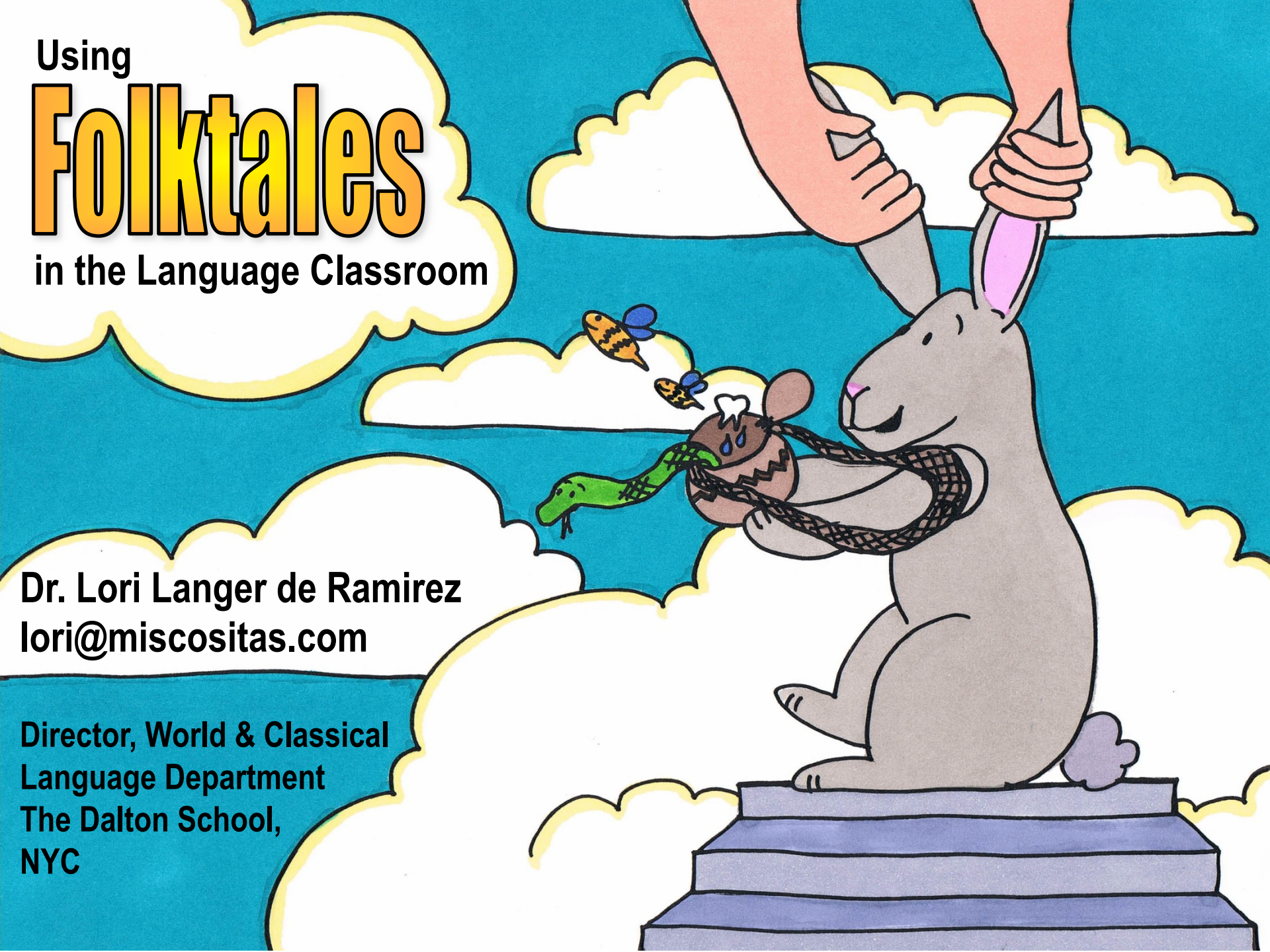
Using Folktales in the Language Classroom



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Our agenda

1. A rationale for folktales
2. Where to find stories
3. How to prep a story
4. Folktale-based activities
5. Creating a folktale-based thematic unit.
6. Video: a sample lesson
7. Now you try it!

WHY use folktales?

"…the great power of the story is that it engages us affectively as well as requiring our cognitive attention; we learn the content of the story while we are emotionally engaged by its characters or events."

- Kieran Egan, *Teaching as Storytelling*

WHY use folktales?

"The use of literature designed for children in the target culture allows learners of the target language to share cultural attitudes and experiences in a very direct way…"

- Curtain and Pesola, *Languages and Learners, Making the Match*

WHY use folktales?

Through the characters on the page, children are able to live out their worst fears and their fondest wishes. Valuable life lessons are conveyed through the stories which children readily absorb in a non-threatening and even enjoyable context.

-Bruno Bettelheim,
The Uses of Enchantment

WHY use folktales?

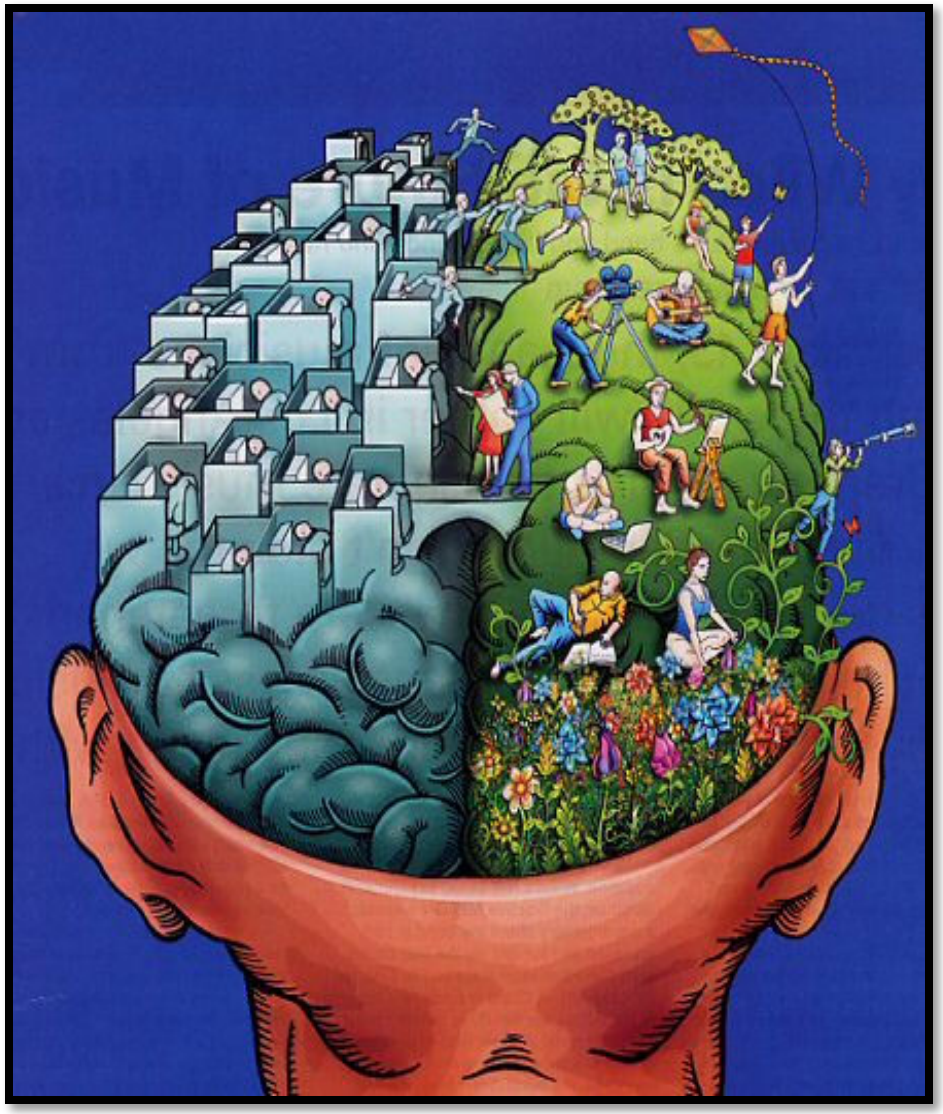
Children do not learn about complex grammatical points by either making errors and then being corrected or through explicit instruction in grammar. The knowledge of specific grammatical rules "...is part of a child's biological endowment, part of the structure of the language faculty.“

“…about 99 percent of teaching is making students feel interested in the material.”

-Noam Chomsky,
Language and Problems of Knowing

21st Century Skills

- **thinking critically**
- solving complex, **multidisciplinary**, open-ended problems
- **creativity**
- **entrepreneurial** thinking
- **innovative** use of knowledge, information & opportunities

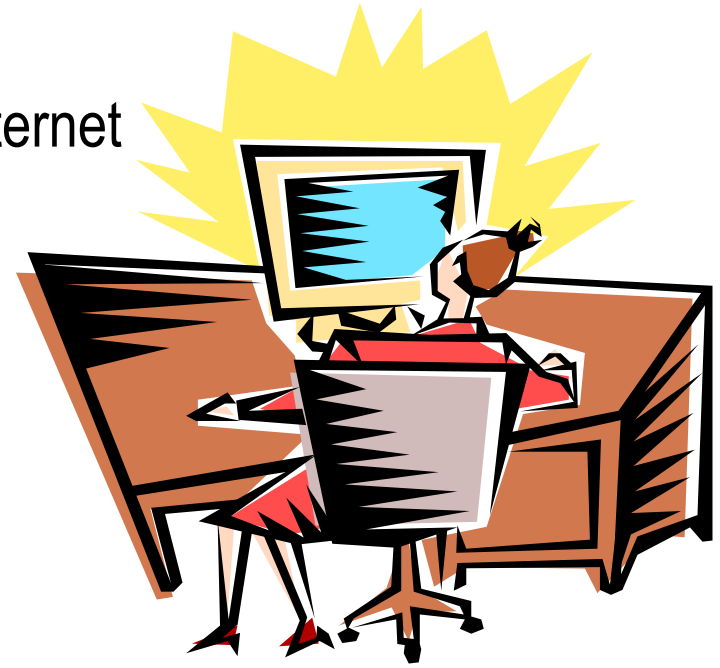


Require all students to interact in the **same way** with the material	**Differentiate** activities to meet the needs of **diverse learners**
Teach grammar and vocabulary in **isolated lists**	Teach grammar and vocabulary **in context**
Teach language **separate from** its cultural context	Incorporate **language, culture and content**
Organize lessons on topics that are **disconnected** from students	Communicate with the classroom teacher to **reinforce** curriculum

Where to find stories

print sources

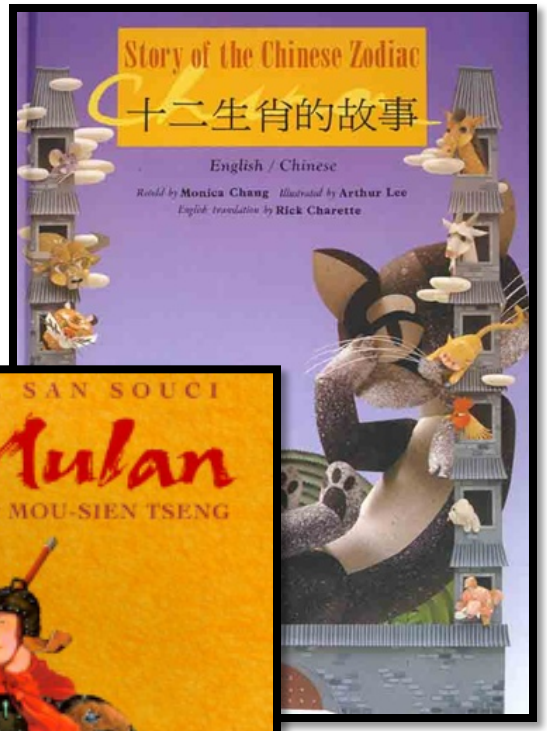
the Internet

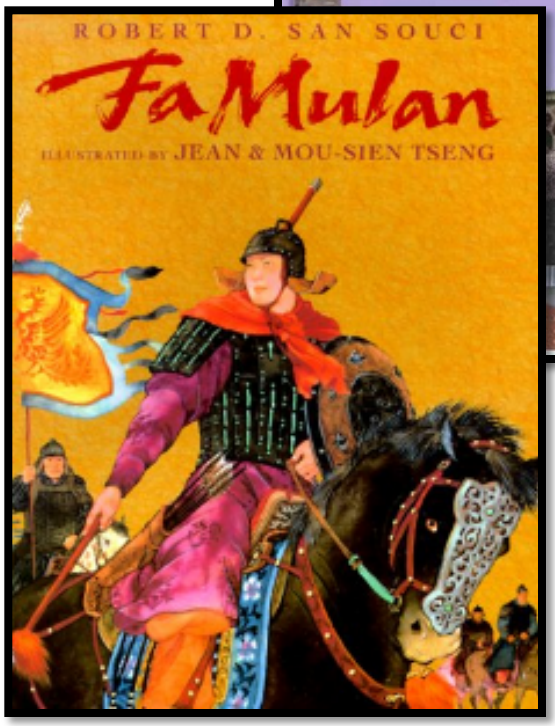


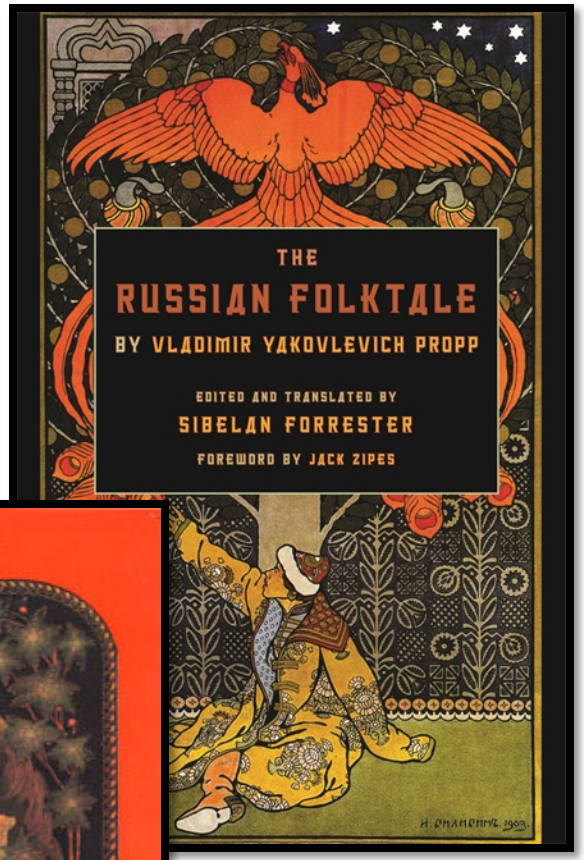
the community

travel

Print sources…







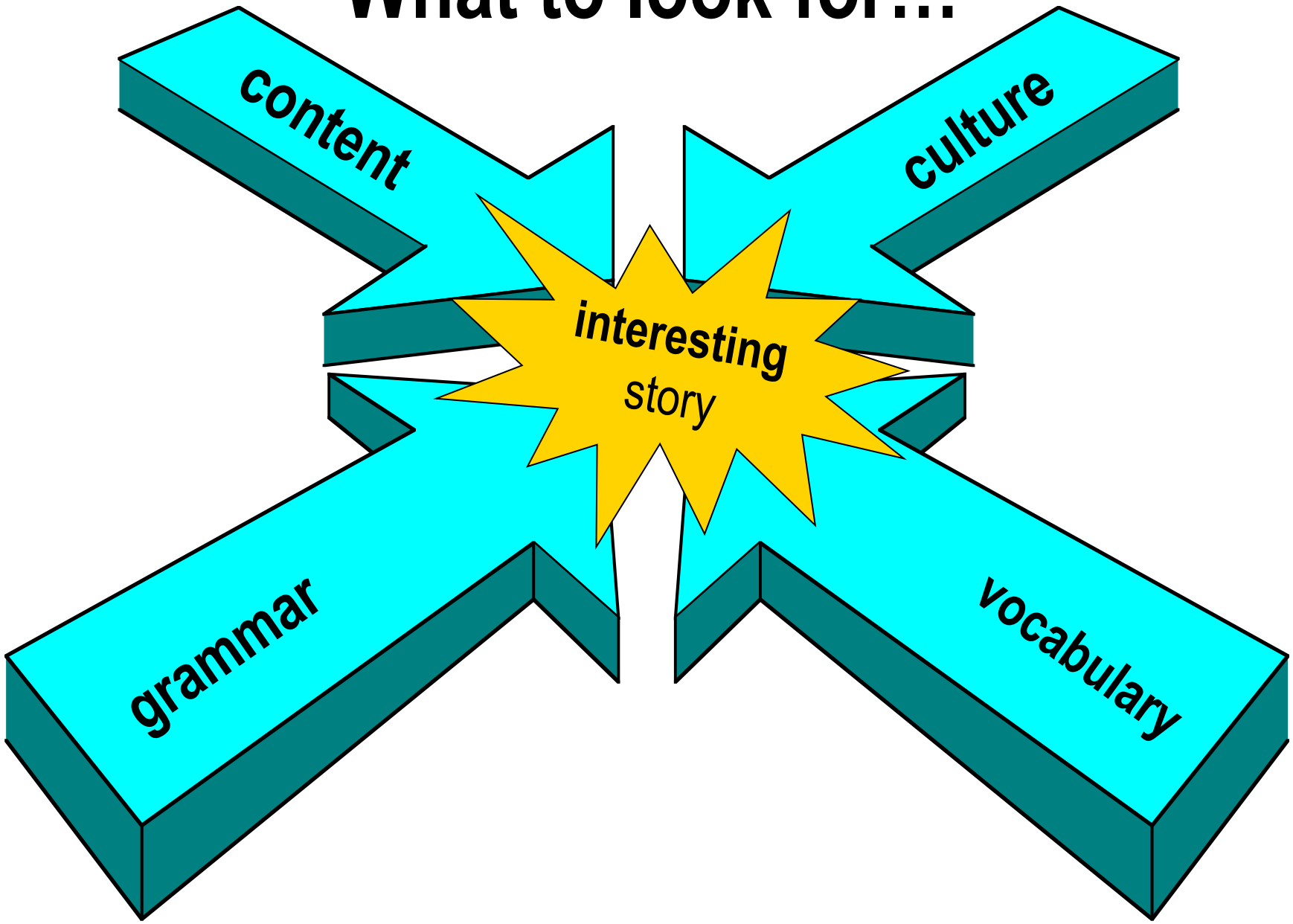
miscositas.com

This site is dedicated to those who know the joy of teaching, learning or living more than one language...

Welcome to MisCositas.com! Click on the images below to find materials for your language!

Click on the icons at right for more materials...

What to look for…

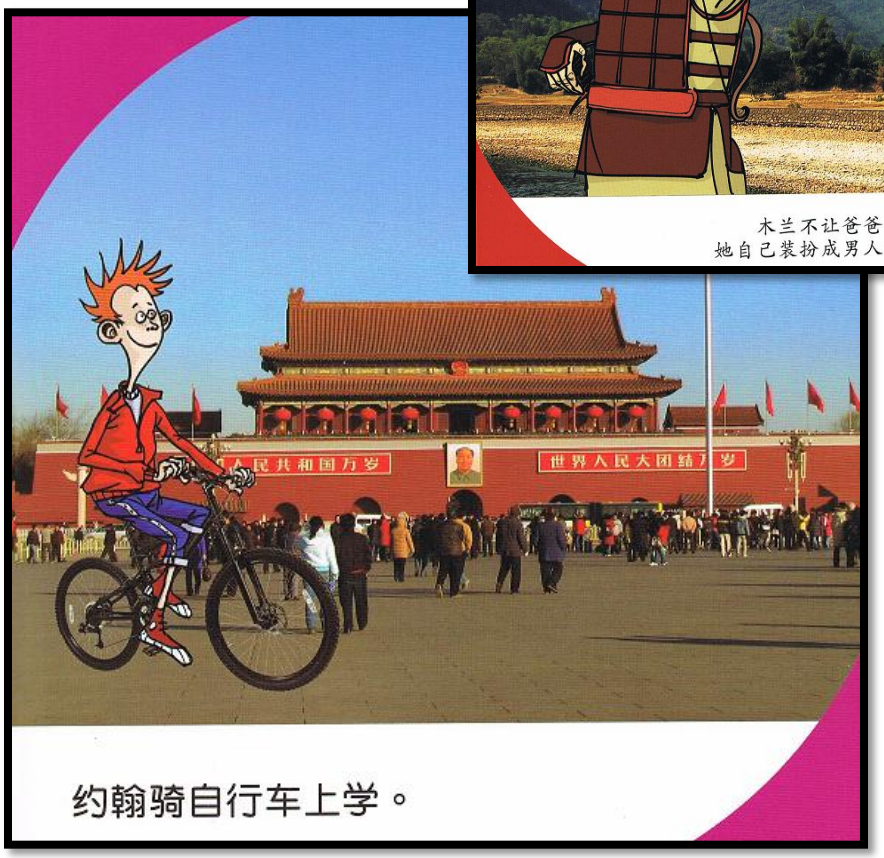


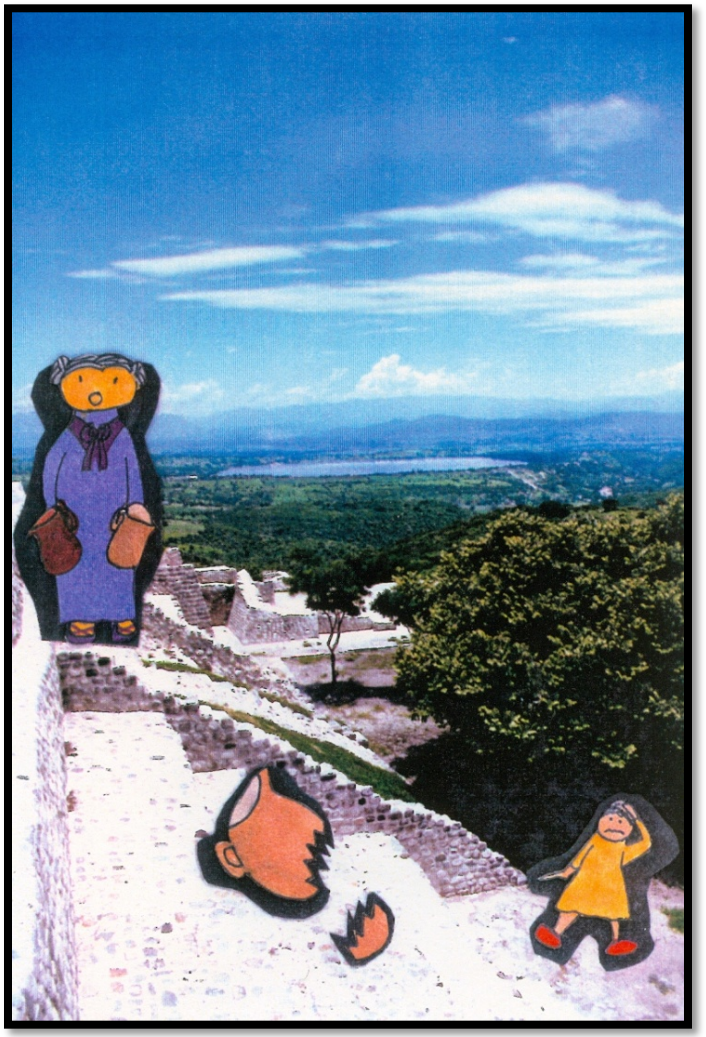
How to prep a story: Illustrations

Sur la base de la grande statue de Zeus, à Olympie, Phidias avait représenté les Douze Dieux. Entre le Soleil (Hélios) et la Lune (Séléné) les douze divinités, groupées deux à deux, s'ordonnaient en six couples : un dieu-une déesse. Au centre de la frise, en surnombre, les deux divinités (féminine et masculine) qui président aux unions : Aphrodite et Éros[2]. Dans cette série de huit couples divins, il en est un qui fait problème : Hermès-Hestia. Pourquoi les apparier ? Rien dans leur généalogie ni dans leur légende qui puisse justifier cette association. Ils ne sont pas mari et femme (comme Zeus-Héra, Poséidon-Amphitrite, Héphaïstos-Charis), ni frère et sœur (comme Apollon-Artémis, Hélios-Séléné), ni mère et fils (comme Aphrodite-Éros), ni protectrice et protégé (comme Athéna-Héraclès). Quel lien unissait donc, dans l'esprit de Phidias, un dieu et une déesse qui semblent étrangers l'un à l'autre ? On ne saurait alléguer une fantaisie personnelle du sculpteur. Quand il exécute une œuvre sacrée, l'artiste ancien est tenu de se conformer à certains modèles : son initiative s'exerce dans le cadre des schèmes imposés par la tradition. Hestia – nom propre d'une déesse mais aussi nom commun désignant le foyer – se prêtait moins que les autres dieux grecs à la représentation anthropomorphe. On la voit rarement figurée. Quand elle l'est, c'est souvent, comme Phidias l'avait sculptée, faisant couple avec Hermès[3]. De règle dans l'art plastique, l'association Hermès-Hestia

Illustrations = kid art

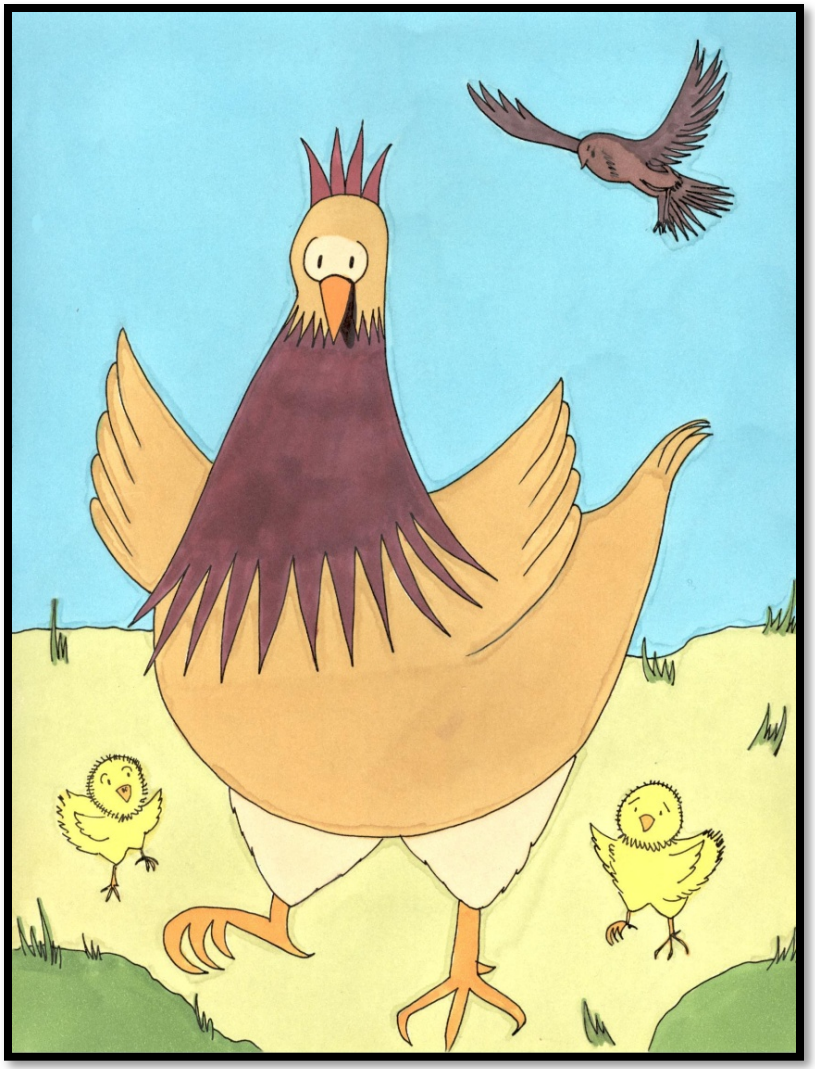
Illustrations = photo/drawing





Illustrations = ClipArt

Illustrations = art therapy!



How to edit a folktale

- **Read** the folktale 2-3 times
- **Simplify** the folktale: determine which details to delete (characters, subplots)
- **Re-write** the folktale in simple language
  - Consider adding **formulae**
    - Repetitive phrases
    - Sets of three
    - Dialogue
  - Re-read your re-write 2-3 times, simplifying each time (ask colleagues and friends to read & make suggestions)
- **Design visuals** to support the text (note: the lower the proficiency, the more visual support is necessary!)

PRE-READING

Story background

- realia
- tradition
- author
- geography: floor maps!

PRE-READING

regions, biomes, environment, weather

Legend

- Oceans
- Tropical Seasonal Forest/Savanna
- Tropical Rain Forest
- Temperate Rain Forest
- Temperate Deciduous Forest
- Taiga (Boreal Forest)
- Temperate Grassland/Desert
- Subtropical Desert
- Woodland/Shrubland
- Alpine
- Tundra
- Polar Ice Cap

N
W E
S

PRE-READING

Vocabulary preparation: Magic Box

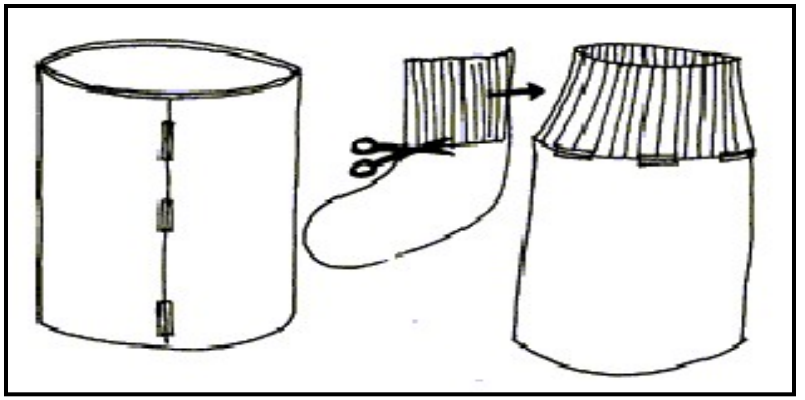
Questioning sequence:

- **Students respond with a name or by pointing to an object:**

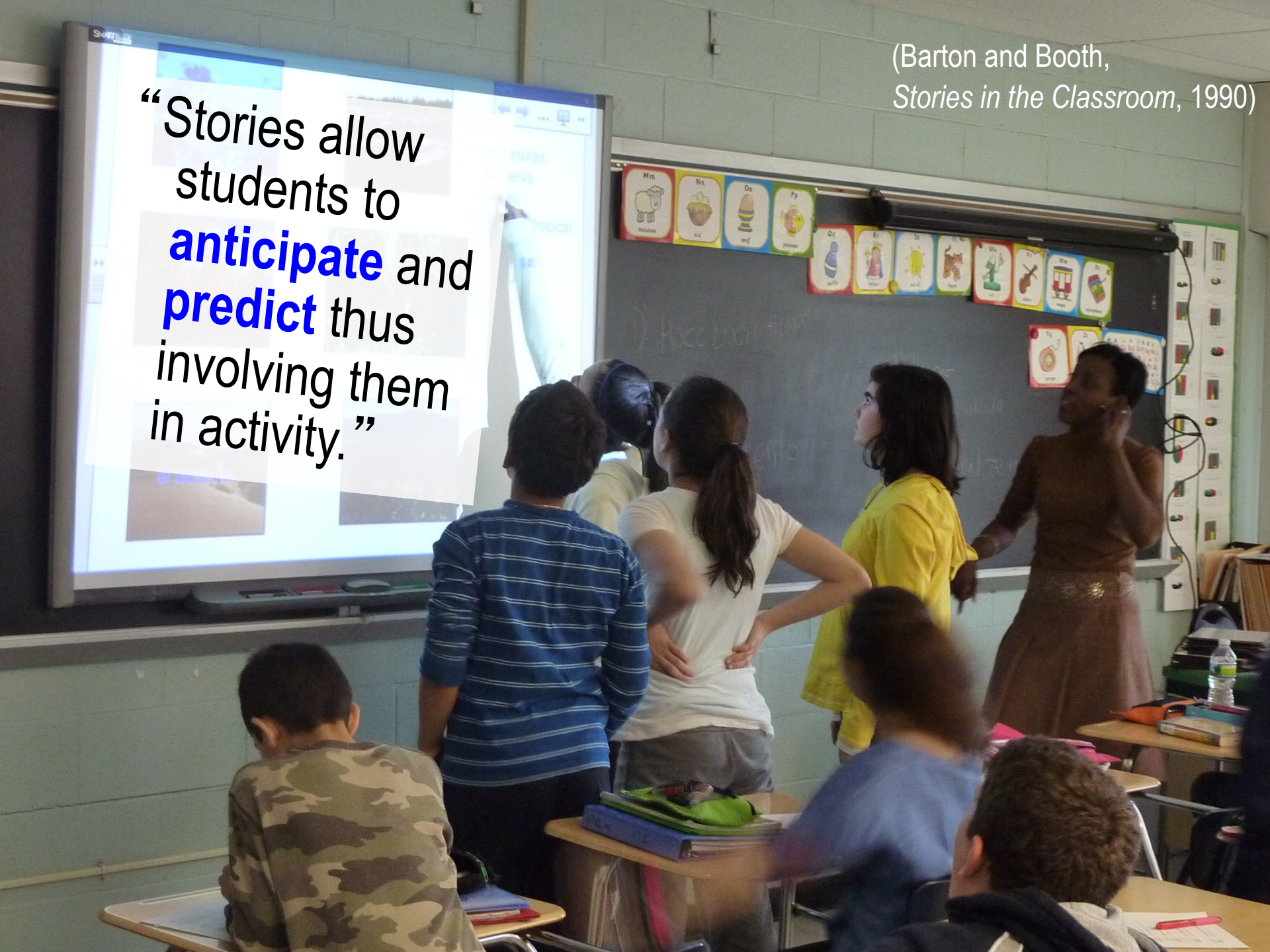
  Who has the rabbit? Point to the rabbit.

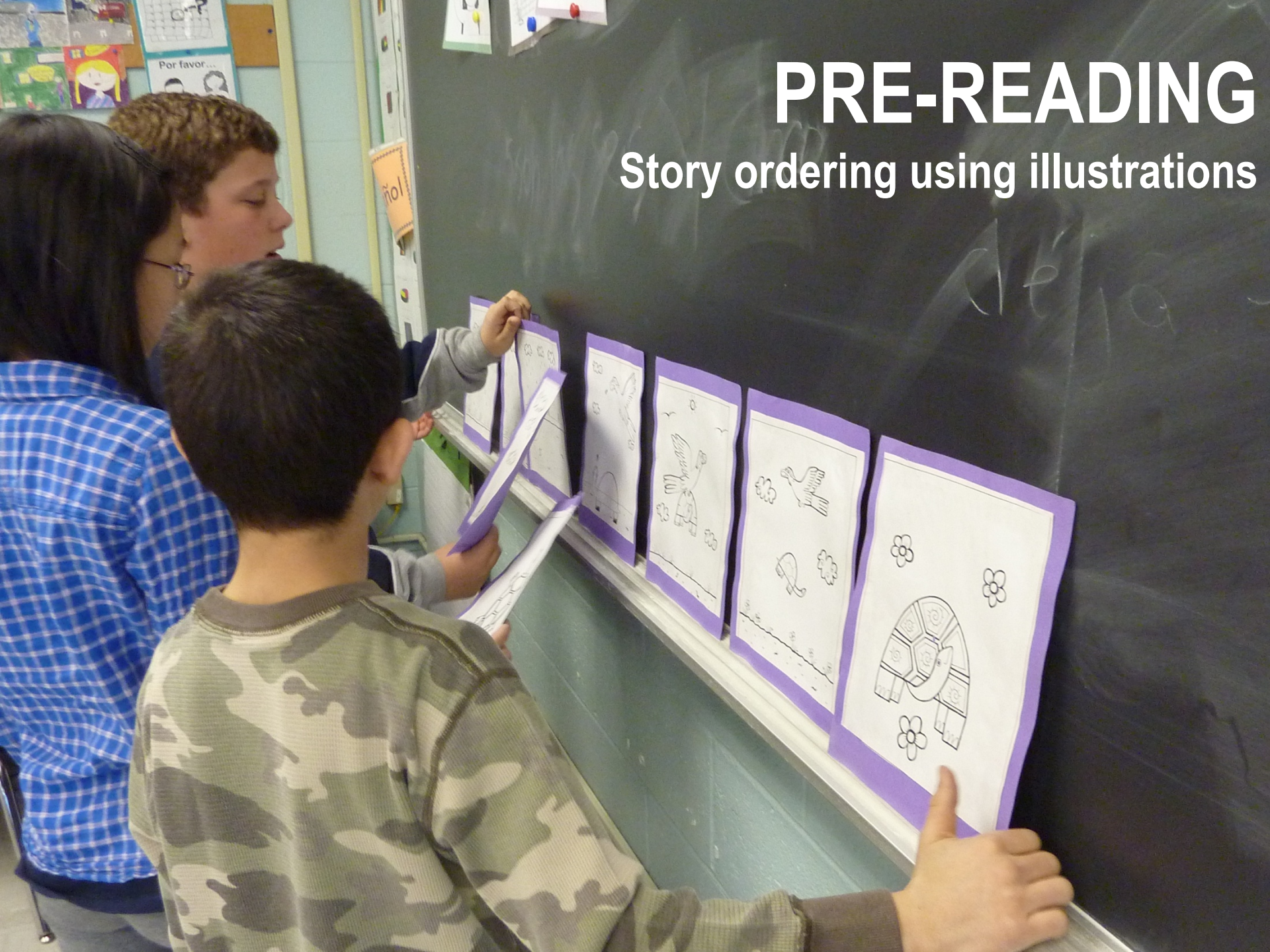
- **Yes/no questions:** ***Does Max have the rabbit?***
- **Either/or questions**: ***Does Max have the rabbit or the snake?***
- **What, where, when, who**:

  What does Max have?



~Curtain and Pesola,
Languages and Learners


"Stories allow students to anticipate and predict thus involving them in activity."
(Barton and Booth, *Stories in the Classroom*, 1990)


PRE-READING
Story ordering using illustrations

READING:

Skits * TPRS * Videos * Puppet Shows

POST-READING

Comprehension check

Factual questions

What did the rabbit want?

How did he get it?

Opinion questions

Do you think that the rabbit was right do trick the animals?

Related personal questions

Have you ever tricked anyone?

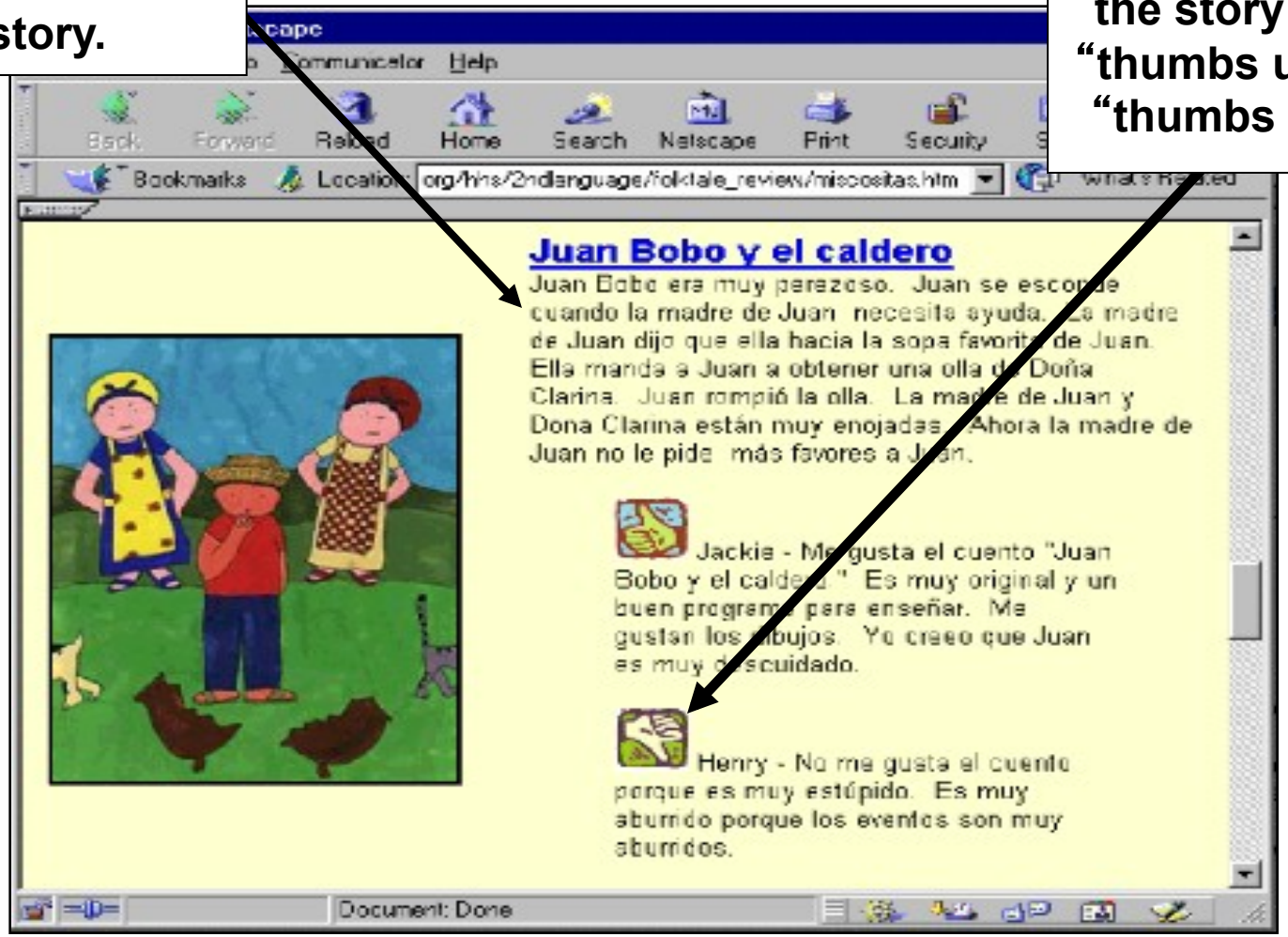
Have you ever wanted to change something about yourself?

POST-READING

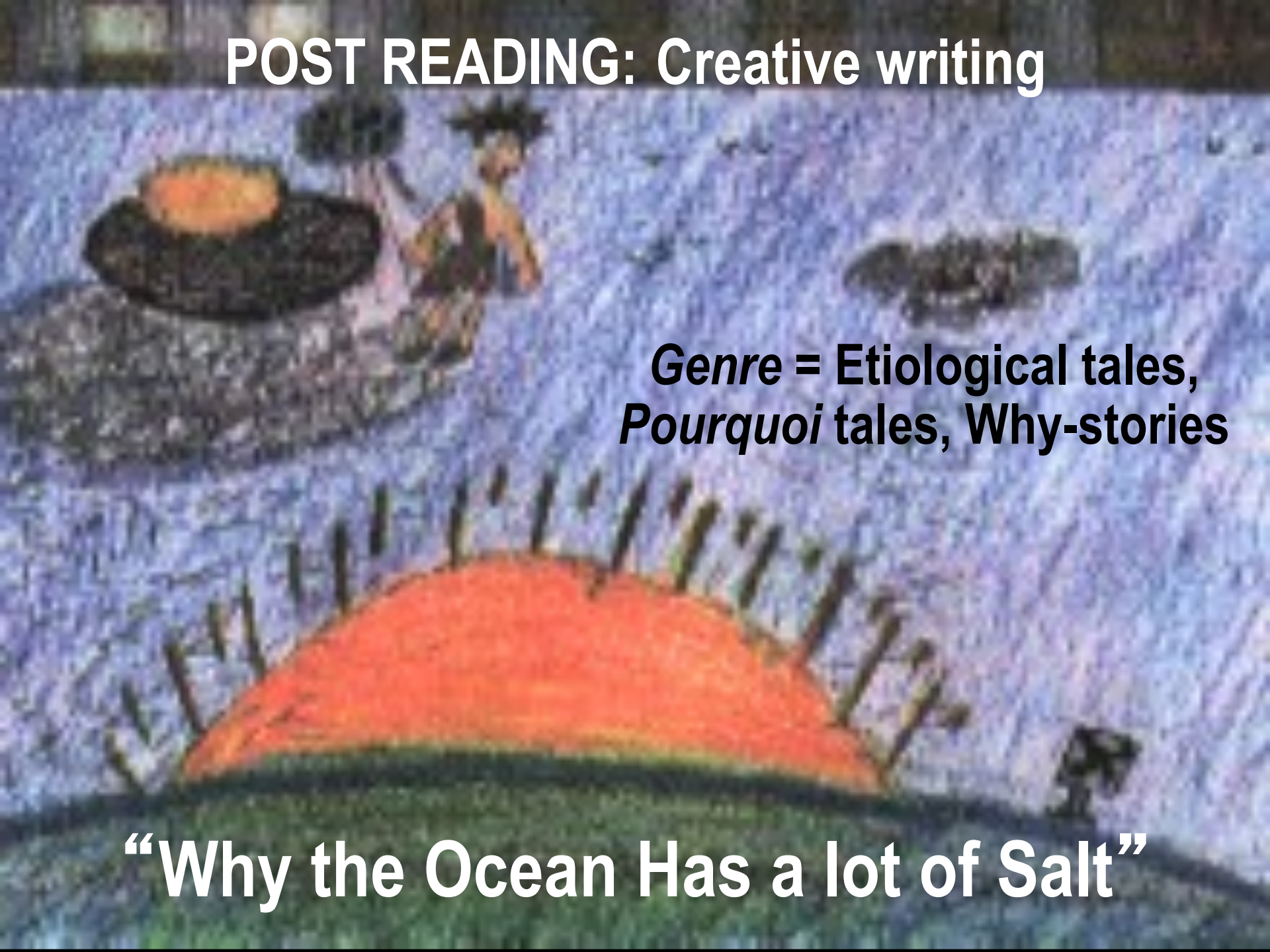
Story reviews

Students summarize the story.

Students review the story with a "thumbs up" or a "thumbs down".



POST READING: Creative writing

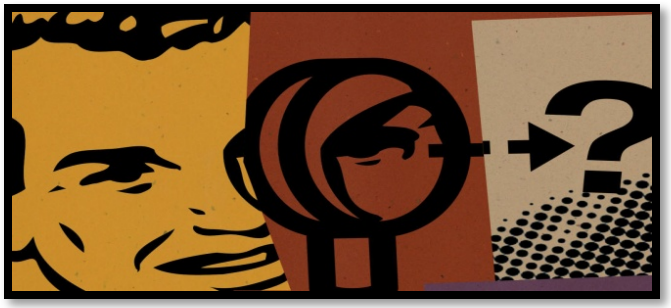


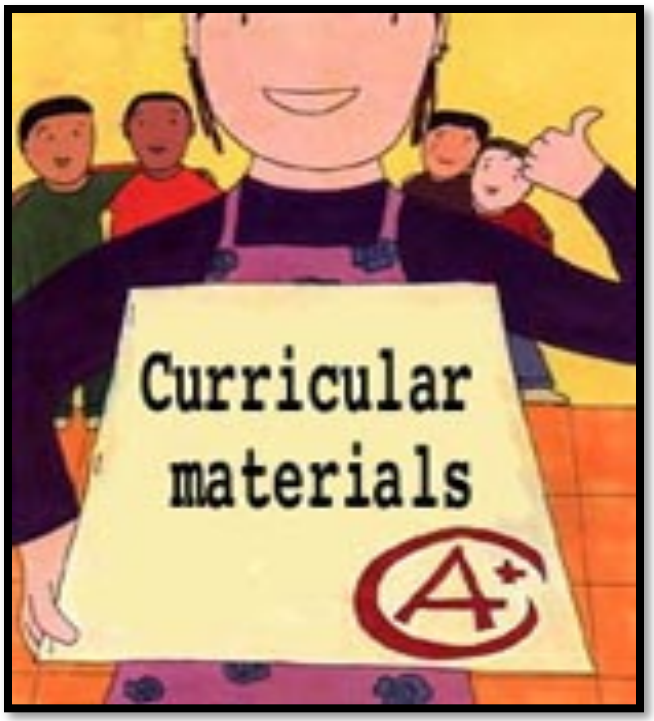
***Genre* = Etiological tales,**
***Pourquoi* tales, Why-stories**

"Why the Ocean Has a lot of Salt"

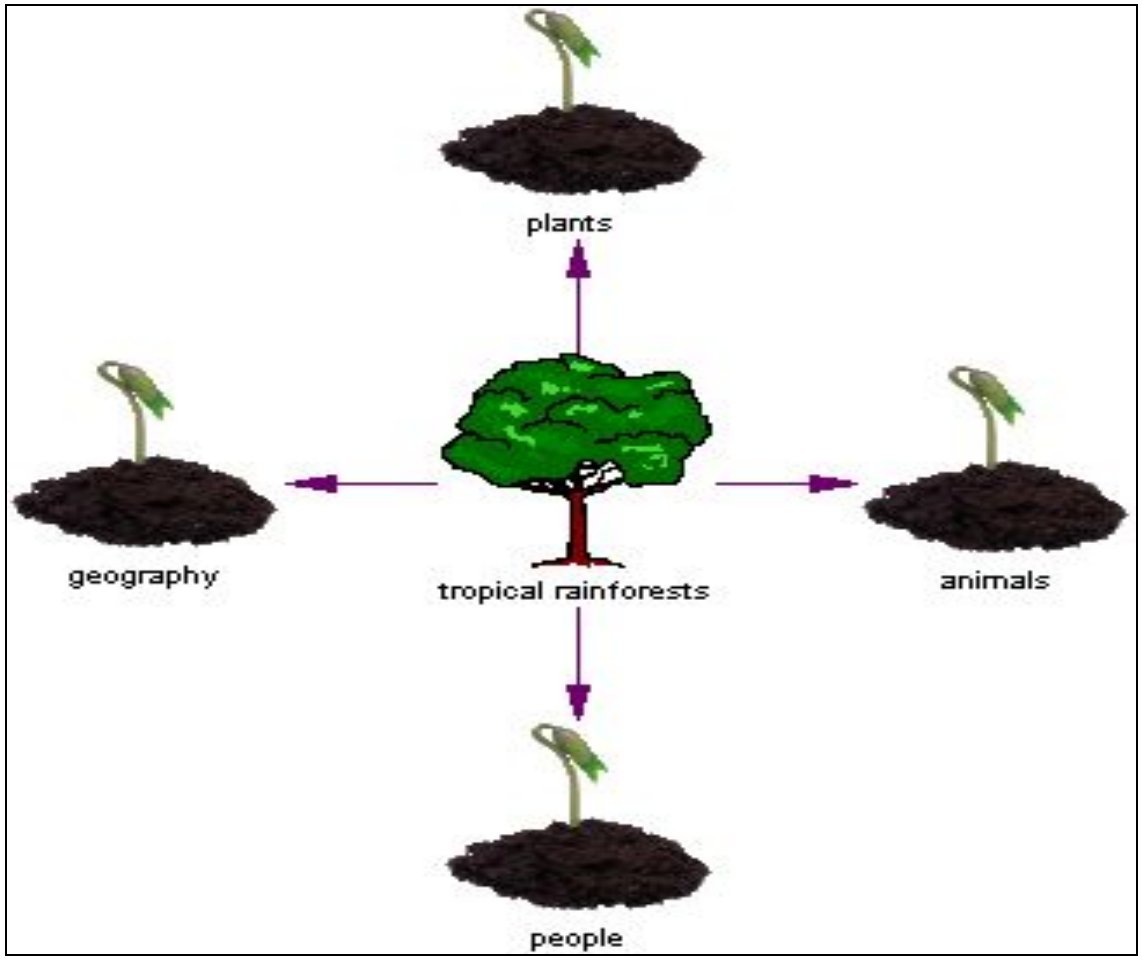
Creating a thematic unit

- Look at current curriculum
- Determine links to
  - ✓ language
  - ✓ culture
  - ✓ content
- Find folktale
- Edit folktale
- Build lessons & activities





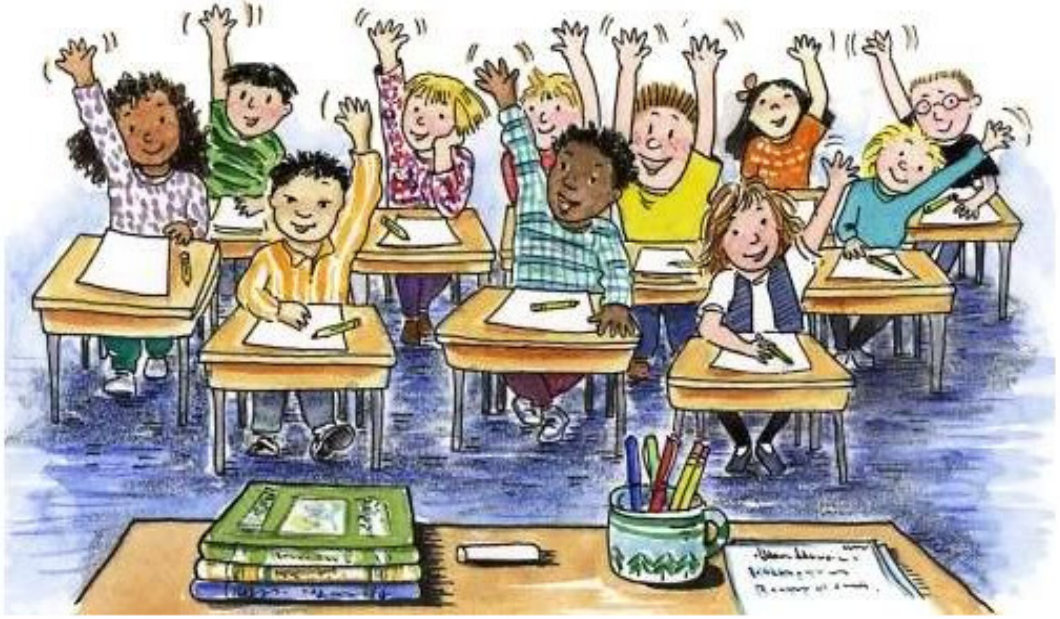
Brainstorming and webbing



Mindset for World Language Curriculum Design

(adapted from Helena Curtain, *Languages and Children: Making the Match*)

- **Culturally Focused**: Leading with Culture
- **Communicatively Purposeful**: Building Toward Proficiency
- **Intrinsically Interesting**: Relevant to Learners
- **Cognitively Engaging**: Thematically Focused
- **Standards-Based**: Reflecting Goals for Learning Languages



Stories are everywhere...
Go out and find them!

Questions?
Ideas?
Comments?