

Playing and Storytelling with Wordless Books

Dr. Christine Lee and Early Childhood Demonstration Teachers Arlen Nava, Kelly Peters, and Eric Varela are collaborating on a research project investigating how wordless books can support students' identities as dynamic storytellers. Wordless picture books have rich and detailed illustrations that students can use to interpret meaning, notice and articulate details, and learn how to use and read books. While wordless books are not a new genre of children's literature, how wordless books are used in instructional practices—especially in multidisciplinary learning is not well documented, researched, or understood.



Playing and reading wordless books with our creatures

Our research study investigated how playing and storytelling with wordless books can transform and support students' identities as valued and agentic storytellers. Our research documented how students approached reading. Wordless books allowed children to engage in complex aspects of reading comprehension: predicting, inferring, perspective-taking, empathizing, and finding evidence in text. While these skills are often relegated to adult-led read-alouds or older, more proficient readers, we found wordless books gave students agency to engage in the powerful work of reading independently.



Students play as characters from stories in our classroom theater.

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