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Working with the Grain: Appreciating Rich Narrative Traditions from Diverse Cultures

Recorded August 7th, 2020

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SpeechPathology.com Course #9417

- [Amy] Once again welcome to our webinar today presented in partnership with the American Board of Child Language and Language Disorders. Working with the Grain: Appreciating Rich Narrative Traditions from Diverse Cultures. I'd like to introduce to you our guest editor this week, Dr. Trisha Self. Trisha is an associate professor and chair in the Communication Sciences and Disorders department and coordinator of the Autism Interdisciplinary Diagnostic and Treatment Team Lab at Wichita State University. And she's also the CE Co-Chair for ABCLLD our partner for this event. So Trisha, I will turn over the mic to you, welcome.

- [Trisha] Thank you Amy. As Amy mentioned, this continuing education event is in partnership with the American Board of Child Language and Language Disorders also known as ABCLLD. I'm on the board of ABCLLD and just wanna mention to today's attendees that if you think you have advanced knowledge, skills and leadership in child language and are interested in becoming a certified child language specialist, you'll find resources at our website that describes the process. The web address is www.childlanguagespecialists.org. Those of us who are specialists have found many benefits to being certified as an expert in child language. One being that we're all dedicated to ensuring that children receive high quality services. So I invite you to become a specialist. I'd like to thank all of you for joining us today, we're fortunate to have Dr. Allyssa McCabe with us who will discuss Appreciating Rich Narrative Traditions from Diverse Cultures. Now it's my pleasure to introduce our speaker. Dr. Allyssa McCabe is professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She got her PhD in psychology from the University of Virginia in 1980 and has published over 100 scholarly pieces. She has written scholarly books and articles on children's narrative development and a trade book for parents called "Language Games To Play With Your Child". She's conducted interventions with both parents and teachers to improve children's ability to narrate. She specializes in cultural

as well as developmental differences in personal narration, working with scholars from many backgrounds to enable the appreciation of many different traditions. Welcome Dr. McCabe, we're looking forward to your presentation today.

- [Allyssa] So I wanted to start by saying that this probably is my favorite conference ever. And I've been to a lot of conferences over the years but I have always found it very inspiring as a psychologist to work with people in the speech language pathology community and that is something that I think we're touching, we've touched on. Everybody, my fabulous co-presenters have touched on throughout the week. So, that having been said I wanna start by looking at a while there's some, there is no disclosures that I'm going to make. But look at a visual metaphor for what I'm trying to say today. If you sand wood against the grain, you make a big mess as this indicates. You rip grains and it's very ugly, people would not typically want to do that. If on the other hand, you sand wood with the grain, it ends up lustrous and beautiful. So, that is what I want as the background to my talk today. There are certain learning outcome of this course.

I expect participants will be able to explain the importance of parents in facilitating narrative development, describe an evidence based method for working with parents to improve children's narration and identify values of diverse cultures related to narration. Okay, so, how you begin is of course with assessment and many people have touched on that, many prior presenters have touched on that. So I don't have to go into it in great detail. I just do want to emphasize that it does not require the purchase of a 200 plus dollar test. It can be done informally by using a method that Pam Rollins and I outlined called and I give you the complete reference there, it's called basically telling a story to get a story to determine whether a child is typically developing by comparison to information given in that article. Also, I recommend from the get go asking parents how they feel their children narrate. I believe it was Rena, who talked about the need to consult with children. You might ask them too but

parents are often a very good source of information. By the way, the developmental sequence that I present in McCabe and Rollins which you would use to determine whether a child was developing typically, while it was outlined on the basis of work done with European North American children it has also been found for low income Chilean children, low income Californian children from Spanish speaking Mexican heritage backgrounds, Chinese children and Taiwanese children from varied socioeconomic classes. Okay, so it consists of conversational elicitation. You want to be relaxed, you want the child to be relaxed, it should not come across as a formal test situation. You tell a mini story of your own in order to get a story and you this could be on topics like, did you ever get hurt? I got hurt one time while I was cutting an apple with a knife, did anything like that ever happened to you?

For assessment, you want to follow that up with neutral prompts saying, uh-huh, tell me more or repetition of the child's words for assessment. And then this use of neutral prompts will clearly contrast with specific prompts for who, what, where, when, how and why for improving narrative that we'll talk about in a later slide. So, you determine that a child is having problems. By the way, I do wanna point out that this procedure that I mentioned is very congruent with Marlene Westfield's detailed standard protocol. So again, I have just gone over in a general today so that this is a standalone presentation but she has given us much more detail.

Okay. So why personal narrative? This is something pretty much every presenter this week has touched on but I have my own arguments that I like to make that I find useful by the way for some reason. Although I had numbers as superscripts, they have not come across that way, I don't know why. But that's what these numbers are for, references. Okay, at the end of preschool, at the end of pre-kindergarten a child's ability to tell a narrative predicts first grade comprehension, vocabulary, global language and narrative and I refer to work by David Dickinson in this regard. Also, the ability of a child to tell a narrative at the end of pre-K predicts, this I find astounding,

the child's ability to tell a narrative at the end of pre-kindergarten predicts fourth, seventh and 10th grade reading comprehension and receptive vocabulary. That is a remarkable predictive outcome and that is coming from the work of Katherine Snow and her colleagues. Many people have mentioned that narrative helps children especially personal narrative helps children make sense of their experiences. Others have noted that it enables children to connect with family and friends and make new friends. But germane to the topic today, personal narrative, unlike fictional narrative is used in all cultures to date that we've studied in detail. Not all cultures feel comfortable with fictional narrative. It is common, as some previous presenters have mentioned, it's exchanged daily between parents and children. It's the most common type of narrative from children as Alison Priest pointed out a while ago.

And the other two are things that we have already emphasized, the sense making and the connection. Two more additional important reasons for using personal narrative. When you go to a doctor's office, you often, the doctor wants to know how a child got injured. And a child who can give a coherent personal narrative is going to be able to do much better job of that. And sometimes it plays a role in treatment of the child. Sometimes it plays a role in the physicians assessing the situation of a child.

Again, I'm a psychologist, so we psych types often have to deal with child abuse and that's where we get into the fact that medical people are trying to figure out how a child's leg got broken. And ultimately, if the case is pursued, the child is sometimes the only witness and children age three can testify in U.S. and Canadian courts of law. Especially in the case of child sexual abuse, that's often the only evidence we have, so, the use of personal narrative in courtroom testimony or reports to legal personnel is very important. I should also underline that by saying there's evidence coming from a different Snow in Australia that many children with language deficits can't explain themselves, they can't defend themselves, they can't explain why they were victims and that's really a huge issue. Now, parents need to be involved, that's the point that I

wanna make, first and foremost. And in order to make this point, I want to tell you about the importance. Well, I'm gonna give you the backstory of a project that I did with Carol Peterson and what we did was Carol Peterson and I had established age related patterns and the development of narrative structure happening but four, five, six, seven, eight and nine-year-olds but we noticed this, that at any age, there were some children who were significantly better narrators than others and we wondered why. So we developed a longitudinal study where we followed parents of very young children, most around the age of 27 months and saw how their narrative developed. Initially, all the children were pretty, very minimal narrators.

And yet at the end of a year, and two years, you began to see considerable individual differences in the children's abilities. So that allowed us to talk about predicting what makes a good story, predicting the kind of parent input that makes for a good story. But a psychologist we like random assignment because that allows it and experimental procedures, so we like to be able to talk about causality. We set out with a project, this is not reported anywhere and you'll see why in a minute. But we had researchers spend 20 minutes a day, one-on-one with preschool children at risk of language delay, five times within every two weeks for eight months.

An amount of time that I'm sure the clinicians amongst you would agree is often not clinically feasible. We tried all the techniques that we thought might be causal. We had one condition, again, we randomly assigned children to one condition in which researchers asked direct wh- questions. Plus researchers modeled good personal narratives. In a second condition, we had researchers asking children direct wh- questions without modeling. A third condition involved modeling good narratives but no questions of the children. A fourth condition was businesses as usual, just talking with the children, neither modeling good personal narratives nor questioning the children. The fifth condition was reading stories with the children and acting out those stories. So these were all the methods that we thought were promising. After this eight

month period, we did a post test of children's narrative abilities and the results, no impact of any of those conditions. So that was disappointing. So instead, we developed an intervention involving parents. And this intervention involving parents is what Ashley and Tiffany yesterday talked about a lot. It's come to be known as elaborative reminiscing but I'm going into the details today so that clinicians will end up knowing the specifics of how to get parents to improve in their ability to talk with their children. First of all, you need to explain the importance of narrative, personal narratives. And again, that's why I reviewed some of the most compelling reasons early on. Parents often do not have any idea these little stories that they're not paying attention to are really important. When people are sharing stories of what they did each day around the dinner table they don't know that this is going to help their four-year-old when that child is in 10th grade to achieve on tests of reading comprehension, formal tests of reading comprehension.

I think most people just have no idea about that. You need to follow up with parents regularly reminding them of the importance of narrative, suggesting prompts that they might use to get their children to talk about things, discuss places, review places and times as you'll see, I suggest you ask parents to think this through at the outset and then find out what and address if there are any issues that they are having. Okay, so I'm going to read the excerpts that we offer to parents in our training condition. By the way, the training condition did not take long. So, since I want you to listen to this and that I want parents to listen, I am going to read you this first excerpt. It's a little two, something year old. The mother and I will adopt the convention of reading the mother's part in a lower voice, the child's part in a higher voice. "Were you playing with Dalton?" "Yes." "And Robert?" "Yes, no, he pinched me. "He pinched you? "Why did he pinch you?" "I don't know." "What did you have for lunch today?" "Sandwiches." "No, I don't think so. "That's not what your teacher told me, what did you have?" "What did we have?" "See if you can remember. "Do you remember what you had for lunch today Matthew? "Here, look at your shirt, see this, what was it?" She's pulling up his shirt,

the mother is. "I don't know." Mother, "I think it was spaghetti "and did you eat all your lunch?" "No." "Why not?" "You always eat a good lunch. "What did you do in circle time this morning?" "Nothing." "Nothing, did you play a game?" "You didn't play any games?" "Teacher didn't let let us." "She didn't let you?" "How come?" "Did she read to you?" "Yes." "That's good. "Do you remember what the story "was about that she read to you?" "She never read them." "Do you remember about the dream you had last night?" Okay, so that's the excerpt and you ask parents to reflect on it. And things come out, a couple things. They note, she's always switching, this mother is always switching topics. She's not staying on the same one. She's also pretty directly confrontational about the spaghetti for lunch issue.

Contrast that to the second excerpt. Mother says, "What are you drawing?" "It's a fallen down thing." "A fallen down thing, what's a fallen down thing?" "It's a monkey bars." "A monkey bars?" "At the park." "At the park?" "You were at the park today, weren't you?" "With my cousin." "With your cousin?" "Who's your cousin?" "Gregory?" "Gregory, do you like him a lot?" "Yeah." "What did you do at the park?" "Oh, took our sneakers off." "You took your sneakers off, what else?" "Go over all the sandies and I walked and it's all sticky." "It was all sticky, was it?" "On your toes?" "And I stepped in the car." "You stepped in the car?" "With no shoes and I put sand in the car." "You put sand in my car, oh." "Dirty mom." "Yeah, what else did you do at the park?" "I didn't get on monkey bars." "No, I think monkey bars are too big for you." "I got on them before remember?" "No." "Well, it's down there you know, you know the lady Judy?" "Oh yeah, Judy, you were down with her, were you?" "What did you do then?" "I get on the monkey bars." "She let you get on the monkey bars." "Yeah, you do, remember?" "I didn't go with you so I didn't know what you did. "What else did you do?" "Got on the slide and she gave me an under duck." "She what?" "She gave you an under duck, holy cow!" "Holy cow--" "Shh!" Okay, so in the second excerpt you asked for reflections and people notice that the mother is less confrontational and really stays on the one topic of going to the park and develops it. So this is the kind of elaborative

reminiscing that you are hoping parents will engage in and we were successful in training parents to do this. Our method was used by Elaine Reese and colleagues, they were successful. In all cases we were using this with at risk children. They were at risk for one thing or another. And recently I will also tell you, a colleague of mine, Ashley Hillier, who is a specialist in researching on teenagers and young adults on the autism spectrum, we have done elaborative reminiscing, we published a pilot article doing that with parents of teenagers and young adults on the spectrum. Okay, so here are the instructions to parents. Talk to your child frequently and consistently about past experiences, spend a lot of time talking about each topic on its own. Ask plenty of wh- questions, who, what, when, where, how, why, and fewer yes/no questions. Was grandpa wearing a red coat?

That's an example of a yes/no question. As part of this, ask questions about the context or setting of the events especially where and when they took place. And this goes to the need to contextualize experiences that people have mentioned in cases of children who have certain types of disorders. Listen carefully to what your child is saying and encourage elaboration. Encourage your child to say more than one sentence at a time by using back channel responses. I see or really or simply repeating what your child has said. Follow your child's lead. That is talked about what your child wants to talk about.

That even if those experiences are negative. Actually, especially if those experiences are negative. And some prior presenters have mentioned the disruption of narrative that happens in cases of trauma and I think it's a common misunderstanding of children that children don't wanna talk about upsetting experiences. The truth is they need to talk about them, they need to be able to explore them with safe adults. In fact, personal narrative and this is another reason it's important is the stuff of psychotherapy. Okay, so, some other caveats. We ask parents not to focus on correcting children about facts or grammar or pronunciation, just to listen to what their

child has to say and to keep conversations interesting and if appropriate fun. Okay, so we did this. At the end of the year we went back, we got our post narratives, we always collect pre narratives, assessments and we got our post narratives and at one year, nothing, no immediate results but two years in our intervention with 27 month old children at risk, we did get significant results and I'll say what those were in a minute. But you need to explain this to parents that it does take time to improve narrative structure, the child's ability to narrate and assure them, reassure them that several independent research laboratories have found that the method we use, training and elaborative reminiscing works. It does take time, that it does take time to be effective, takes us back to the importance of involving parents explicitly in this effort in the first place. So what did we find after two years?

We found children in the intervention group gain significantly and receptive vocabulary. We didn't expect that. But somehow when you had at risk parents talking to their kids about past personal experiences, they accessed more vocabulary than they typically did, than people in the control group did. The children in the intervention group produce significantly more narratives, significantly longer narratives, they produce significantly more temporal context, they produce significantly more total context setting information, they produce significantly more unique units of information. As a side benefit, parents reported feeling closer to their children in the intervention group context.

As I say, Ashley Hillier and I recently published an article where we took elaborative reminiscing and basically did exactly the training that we did with preschool children. But we did it with parents of teenagers and young adults on the autism spectrum 15 to 25-year-olds. This is because Professor Hillier and I had found as other presenters have found that children with autism spectrum disorder in the 15 to 25-year-old age range produce one of two types of stories. One type is minimal to events at most, not even necessarily complete sentences and that is characteristic of a three-year-old. So

these are 15 to 25-year-old individuals, typical intelligence but they are producing narratives at the level of typical three-year-old children. Or they produce these leapfrog narratives that Carol Westby mentioned, which are very hard to follow, they jump around and leave things out. Narratives that are characteristically produced by four-year-olds. And so this is obviously, a problem. So we read all of the rules or the advice that we gave to parents of much younger children to these parents of 15 to 25-year-old individuals, we collected tapes regularly from the parents and at the end of a year, we found that most parents in the intervention group had become truly elaborative narrators.

They, parents rated their children's narration as significantly better than at the outset. And this compares, both of these things compared to parents in the non intervention group, the business as usual group, the group to whom we offered the training if they wanted to at the end of that first year. Parents in that control group were not elaborative in their reminiscing with their children and did not write any improvement in their child's narration. I will mention one way in which we tweaked the instructions that we use for two-year-olds to adapt to parents of children on the spectrum because of what a prior researcher Sylvie Goldberg found. She found that parents of children on the spectrum had a way of derailing narrative in favor of coming up with a question that pertained to the child's special interests.

So for example, a parent would ask a question. Do you remember what we did at Thanksgiving? And because their child liked shapes the child would say yes and the parents would follow it up with and what shape was the pie? Well, that's a question about shapes but not really what happened to Thanksgiving. Or parents would say, another parent said, "Do you remember when we went to Disney World?" "Yes." And the parent would say, "So what room did we stay in?" And the child would come up with numbers because this child was fascinated by numbers in all ways. So we said, please, do not, we tackled this point directly and we said, please try to avoid asking

questions that will elicit your child's special interest and focus them instead on personal narration. So again, it was a pilot project but very promising and the parents liked it and they enjoyed having a reason to pursue these topics that their kids typically resisted. Okay, so when you're working with parents of typically developing a let alone children who struggle, children who have some sort of disorder, you need to problem solve. Where do you think you would regularly be able to talk about the past with your child? Is the dining room table a good place? This becomes particularly important when you're dealing with parents from various cultures because not all parents value having children participate in dinner table conversation. In some Mexican American homes we found that they did not like children to be involved in dinner table conversation but it was a natural source for these families to talk with the children while preparing food in the kitchen.

So you wanna get the parent to figure out what would work for their family and when. When do you think your family would regularly enjoy talking about the past? Is after school a good time or not a good time? At lunch, dinner? Now, as we are entering into the core of my lecture about appreciating differences from various cultures, we need to figure out, you need to figure out initially what culture your child and parent come from. And I want to make sure I'm very explicit. I'm sure people would know this but I, again don't want to assume anything. So you don't assume by looking at a person's skin color or name that you know what cultural values the parent has. Instead, you need to have a brief respectful conversation with parents about how they see their families and what they value in personal narratives. And by this, I mean, focus on the values. I really strongly advise people not to look for a label, not to look to see whether somebody is going to call themselves Japanese or Chinese or what have you. Because that is misread as what we psychologists call a microaggression. For example, Chinese American friend of mine talks about it as the where are you from from question. She was from a town in New York and when people would ask where she's from, she would say Scarsdale and people would look at her and say, "Yeah, but where are you from

from?" And that is, again, as I say, it implies that Americans do not include someone who is Chinese American and is seen as a microaggression. So focusing on values and traditions is safe and useful. So I'm gonna talk about some cultural traditions about which I have done research with people, colleagues from many different backgrounds. And we've been working many years on this, it's been wonderful work. I regret to say there are many cultures yet to be studied, so we don't have information about these. Okay, and in particular, we'll touch on European American values, Japanese and Japanese American values, African American values, Latinx American values, Haitian American values, Chinese and Chinese American values.

Okay. Family values. Again, I want to emphasize that family values about narration should take precedence over things such as goals, goals, story grammar. It's a feature of European and European North American school culture but not something valued by all cultures in this country. And remember, you focus on and value what parents value because parents will feel comfortable if they talk in ways that they value rather than in ways prescribed by others. It's really a strange thing to ask a parent to emphasize goals if that's not something they value in, talk about the past with your children. The more comfortable they feel, the more they will engage in reminiscing and the better the outcome for their children.

All right, so I'd like people to hear these stories. These are all given orally. This is given by a six-year-old European North American boy. "Hi, Sally, I broke my arm. "I was well, the day, two days ago, "I was climbing the tree." That's orientation or setting. Again in the slide I sent abstract orientation and setting were bolded and it's not coming through here. I'm showing you what basically the structural components are. "And I will see, I went towards the low branch "and I got caught with my bathing suit. "I dangled my hands down, and they got bent." A lot of actions there. "Because it was like this hard surface under it. "Then they bent like in two triangles "but luckily it was my left arm that broke." That's the high point, accumulating of evaluation. Then we get into the

resolution. "Only my mom was home. "My mom was in the shower so I screamed for Jessica "and Jessica goed told my mom. "I don't have Dr. Vincent anymore. "I had to go to the hospital and get, "it was much worse than you think "because I had to get, go into the operation room "and I had to get my, and I had to take anesthesia "and I had to fall, fall, fall asleep "and they bended my arm back and I have my cast on." So that resolution component is something you typically find in six-year-old European North American narration.

You don't necessarily find that in Chinese narration, you don't find that in the narratives even of adults who have a history of trauma. So people have mentioned trauma and how that disrupts narratives, so, in my own work with Professor Ivy Ho, we have found that this resolution section is often missing. Then, this boy ends with [00:37:04] calls a coda. "Do you wanna sign my cast?" So what are the values here? Well, to begin with a caveat, there are lots of variations due to dialect and geography. Southern families and Northern families have very different narrative traditions, this is true of all groups.

So I'm just gonna say this once but it's true of all groups that I'm talking about. Lots of variation due to dialect, geography and individual family differences. But generally European North Americans compared to other groups value medium length narratives in a very distinct way. It's become distinct by looking at all sorts of other cultures, European North Americans talk about one experience at a time, whereas most other cultures I've studied talk about multiple experiences. European North Americans value goals and resolutions, not the case in other cultures and they value fidelity to exactly what happened or truthfulness. Japanese values. This is an eight-year-old boy, it was given in Japanese and elicited by Masahiko Minami. "As for the first shot, got at Ehime, it hurt a lot. "As for the second shot, knew would hurt, "didn't hurt so much. "The next one didn't hurt so much either. "As for the last shot, you know, didn't hurt at all. " So this is an older child but you'll notice how much more succinct the narrative is. And that's what Masahiko Minami and I have found was characteristic of Japanese

children's narratives. Brief turns when they were exchanging talk with their parents, which is another project we did. The parents would interrupt them if they went on too long in a very friendly, supportive way but they didn't want their children monologuing. They valued succinct narratives, they talked about two or three similar experiences in the same narrative and that's something that was confirmed when we talk to Japanese parents, they prefer that. There is such a phenomenon as empathy training in Japan. Something I wish we would do more of in America but people train their children to listen to others in and fill out the experience, flesh out the experience. So parents don't want their children to insult these empathic listeners. They don't want children to embarrass themselves and have common proverb is, I love this, a talkative man is embarrassing, so that's Japanese values.

African American values. This is an eight-year-old girl and I want you to think before we talk about this about the last time you went to a dentist and the narrative you told about it. And I am going to bet most of us when we've gone to the dentist did not tell much of a narrative about that experience but listen to what she does. "We went to the dentist before and I was getting my tooth "pulled and the doc, the dentist said, "Oh, it's gonna hurt," and he hoped it's not gonna hurt. "And he was lying to me and it hurt. "It hurted so bad, I coulda gone on screaming "even though I think some I don't know what it was like.

"I was, in my mouth like it was, 'Oh, that hurt.' "He said no, it wouldn't hurt. "'Cause last time I went to the doctor, "I had got this spray. "This doctor, he sprayed some spray in my mouth "and my tooth appeared in his hands," and she acts this up. "He put me to sleep and then, and then I woke up. "He used some pliers to take it out and I didn't know. "So I had told my, I asked my sister, "'How did, how did the man take it out?' "And so she said, 'He used some pliers.' "And I said, "Nah, he used that spray.' "She said, "Nope, he used that spray to put you to sleep "'and he used the pliers to take it out.' "I was like, huh, that's amazing.' "I swear to God, I was so amazed, "it was

so amazing, right? "that I had to look for myself. "And then I asked him too and he said, "'Yes, we, I used some pliers to take out your tooth "'and I put you to sleep so you wouldn't know "'and that's how I did it.' "And I was like, 'Ooouu.' "And then I seen my sister get her tooth pulled. "I was like, 'Ooouu,' 'cause he had to put her to sleep "to take out her tooth. "It was the same day she got her tooth pulled "and I was scared. "I was like, 'EEEhhmmm.' "I had a whole bunch of cotton in my mouth "chomping on it because I had to hold "it to stop my bleeding. "One day I was in school, I took out my own tooth. "I put some hot water in it the night, "the night before I went to school and I was taking a test. "And then it came out right when I was taking, "when I finished the test. "And my teacher asked me, was it bleeding?

"I said, 'No, it's not bleeding 'cause I put "'some hot water on it.' "And so my cousin, he wanted to take out his tooth, "and he didn't know what to do. "So I told him, 'I'm a pulling teeth expert. "'Pull out your own tooth but if you need somebody "'to do it, call me and I'll be over.'" So again, multiple experiences in the same story and it's all tied together because after we've heard all these multiple experiences, we're convinced I'm a pulling teeth expert. Yes, she is.

So what are some African American values? Well, first of all, having a boring life is no excuse for telling a boring personal narrative. In a way this is very much like Irish friends of mine who tell me, their families were. Embellishments are welcome. I have an Irish American friend who can take a boring dinner party and make it into a narrative that has me doubled over with laughter. I should mention that the pulling teeth narrative has drawn a lot of laughter over the years from many, many people. They often talk, African American narrators often talk about more than one experience in the same narrative, as I've mentioned and narratives may be performed along with gestures, there's a lot of acting out in a good way. Okay, Latinx values. Now, Latinx is not much of a coherent category because we include there all the countries in South America and Central America and all the immigrant or third, fourth generation families living in

America. But nonetheless, there are some just general points that are worth making. We ask a question, we tell the story to get to story and we asked, "Have you ever been to the hospital?" "Yes, to grandma. "My mother wanted to go to take her to the hospital "but grandma didn't want to go but we took her. "They didn't do anything to her. "And another old lady was there. "We talked at her but she was not grandma. "The old lady was just talking and talking with my mom "and with my sister Areli. "My big sister who lives in Riverside "and we took her home "but she wanted to go to another house "which was my aunt's house, but that house was very ugly. "And my aunt had too many dogs and the house was dirty "and then we took her to my aunt's.

"And now grandma says that my sister and my aunt "keep the house clean, that it has a new roof "and today we are going to visit her after school." This is told by a seven-year-old Mexican American girl. So what are the values here? Mention of many family members and I give you a reference there. This is true of a number of Latin American cultures. Everyone that we have studied in detail to this point. Many more relatives appear in their narratives compared to European North American narratives. Juliana Meltzi talks about the fact that Latinx mothers typically focus on keeping the conversation going, they don't like letting the conversation lapse.

So they focus on keeping that conversation going rather than coming up with a clear beginning, middle and end and this may strike Anglo listeners as tangential. In fact, all of the Latinx researchers that I have collaborated with over the years say they ran into that criticism in American schools that they were going off into tangents but for them, what happened was not the point. They wanted to tell you who was there and all about their family group. I'll just remind people in general bilingual children, what about bilingual children? Well, you need to have children parents' speak in whatever their native languages that they're comfortable in because there's a much better quality of input, more talk, closer relationships and better language outcomes. I'm sure everybody knows that but I'll just repeat it just to make sure. Okay, Haitian American

values. This is a seven-year-old Haitian American girl. "And once when I was in this wedding, I was a flower girl "and my friend Isadora too was a flower girl. "And I was wearing this dress, can I show the dress? "It was a long dress with a ribbon around it. "It was a blue dress, it was a long dress," that's very poetic. Lots of detail about that dress. "And they stuck something on it and I think "it's still there and it was a pretty dress. "And I was so lucky because there was a flower girl "with curly hair, the same thing as me "at this other wedding. "This flower girl, they wore ugly dresses, they was green "and my friend said it was an ugly dress. "Their hair was ugly, this girl "had, her hair was like this, like that," she demonstrates. "And was up and curled up and curled." Again, that poetic repetition. "And I was like, 'eww', "I was glad I wasn't that flower girl "because and her hair "was like, did she wake up in the morning?

"And these other flower girls, "their hair was different "from my hair 'cause theirs was curly "too but it was different, it was skinny curly. "But I don't like the dress and I don't like their hairs "but I like that they had the same "flower girl from at the wedding, it wasn't different. "And the reception ghetto superstar." And here, she says, she says, "I like ghetto superstar," and it goes she starts to sing, I'll save you from that. It reenactment. "Yeah, Maya sings it, Maya and Pras from the Fugees. "Can I show you the dress now?"

Now I will mention that this narrative which I think is a wonderful narrative is a narrative that is not a great description of goal setting. There's no goals there or problem solving. So, instead, my colleague, Dr. Tempii Champion, a speech language pathologist and I adapted an analysis based on Western African oral tradition, literature and that did justice. Story grammar didn't do justice, high point analysis didn't do justice to this type of narrative. I think this is a terrific narrative but neither of those systems represented its strengths. And so, we're definitely, and we were very lucky when we did this to use this African, well, it wasn't luck, it was knowledge. The point is this Haitian American child and this was told in English, she's grown up and lived all her

life in America, in Connecticut. But she, in her discourse pattern reflects values of Western Africa. When her family, originally from Haiti, her family has not been in Africa for hundreds of years, centuries. And yet still we see these values. And again, this speaks to the importance of working with the grain not trying to get kids to tell stories that they don't necessarily think are good stories. This is a great story. So again, Haitian American values, there's lots of emphasis on descriptive details. We have another example of a narrative about worms on the sidewalk, lots of description of worms on the sidewalk. Lots of repetition, lots of parallel structures; it was a long dress, it was a blue dress, that sort of thing. Again, not much emphasis on plot, the stuff of story grammar, the stuff of high point analysis, not much emphasis on goals, the stuff of story grammar. All right, finally, Chinese and Chinese American values. Here is a six-year-old girl from Taiwan. "I was frightened by a cockroach before too but I forget. "Once when I was having a bath, "My older, my older sister saw I, saw caterpillar on me.

"When I took a bath last time then washed, then touched. "When my older sister saw the caterpillar on me, "I did not know, I did not know what that was. "My older sister say, then she was frightened. "Then my mom took a piece of toilet paper, "she caught the caterpillar threw away. "And there were a bunch of ants in my house. "I was frightened one time. "I was frightened there was a bunch of, "a bunch of super many ants in my house. "Then she took that tape, "a tape, and she took a tape. "She took the tape to stick, then my mom took "my tapes to stick the ants." This is all implied to stick. "And then took another tape again. "Older sister did not help at all because she was drawing." So what we see there in this narrative is that there again is similar to Japanese families and Japanese American families that values placed on succinctness over elaboration, there's less value placed on children getting to evaluate their experiences. We know that in research comparing the narratives of children in both China and Taiwan to European North American children. They include several experiences in one narrative, as is true of everybody but the European North

Americans and Europeans perhaps, they often end without resolution. And finally, and this is something Rena had mentioned, she was curious about, they often include idioms reflecting moral values. The idiom be kind and love each other is something that a teacher told a child as the background for this kind of story, so is a five-year-old boy, translated from Chinese. "Sometimes we hit each other. "Then we hit each other as we quarreled. "We were mad, then we were angry. "Then we hit each other, kicked each other, "then kicked each other, hit each other. "Later, the teacher saw, then didn't allow us to hit, "then we stopped. "Then the two of us played in love." That's a version of the idiom the teacher used to stop there fighting.

Okay, so this has been a tour around the world of discourse values, then how they differ from one culture to another. I hope you've enjoyed them as much as I have. Conclusions; Personal narrative is important for many critical reasons. That's something that is a good wrap up of everything, all the presentations in this symposium, as well as my personal presentation. To improve a child who struggles with personal narrative takes a great deal of time and input from parents. I suggest that SLPs not even try to do this on their own, even under ideal conditions. Parents have the time and they have the motivation needed.

Encouraging parents to talk about past experiences a lot and at length in the way that they feel comfortable talking about past experience, that is working with the grain, not against the grain. Implications; cultural differences in narrative may not always be understood as such, lots of cross cultural miscommunication. So, this is important to keep in mind because you wanna beware of misdiagnosing difference for deficit, but also beware of failing to detect deficits in clients or students from cultural groups not your own. When you are in doubt, you need to ask somebody who knows the culture, often that the easiest person to ask would be the child's parents. Again, going back to, what are your values? What do you like to hear when you talk to people about the past. Now, there's one added benefit from listening to, taking this tour of diverse narrative

traditions around the world. Now that you are all familiar with a number of different cultural traditions of narrative, you can not only assist clients better, you're also be able to appreciate personal and fictional narratives from other cultures better. And here I am indebted to a slide that Carol Westby gave me. It featured, if readers, and it pertains to my book on, "Chameleon Readers", in which I make the argument that, if readers in the 21st century are to promote dialogue and mutual understanding between civilizations, they must be chameleon readers. They must be able to understand texts written and told by people from the diverse cultures throughout the world. And Carol even had this beautiful chameleon that changes color, which I think is completely cool. So thank you, and I'm ready to take questions now.

- [Amy] Thank you so much Allyssa. I really appreciate that. Let's see what we have in the question and answer pod here. I'm seeing something from Rachel that says "Hearing about Latinx narratives that may be perceived "as "tangential", makes me realize "I may have mischaracterized narratives that I heard "in the past." "Are there any factors that we can use "in evaluating narrative structures? "Like what makes for a good," hold on one second? "Good narrative that is consistent across cultures."

- [Allyssa] There, I have been pondering that question for literally almost 40 years. So at the end of that time, I would have to say that, no, you need to appreciate each culture on its own terms, that's what I've learned. If I tried to apply story grammar to narratives from all cultures, those Haitian children would suffer. As would the Chinese children if I were to say, yeah, every good classic narrative needs a resolution. Well, many of the Chinese children and Taiwanese children don't have resolutions because their parents instead end with these idioms or morals and they talk about morals quite a bit, both at home. Peggy Miller talked about how Chinese mothers like to get their children to narrate times when they misbehave, which is very different from European North American mothers. So, moral issues are a big concern of both the parents and then the education system in both Taiwan and China, the education system places extraordinary

value on moral values and these idioms, unlike anything in English. So I have to say, yeah, you need to keep in mind that there are, and again, this goes back to Canadian readers, there are a lot of different types of good stories. And that's why again, you need to ask parents what their values are. Parents should be consulted, about how they think their child is doing. I realized that's not feasible sometimes, but if it's not feasible to get parents to do that, maybe ask a teacher who has, shares a cultural background to talk with you about it, that sort of thing. So you need to figure out what the culture of the child and parents values. That's what I would say. I hope that's a long answer, but...

- [Amy] No, it was very informative. And there's, it's kind of a nice segue into a comment that one of our audience members made. That said, "Personal narratives are also important "for parents who may not be literate in the child's "academic language, and thus they feel "that they cannot help their child with personal narratives. "The language mismatch between home and school "is not so much of an issue."

- [Allyssa] That's such an important point. And I've made that point over and over again, that I think the word has gotten out, that parents are supposed to read to their children, but some parents can't. And I thinking of Portuguese American friend of mine, who got the message from her child's school up here in the Boston area that she was supposed to read with her child and she said to me, "But we always end up with "a fight. "We scream at each other," because she was not comfortable in the language of school. And I said, "Oh, please, please don't. "Don't do that then and your child...' "The most important thing you could be doing is talking "with your child about past experiences." So I love that question. Thank you, I would have made that--

- [Amy] I thought that, very insightful comment. Thank you Graciela. So here's a question from Edith that said, "What are the implications for therapy or intervention?"

"Do you teach the mainstream type narrative form "as another way of storytelling
"that's not necessarily better "but a different way or?"

- [Allyssa] I would say that's something that I would leave to teachers who are teaching children to write narratives. So in the process of revision that typically happens in the instruction of children in writing narratives, you can do that more than trying to get someone to tell an oral story differently. I've tried to tell a Latinx type story, I have tried to tell my stories and go off into mentioning extra people and it's just I think I'm a pretty good narrative person. I think I'm pretty competent, but it totally derails me. And if I can't do it, I'm imagining these little kids and their parents who are often struggling in one way or another. So I would say leave that to the teachers to... If their high stakes testing requires that the child tell or write a story that conforms to story grammar, okay, well, that's for their literacy teacher to tackle. Rather than getting kids fluent and able to tell stories that mean that they will understand what has happened to them, the kind of thing that people have been talking about, so many rich examples all throughout this week.

- [Amy] Great. I did wanna throw out to our audience if you need to leave at this point, you can, we've met the full hour, but I am gonna try to cover maybe two more questions and comments here in our Q&A pod before we wrap up today. An interesting comment from Susan, regarding the topics we were just talking about. She said that "Meeting core curriculum standards, "the common core, I assume we're talking "about those are primarily based on American expectations "for narratives."

- [Allyssa] Yeah, yes they are. They certainly are.

- [Amy] Yes, indeed.

- [Allyssa] Problem with that, and again, as I say, I've thought this through, in Massachusetts we have the MCATs. And I can't remember off the top of my head, whether it's third or fourth grade, they're supposed to write a story that conforms to story grammar. But again, that something that you can do it in drafts, the child has time to reflect, and you're not getting kids who are struggling with personal narrative tripped up because you're, you know, the parents are asking them a certain set of questions that are very different from the questions that someone who values problem solving and goals would be asking.

- [Amy] Right, right. Yeah, that's great. Thank you. I'm gonna try to hit one more question here. Someone was asking, "What did you find was underlying "the inefficacy of treatment by SLPs on development "of personal narratives or did you delve into the why?"

- [Allyssa] The inadequacy of SLPs?

- [Amy] Inefficacy of treatment by the SLPs when they were working on them.

- [Allyssa] Okay, that's a strong term in advocacy. I would say that there has been, Rena mentioned this in the Australian context, there has been for reasons that have basically frustrated me for 40 years. Such an emphasis on, like telling wordless picture books, when actually, I have never told a wordless picture book to anybody again, why? Why was that a thing? Why such an emphasis, such an overwhelming emphasis on telling and retelling fictional narratives? So, again, I would say that it's not gonna be useful. If anybody can tell me how often you use telling a wordless picture book, then maybe I'll reconsider, but I haven't come across it. And my own kids who were very good narrators, I tried to get them to do it, and they hated it. They said, okay, if you want me to make up a story, I'll make up a story, but I don't wanna tell this story.

- [Amy] But this is silly. I don't do this every day so why?

- [Allyssa] Yeah. And we are European North American, so the white boy and the frog story, that is so ubiquitous. If there was the white boy and the deer and so forth, that was all culturally relevant, which is not something you can say about children, that those pictures are culturally relevant. Somebody else mentioned avoiding pictures. I think it was Marlene, which I totally agreed with, for that reason.

- [Amy] Very good. Well, I think I'm gonna wrap it up here. We've got to the questions. This has been a wonderful week of presentations and Alyssa yours just put the cherry on top this week, I think. So thank you so much for being here today. We really appreciate it, great information. I'd like to give a shout out to our guest editor, Trisha Self from ABCLLD in Wichita State University for helping us to make the arrangements for this virtual conference this week and to ABCLLD themselves for partnering with us for this virtual conference. I think it's been a great success. Thank you to our audience for being here and I wanted to remind you that if you missed any of the events this week, and you're interested in hearing those, they are available in our library now in the recorded format. So, help yourself to the rest of them. Thanks, everybody. I'm gonna wrap it up here. I hope you all have a great day.