FAIRY TALES AS A TEACHING TOOL IN SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

By

Catherine Lapointe

A Capstone Project Submitted to the Faculty of Education

McGill University

November 2016

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Teaching and Learning in
the Department of Integrated Studies in Education
Abstract

This Capstone research project explores the practice of using fairy tales as a teaching tool in second language education, with the goal of promoting critical thinking. Based on the literature about fairy tales in second language education, as well as the author's own experiences, ways of using fairy tales as a tool to promote student engagement, cultural diversity, and to deconstruct stereotypes are considered.

Keywords: Fairy tales, pop culture, ESL, second language education
# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

Literature Review ......................................................................................................... 3
  Student engagement................................................................................................. 4
  Cultural diversity...................................................................................................... 6
  Deconstructing stereotypes .................................................................................... 8

Findings .......................................................................................................................... 11

Reflection ...................................................................................................................... 11
  Student engagement................................................................................................. 12
  Cultural diversity...................................................................................................... 13
  Deconstructing stereotypes .................................................................................... 14
  Fairy tales as a second language tool ..................................................................... 14

Implications for my practice ....................................................................................... 15

Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 18

References .................................................................................................................... 20
Introduction

Fairy tales are present in many cultures, and are part of an oral tradition. They are usually shorter than novels and use simpler language. For these reasons they lend themselves well as language teaching materials. They are used to promote cultural and literary understanding, and are usually regarded as beneficial teaching tools. However, there is little research about the best way to implement the use of fairy tales in an English second language classroom. Thus, the purpose of this critical literature review is to explore the practice of using fairy tales as a teaching tool in second language education. The following questions arise: How can fairy tales be best be utilized in order to deconstruct binaries and promote critical thinking in the second language classroom? What are the best practices to promote student engagement? What are the challenges of using fairy tales, and how can these be overcome?

According to the Quebec Education Program (2016) for both core and enriched programs, students must: “explore a variety of authentic texts: popular, literary and information-based. They construct meaning of texts through the response process. Core ESL students listen to, read and view texts that are appropriate to their age, interests and level of language development, while EESL students experience a much broader range of texts that deal with increasingly complex issues and abstract ideas.” This flexibility presents an opportunity for ESL teachers to use texts that are relevant to their student's interests. But it also gives an opportunity for the teacher to represent themselves through their pedagogy.

For this Capstone research project, we have been asked to consider the question: “Who am I to do this work?” (Agar, 1980, p. 26). I think that the most difficult part of
answering it is to avoid platitudes. When asked why they chose a career in teaching, most teachers answer that they enjoy learning, and want to transmit that love of learning to others. While this is as good an answer as any, it should be a given. Thus, we must consider what we bring as individuals, what makes us suited to this work. What do we bring to the table that makes us different from other educators?

The answer I have come up with is that I am someone who is dedicated to breaking down the concept of the 'Other' (Said, 1978). My interest in East Asian Studies has given me an awareness of how the Western way of viewing the world is often limited to binaries. Because of this, we often construct an 'Other'. We create a world constructed out of binaries, and place one half in opposition with the other. If one culture is civilized, then the other is barbaric. If one culture is masculine and strong, then the “Other” is feminized and weak. Cultural binaries then allow people to have a false sense of superiority and to justify aggression. Breaking down these binaries and humanizing this “Other” is essential to create a just and equal society. This awareness informs my pedagogy, as I believe that as an English Second Language teacher, I would not only be teaching students how to speak English, but also think critically about cultural stereotypes.

But how can I do that? How do I teach students to deconstruct cultural stereotypes? In an English Language Arts classroom students can read a novel or watch a movie and deconstruct it, but in an ESL classroom they may not have the linguistic ability necessary to engage with a long or dense text. ESL teachers need to choose a text that suits their students' linguistic abilities, and then teach students the vocabulary and grammar necessary to engage with the text. Students should be provided with
opportunities to engage with cultural materials in order to feel connected to the people whose language they are learning.

When I first began this research project, I thought that the best way to do this was by teaching pop culture and critically analyzing it. But this is rather broad, so I tried to narrow my focus. Since I have an academic interest in monsters and the role they play in popular culture, I tried to research the best way to teach students to think critically about monsters and the “Other”. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was very little research about this topic. There is, however, a great deal of research about using fairy tales in the ESL classroom. This makes a great deal of sense. Movies based on fairy tales such as 'Cinderella', 'Beauty and the Beast' or 'Snow White' are constantly being re-made or re-mixed, and as they are successful internationally it would suggest that myths and monsters have a cross-cultural appeal for young people. It is not only movies, but also TV shows such as 'Grimm' or 'Once Upon a Time', and video games such as 'Fable' that frequently make use of fairy tales and their tropes. ESL teachers attempt to tap into this well of interest by using fairy tales and folk tales in the classroom.

**Literature Review**

Immersion education, and by association content-based instruction, is generally viewed as an effective way to form bilingual students. Focusing on content rather than form reduces some of the stress associated with language learning, and places more importance on communicating ideas. In immersion programs the topics are usually academic, however they can also be based on student interests. Instructional content should help students develop not only communication, and cooperation, but also their cultural identity. For this reason, it is important for ESL teachers to choose content that is
easily accessible, interesting, and engaging for students. Depending on the classroom context, fairy tales might be a useful tool in second language instruction as they are usually shorter than novels and use simple language. Furthermore, fairy tales are produced by most cultures and can be used to develop critical skills.

**Student engagement**

Since the 1980s a number of researchers have considered the usefulness of fairy tales for second language instruction. Many articles highlight the benefit of using content that students already know as it can reduce anxiety, and make vocabulary and grammar easier to learn. Earlier articles focused on the usefulness of fairy tales to facilitate the learning task based on the predictability of the grammar and vocabulary (Turner, 1978; Nollendorfs, 1983). Fairy tales are considered to have a simple structure and use language that is neither literary nor complex, and thus are appropriate for language learners of varying age and linguistic ability (Davidheiser, 2007). If students are already familiar with the content of the text, then they can predict the meaning for unfamiliar grammar and vocabulary. Also, as fairy tales come from an oral tradition, many of them feature mnemonic devices such as repetition. This repetitiveness can be helpful for students with lower language abilities, as it can help them with their text recall (McDaniel, Hines & Guynn, 2002). Thus, since repetition in the text was meant to make it easier to memorize, it can help second language students remember new grammar. Reciting or performing fairy tales can also improve student fluency and reading comprehension (Campbell & Hlusek, 2015).

Later research also considers the importance of familiarity for lowering student anxiety. Davidheiser (2007) suggests that familiar content can lower the level of fear
students experience when approaching a foreign language. He believes that since learning a foreign language is already stressful, working with a familiar text will lower anxiety and help students feel more confident about their language skills. Familiarity with the content and its tropes is also an effective way of developing fluency, which is essential for language development. Disney movies in particular are identified as being familiar to students from many different backgrounds (Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

According to Koehnecke (2000), reading fairy tales promotes student engagement as it allows students to express strong emotions and imaginativeness. Connection with the text motivates students to read more, thereby developing their fluency. Fairy tales and folk tales can allow students to express themselves through a story structure that they are familiar. Kiliç (2015) also believes that fairy tales are an excellent genre to promote student engagement as they develop a student's linguistic skills, as well as their mental and spiritual development.

However, many scholars do not explain why they believe fairy tales have a privileged position with regards to student engagement. Most scholars simply assume that students will enjoy working with fairy tales as they are entertaining (Davidheiser, 2007; Kiliç, 2015; Koehnecke, 2000; Zabel, 1991). This may be true, but fairy tales do not have a monopoly on humour and entertainment. Texts such as short stories or news articles can also be appropriate for language learners. It seems that the advantage fairy tales have over these other types of text is content familiarity. If students are unfamiliar with fairy tales, would they still promote student engagement? Duff (2002) suggests that lack of familiarity with a text does indeed influence student engagement. While using pop culture in the ESL classroom may help to engage local students, students from different
backgrounds might feel excluded and situated as outsiders.

Another factor that may affect engagement is student perception of fairy tales. While most scholars believe that age does not influence enjoyment of fairy tales, Nollendorfs (1983) admits that some high school students may feel the subject matter to be too childish. Although she does not explain why high school students in particular might be resistant to fairy tales, she suggests that teachers use “contemporary take-offs and spoofs” (293) to engage student interest. This student perception might be influenced by familiarity with the Disney version of many fairy tales, as these films tend to be marketed towards children. Nollendorfs does not seem to consider fairy tales from different cultures, or versions that may be darker than the standard Disney narrative students might be familiar with. Kiliç (2015) notes that gender may also influence the effectiveness of fairy tales as a tool for language instruction, as it may influence student attitudes.

Cultural diversity

While familiarity with the stories themselves might lower the stress associated with learning a foreign language, there are other aspects that can create a hostile learning environment. As Duff (2002) points out, students from different cultural backgrounds who are not familiar with the text being studied in ESL class may feel like outsiders. This negates the benefit of using fairy tales for their familiarity. Grimm's fairy tales are situated firmly within a white euro-centric cultural canon, and exclude positive representations of diversity. Fairy tales from the Disney canon are also overwhelmingly euro-centric and focus on white characters. This can be alienating for people from different cultural backgrounds, as they might not only be unfamiliar with the stories, they
would also not see themselves represented in the texts.

However, this euro-centrism can be remedied through careful text selection by the teacher. Yenika-Agbaw (2014) recognizes the lack of diversity evident in fairy tales, and recommends using counter-narratives in the school curriculum. As fairy tales are viewed as a popular genre across cultures, teachers can use the cultural and linguistic diversity of their classrooms to help determine the texts they chose (Sturgess, 2009). Cinderella-type tales are present in many cultures, and using different versions of the tale which feature characters of colour can help engage students from different backgrounds (Yenika-Agbaw, 2014). Hurley (2005) also highlights the importance of diversity in texts, and points out Disney's problematic position with regards to representing children of colour. She suggests that children's self-image is affected by these texts, and so they must develop critical literacy skills and be exposed to transcultural literature in order to have a good self-image. Native American folktales can also be used to present the Cinderella tale to students, although Reese (2007) recommends caution when using Native American folktales in the classroom. As there are many versions of the texts, the text selected by the teacher should be as authentic as possible.

Many scholars highlight the usefulness of fairy tales for addressing topics of culture, as fairy tales can give a “glimpse into another people’s world view” (Zabel, 1991), and can be used to compare different cultural values (Brickman, 1998). While simply including texts from different cultures can help promote diversity and student engagement, comparing texts can also help develop critical understanding. Al-Jafar and Buzzelli (2004) suggest that comparing a familiar fairy tale with one from another culture can lead to cross-cultural appreciation and greater understanding. Learning about
unfamiliar world views can also help students develop an awareness of their own culture and values (Gholson and Stumpf, 2005). Davidheiser (2007) also suggests that adolescents can use fairy tales to create a better awareness of their own self, or work through their problems by identifying with the hero of the narrative.

While fairy tales can also be used as a tool to promote classroom discussion and create a student-centred learning environment (Brickman, 1998), teachers should be careful with dealing with cultural representation. It is important to recognize cultural diversity, but fairy tales are not representative of a culture. Davidheiser (2007) suggests that it’s important to teach the historical background of fairy tales, and how they have changed over time due to changes in culture. The values found in Disney's Cinderella, released in 1950, may not represent the cultural values of a more modern audience. Furthermore, Gholson and Stumpf (2005) warn that lecturing about cultural differences found in various fairy tales can put students from that culture on the defensive and alienate them. While a student-centred approach would allow for greater fluidity in the range of discussion, and would also allow students to share their own personal cultural knowledge, it is important not to perpetuate binaries. When presenting fairy tales from different cultures teachers should not encourage students to compare and contrast, as this may emphasize difference rather than similarities.

**Deconstructing stereotypes**

While some scholars suggest that simply discussing different fairy tales will lead to a greater appreciation for diversity, others highlight the importance of critiquing the values inherent in fairy tales in order to disrupt structures of inequality. Fairy tales, as cultural products, represent the values of the society that created them. Yet
older articles suggest fairy tales are representative of the target language's culture and simply teaching them will give students a greater understanding of both the target language and culture (Brickman, 1998; Nollendorfs, 1983; Zabel, 1991). These articles seem to suggest that fairy tales written over 300 years ago are still representative of a culture and its values. This is not the case, as culture and cultural values are constantly in flux. After all, Grimm's fairy tales were first published in 1812 and come from an oral tradition that might be even older. The values found in those texts are unlikely to represent those prized by modern society. Yet if scholars writing to an audience of their peers make this mistake, it would be quite simple for teachers and their students to do the same. Thus, it's important for teachers to not only avoid presenting fairy tales as though they represent a culture, but also question the values inherent in the tales. Teachers should present fairy tales critically in order to avoid perpetuating stereotypes.

Because of their age, fairy tales present outdated gender roles to children, particularly with regards to women. Women in fairy tales are often passive, defined by their relationships with men, and excluded from female collaboration (Mendelson, 1997). Moula and Kabouropoulou (2014) suggest that teachers must create a student-centred classroom by questioning the gender roles and values in fairy tales. By using the Socratic Method, students can be guided to a greater critical understanding of sexism and gender. Teachers can then act as a facilitator and promote student communication and autonomy. Hayik (2015) also recognizes the usefulness of fairy tales for challenging gender roles. Hayik had language learners write challenging letters critiquing the representation of women in the Disney version of the tale to an imaginary author. This activity revealed an emerging critical awareness of gender-bias, and an eagerness for change.
Another method of approaching fairy tales is through remixes. Having students write their own ending can help with student engagement (Davidheiser, 2007), and can also help students develop a greater understanding of the narrative's content (Campbell & Hlusek, 2015). Teachers can target multiple intelligences by encouraging students to create remixes as a group. Remixes that are created through collaboration can facilitate student understanding of literary forms, and promote language development, particularly with regards to lexis (Sauro & Sundmark, 2016). The collaborative aspect of such a task can allow students to display different abilities, as students who are not as strong with the oral or written aspect of creating a fairy tale can provide illustrations (Davidheiser, 2007). Students can also re-write the fairy tale from a different character's perspective (Zabel, 1991), or consider the lives the characters will lead after the happy ending (Joosen, 2004). Remixes can also be used to critique the portrayal of women, gender binaries, and other cultural stereotypes (Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Joosen, 2004; Moula and Kabouropoulou, 2014). Important to note is that teachers should encourage students to move beyond simply changing the gender of a character, as this will not eliminate gender binaries (Kuykendal & Sturm, 2007). Also, while traditional versions of fairy tales have outdated notions of gender-roles, modern adaptations of Disney movies struggle to reconcile traditional fairy tale tropes with more modern notions of gender and femininity (Justice, 2014). Because of this, it might be interesting for teachers to encourage students to compare older versions of a fairy tale with more modern adaptations.

As fairy tales are a useful pedagogical tool for introducing critical theory into the ESL classroom, teachers should address topics beyond gender and culture in order to develop a truly inclusive pedagogy (Rycik & Rycik, 1990). However, this usefulness for
discussing gender roles is often presented separately from culture, not taking into consideration the interconnectedness of gender roles and culture. Also, although ageism is touched upon by Joosen (2006), the literature fails to address topics such as ableism, gender fluidity, and non-hetero sexuality.

**Findings**

**Reflection**

For my first Masters, I attended the University of Toronto and wrote my first Masters thesis about monsters in the Japanese capitalist context, and continue to be fascinated by how mass media produces monster stories to exorcise cultural fears. I am also very interested in how folk tales and fairy tales represent gender and Otherness. This interest in monsters, fairy tales, and popular culture informs who I am as a person, and also who I am as a teacher. I am very interested in exploring pop culture in my pedagogy, and bringing texts that are relevant to my students' interests into the classroom. Thus, during my internship I taught a unit on fairy tales.

I began the unit by looking at the students' background knowledge on fairy tales, discussing the works of the brothers Grimm, and analyzing several adaptations of the traditional tales. The final assessment was remixing traditional fairy tales to make them more socially just. I encouraged them to get rid of stereotypes and traditional gender roles, and was rewarded with highly entertaining remixes of traditional tales that featured princesses rescuing themselves, or two princes riding off into the sunset. While students were able to accomplish the task and created highly entertaining remixes, I had gone into the unit with several pre-conceived notions based on my review of the literature about fairy tales. I believed that students were familiar with the material, that they were aware
of stereotypes and gender roles, and that fairy tales were best suited to the second language classroom thanks to their length and simple vocabulary. These assumptions were challenged over the course of the unit, and what I discovered gave me a better understanding of how to use fairy tales as a tool in the classroom.

**Student engagement**

Davidheiser (2007) suggested that the main benefit of fairy tales was their familiarity, so I had thought it was safe to assume that all students had some exposure to Disney films. After all, Disney films are available worldwide, so they should be known to students regardless of their cultural background (Bonds-Raake, 2008). I was surprised to learn that this was not the case. A good number of boys and a small number of girls claimed that they were not familiar with fairy tales, and had never seen a Disney movie before. While I suspect that some students said this to protect their image, I have no doubt that some of them were telling the truth. Although Disney movies are very popular cultural products, some people simply never get around to watching them. Also, Disney movies and princesses in particular have become closely associated with the feminine in recent years, so students or perhaps their parents, might have resisted products marketed towards girls. Finally, although Disney movies have been translated into many languages, they are very much an American cultural product. It is not unreasonable to believe that people from different cultures might not have been tempted to watch these films, or did not have access to them.

I also learned that although some students claimed to not know the basic plot of fairy tales like Snow White or Cinderella, they did, however, have a good awareness of recent adaptations. Students were much more likely to be familiar with remixes like the
movies Shrek, Ever After, Stardust, Maleficent, and Snow White and the Huntsman rather than the original traditional tale. Several students were also fans of the television series Once Upon a Time, which remixes Disney fairy tales and puts the characters in a modern American setting. In my enthusiasm to teach fairy tales, I had not considered the fact that some students might not be familiar with the text. Without this familiarity, students would not benefit from reduced anxiety, or increased motivation.

**Cultural diversity**

As a teacher I am invested in promoting cultural diversity, so it was very important for me to introduce students to fairy tales from different cultures. I am very aware of the importance of representation for developing children's identity. However, when presenting fairy tales as a cultural text, I was expecting students to already be familiar with the basic fairy tale storyline. This lack of familiarity with the material caused some problems, as I was expecting to build on their prior knowledge. However, lack of familiarity with traditional fairy tales may also have been an advantage. Students did not view the Grimm version of the text as the 'original', and therefore were receptive to learning about fairy tales from different cultures.

Sturgess and Locke (2009) suggests using student diversity to inform the choice of texts, however I soon realized that this is easier said than done. Quebec classrooms can be diverse, and so there is a great deal of cultural variety to choose from. It was difficult to choose texts, as I wanted many cultural groups to feel represented. Also, while some cultural groups might be visible to the teacher, others may not be immediately obvious. For example, it was only after introducing a Native American tale that I found out that one of my students had First Nations ancestry.
I was careful not to lecture about cultural differences to avoid alienation (Gholson & Stumpf, 2005), but it was more difficult than I expected to promote a student-centred environment. Many students were unaware of fairy tales from their own culture, so unless the teacher introduced the material there were limited opportunities for discussion.

**Deconstructing stereotypes**

This leads me to my next preconceived notion: that students are aware of stereotypes and gender roles. Although I touched those two topics briefly, I soon realized that I should have dealt with them in greater depth before beginning a unit on fairy tales. While students were very much engaged with the idea of equality and social justice, they had several biases towards fairy tales. When I first introduced the unit, there were several groans. I got the impression that many students viewed fairy tales as somehow inherently childish or feminine. University students like those in Davidheiser's (2007) study might be less worried about their image, but high school level students are very much concerned about how they appear to their peers. I believe that they were reluctant to express interest in a topic that was not overtly masculine. The bloody nature of the Grimm version of fairy tales soon changed that feminized perception, but I realized that students would undoubtedly benefit from analyzing the 'why' behind their bias. Although most students eventually became invested in the unit on fairy tales, I realized that fairy tales can only be an effective tool for critical analysis if the students have a greater understanding of their own gender biases. Therefore, before attempting to use fairy tales as a tool in the ESL classroom, the teacher must set up the unit very carefully. Steps must be taken to engage students who might be resistant to their feminized image.

**Fairy tales as a second language tool**
My final assumption with regards to using fairy tales as a tool in language instruction was that they were best suited to second language instruction. This assumption was for the most part confirmed. The simplicity of the language used in fairy tales means that students were able to easily understand the plot. While there is grammar and vocabulary that needs to be taught, it is not overwhelming, which helped promote student engagement. Thanks to their understanding of the text, students were able to easily reinvest their knowledge and create remixes. Thus, fairy tales are indeed an excellent tool for second language education. However, I had assumed that because of their simplicity, they were uniquely suited to the ESL classroom. This assumption was challenged when I learned that students were studying Charles Perrault's version of fairy tales in French class. Because of my assumption I had not discussed my unit with the other teacher, and thus missed out on an excellent opportunities to develop cross-curricular competencies. I could have taken the opportunity to compare and contrast the Grimm and Perrault versions before moving on to more modern versions. It also meant that students were less receptive to the use of fairy tales in English class since they had already looked at the topic before.

**Implications for my practice**

While there are many different suggestions for using fairy tales as a teaching tool in the ESL classroom, not all of them are suited for the Quebec high school context. Based on my research and my own experience, I have developed a greater understanding about how to use fairy tales effectively to teach critical thinking.

First, while most students will have background knowledge of fairy tales, there may very well be students that have never been read fairy tales as a child or seen a
Disney movie. These students are at high risk of becoming disengaged by the subject matter and resistant to learning about fairy tales altogether. For this reason, it is important to give students many texts to compare and contrast. I had originally shied away from showing a Disney movie, as I had assumed that students would interpret it as too childish, or that they had already seen it. However, when considering that students were already resistant to fairy tales, and claimed to never have seen a Disney film, perhaps this was the wrong approach to take. Watching a Disney movie as a group would help give students the same kind of background knowledge, and refresh the memories of those who had seen the movies when they were very young. Rather than dancing around the childish and feminine image of Disney movies, I think it's better to approach these preconceptions head on and challenge the assumptions that students may already have about fairy tales.

To help with the engagement of students from many cultures, it would be a good idea to poll students to ask them which version of the tales they would like to read. To make sure that their selection is not purely euro-centric, the teacher can give them a list to choose from with texts from many different cultures. It is important that this list contain a wide variety of tales to choose from, and gives students the option to study fairy tales from their own cultural background.

Also, great care needs to be taken before presenting fairy tales from different cultures. Gholson and Stumpf (2005) believe that comparing fairy tales with the intent to compare two culture leads to student alienation, and puts students from that culture on the defensive. Since my intent with teaching fairy tales is to disrupt notions of the “Other”, this would be highly counter-productive. Thus, I must be careful not only in the way I frame critical discourse of fairy tales, but also with guiding student discussion. It is
important that one version of a fairy tale is not treated as being superior, or more authentic than another. Binaries must be broken down, and not reinforced.

My research has suggested various means of breaking down these binaries such as: looking at contemporary versions of fairy tales (Nollendorfs, 1983), questioning gender roles in fairy tales (Moula & Kabouropoulou, 2014), having students write their own ending to a fairy tale (Davidheiser, 2007), rewriting the fairy tale from another character's perspective (Zabel, 1991), writing a letter to an imaginary author critiquing the role of women in the tales (Hayik, 2005), critiquing the treatment of a character like Rumpelstiltskin (Rycik & Rycik, 1990), and writing about what will happen to characters after the end of a traditional fairy tale (Joosen, 2004).

All of these ideas can be implemented to deconstruct binaries and the notion of the “Other”, but I think that remixes are particularly well suited to this task. By asking students to remix traditional fairy tales to get rid of the inherent stereotypes, they can become more aware of their own values and break down the concept of the other. This task was popular with most students, as they enjoyed the opportunity to be creative and deal with issues of social justice. With some prompting from the teacher, they covered many topics, including ageism, homophobia, beauty, and female cooperation.

However, before asking students to create a remix free from stereotypes it is very important that they recognize what stereotypes are. For this reason, it would not be a good idea to go directly into a unit about fairy tales. Many students are unaware of gender roles, or the prevalence of stereotypes for the depiction of cultural minorities. Thus, before using fairy tales as a tool to break down binaries, the teacher should spend some time explaining what those binaries are. I believe that the way I can approach this
problem in my own practice is to teach a unit on stereotypes before starting a unit on fairy tales. By thoroughly engaging with the topic of stereotypes ahead of time students can understand what stereotypes and binaries are, and critique them more easily with fairy tales.

A final consideration that will affect my practice is cross-curricular cooperation. Although fairy tales are well suited to being an ESL text, they may also be used by teachers in other classes. That is why the teacher should communicate with colleagues and make sure that there is no overlap. If fairy tales are being studied in another class, then it would be beneficial to the ESL teacher to coordinate their lessons and planning with the other teacher.

**Conclusion**

Based on the literature about using fairy tales in the second language classroom as well as my own experience, I have come to several conclusions about the use of fairy tales as a tool in second language instruction. First, it is unwise to assume that students have background knowledge of fairy tales. Second, great care needs to be taken when introducing fairy tales from different cultures. And finally, gender biases and stereotypes need to be looked at in depth before the topic of fairy tales is approached.

The QEP (2016) states that the ESL curriculum must explore “authentic texts: popular, literary and information-based” (579), so it is important for English teachers to choose texts that are not only appropriate for their students' language level, but also to their interests. By using fairy tales as a tool for teaching English second language, I believe that students can benefit from their simplicity, and their usefulness as a cultural product. However, the usefulness of fairy tales as a tool for deconstructing binaries and
overcoming the notion of the “Other” depends greatly on the way the teacher approaches the topic.

In order to effectively use fairy tales as a tool in second language instruction, the teacher must first engage with any preconceptions students have about fairy tales, show students a variety of texts, incorporate texts from various cultures, and critically examine issues of diversity. If these conditions are met, then fairy tales remixes can be an effective tool for students to deconstruct binaries and promote a more just society.
References


Journal of Negro Education, 74(3), 221.


