
Cultivating Conversation: Story Circles in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Within the dichotomy of future and past, both of society and education, therein lies South Korea. As such, many new pedagogical subjects, especially within English education, have been given wings in response to its rapid growth, but are generally forced to fit into their educational forebears' lifeless methodology. New subjects and concepts cross the teacher's desk, but the same tools are used to form them. The use of story circles is one attempt to cobble these old methods into a better fit for the current generation.

This article presents a preliminary qualitative study of the use of story circles as a means to encourage a group of 8 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to break through the norm of their educational experiences and express freely their opinions and experiences through the confines of the English language. Instead of utilizing rote memorization, or dated texts, the students were given a prompt to answer, and upon sharing with the group of students surrounding them, experience education in a more open and organic way than usual.

Upon finishing this research study, it was my experience that the students found it to be a positive experience in the classroom; one that encouraged them to be more open, more comfortable sharing, and capable of building stronger camaraderie overall.

Although this is a preliminary study, it is a light amongst dimming bulbs that can potentially be a stepping stone towards a more community centered, organic, and authentic English learning experience for not only Korean language students but also any English

Language Learners (ELLs) struggling to find connection with their studies. This article is titled “cultivating conversation” because of the theme of helping students grow as English language learners through the use of story circles.

Keywords: EFL, story circles, community, sharing, classroom interaction

Cultivating Conversation: Story Circles in the EFL Classroom

Tilling the soil

Study as if you were never to master it; as if in fear of losing it - Confucius

The cacophonous chorus of cicadas is synonymous with the academic excitement accompanying the beginning of the second semester in September. Surrounded by scaling mountains trapping the burning heat and suffocating humidity; the buildings washed by the sun are relics of the wake of the rapid industrialization of South Korea. Contrasting with these proud facades are students with high heels and high-pitched greetings-hurrying to class and holding their smartphones close. Professors accept the fate of a suit jacket in the late summer heat and carry with them an air of conservative pride.

Founded in 1947, Yeungnam University is seated in the countryside of Gyeongbuk province. It has one of the largest campuses in the country with 27,100 students, 161 buildings and 2,649,458m square meters of land ("Yu facts,").

The tomes of Confucius hang in memory where now, eager young students clutch English Conversation texts. Regardless of its pragmatic use within the confines of the peninsula, English has become the modern key to success and status, one that is not taken lightly (Yoshikawa, 2000). Academies or 'hagwons' have popped up like weeds amongst the metropolitan landscapes, with promises of English fluency and high-test scores. Parents push their children to study as much as possible-trying to keep up with the education trends and demands of their society (Hwang, 2001). South Korean culture, as if protected by the ominous mountain ranges, is still knee deep in Confucian values in the face of globalization

("Kwintessential,").

Once within University, students are faced with the conflict of apathy towards their redundant instruction in English versus their desperation to become fluent in it to become gainfully employed (Kim, 2009). Having experienced English education through mostly rote curriculum, the concept of "English conversation" carries with it the feelings of excitement and apprehension (Park & Lee, 2005).

Within Yeungnam University, students have two options of experiencing English conversation within the Foreign Language Institute (the building housing English language studies). First and foremost, students are

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required to take two semesters of English conversation classes to be eligible for graduation. These classes are highly structured and are held two times a week, once with a Korean instructor and once with a native English instructor (unless they are advanced level, whereas both classes are taught by a native English instructor). Because these classes offer a limited amount of exposure to English, students are given the option to take elective non-credit courses which have smaller class sizes and more frequent class times (such as five times a week.) Unless they are very low levels, these classes are taught by native instructors.

This is where I come in. As a native English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor from the United States of America, I am tasked with taking these students and helping them to improve their English conversation skills.

Planting the seed

There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you - Maya Angelou

My goal was to help my Korean students transition from their rote English learning to a more comfortable environment through which English conversation was not a foreign concept. Through the use of story circles, I hoped to lower the inhibitions of my students while fostering meaningful conversation that parted ways with the typical “what is your favorite kind of food” fair of bland conversation topics.

Story circles, in the context which I used them, could be described as “sharing” discussions, or structured discussions. Basically, they are called “story circles” because they involve everyone sitting in a circle taking turns sharing a personal story about their lives. I felt that this practice would be beneficial to an EFL classroom where such sharing activities have been effective in producing the growth of community in other second language classrooms (Valenza, 2012). In the Korean education context, there is less emphasis on the student and more on the teacher, thus generating less importance in what a student has to say (Lim, 2003). Although I was unable to find related research regarding the use of story circles or sharing circles in the Korean EFL context, I did find that such activities can benefit second language learners in other contexts (Valenza, 2012). Language learning anxiety, or the “complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 128) can be greatly detrimental to second language learners (Duvernay, 2009; Life, 2011). It was my hope that by using story circles I would be giving the students back their “voice” which would hopefully lead to them

taking more control of their learning (Crone & MacKay, 2007) and thus have more confidence (Kim, 2009) and experience less anxiety (Duvernay, 2009) – giving them the confidence to speak more English (Life, 2011). As Brown states, “At the heart of all learning is a person's belief in his or her ability to accomplish the task” (2001, p. 62).

There are other ways to refer to this exercise, I chose to use the term “story circle” because of my familiarity with the term and my experience with doing story circles in college (where I originally experienced doing them). “Sharing circle” is another common term used for

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this exercise, being described as a discussion by a small group of participants and their leader where experiences, insights, and feelings can be shared in response to a prompt or assignment (“The sharing circle's underlying theory,”).

Although such an activity may appear counter-productive in a class where speaking is the ultimate goal, the idea was to lower inhibitions, with English speaking improvement a positive bi-product. Language learning anxiety in an English classroom can be a major hurdle to either personality (Duvernay, 2009) or culture (Lim, 2003) in South Korea – so I felt that any method to potentially counter this would be beneficial.

The class was a medium level English conversation elective class which met for one hour and five minutes, four times a week, for twelve weeks. There were eight students with five coming to class regularly. The group was small which allowed for more relaxed and natural discussion (Ebata, 2008). All of their names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Of the five, the eldest was Jun at almost 30. He has a heart of gold and is currently

studying for a Master's degree. I have been lucky enough to teach him on two different occasions and he always has a positive and mature outlook. He is a smoker but is constantly trying to quit. His dream is to be a professor and “have a nice family.”

Dong, 27, is a senior in computer science. Always one to be vocal about his disapproval of parts of the class he doesn't agree with. He was always brutally honest. He had the tendency to be quick to make a joke or show his dissent of the class, but was not necessarily disrespectful. He acted this way because of the great interest he held in his own education, reminding me of Lim's (2003) study which showed the Korean participants to be wary of classroom discussion as an alternative to rote study-even so far as to consider it a veil for the teacher's ineptitude. His dream is to be a video game programmer.

Mei, 25, was a welcome member of our group, as the only Chinese speaker. She always had a different outlook on things; and is kind and outspoken. She is finishing up her masters here in South Korea, and will soon move back to China. Her biggest dream is to open up a hello kitty coffee shop – to her family's pragmatic disapproval.

Hye-ji, 23, is a shy girl who is not happy to do work she is not interested in. She is more of a “typical Korean woman” of her age, with a love for shopping and handsome boys. Her dream is to have a comfortable lifestyle with “enough money to shop.”

Finally, the youngest was Min at 21. Min was a kind, shy, and hardworking individual. She is a student of language, already almost fluent in Japanese, at a high proficiency of English, and now studying Spanish. She was in Gyeongsan to visit her family for a semester, but is actually a student in a university in Seoul, the 11 million-person capitol of Korea. She acted,

however, as though she belonged amongst us living in the country. Upon my suggestion that she travel and teach, her dream has focused upon a goal to volunteer in South America and study Spanish.

Before we started using story circles, I explained to all of the students how the process works, that I was doing research on the subject, and that I would be asking for their feedback. Sitting at our desks grounded to the earth, I presented the students a prompt every day; such as “tell a story about a time you were scared” or “tell a story about a time you accomplished something difficult” (See Appendix A). Generally, I began this exercise with a story of my own, which helped the students to get a feeling for the question “In my case, a difficult thing for me was when I came to Korea to be a teacher...” Then, slowly, as though growing from their chairs, they shared their stories. Each story lasted anywhere from 3 to 8 minutes depending on how much the student had to say. Students took turns based only on where they were seated, to avoid any cultural hurdles such as age giving way to domination of the activity, a common Korean cultural trope (Lim, 2003). Once all students had completed their stories (and all the students sat and listened quietly), questions were asked and elaborations were made. After this, students could tell more stories, especially if they thought of another one while another student was speaking (“Hye-ji's story reminded me of this time that I...”).

I took notes on students' involvement in story circles as well as noted their participation in the classroom. I jotted down interesting quotes or notes about what worked and what didn't work. I also conducted assorted “check in” interviews with students about the process, more often in the beginning of the course, to put out feelers (See Appendix B). The interviews

generally began with “so how do you feel about Story circles right now?” or “What would you like to change about this process?” These interviews were conducted right before, or at the beginning of class, in the classroom. Because of their unstructured nature, they are more of an informal window into the thoughts of the students on the subject, used to supplement other data collection methods (See Appendix C).

Finally, the students were given an online survey after the semester was finished. This consisted of questions based on effectiveness of, comfortability with, and opinion of story circles. Story circles were used almost every day for the entirety of the twelve weeks. I corrected some grammar of the correspondence for better comprehension, though most students speak English well enough not to need it. The following conversations are based on my own recollection and notes.

Growing

The most intense conflicts, if overcome, leave behind a sense of security and calm that is not easily disturbed. It is just these intense conflicts and their conflagration which

are needed to produce valuable and lasting results - Carl Jung

Sitting around the room, there are empty seats and a lone student: Min, the youngest and most punctual. The general consensus is that 9:00 in the morning is *too early*. “Are you tired?” I ask my early riser. “Yes!” Min says. “Why?” I goad her on to speak more in the class. “Well, last night I had to write a paper for my class, and it was really hard.” “What time did you go to bed?” “Two am.” “What time did you wake up?” “7:30.” We laugh, but this is an unfortunate truth for

After having some time to prepare an answer, Hye-ji was the first to share her story, one about how she didn't cheat when she had the chance. Jun shared a story about how he helped out on a farm. Dong shared a story about how he gave his seat to an older woman on a bus.

many of my students.

Another student soon rolls in. “Oh hi Jun,” I greet with feigned energy as this is already my second early morning class and I lack for coffee, “How are you on this fine morning?” “So-so.” He always answers in this way. A few more students trickle in and the day starts. “Alright class, today's story circle will be, ‘talk about a time you did the right thing even when you didn't want to.’”

At this point I shared a story with my class about how I stood up to a boss who was treating us workers poorly. After having some time to prepare an answer, Hye-ji was the first to share her story, one about how she didn't cheat when she had the chance. Jun shared a story about how he helped out on a farm. Dong shared a story about how he gave his seat to an older woman on a bus. Then Min told her story.

“When I was studying in Japan, I did a kind of internship. They said that this job would help us to practice speaking Japanese. It was in a hotel, and we were waiters. In fact, we barely spoke Japanese, and usually just cleaned and took orders. We worked like slaves. After working there, I told my teacher about that. She recommended the program. She acted shocked, but I think she knew about it.” This story drew the attention of other students who talked about being cheated or about Korean internships gone sour.

Classes continued to be like this one, talking about fears, first loves, family, and other common issues that brought up deep conversation. Sometimes a student was unable to make up an example that fit the prompt. For example Mei, when considering the prompt, talked about how she rarely did the right thing if it was hard-but she always wished she did. This honesty

brought on another discussion about when we wish we said or did something in a situation when someone says something wrong, but don't.

"I always see young people sitting on the bus when they should give their seat up to a har-mo-ni (old woman). I want to hit them and yell at them, but usually I say nothing," Mei says.

Not only were we lowering inhibitions, we were exploring humanity. The students and I both shared our strengths and weaknesses. Although we were not exactly crying on each others' shoulders, we did find similarities amongst ourselves which helped the bonds of friendship grow.

As a teacher, I found myself amazed by the emerging stories. Generally in my classroom it is hard to get students to share about their personal lives. With story circles, the walls started to come down. As we sat there every day sharing our lives, our community grew. As suggested by Freire and Ramos (1970), the community became where the learning took place, not the classroom. The vines of our stories intertwined until finally there was a common roof amongst us—a place of mutual respect and understanding created simply by our sharing of stories.

It didn't start off like this however. Some students were reluctant to participate at times such as Mei (because she was shy about using English in front of the group at first) while others found themselves unsure of how to respond to a prompt that may have been too difficult for them (such as the culprit: "talk about a time that you grew as a person"). When Dong, the outspoken one in all other parts of the class, participated, there were times that even he could not think of an answer. "I can't think of anything... but I know that I have an answer," Dong would say. The same thing happened to Hye-ji, the second youngest. "I can't think of anything, sorry," Hye-ji would often say. Once again, part of this may be due to shyness related to sharing personal

information, with the possibility that since they were a little introverted, they felt overrun by the extroverts of the group (Duvernay, 2009), or it is possible that they were less willing to become

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active members in their learning (Lim, 2003), and if a question was too hard, they shut down and wanted me to change it to an easier question. Another likely reason is that since their English ability is naturally inhibited due to them being EFL students, sometimes they just couldn't “find the words.” Although the students were given all of the time they needed to respond, there is a point where it is better to ask a new question. In a one hour and five minute class, it is hard to give students 10 minutes to respond to each prompt presented to them. The teacher has to use their own discretion.

Mei and Min were usually early to class, so they often fell prey to my “check ins” on their experience:

“So how do you feel about Story circles, do you like doing them?” I asked, sipping on my coffee.

“I like doing them,” Min replied, “I like practicing speaking English and this is a good way for that.”

“How about you Mei?” She only gave me an uncomfortable smile. “Uh oh! You don't like them?”

“No, I don't mind,” she started, “But sometimes I feel uncomfortable sharing personal information.” This reminds me of Life's (2011) study of Asian EFL students, which found its

Chinese participants to be more inclined towards structured and traditional classrooms, as they were not prompted to share about themselves and were instead simply required to be passive learners.

Over time, it became easier for these students to participate, but in the end not all students enjoyed story circles as much as the others. They did participate regardless of their feelings, which was important for the classroom dynamic. This nurtured the canopy of vines which supported the community amongst the students.

“Would you change anything about story circles?” I asked Jun. He looked up from using Kakao, an instant message application popular with smart phone owners. For some reason he was the only one on time to class at 9:00 am.

“No it is fine, I like them!”

“What about Hye-ji (who just happens to have become his girlfriend by this point in the semester), what does she think about them?”

“Oh, I don't know, she thinks they are okay I guess.”

“She likes story circles?”

“She likes practicing English.”

“Okay, then why is she not in class?”

“Haha, she is coming, she woke up late.”

After the 12 week class was over, a survey was completed by five out of eight of the students who were enrolled in the class. The survey was anonymous and completed via the Internet, so there was no way of knowing who these students were. Table 1 (See appendix D)

represents the yes/no questions given to the students and the percentages for the answers.

Table 2 (See appendix D) represents the multiple choice question given to the students and the percentages for the answers.

There *was* a final open-ended question which prompted the survey takers to write about how they felt about Story circles. Unfortunately, only one student responded saying that “I think Story circles are better than free talking because it has specific subject.” This is the richest part of the survey, so I was disappointed to find that almost no one wrote a response.

There are also a couple of issues regarding the use of story circles suggested by the survey. The first issue was that one person who completed the survey did not feel comfortable participating in story circles. Of course, initially the activity might seem unfamiliar to students, I took extra care to make sure the students were not uncomfortable or feeling they had to share anything that they didn't want. This suggests that for this person, although every precaution was taken, the very act of sharing a story about themselves may just have been too uncomfortable, which is something that must be considered when choosing to use story circles in future classrooms.

Sometimes I would push the students to participate, which might have been what caused this person to be uncomfortable. One time, when talking about our first love (‘talk about your first love’), I kept pushing the class to give an answer about a topic they were naturally a little shy about.

Sometimes I would push the students to participate, which might have been what caused this person to be uncomfortable. One time, when talking about our first love (‘talk about your first love’), I kept pushing the class to give an answer about a topic they were naturally a little shy about. I tried to break the ice by sharing about my first love in elementary school; a new

girl who recently transferred to our school. I also shared them an embarrassing story about twin girls visiting my house to play; the purpose of this was to entice my students to share and build trust within our community. None of this did anything to encourage the students.

“Hey Dong, come on, let's hear your story, I know you have a good story with juicy details.” Finally, he was willing to share.

“One time, when I was young, in elementary grade one, I said to a girl I liked her.”

“And what did she say?” A chorus of us asked eagerly. “Did she say she liked you too?”

“Of course,” said Dong with confidence, “I was a very cute child.” We laughed.

Although my insistence might have caused him a small amount of discomfort, his story lead others to share about their first love. I chose Dong as the student to ask, because although at times he seemed at a lost for words, when he had something to share, it was always interesting. As Duvernay (2009) suggests, special considerations must be made when grouping and organizing students in the EFL classroom. As our community had grown, I had learned that some students were better at watering the conversation so that it could bloom.

It is interesting to see that 60 percent of the survey-takers claim to have participated in story circles before my class. It is possible this is true, but more than likely the students were confused by the question as the concept of “story circles” is, to my knowledge, not well known amongst my colleagues. When I had asked the class in the first week, if they had done anything like story circles, they all said “no,” which suggests that when I explained the concept of story circles to them they understood how they were different from other speaking activities.

Finally, although only five students attended class regularly, I invited all students to

participate in the survey. There were five responses to the survey, but I'm not sure these were from the five students who consistently came to class. In the future the survey should be given during class instead of sent as an email invite-which gives students less incentive to complete it. Also, those students who participated regularly should be the only ones invited to respond.

Overall, the survey suggested that Story Circles were a successful and worthwhile endeavor for this class. Even the students who suggested they were uncomfortable or would not want to participate in story circles in the future gave neutral (as opposed to negative) responses about their opinion of story circles in general (question 7). Every student who took the survey felt that story circles helped them to be less shy about speaking English, improved their English,

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and were a valuable use of class time. This suggests that story circles were accepted as a positive method of speaking English in the classroom, and possibly lowered the inhibitions of students, increasing their motivation to practice speaking English more (Gardner, 1982).

In regards to my own careful observations, I found that the students who regularly participated in Story circles were more inclined to offer their opinions during discussion, and felt more comfortable sharing information about themselves with their classmates. Hye-ji, who was shy at the beginning of class (“Hye-ji, do you have any story to share today?” “No, sorry teacher.”), was more free towards the end. She was more willing to share her opinions and share stories with the group. Dong also changed towards the end of the semester, being more open to share stories than before with an inclination towards sharing his insidious comments about his

final project partner- the frustration motivating his participation (Crone & MacKay, 2007).

“I talked to my professor, but he doesn't care. He just says, try to work together. I did that but my partner is horrible! I went to Seoul to talk to him. It is frustrating.” Unfortunately for him, his partner for his final project found a job, and completely lost interest in putting in his half of the work.

Min, a shy student, gained great confidence in her willingness to share, and eventually became one of the volunteer facilitators of story circles, guiding students with phrases such as “how about you?” and “now it is your turn!” I felt that this change came from the nurturing attitude of the students and myself, which helped her to feel motivated to participate further (Lile, 2002).

Jun was always a good sport. He was always honest and willing to share his stories, as well as less resilient to my onslaught of encouragement for more information.

Finally, Mei gained a solid friend in Min, and they often left class walking hand-in-hand (a common act of women and sometimes even men in Korea who are close friends.)

The students were no longer worried about the implications of the classroom, and why they were learning English (Kim, 2009). They simply participated in class as though it were an everyday regular conversation with a friend. Life (2011) found that the Korean EFL students in his study appreciated more social aspects in their English language classrooms; and the Korean, Japanese, and Chinese EFL students in his study preferred listening to reading, writing, or speaking in the classroom. It is no doubt that the students in my classroom relished in listening to the interesting stories that connected them with others.

Photosynthesis

By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest - Confucius

Looking back is easy, but finding meaning in what you see is sometimes difficult. The journey which I set off upon with these students seems as though the same path every teacher takes with a new class: attempting something new in hopes of improving the learning of the classroom. Although a new door has been opened, it is not to say it is the best door or that there aren't other routes to be considered.

Story circles have, for this class, been for the most part a success. The majority of the students who attended the class regularly found within themselves the ability to share their more complex thoughts in the form of English, while also gaining kindred spirits

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amongst their classmates. They became more comfortable using English, improved their English pronunciation and fluency through practice and my careful “pruning” of their mistakes, and felt for the most part comfortable in their learning environment. The realm of the room had transformed from a dry abyss to an exotic oasis of foliage, with fruits of the students' labor readily picked and voraciously eaten to quell their appetite for a context more forgiving than the draconian alternative of the rote variety. This positive change in their environment no doubt affected their willingness to participate further, thus synthesizing with their effort and desire put forth to improve their English (Gardner, 1982).

Although not all days were without their doldrums, it is my belief that because story

circles were so well received by the majority of the students, and unabashed conversation was taking place, it is no doubt that this is a tool that other EFL teachers should consider donning in their quest for less shyness and more speaking in their classrooms.

In regards to data collection and survey results, I feel that in the next round of teacher research, I should be more vigilant in my accumulation. Though the data and notes which contributed to this study were beneficial, they need to be more effectively collected. In regards to the interviews, it would be important to set up stricter parameters to make sure the data used is more valuable, such as specific individual interview times and proper preparation for said interviews. As for the survey, students should be given the survey in class (but still remain anonymous) and have it be mandatory to give a response to the open ended section. Also, only those students who regularly attend should contribute.

Within my own levels of experience, I can say I grew as a teacher through my student's experiences. Sometimes, with the hands that guide a classroom much as a gardener would, we get lost in the pruning and the watering, forgetting to pull from our students the fruits and ferns that they are capable of producing. The students themselves, caught up in their vertical growth, need the guidance of their teacher to point them in the direction of the sun. I have found that, with the use of narrative and story, we can step outside of the confines of the average classroom into that grassy knoll, that shady willow, or that blue pond, and within these areas, find more rich soil with which to plant the seed of authentic conversation.

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About the Author



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Appendices

Appendix A

Story circle prompts

Talk about a time you overcame an obstacle/did something difficult.
Talk about a time you did the right thing even when you didn't want to
Talk about a time you grew as a person.
Talk about a time something you thought was bad was actually good.
Talk about a time you were not in the right place.
Talk about a time you were lucky.
Talk about a time you did something difficult even when it was hard.
Talk about a time you tried something new.
Talk about your first love.
Talk about a time you were too late.
Talk about a time you “grew up” a little.
Talk about a time you were a leader.
Talk about a time you were humbled.
Talk about a time you had to do something you didn't want to do.
Talk about a time you learned something important.
Talk about a time you helped someone.
Talk about a time someone helped you.
Talk about a time you had to start over.
Talk about a time you had a difficult choice.
Talk about a time you changed your mind.
Talk about a time you were a good person.
Talk about a time you “had enough” of something.
Talk about a time you gave up control.
Talk about a time you realized what was important in your life.
Talk about a time you were brave.
Talk about a time you were embarrassed.
Talk about a time you had an adventure.

Appendix B

Common “check in” interview questions:
“How do you feel about story circles?”
“Would you change anything about story circles?”
“Are you comfortable doing story circles?”
“Are story circles difficult?”

Appendix C

Online Survey

Story circles Survey for Fall 2011 EC-4 9am Class

Please answer the following questions.

Question 1

Did you like doing Story circles in class?

Yes/No

Question 2

Do you think Story circles were a valuable use of class time?

Yes/No

Question 3

Do you feel that Story circles helped you to improve your English ability?

Yes/No

Question 4

Were you comfortable participating in Story circles?

Yes/No

Question 5

Did Story circles help you feel less shy about speaking English in class?

Yes/No

Question 6

Would you like to participate in Story circles in your future English classes?

Yes/No

Question 7

Choose the response which best describes your feelings about Story circles.

I hated participating in Story circles

I did not really like participating in Story circles

I did not mind participating in Story circles

I enjoyed participating in Story circles

I really enjoyed participating in Story circles

Question 8

Before this class, had you ever participated in a Story circle in an English Class?

Yes/No

Question 9

Please take the time to make any comments on Story circles. (Why you liked them or didn't like them, how they made you feel, etc.)

Thank you for participating! –William

Appendix D

Table 1

Question	Percent who said “yes”	Percent who said “no”
1. Did you like doing Story circles in class?	100.00%	0.00%
Do you think Story circles were a valuable use of class time?	100.00%	0.00%
Do you feel that Story circles helped you to improve your English ability?	100.00%	0.00%
Were you comfortable participating in Story circles?	80.00%	20.00%
Did Story circles help you feel less shy about speaking English in class?	100.00%	0.00%
Would you like to participate in Story circles in your future English classes?	80.00%	20.00%
Before this class had you ever participated in a Story circle in an English class?	60.00%	40.00%

Table 2

Choose the response which best describes your feelings about Story circles:	Percent who chose this answer:
I hated participating in Story circles	0.00%
I did not really like participating in Story circles	0.00%
I did not mind participating in Story circles	40.00%
I enjoyed participating in Story circles	60.00%
I really enjoyed participating in Story circles	0.00%