the imagination, an escape from reality, or serve to preserve and pass on history or traditions. Many people use stories to share thoughts and experiences, reflect on memories, and to explain and enrich cultural or religious practices and traditions.

Whether fact or fiction, personal or historical, stories are often a meaningful way to share thoughts, information, or ideas with one another. For young children, this process can be even more meaningful and powerful. Not only do stories provide children with the opportunity to share their own and hear others' thoughts and ideas, they can help children gain insight into their culture or history, daily interactions and environments, and help them frame their thoughts, emotions, and social cultural identity (Curenton, 2006).

In early childhood development, exposure to all types of language is of critical importance. Early exposure to language not only prepares children for later work with reading and writing, but can serve as an aid in children's social emotional understanding and development. Reading books, providing children with pictures, and daily communication are all ways to provide children with early language tools to support emotional development. In a Montessori environment, there is an intentional focus on language development, and a particular

emphasis on spoken (oral) language. A Montessori environment should be rich with all types of spoken language materials. A specific way to this is through oral storytelling.

Oral storytelling is the act of verbally expressing real-life or fantasy experiences to another person (Curenton, 2006). Oral stories are a social experience for children and allow children to use facial gestures, expressive motions, and props to expressively tell a story (Van Gorenou, 1995). Because of this, children are able to interpret these stories, and in turn, navigate their own thoughts and emotions in a different manner than through written word or a book with pictures (Berkowitz, 2011).

The Montessori spoken language presentation of oral storytelling (see Appendix A) is a small group activity where children are encouraged to come together and share their own (or another's) stories first from the adult, then amongst each other. Stories are told orally, and without the use of printed words or books; though pictures, fabrics, or other objects may be used to coincide with or enhance the story. Stories are usually true and relatable to children's lives, but any type of story (including fiction) can be told. Telling stories in this manner provides children of all ages the opportunity to gather together in a large or small group and share stories with one another. While one aim of this is to provide visual, auditory, and creative preparation for reading and writing, it can also assist children with social development, promote social cohesion, and allow children to share their own thoughts and emotions and listen to the thoughts, ideas, and experiences of others. Through shared experiences, sometimes similar to their own, children can gain a better understanding of how to handle these situations, navigate their emotions, hear language put to emotion (Santos, Fettig & Shaffer, 2012), and have an opportunity to interact with others in a social setting.

The purpose of this research was to determine if daily oral storytelling in a Montessori environment would impact children's emotional response to conflict. Before the research, I noticed that all children communicated and expressed their emotions differently, which often led to conflicts and played a role in the way conflicts were resolved. Based on my observations, most conflicts typically centered around children feeling angry, frustrated, sad, or disappointed for a variety of reasons. Often, children did not have the tools or words to express these emotions, but rather reacted in the only way they knew: yelling, crying, or with physical aggression.

If children were given developmentally appropriate tools and language through oral storytelling to help them navigate social situations and their emotions, would this change their reactions to conflicts? Children of this age often learn through a scaffolding approach; they must first have a concrete understanding of something before moving on to the more abstract. Much as scaffolding has a foundation that is built upon for the construction of buildings, so too must young children first have a foundation to build both themselves and their knowledge, thus, constructing themselves.

This foundation is built through repeated experience of the child's environment through the senses. In language development, the foundation for later work is set through spoken language. By providing children with stories about relatable situations, giving names for emotions, and allowing opportunity for their own verbal expression, children begin to lay the groundwork for both emotional and language development. This made me wonder if there would be any change in the frequency, behavior, language, or response used in times of conflict if children had the opportunity to hear weekly stories about situations they often find themselves in, such as a disagreement with a friend or an intense moment of frustration.

The daily oral storytelling assessed the impact of children's emotional responses in times of conflict. Though the goal was to provide a framework for children to navigate their own emotions and responses to conflict, the social aspect of storytelling was also of critical importance during the research.

This research was conducted in a classroom at a private Montessori school in a suburban setting. The room included 23 children, 11 females and 12 males, between the ages of two-and a-half to six years old. There were three adults in the room, the guide (a Montessori teacher), and two assistants (myself and one other adult).

Each day for a weeks' time over a period of three weeks, I asked a small group of four to six children to join me for a story. I then shared a true, personal story with the group about a time when I had felt an emotion typically related to conflict. The emotions focused on were frustration, anger, and sadness/disappointment. Throughout the week, each child had the opportunity to listen to the story, as well as the opportunity to repeat the story or share their own story with friends.

Though the goal of the research was to see if implementing daily oral storytelling would impact emotional responses to conflict, the opportunity to gather together and share stories also promoted social cohesion and social development. This provided children the tools for self-expression, creativity, and the opportunity to practice language without the barriers of having to know how to read or write. Overall, daily oral storytelling can benefit children in multiple ways, and may have an impact on conflict resolution and response. Oral storytelling can provide children not just with the tools to navigate emotional situations, but serve as a social activity in which lifelong skills are developed and enhanced. The child, set with the base for constructing

themselves and adapting to their world, now sees him or herself as a storyteller, and with it, the great power this encompasses.

Review of Literature

Throughout history, almost every group or culture of people has passed down stories, shared thoughts and ideas, identified items of importance, and shared social and personal experiences through storytelling (Van Groenou, 1995). Folklore, historical accounts, mythology, fiction, and personal narratives are all types of stories. Some stories are written, some expressed through art or drama, some produced on film, and some told verbally. Many stories capture the essence of the message, the feelings of the characters, the thoughts of the authors, and convey much more than words. Stories give children a glimpse into their culture or history, insights into their daily lives, and help them frame their thoughts and emotions (Curenton, 2006). Stories have the capacity to stretch beyond cultural, geographical, or time limitations. Because stories often contain authentic characters, realistic situations, and possible resolutions to these situations, children's emotions are validated, and they begin to learn how to navigate their own emotions (Harper, 2016). Oral storytelling plays a dual role in child development. Not only does oral storytelling indirectly prepare children for reading and writing, it serves as a fundamental aid to emotional development and conflict resolution.

Language Development in Children

Emotional development cannot occur without language development. Zambo and Cory (2007) stressed how critical oral communication is, starting in the womb, as this creates a bond with the voice of the mother and introduces the child to oral language. This relationship does not end after birth, as the child from birth to six is in an extremely critical period of development.

During these important formative years, children have the capacity to absorb all aspects of their

environments, including sights, sounds, smells, tactile impressions, words, and language

(O'Shaughnessy, 2015). These are not things that are specifically taught to the child, but rather

occur naturally as the child develops. As the child continues to interact with the environment and

develop, he or she begins to have tremendous interest in certain aspects of the environment,

particularly language, order, refinement of the senses, and refinement of movement. Dr.

Montessori referred to these optimal times of development as sensitive periods (O'Shaughnessy,

2015). During the sensitive period for language, all language (especially spoken) is incarnated

into the child and becomes a permanent part of his or her very being (Montessori, 1949). Every

child is born with the potential to develop language. In the first few months after birth, infants

are attracted to sounds and voices. When an infant gestures toward a sound across the room or

focuses intently on the mouth of the person speaking, they are taking in language in various

forms and will eventually begin repeating words. By ten months, the child begins to understand

that words have meaning, and by one year, has most likely gone from babbling and repeating to

speaking their first intentional word. As the child continues to develop, it is important to keep

talking to and exposing the child to all aspects of language. By age three, the child, with a

tremendous interest in language, knows many words, can speak with syntax and intonation, and

becomes phonetically aware. From here, the child is ready to refine his or her language and begin

the process of reading and writing. Supporting this development with spoken language is of

critical importance.

        In a Montessori environment, spoken language is a part of the pedagogy that consists of

introducing and creating an appreciation of language to children through various materials.

Spoken language can be done through many mediums including social or scientific cards (cards

with pictures), conversations, games, or by giving lessons on names or qualities of objects. Spoken language lays the foundation for all future work the child will do in the Montessori environment. A child must be able to know a name, identify an object, or have a conversation to allow for more complicated tasks. Spoken language provides the child with the ability to have and understand conversations, to communicate thoughts and needs, and to express ideas and emotions (Davis, 2015). Spoken language sets a basis not only for reading and writing, but serves as the framework for all academic areas, as well as classification and order, social development, and movement. It is important to introduce spoken language early and daily, as much of children's experience with the world is discovered through the senses. When a child hears a story, engages in a conversation, or acts out a drama, the child gains a sensorial and physical impression of language, emotion, and social skills (Berkowitz, 2011; Van Gorenou, 1995).

Promoting spoken language activities both in the home and at school not only sets a foundation for reading and writing, but also fosters social and emotional growth. Many types of spoken language are done through expressive arts such as songs, dramas, stories, and visual arts. Expressive arts foster learning both concretely and developmentally (Dettore, 2002). Studies from Byrnes and Wasik (2009), and Harper (2016), have been done to show the importance of developing language through expressive arts, and the multiple ways to implement these activities. Harper (2016) described the connection between children's picture books and children's ability to develop social emotional skills. She described how reading carefully selected picture books with content and illustrations about emotions gave children both a visual and verbal means for identifying emotions. Harper (2016) continued to explain that this allows children to make meaningful connections to 'global messages' (p. 85), (emotions and situations

consistent with events experienced by children across the world), and it is with this knowledge

that children can develop the skills necessary to regulate emotions and interact positively with

others. A similar correlation was discovered by Byrnes and Wasik (2009) after using child-taken

photographs as a tool for children to identify emotions and develop concept of self. They

described how child-taken photographs often captured people in various contexts and differing

emotional states. When the children looked at the photographs, they could talk about different

emotions and feelings in relation to their own experiences (caught on the camera). The

photographs also promoted empathy toward others when children observed and talked about

pictures of others who looked sad, scared, or distressed.

Many differing spoken language activities such as conversations, cards, books, songs, or

poems all help children recognize, identify, respond to, and regulate emotions as they construct

themselves, adapt to their world, and become masters of their environments (Dettore, 2002).

Spoken language is a critical aspect of a child's environment that provides multi-faceted

materials, aids in self-construction, and correlates directly with children's social emotional

development.

Oral Storytelling

Though the area of spoken language can be very broad, the following research reviewed

is focused on oral storytelling. Oral Storytelling is the act of verbally expressing real-life or

fantasy experiences to another person (Curenton, 2006) using drama, gestures, or props (Van

Groenou, 1995). These oral stories help children make sense of their lives and frame their

thoughts, emotions, and social cultural identity (Curenton, 2006). Curenton (2006) described

how stories allow children to interpret and make sense of life events, share ideas or fantasies, and

learn important aspects of history or culture. Stories are told person to person, in a social, often

dramatic manner, and do not contain the illustrations or pre-determined words of a typical

storybook; as the written word does not always carry the same emotional connotation that the

spoken word evokes (Van Groenou, 1995). Berkowitz (2011) elaborated further, describing the

different ways children experience storybooks and oral stories. Oral stories allow children to

exercise their imaginations and create their own images and interpretations. Because of this,

children can then begin to develop effective communication, enhance social literacy, and build a

sense of community.

Telling a story creates a social experience for the child. Stories are often told in large or

small groups and with a special artifact or object to indicate the importance of the story. When

children hear the dramatics, see the gestures or expressions, and are asked to participate or

contribute to the story, they are engaged socially with their peers and with the storyteller.

Berkowitz (2011) continued to explain that because of the social interactions and dramatics

intertwined with storytelling, children create a foundation for both educational and social

experiences now and in the future. The person telling the story must not just say the words, but

rather put meaning, emotion, and context behind them. Presenting stories in this manner will

give children a view of the world as a whole; not just words about the world separate from the

experience. Furthermore, narration of personal experience makes stories more meaningful and

stimulates the imagination, encourages different thinking strategies, and can assist with

articulation (Van Groenou, 1995).

When telling a story, facial expressions and intonation create a visual and auditory

connection to the emotions being represented (Santos, Fettig & Shaffer, 2012). As the adult (or

another child) dramatically tells a story, a mutual matching of facial, vocal, and physical

expression occurs. When children tell their own stories, they begin to connect the meaning of

words with their own experiences, thus supporting cognitive development and executive function

(Van Groenou, 1995). Children literally become a part of the story through movement, actions,

and sound (Berkowitz, 2011), and come to see their own experiences as important, their thoughts

as valuable, and to see themselves as storytellers (Berkowitz, 2011; O'Shaughnessy, 2015).

Role of the Adult

Various research from Berkowitz (2011), Curenton (2006), Davis (2015), Dettore (2002),

and O'Shaughnessy (2015), of both Montessori and other early childhood programs have found

that the adult is a critical component when it comes to expression through storytelling and

spoken language. In a Montessori environment, the adult acts as a living piece of language

material (Davis, 2015; Dettore, 2002; O'Shaughnessy, 2015) and must provide a language rich

environment. Being a living piece of material goes beyond simply providing work or materials to

help the child develop literacy; the adult must bring all forms of language to life in an exciting

and engaging manner through spoken word, written word, gestures, facial expressions, art,

culture, and body language. Dettore (2002) described the role of the adult as an emotional

archaeologist, by both modeling to and interpreting these communications in the child. As an

archaeologist chips piece by piece to discover the culture, history, and importance of an artifact,

so must the adult, piece by piece, support language and emotional development in the child. This

is done by gathering data including expressions, gestures, body language and words, observing

social interactions, interpreting information from parents or others, and in turn, responding to and

meeting each child at their own level of emotional development.

Emotional Literacy

Emotions can be defined as physical and psychological reactions or feelings that each person has in response to events. Emotions, as well as contributing events, are usually, but not always, personally meaningful (Goleman, 1995; Saarni, 1998). Children's squeals of delight when playing with a friend, tears of sadness when saying goodbye to parents, or shouts of anger when faced with an unpleasant situation are all ways in which emotions are manifested in children. Emotions influence thoughts and actions, impact relationships, and contribute to daily interactions (Curenton, 2006).

Literacy is commonly thought of as strictly fluent reading, reading comprehension, and writing. Literacy, however, is a complex, multidimensional concept that extends beyond reading and writing. It encompasses the ability to create meaning and apply meaning to one's own life (Figueroa & Sanchez, 2008). Emotional literacy is a gradual process in which children can recognize, identify, and regulate reactions and responses to their various emotions and feelings. This starts within the self, and eventually radiates to others (Dettore, 2002; Figuorea & Sanchez, 2008; Harper, 2016). Emotional literacy is not something that can be concretely taught or forced upon the child by an adult or educator; it is something that the child develops from within, based on repeated social and emotional experiences.

As with the development of language, emotional literacy has been shown to develop most effectively within a scaffolding approach (Harper, 2016). A child must have a concrete understanding of an idea before moving on something more complex. The same idea holds true with emotions. Children must have an emotional vocabulary before they can identify and respond appropriately to their feelings (Borba, 2001). An appropriate response to emotions can occur when a child simply names or identifies the emotion, and extends to when children regulate their reaction to the emotion (Borba, 2001; Harper, 2016). This self-regulation gives

children the tools to respond to conflict expressively (with words instead of yelling or name calling), to refrain from physical reactions, and to think about the impact their response will have on others. Child psychologist and educator Jean Piaget's theory of development supports the research of self-regulation, as he described emotional literacy as a process of equilibrium between self and environment, based off emotion, maturation, experience, and social interaction (Singer & Revenson, 1978).

A Montessori environment allows for repetition, mastery of movement, development of concentration, and serves as an aid to self-construction. In the same manner, through repeated social interactions, frequent use of spoken language materials, and multiple occurrences of natural emotional situations, children develop the skills to label emotions, respond to feelings, better communicate, and become masters of their selves and environments (Dettore, 2002). Peterson and Biggs (2001) explained that identifying emotions is a complex process. Identifying emotions does not simply mean the child can say they are 'happy' or 'angry'. Children identifying emotions can be seen through their judgments ('you're mean'), reference to cognitive states ('I wanted that'), reported speech ('he said go to bed'), negatives ('I didn't do it'), hedges (indicating the speaker is unsure, such as 'I suppose I am in trouble'), and onomatopoeia ('it went boom'). As a living piece of language material acting as an emotional archaeologist, the adult must recognize that these are forms of identifying emotions and respond in a variety of ways. Many times, an appropriate response can be providing the child with understanding or empathy; other times it can be helping the child navigate what do to next, and ultimately it involves being in tune with the child and his or her needs (Dettore, 2002). It is only when each child's natural path of emotional development is supported that he or she will gain the experience necessary to express and respond to emotion in self and others.

Oral Storytelling and Emotional Response to Conflict

A study conducted in 1999 from the National Research Council found that written and oral stories provide the framework for social emotional literacy (Santos, Fettig, & Shaffer, 2012). Furthermore, Figueroa and Sanchez (2008) noted that storytelling contributes to children's vocabulary growth, cognitive skills, and sequencing skills, all which aid in emotional development. In a study conducted about the correlation between oral language, emotions, and conflict resolution, Bartini, Charak, and Pellegrini (2009) supported their hypotheses that conflict resolution relates directly to emotional recognition; which in turn is directly related to literacy activities, including oral storytelling. The two-year study focused on friendship, language, and conflicts and followed students in a kindergarten classroom. Each student was given prompts about friendship, social situations, and language interventions; which included reading stories and labeling pictures. Students were evaluated through observation, questioning prompts, and audio recordings during times of conflict and times of play. Throughout the study, the conclusion was reached that because of the language support provided, children could 'encode' (p.47) (describe and talk about) emotions with one another in times of conflict.

This correlation could occur for a variety of reasons. Montessori (1955) observed that there are two centers of language; physiological and psychological. The physiological phase occurs as the child begins to become sound conscious, starts to identify and classify their world, and takes steps toward reading and writing. The psychological center is the intellectual phase of language when language is developed in its expressive construction through spoken word. All spoken language materials, including oral storytelling, serve as the child's contact to the world through language (Montessori, 1949).

Conclusion

From the earliest studies of Piaget, to the observations of Dr. Montessori, to the most recent educational research, the importance of storytelling and all spoken language has remained consistent for many years and across various cultures. No matter the medium or the method, many types of spoken language materials have been used to help support children's emotional development in both traditional and Montessori learning environments. Educational and psychological research has shown that there is a correlation between spoken language activities, emotional development, and conflict resolution and must be incorporated into the child's school and home environment. Adults are given the great privilege of recognizing the importance of implementing storytelling and spoken language in educational settings, and interpreting this development as an emotional archaeologist.

Communication is the thread that weaves all humankind. Spoken language, specific to humans, is an expression of the intelligence of man (Montessori, 1949). When properly supported and developed, language serves as a transmitter of culture, acquired by the child, and guided by the laws of natural development (Montessori 1955). Through storytelling, children are given a glimpse into culture, an identity of emotion, an aid in self-construction, and developmental and social skills that will serve them for years to come.

Methodology

This study was done over a period of five weeks and included daily storytelling with the children. Almost any thought, experience, or situation can be told as an engaging story. When vivid sensory details, vocal intonation, and expressive facial and body gestures are added, even the most seemingly mundane event can be transformed into a fascinating experience for children. Antics of a family pet, memories from childhood, travel adventures, or daily tasks are all ideas that can be told as stories. The stories used in this research were true, personal stories and

focused on emotions or situations often seen during times of conflict. For this research, stories were pre-written to maintain consistency, though typically stories do not need to be written. The written story was used as a general guide when telling the stories, and was not read word for word. Different expressions, gestures, and nuances occurred each time the stories were told.

The first story, 'The Icy Hill,' (see Appendix B) was about a recent event in my life where I was in a situation that caused me immense frustration. The story was told in a fun, engaging and slightly dramatic (though never scary) manner. During parts about how frustrated I was feeling, I used facial expressions and hand gestures. I made sure to explain how I was feeling and how I handled those emotions, as well as how I ended up solving the problem. This allowed the children to gain both an auditory and visual impression of the emotion being discussed and to hear language put to emotion.

The children's responses to both the stories and during times of conflict with one another were observed. The first week of the study was to obtain baseline data, followed by three weeks of storytelling intervention while collecting data, and a final week focused strictly on data collection. The room in which the study took place consisted of 23 children between the ages of two-and a-half and six years old with 12 males and 11 females. There were three adults present in the room. Data collection was done throughout the morning work cycle (8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.), and the stories were told once a day to a small group. The groups were chosen based on availability of the children, and though not always possible, tried to include children of different ages and genders. The time of day the story was told was not pre-determined (but was documented) and varied daily. Variables included availability of children to join a group activity (children already engaged in work were not interrupted), special activities (such as Spanish lessons), and my own responsibilities and availability as an assistant in the classroom.

Baseline Data

The first week served as an observation week to obtain baseline data. The goal of this was to observe what emotions or situations often led to conflict, how many conflicts occurred, and how conflicts were resolved. To do this, I used a tally sheet (Appendix C) which included each child's initials and a space for weekly number of conflicts. The tally sheet was designed in this manner to analyze the effectiveness of the interventions for both the room overall and each child individually. A tally mark was made next to each child that was involved in a conflict that included shouting or screaming, physical reactions (hitting, kicking, throwing objects, etc.), name calling, unkind words (for example, "you're not my friend anymore"), adult intervention, and/or left unresolved. I chose this criterion for the tally sheet as these were the behaviors I had noticed most often during times of conflict before the research began.

Along with the tally sheet, I also used a conflict checklist (Appendix D) during the baseline week. This checklist contained boxes indicating 'yes' or 'no' of behaviors seen or language used among children during times of conflict. The behaviors were the same as the tally sheet, but also included spaces for positive interactions, such as 'use of an emotional identifier' and 'expresses needs positively with words.' There was also room to make notes or write more details about the situation. The checklist included the number of children involved, ages of the children, and a brief description of the situation. When filling out the form, children were identified by initials. My role as an assistant allowed for close observation of these situations.

One of the most crucial tasks of an assistant in a Montessori environment is to observe and remain available yet unobtrusive during the daily activities of the children. My mornings were spent sitting in a chair where I could see a large portion, but not all of the room. Due to the setup of the room and the location my chair, there was a small area of the room that was not

visible to me. Because of this, another adult filled out the conflict checklist for this area of the

room.

Using my notes from these sheets, I looked at what emotions seemed to surround most

times of conflict. Although there were multiple emotions and situations that contributed to the

conflicts that occurred, I noticed that the majority of conflicts stemmed from when children felt

frustrated, angry, or sad and disappointed. These emotions usually occurred during everyday

interactions, such a child not wanting to work with a friend, interruption of work, or

disagreement of ideas or opinions. These situations seemed to build and escalate into full blown

conflict. For example, if a child felt his or her work was being interrupted, asked multiple times

to be left alone, and did not get a response to the request, the anger or frustration would build and

conflict would erupt.

After a week of observations, I wrote my first story focused on frustration. Stories were

centered around the specific emotion, and not necessarily a situation. My first story was about

frustration and did not involve a situation with others, as the other two stories did. The second

week's story was about anger, and the third sadness and disappointment (see Appendix B). Each

story was developmentally appropriate for children ages two-and a-half to six, as per the

Association Montessori Internationale's guidelines and presentation for storytelling (see

Appendix A).

Storytelling Presentation

Stories were told for a period of three weeks, with each weekly story focused on a

different emotion. Throughout the course of the children's morning work cycle (8:30 a.m.-11:30

a.m.) I invited a small group of children (typically four to five at one time) to join me for a story.

The children always had the right to decline the story, and I tried to never interrupt a child who was already working. If a child declined, I simply made a note of that and invited him or her at another time.

We then gathered at a chowki (a small table close to the floor) or a working mat (a rug or mat which designates children's work space). I decided to use a shell as a symbol to indicate that this was a storytelling presentation. The children nicknamed this the 'story shell.' I explained to the children that the shell is a symbol that we are gathering to tell a story. I kept the shell on a stand by where I sit throughout the morning. Although not a specific data tool, I made sure to take attendance at each story to be sure that I had invited each of the children in the classroom throughout the duration of the week. I then explained the expectations during storytelling to the children. The children needed to listen during my story, but I reminded them that everyone would have an opportunity to talk at the end. I also explained that the shell was to sit in the middle of our work space, and that playing with it or moving it might be distracting or unsafe for others.

I then proceeded to tell a true, personal story about myself centering around a specific emotion. The story was told orally, in an interesting manner, with detail, and with focus on facial gestures and intonation. After the story, I asked the children if they had any questions. Each child was given an opportunity to ask a question, make a comment, or share a similar experience or different story. The children were then free to make another choice of activity in the room or continue to share stories with one another. They were also reminded that they could share stories (both mine or their own) with one another at any time and did not need to ask permission to use the story shell.

Data Collection

Immediately before and after the stories, I recorded the children's responses with observational field notes (Appendix E). This sheet included the questions, comments, or stories shared by the children, as well as any other important information relating to the story. It also documented what occurred before, during and after the story (such as the level of engagement or if any children left the group), as well as the time of the story, the number of children in attendance, and the ages of children.

This same procedure was followed each week for a period of three weeks. In addition to the tally sheet, conflict checklist, and observational field notes, I also collected data using a reflective journal (Appendix F). This journal included children's response to the stories, prompts about any changes in the environment, the number of times children repeated or told their own stories, and language heard and conflicts observed throughout the day. Any other thoughts, changes, or items of importance were noted in the reflective journal.

During the final week, I did not tell stories, but continued to fill out all four data tools. If children asked me to tell a story, I encouraged them to share their own stories with friends. Though this was meant to be done during a full five-day school week, the post intervention data was collected over a three-day week and a following four-day week due to the school's conference schedule.

Data Analysis

Data was collected over a period of five weeks. This included one week of baseline data and one week of post intervention data (where I did not tell stories, but encouraged the children to do so). Baseline data consisted of the tally sheet and the conflict checklist. These tools were used in subsequent weeks, along with the observational field notes and reflective journal. The purpose of the tally sheets was to show if there was an increase, decrease, or no change in

conflicts over the course of the intervention. It also showed the number of conflicts per child per week. This helped to analyze the data in terms of the data group as a whole and each child individually.

First, the number of conflicts per week were totaled and averaged. The data between the total and the average for weeks two through post intervention was consistent and fell within one tenth of the baseline data. The exception to this was week one. Baseline data showed 18 conflicts, week one, 29 conflicts, week two, 19 conflicts, week three, 17 conflicts, and post intervention data, 18 conflicts (equal to the baseline data). Weeks two, three, and post intervention showed that conflicts either increased or decreased by just one conflict per week. Figure 1 shows the number of conflicts per week over the five-week period. Except for week one, all the data showed a difference of just one conflict. The total number of conflicts did not consistently go up or down during the duration of the intervention.
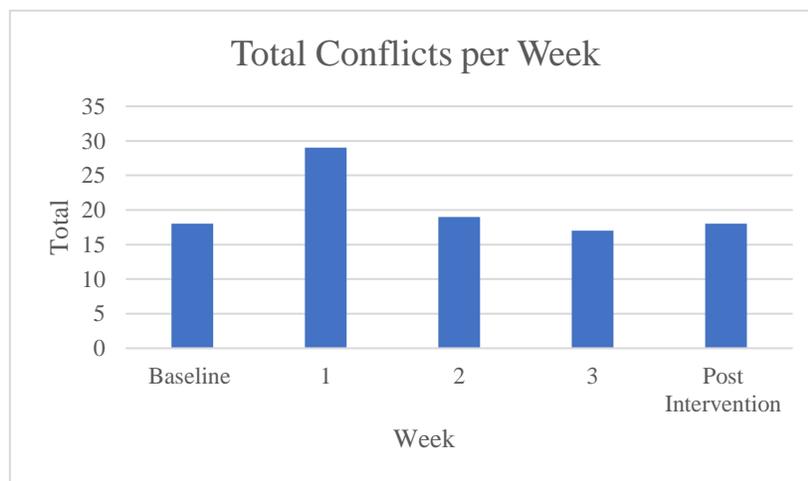

Figure 1. Total Conflicts per Week

The tally sheet shows a total of 29 conflicts in week one, which is inconsistent with the rest of the data. Week one showed an increase of 11 conflicts versus the plus or minus 1conflict during the other weeks. To infer why week one had such a higher number of conflicts, I referred

to my observational field notes and reflective journal. During the first week of the intervention, there were some changes and disruptions in the daily morning routine. A student observer was present all week; thus, four adults were in the room instead of the usual three. On another day, a fifth adult entered the room to take photographs for school publications and marketing purposes. Though not intrusive, the presence of other adults may have had an impact on the children. The last day of week one brought another change. The guide (teacher), who typically gives children presentations, or lessons of activities, was absent. Because of this, I was giving the children their presentations, in addition to taking data and implementing my intervention. These changes and inconsistencies may have factored into an increased number of weekly conflicts.

The number of conflicts were also averaged. Figure 2. shows the average number of weekly conflicts per child.
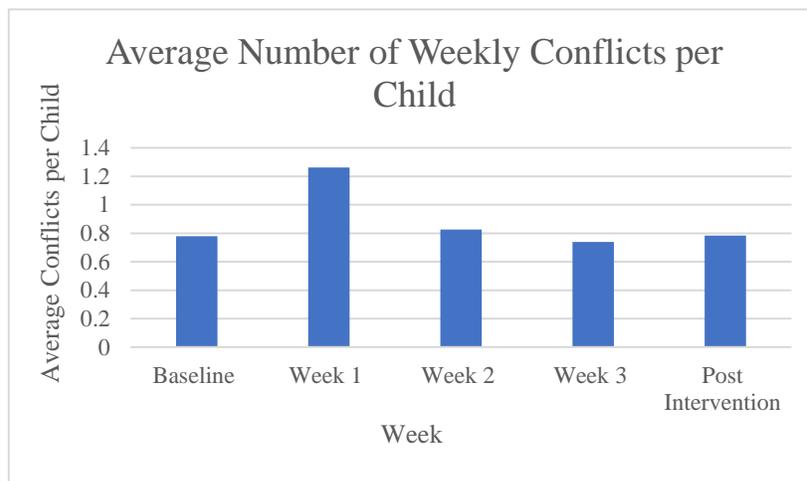

Figure 2. Average Number of Weekly Conflicts per Child

When compared to the baseline data, the average number of conflicts per child was less than 1 during weeks two, three, and post intervention. Week one shows that the average amount of conflicts was higher by over 1. Figure 2 is consistent with Figure 1, and shows that aside from week one, the average number of conflicts did not consistently go up or down, and were

within one tenth of the baseline data. These results did not show reliable information that daily storytelling increased or decreased the number of conflicts.

The total number of conflicts were also analyzed among the 23 children in the classroom and percentages were calculated per week. Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 show the percentages of children involved in zero, one, two, three, or four or more conflicts per week.

Figure 3 show percentages for baseline data. Over half of the class, 56.52% was involved in 0 conflicts. A total of 7 children, or 30.43% of the class was involved in 1 conflict, and 4.35% of the class was involved in 2, 3, or 4 or more conflicts, respectively.
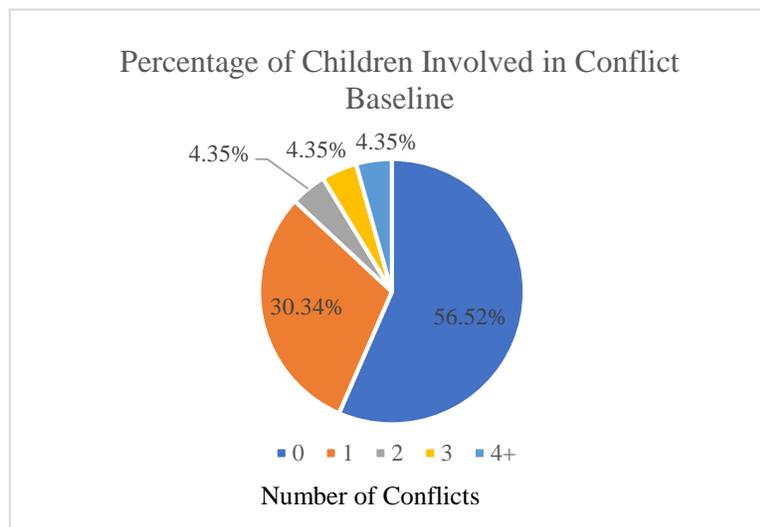

Figure 3. Percentage of Children Involved in Conflict

Figure 4 shows the percentages of children involved in conflicts during week one and included the largest number of total conflicts. The number of children involved in conflicts decreased, with 39.13% of the class involved in 0 conflicts, 26.09% involved in one conflict, 17.39% in 2 conflicts, 4.35% involved in 3 conflicts, and 13.04% in 4 or more conflicts. This week also had the largest number of children with 4 or more conflicts, and the lowest percentage of children with 0 conflicts.
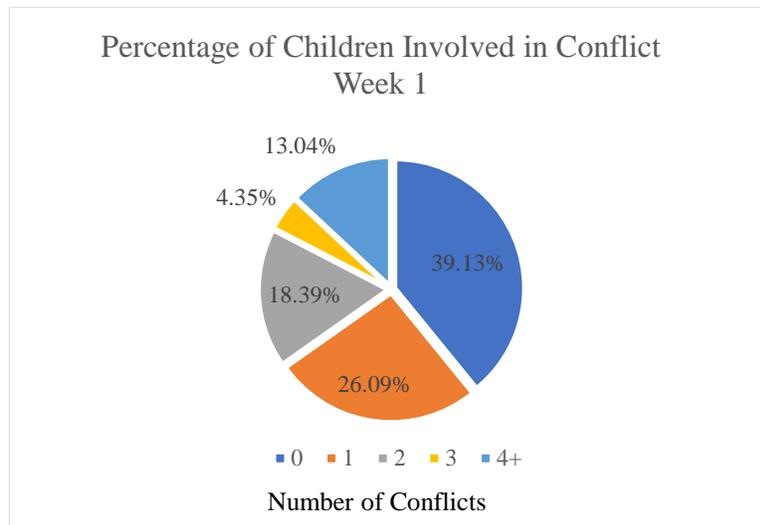
Figure 4. Percentage of Children Involved in Conflict

Week two, as seen in Figure 5, consisted of 65.22% of the class involved with 0 conflicts, 13.04% with 1 conflict, 8.70% with 2 conflicts, 4.35% with 3 conflicts, and 8.70% with 4 or more conflicts. Figure 6 shows that in week three, 60.87% percent of the class was involved in 0 conflicts, 21.7% involved in 1 conflict, 4.35% involved in 2 conflicts, 8.70% involved in 3 conflicts, and 4.35% involved in 4 or more conflicts. Post intervention data, seen in Figure 7, showed that 47.83% of the class was involved in 0 conflicts, 39.13% involved in 1 conflict, and 4.35% of the class involved in 2, 3, or 4 or more conflicts.
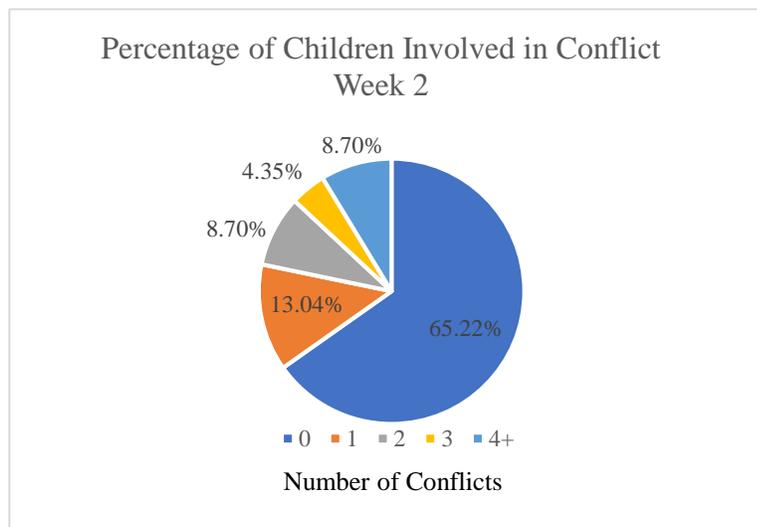

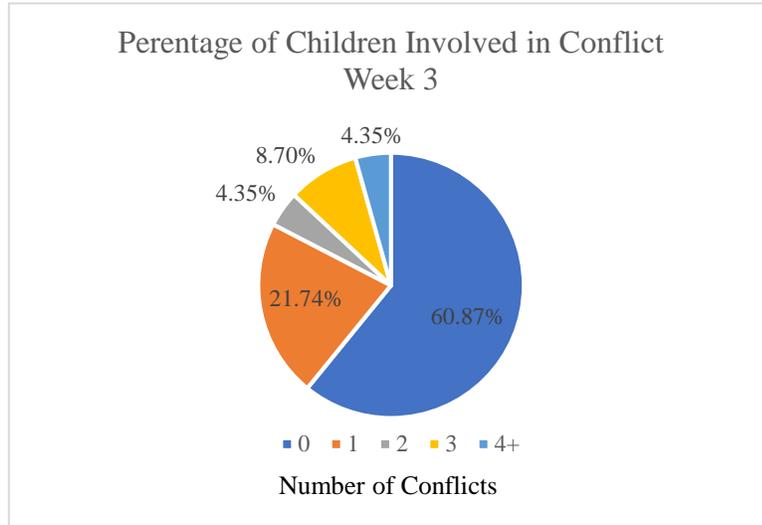*Figure 5*. Percentage of Children Involved in Conflict

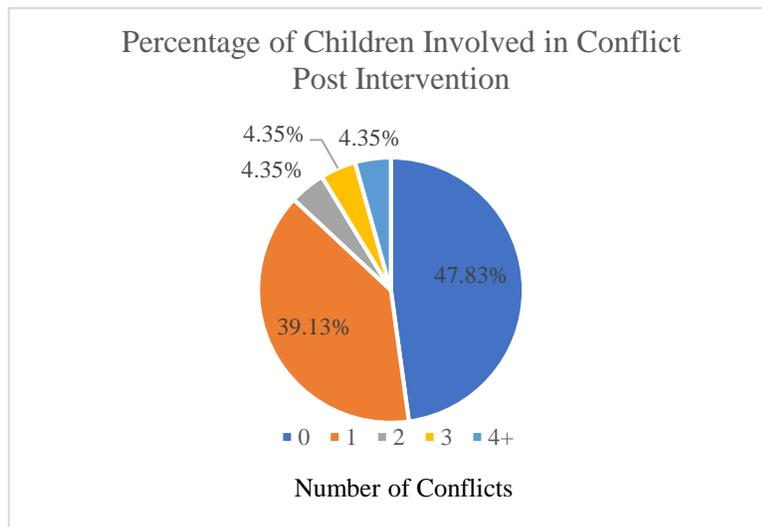*Figure 6.* Percentage of Children Involved in Conflict

Figure 7. Percentage of Children Involved in Conflict

These percentages show that between 70% and 80% of the total class had between 0 and 1 conflict per week. The total number of conflicts that increased per week occurred with about 17% of the class (or 1 in 6 children).

Analysis of each week showed that the percentage of children involved with 1 or more conflicts decreased during each week except for week one and post intervention week. Week one showed there was an increase in the number of children involved in one or more conflict. The

post intervention week showed that there was a decrease in the number of children involved in 0 conflicts, while there was a marked increase in the number of children involved in 1conflict.

This could have happened because of the changes in environment and in number of conflicts during week one. During the post intervention week, I was not telling children stories, but rather encouraging children to tell their own. Observations and reflections noted that during the post intervention week, the story shell – the symbol to indicate storytelling – was put away for a few days at the discretion of the guide and assistants. Sometimes, even though expectations were placed on the use of the shell, it appeared that children would use the shell in an inappropriate manner or as a reason to not complete their daily activities or work. Instead of telling a story, children would play with the shell or with each other. This prompted the three adults in the room to discuss the shell, and reach an agreement to observe what would happen if the shell was put away. Though this did not deter children from telling stories completely, it may have influenced the number of stories told that week.

The percentages showed that, apart from week one and post intervention data, most of the class was involved in little to no conflict per week, and a small percentage of the class was involved in multiple conflicts per week. It is important to note some isolated incidents among the children. Analysis of data per each child in the classroom showed that although the percentages are consistent with the majority of children being involved in 0 or 1 conflict per week, one child was involved with 1 conflict per week during the baseline and post intervention weeks, and 4 conflicts per week during the interventions. Oppositely, another child started the baseline week with 5 conflicts per week, had only 1 conflict during all three intervention weeks, and 2 conflicts post intervention week.

In addition to the total number of conflicts, I also wanted to see if the number of times that children told stories each week had an impact on the number of conflicts. Once children had the initial storytelling presentation with me, they were, as with all work in a Montessori environment, free to repeat it as many times as they chose. The children were told that they could either repeat my story or tell their own. Both children's own stories and repetition of my story were counted as repetition of the activity. As seen in Figure 8, the comparison of the number of conflicts to the number of repeated storytelling presentations shows no discernable correlation. The storytelling presentation was not introduced to the children until week one, thus baseline data indicates zero stories repeated.
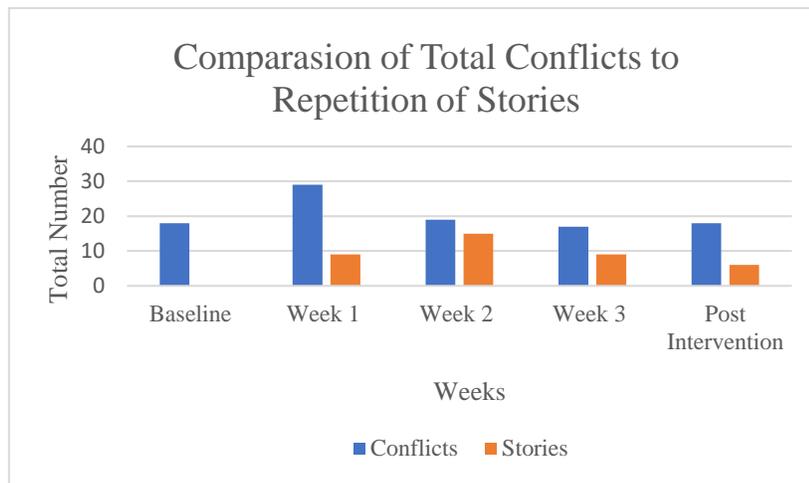

Figure 8. Comparison of Total Conflicts to Repetition of Stories

Weeks one and three both had stories repeated 9 times, with 29 and 17 conflicts. Week two of the intervention showed a more even correlation with 19 conflicts and 15 story repetitions. The post intervention week had the least amount of story repetition and the second highest number of conflicts. This is the week that I stopped telling stories, but rather encouraged children to tell their own stories. The symbol for telling stories, the story shell, was only present for the first day of the post intervention data collection before being put away after discussion among the adults in the room.

When I reviewed my reflective journal and observations, two common themes were observed. Some children did not seem to tell stories as often without the use of the story shell, and others looked for adult-aided initiation of storytelling. A specific example of wanting to use the shell occurred when one child asked for the shell. When I encouraged the child to tell a story without the shell, he declined. A few minutes later, the child invited a friend to join him for a story without the shell. Further analysis revealed that of the six stories told by children this week, only one child did not initially inquire about the shell. Observations and reflections also note that the shell was asked about every day after it was put away.

Data from the tally sheets does not prove that storytelling created a significant increase or decrease in the number of weekly conflicts. Aside from the number of and changes in conflicts, I also wanted to see the response to conflicts. This was recorded with the conflict checklist (Appendix D). The conflict checklist was filled out for each child that was observed in a conflict, and focused on behaviors and language used, both positive and negative. Some of these behaviors were more common than others, but there was no consistent pattern. To properly assess the data, each behavior was divided into some common groups of adverse reactions, language and tone of voice, and if and how conflicts were resolved. These were compared to the total number of conflicts per week. Figure 9, Figure 10, and Figure 11 show this comparison.
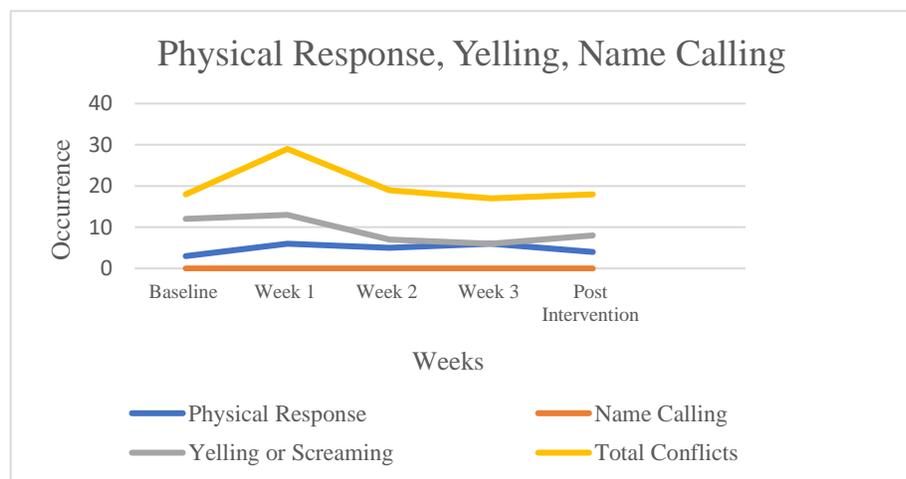

Figure 9. Physical Response, Yelling, Name Calling

Figure 9 shows the conflicts which included physical responses, yelling, or name calling. Name calling, which I had assumed (or observed before beginning baseline data) would be a common behavior, never occurred. Further analysis of the conflict checklist, observations, and reflections showed that negative words, such as "you're mean," "go away," or "stop" occurred rather than name calling. Physical responses and yelling were the most frequent during week one, when the highest number of conflicts occurred. Over the course of the interventions, the relative frequency of these behaviors did not change (though they went up and down throughout the intervention).
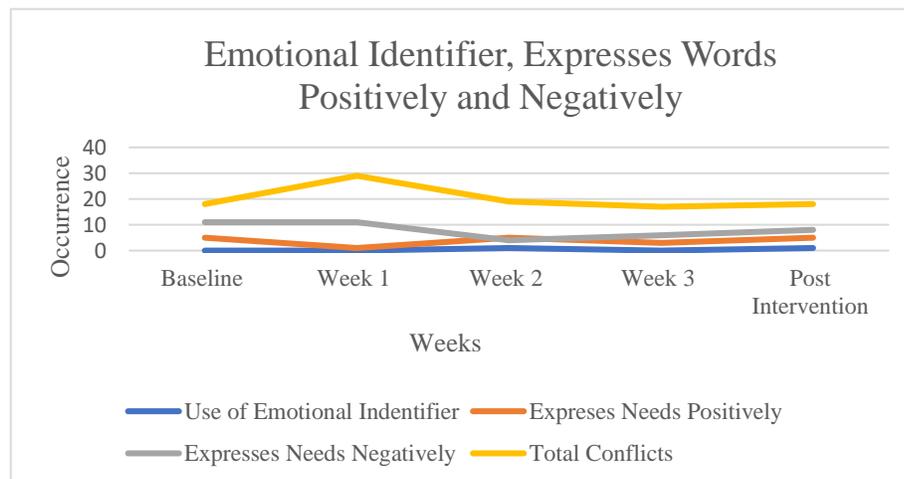
Figure 10. Emotional Identifier, Expresses Words Positively and Negatively

The words that children used during times of conflict was focused on in Figure 10. Again, a correlation between the highest number of negatively expressed words and the highest number of conflicts is shown. The use of positive expression of needs went up and down, and back up during the post intervention week. In all weeks except for week two, the negative expression of needs was higher than the positive expression. During week two, the positive and negative expressions were almost the same, and as noted in week three and post intervention, the difference between these is not as great as it was during baseline and week one. Though not always used in

times of conflict, the language heard throughout the morning was recorded in the observational

field notes and reflective journal. This was based not just on words said, but also on tone of voice.

Typical negative language heard included "stop it," "no," and "I don't care." Positive language

heard included "I'm getting frustrated," "please move your mat out of the middle of the floor,"

and "no watchers, please" (watcher is another word for an observer – a child who is watching

another child work). Reflections indicated that during week three, there was a spike in the kind,

positive language heard (both in times of conflict and in neutral times). Review of reflections

showed that an example of this occurred when one child jumped over another child's workspace.

The child who was working gently explained to the other child that for safety reasons, he should

walk around the work space. The children talked about and peacefully worked out the situation

before it developed into a conflict. During the post intervention week, reflections showed multiple

instances of children resolving conflicts or potential conflicts peacefully and with kind, positive
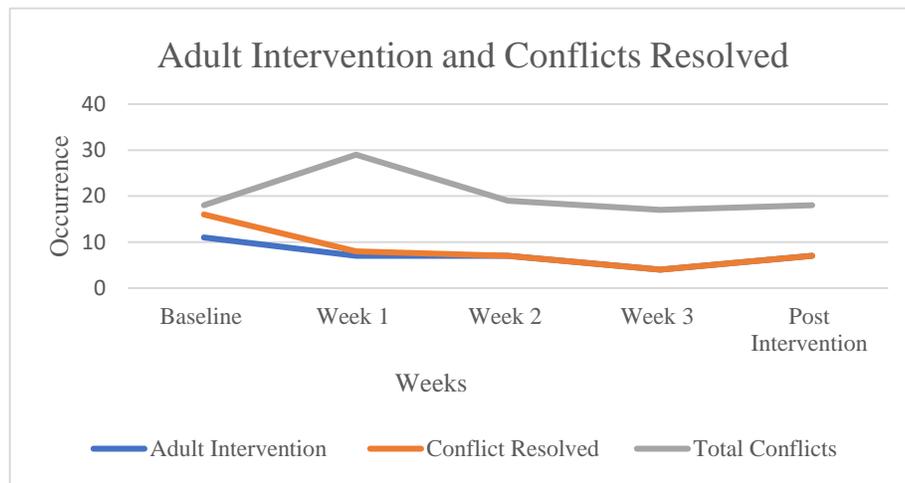
language.

Figure 11. Adult Intervention and Conflicts Resolved

Figure 11 shows that adult intervention and resolved conflicts were in very close range of

each other. Data from the figure suggests that there may be a strong correlation between adult

intervention and conflict resolution; however, these are not necessarily dependent on each other.

In some instances, adult intervention did not lead to conflict resolution, and other cases adult intervention was not required for conflict resolution. Some resolutions may not have been recorded. This could have been for a variety of reasons, such as not noticing a resolved conflict, or children just walking away or moving on without talking about or taking action for a resolution. In a Montessori environment, to promote independence and social development, the adult is only to intervene is certain situations. Typically, misuse of a material, physical reactions, and running would all require adult intervention. I considered a conflict resolved when the children involved worked out a solution. When children just walked away, ignored, or let a conflict be, I considered this unresolved. Week one had the highest number of unresolved conflicts as well as the highest total number of conflicts. In the following weeks, it appeared that the number of unresolved conflicts decreased and evened out through the remainder of the intervention.

While the results of storytelling are inconclusive, there are many factors and variables that may have limited the impact of this study. Some of these include the time frame (five weeks may not be long enough to show conclusive results), daily changes and interruptions in environment, and daily variances, such as absences of children in the group. Because a Montessori environment is mixed ages, the developmental needs of the children in the group may have also impacted the study, as these factors were not isolated during the intervention and data collection.

Though the data collected and analyzed does not show a specific change in storytelling and emotional response to conflict, many themes, behaviors, and words were observed that showed storytelling had an overall positive impact on the children in the room. Reflections and observations note a feeling of excitement regarding stories and the story shell. The small group

setting provided both groups of children and groups of children and the adult the opportunity to interact together in ways they typically might not, thus creating social bonds and promoting social cohesion.

Children would talk about ideas for stories, the location of the story shell, who they wanted to share a story with, and remind me of my own stories throughout the morning. Children often asked me if we were going to do a story together that day. One child created and decorated his own symbol at home and proudly brought it to school the next day to use as a symbol for a story about snap circuits. Another child worked intently on building the pink tower (a Montessori block-building activity). When she had completed it, she invited some classmates to gather around the pink tower so she could share a story with them. After the intervention, children who participated in this intervention and those from other rooms continued to spontaneously share stories together throughout the school day; during lunch, recess, or times of transition. Storytelling proved to be a well-loved activity that stretched far beyond this research study.

Action Plan

Research across Montessori and other preschool settings (Berkowitz, 2011; Curenton, 2006; Davis, 2015; Dettore, 2002; Harper, 2016; Montessori, 1955; O'Shaughnessy, 2015) have shown that providing preschool aged children with multiple types of spoken language is of great benefit. Books, songs, conversations, stories, and many other types of language activities are all ways that children can develop social, emotional, problem solving, and language skills.

Daily oral storytelling did not appear to show a change in the number of conflicts or how conflicts were resolved; however, it did prove to be an enjoyable experience for the children. Data suggested that although further research needs to be conducted to assess the impact of oral

storytelling and emotional response to conflict, the daily small group gathering promoted a sense of community and created social bonds among the children.

Moving forward, there are many things to be considered when implementing this research both in the research process itself and with collection of data. What constituted a conflict and a resolved conflict were pre-determined at the discretion of the researcher, but these could be adjusted based on future researcher's preferences and observations. This is also true for the behaviors and language listed on the conflict checklist. These could be changed to best fit what future researchers observe in their own environments.

It was a personal assumption of mine that verbal words would be a suitable experience for all the children in this study. Most children appeared to enjoy the stories, but I did find that each child had his or her own needs and ways of expression in both language development, emotional development, and times of conflict. A story that was enticing and exciting for a three-year-old may not have had the same effect on a six-year-old. Some of the children in this study were visual learners, some showed exceptional verbal skills, and others had an artistic flair. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, stories could be adapted to better fit the characteristics of each child. Stories could include pictures or more objects to better share the story, or a different story focused on the same emotion could be told to different aged children. I did allow each child to decline to attend or to leave the story if he or she lost interest, but it should be noted that there could multiple adaptations made to ensure that each child's own needs are being met.

Throughout the course of this study, some factors occurred that should be addressed in future research. These included the use of the story shell (the symbol to signify storytelling), the number of times a day stories could be told, the number of children in a storytelling group, and how misuse of the material and the activity was to be handled. I would suggest that expectations

and limitations of the process for telling, repeating, and using a symbol during stories be created

and decided upon before research begins, while leaving room for flexibility. During this study,

these factors were handled as they arose and were then implemented.

The use of a shell as a symbol for storytelling had both great impact and left room for

improvement. Use of a symbol in later research may depend on the specifics of the room,

participants of the study, and preference of the researcher. Though the shell was a source of

community building, excitement, and engagement, it also seemed to sometimes be the cause of

misuse, hiding behind a work (when a child continues to use materials which do not purposefully

serve him or her), arguments, and may have created a dependence for the children. It seemed that

some children felt they could not tell a story without the shell.

While stories were always encouraged, the shell was used in a secondary manner as a

physical representation of storytelling and to limit the number of children engaged in the activity

at one time. If the shell was being used, then children needed to wait until it was available to tell

stories. When the shell was removed from the room after the last week of the intervention, it

appeared that children were apprehensive or did not want to tell stories without the symbol. The

children were encouraged to continue to tell stories without the shell. Observations and

reflections noted that some children told stories without the shell and others decided not to. It

was not the intent for children to feel as though they must have a symbol to be able to tell a story,

as stories can be spontaneous and occur organically. I do believe that the use of a symbol,

especially in a classroom setting, is of great value and can create a special experience for

children. It can also act as a tool to spike interest and draw children to the activity.

The use of the shell in the room of study helped prevent issues such as arguments over an

activity and too many children involved in an activity (though stories can be told in a large group

setting). Moving forward, I might explain right away to the children that the shell is acting as a symbol for the story, but is not necessary to be able to share a story. I may also introduce it as an optional material and leave the decision of whether to use it up to the small group. Another aspect would be to encourage children to tell stories at other times, when the shell or symbol is not available, such as lunch or recess. This might help children realize that stories can be told anytime, and a physical symbol is not always a necessary component.

In a Montessori environment, the guide is to give each child a presentation of different activities and how to use the accompanying materials. The child is then free to repeat the activity on his or her own. The guide and the other adults in the room are available to assist children with any challenges or questions, but not to constantly be the source of the child's learning (which comes from within). After I told children stories, they were free to repeat or tell their own. Observations and reflections from this research showed that children would often come to or ask an adult (the researcher) for a story, rather than independently or spontaneously sharing their own or repeating the one they were originally told. Children, in order to view their own thoughts and experiences as valuable, should be encouraged to tell stories independently. In the future, I would try to find more ways to encourage independent repetition of storytelling. However, I found that the time spent with a small group of children during the initial storytelling presentation created a sense of community and bonding between the adult and the children.

Storytelling promoted independence in thoughts and ideas, created a sense of community, developed social cohesion, and solidified a new way of communication between children and their peers and between children and adults. In the weeks following the intervention, children have continued to share stories with one another (and ask the adults for stories) not just in the classroom, but in other times of the day such as lunch, recess, before or after school care, or

times of transition. Children from classrooms that did not participate in this study have also asked for and shared stories.

Though the storytelling did not directly impact the number of conflicts or emotional response to conflict as was originally intended, the multi-layered benefits it did create were beneficial to all children. Children at all levels of language development, verbal expression, or reading and writing skills came together to share their thoughts and ideas with each other. Oral storytelling is a creative and expressive language work in which all children can partake regardless of age or level of language, reading, or writing development.

The work of a Montessori educator goes far beyond knowing how to use the materials. It is an on-going, often personal process of growth, reflection, and observation, and requires a deep understanding of how to meet and serve each child at the level that is best for him or her. This research has allowed me to look at several ways in which I can improve as a Montessori educator in how I observe, react, intervene, and help children develop. It has also reminded me the critical importance of daily spoken language activities.

Throughout this research, I witnessed a small glimpse of the power of spoken language and was reminded that this work serves a purpose which cannot be measured through reading writing, or monitoring the number of conflicts. It satiates a deep inner human need for communication and connection and provides children a life-long foundation for both academic and social development.

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Appendix A

Association Montessori Internationale Storytelling Presentation
(Presentation and guidelines adapted from the Montessori Center of Minnesota)

Materials	A collection of books, stories, poems, and songs. Geography folders and other pictures may be used to support conversations and stories. Optional: circle of friends, candle story, rock, or stick, worry or trouble dolls.
Prerequisite	None.
Introduction	
	Storytelling is one of the most common uses of language in daily life. We are all story tellers. We tell humorous stories, inspirational stories, stories about others, about our lives, travel and so on. Storytelling should be included every day. It can be as short as two sentences. Children love stories, but we have to model it for them. Stories help children with their imagination, their memory, their concentration, vocabulary, and social development.
Guidelines for Choosing Stories	• They should be developmentally appropriate for the age of the children. • Avoid stories that are moralistic; they are beyond their understanding, or are frightening. • The best stories that children like are about real life and especially stories about when you were young. • Tell stories about famous and non-famous people. • We need to be a model for storytelling and encourage young children to tell stories. • For older children, be sure to tell stories that include history.
Guidelines for Telling Stories	• Have something in the environment that indicates you are going to tell a story (Circle of friends, story stone, story stick, etc.). • Vary the pace of the story. • Be sensitive to different levels of concentration. • Whenever a child tells a story, always thank them for sharing their story. • Learn a story well before telling it. • Tell it in a lively way with eye contact. • Use objects in the environment to help tell the story (fabrics, flags, etc.). • Be flexible so children can be involved. • Include many sensory details.
Presentation	1. Invite a small group of children. 2. Gather with the children around a chowki or working mat. 3. Bring the circle of friends (or whichever object is used to indicate storytelling). 4. Tell a story. If the story is true, tell the children, "This is a true story." The story can be started with "Once Upon a Time." Start with a story about people, places, or our own childhood experiences. The stories can expand from there. 5. When the story is complete, discuss with the children. Ask the children what they enjoyed about the story. 6. Invite the children to each share a story, one at a time.

7. Show the children how to put away the storytelling materials.
8. Establish guidelines for storytelling if a candle is used.

Control of Error	None.
Direct Aims	Verbal and auditory preparation for written language (both reading and writing).
Indirect Aim	Preparation for creative writing and total reading.
Age	3 and up.

Appendix B

Stories Told During Intervention:

Week 1: The Icy Hill, Emotion: Frustration

This is a true story.

One night, I was out meeting my friend for dinner. It was raining out, and it was so cold that the rain was turning to ice on the ground. The ground and the roads were very slippery. I got into my car, and began to drive home very carefully. When I got close to my house, there is a hill that I needed to drive up to get home. I thought "hmm, it is so slippery, I do not want to go up that hill."

So, I tried to go another way – but, as I turned to go another way, I found myself trying to drive up an even bigger hill! I pressed the gas pedal (what makes the car go forward). Zoom. Zoom. Zoom. My car went a little bit up the hill, and then it stopped. I put my car into reverse (what makes the car drive backwards), went down a little bit, and then tried to go up again. Zoom. Zoom. Zoom. My tires were spinning, but my car was not going up the hill. I tried again and again, and again.

My car would not go up the hill, and I really wanted to get home.
I began to feel frustrated. I was trying and trying and trying to get my car up the hill so I could go home, and it would not go. A nice man gave me some advice (keep going backwards) and a nice woman offered to help me. I tried all of the things they suggested, and my car still would not go up the hill.

Because I was frustrated, I felt like yelling and crying. I did not yell or cry. I took a deep breath and called my family and said, "I am trying to get home, and I am stuck on a big, icy hill." "I feel very frustrated and need some help."

So, my family came to help me. My brother put salt down to help melt the ice, and my family helped me get my car to the bottom of the hill. I felt less frustrated. I began to drive home, but had to drive up another icy hill to get there.
Zoom. Zoom. Zoom. My car almost made it up the hill, and then it got stuck again. Now, I felt VERY frustrated. I had almost made it home, I was trying and trying, and I just could not get my car up the hill. I felt like screaming, yelling, or crying. I told my family "I am so frustrated right now, and I need help again." We tried and tried, but my car would not drive up the hill.

Finally, my brother PUSHED my car up the hill, while I gently tapped the gas pedal. Zoom. Zoom. My tires were turning. Zoom. Zoom. Zoom.
My brother pushed and pushed, my car made it up the hill, and I was able to drive home. I told my family "thank you for helping me when I was so frustrated." Even though I felt like my car would never get up the hill, and I would be stuck for a long time, I asked for help, and worked together with my family to get home!

Week 2: Camp, Emotion: Anger

This is a true story.

One summer, when I was a little girl, I was so excited to go to camp for one whole week. It was going to be my first time at camp. I was very excited because we were going to sing songs, play games, do crafts, build fires, go hiking, and learn and do all sorts of neat and interesting things. I was also a little nervous. At this camp, you are separated into a group called 'units.' Your unit is the group that you do all of those wonderful things with. I was nervous, because there was only one person that I knew from school going to this camp, and I would not know anyone else.

On the first day of camp, I arrived ready to go. I was both excited and nervous. Luckily, my friend from school was in my unit, and I felt a little better. We arrived at our campsite, sang some songs, and got set up. Then, our unit leader explained that each person in the unit should have a 'buddy.' Your buddy would be the person that you do everything with – walk around the camp, get water, go to the bathroom, and do things to help prepare and clean up the camp.

I really wanted my friend from school to be my buddy, because I already knew her and was comfortable with her. As we were choosing buddies, a girl that I did not know asked my friend to be her buddy, and my friend said yes! I wanted to be buddies with my friend! I did not want her to be with someone else!

I began to feel so angry. I wanted to be my friend's buddy, but someone else asked her, and she said yes. Now I did not get to do all the things I wanted to do with my friend, and I had to choose a person I did not know to be my buddy. My eyes filled with tears and I wanted to cry. My cheeks felt hot and red. I wanted to yell and scream and shout and stomp my feet at my friend and her buddy. I was so angry and I felt like my feelings were hurt. It was not fair because I was not able to be buddies with the person that I wanted to.

Even though I felt SO angry and mad, I choose another buddy. I then said to my friend "I really wanted to be your buddy, and I am upset that we are not buddies."

And do you know what happened? My friend's buddy suggested that we SHARE and trade buddies! That meant I got to be buddies with three different people at camp. The best part of the story – the girl I did not know who made me angry by choosing my friend as a buddy – is today one of my very best friends, and we went to camp together for many, many years!

Week 3: The Competition, Emotion: Sadness/Disappointment

This is a true story.

When I was in high school, I was in a sport called cheerleading. In cheerleading, there is some dancing, some gymnastics (flips and tumbling), jumping, and stunting (where you put people up high in your hands and they do tricks).

My cheerleading team was practicing and practicing and practicing. We practiced our dances, our motions, our jumps, and our stunts. There was a big competition coming up with cheerleading teams from all over the state, and we wanted to be prepared.

On the day of the competition, when it was our turn, my team was nervous. But we remembered our practice and how hard we worked. We went out onto the big blue mat to do our routine. We remembered everything- our jumps were high, our dance was all together, and all of our stunts worked! Afterward we were so happy, excited, and proud of ourselves.

We really wanted to win that competition to show how hard we had worked. We waited as all of the cheerleading teams had their turns on the mat.

When it was time for awards, my team was waiting excitedly to hear if we had placed. We listened to another team get fourth place. Then another team got third place. "This is it," we thought. "We must be getting second or first place." We listened as a team was called for second place. We all held hands, and our hearts raced, because we had done SO well; we knew that we were going to get first place! We listened to the announcer… "And in first place…" was another team.

My team, who practiced so long and so hard, and had done so well did not even place at all. I felt my eyes start to fill up with tears. I watched my teammates start to cry, and watched their excitement and happiness turn to sadness. We felt so sad, because we worked so hard and did so well. We knew that we did everything we were supposed to do in our routine. "It is not fair" someone said. "There must be a mistake." This isn't right, we did so well," said someone else. "I am so disappointed," said another one of my teammates.

We were so sad, that all we wanted to do was go home and cry or be alone. But then, something happened. Our coaches (the adults who lead the team) came over to us. They said "you guys worked so hard. You did your best. You did a great routine. Sometimes, things do not go the way you want them to. You should still be proud of yourselves. We are going to celebrate because you did a great job!"

Even though we were still sad and disappointed, and we had wanted to win the competition, we were able to feel a little bit better and go celebrate. We were so sad, but became proud of ourselves because we had worked so hard in our practices and had done a fantastic job at the competition.

Appendix C

Tally Sheet

Place a tally mark by each child involved in a conflict that includes any of the following:
- shouting or screaming
- physical reactions (hitting, kicking, throwing objects, etc.)
- name calling
-unkind words (or language such as "you're not my friend anymore")
- adult intervention
- left unresolved
Date:

Child	Age	Tally	Total	Notes
1	2. 11			
2	2.10			
3	3.5			
4	3.6			
5	3.7			
6	4.1			
7	4.2			
8	4.3			
9	4.3			
10	4.8			
11	4.9			
12	4.9			
13	4.10			
14	5.1			
15	5.5			
16	5.6			
17	5.7			

18	5.9			
19	5.9			
20	6.1			
21	6.2			
22	6.2			
23	6.3			

Appendix D

Conflict Checklist

Date:
Situation:
Number of Children and ages:

Behavior	Yes	No	Notes
Physical Response			
Name calling			
Yelling or Screaming			
Use of emotional identifier			
Expresses needs with words positively (could you please, I do not like it when, etc.)			
Expresses needs with words negatively (go away, get out of here, you're mean, etc.)			
Adult intervention			
Conflict resolved			

Appendix E:

Observational Field Notes

To be filled out before, during, and after Storytelling interventions.

Date and Time:
Number of participants:
Ages of participants:

Before:

What is the overall mood of the room before inviting children to the story?

Did any children decline the invitation? Leave during the story?

During:

What was the concentration, focus, or engagement level of the children during the story?

Did any children stop their work to observe or listen?

What types of questions were asked after the story? What types of responses or conversations did this lead to?

What was happening in the environment during this time? Any changes?

After:

Describe what happened after concluding. Children lingered, conversed, immediately made another choice, etc.

Did any children repeat the story to other children? Tell their own stories?

Additional comments or general notes:

Appendix F

Reflective Journal

Keep a reflective journal using the following prompts.

Date:

The children's response to the story was:

Have any children repeated or told their own stories?

Some conflicts I notice today are:

These conflicts were resolved by:

What language am I hearing today during everyday conversation and in times of conflict?

Any other important notes, observations, or changes to environment?