

In a Land Far Away: Fairy Tales as an Inclusive Teaching Practice

Dr. Anna Burnley, Ed.D.

Associate Professor of Education, ESOL Specialist

Flagler College – Tallahassee

burnleya@flagler.edu

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Anna Burnley, Ed.D.
burnleya@flagler.edu



Terminology

- **Fairy Tale:** “A fairy tale is a story, often intended for children, that features fanciful and wondrous characters such as elves, goblins, wizards, and even, but not necessarily, fairies. The term “fairy” tale seems to refer more to the fantastic and magical setting or magical influences within a story, rather than the presence of the character of a fairy within that story. Fairy tales are often traditional; many were passed down from story-teller to story-teller before being recorded in books.” (www.LiteraryTerms.net, 2021)
- **Folktale:** “The definition of a folktale is a story passed on by word of mouth, or a legend or myth shared among people of a culture. A story or legend forming part of an oral tradition.” (www.YourDictionary.com, 2021)
- **Myth:** “A myth is a classic or legendary story that usually focuses on a particular hero or event, and explains mysteries of nature, existence, or the universe with no true basis in fact. Myths exist in every culture; but the most well known in Western culture and literature are part of Greek and Roman mythology. The characters in myths—usually gods, goddesses, warriors, and heroes—are often responsible for the creation and maintenance of elements of nature, as well as physical, emotional, and practical aspects of human existence—for example Zeus; the god of the sky and the earth and father of gods and men, and Aphrodite; the goddess of love and fertility. A culture’s collective myths make up its mythology, a term that predates the word “myth” by centuries. The term myth stems from the ancient Greek muthos, meaning a speech, account, rumor, story, fable, etc. The terms myth and mythology as we understand them today arose in the English language in the 18th century.” (www.LiteraryTerms.net, 2021)
- **Saga:** “a long story of heroic achievement, especially a medieval prose narrative...” (www.Dictionary.com, 2021)
- **Creation Story:** “Creation myth, also called cosmogonic myth, philosophical and theological elaboration of the primal myth of creation within a religious community. The term myth here refers to the imaginative expression in narrative form of what is experienced or apprehended as basic reality... The term creation refers to the beginning of things, whether by the will and act of a transcendent being, by emanation from some ultimate source, or in any other way.” (Long, 2020)
- **Oral Tradition:** “Oral tradition, also called orality, the first and still most widespread mode of human communication. Far more than “just talking,” oral tradition refers to a dynamic and highly diverse oral-aural medium for evolving, storing, and transmitting knowledge, art, and ideas. It is typically contrasted with literacy, with which it can and does interact in myriad ways, and also with literature, which it dwarfs in size, diversity, and social function.” (Foley, 2020)
- **English Learner (EL):** A learner who is acquiring English as an additional language (Education Commission, 2014)

Introduction

- Eng (2017, p. 44-45) quotes Lambert (2012) in describing the need for active learning to begin with connecting subject matter to a learner's background knowledge, thereby producing ownership of the material.
- Eliciting background knowledge can include the pedagogical use of shared stories, such as fairy tales, because such stories are globally understood (Campbell, 1973).
- In our work, we felt it was important to link background knowledge to new knowledge, a process that can be accomplished through selective use of fairy tales or other shared stories.

Methods

- A critical review of the literature, examining dozens of sources and then pruning to 23 sources
- All journal articles are peer-reviewed
- Use of anecdotal university student feedback
- Limitations include perhaps missing helpful information housed in non-peer-reviewed journal articles or books that were not examined, and relying upon anecdotal qualitative classroom feedback

Theoretical Framework

- Campbell, J. (1973). *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (3rd ed.).

Princeton University Press. ISBN: 0-691-01784-0.

Exploring the concept of the fairy tale: “it will always be the one, shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with a challengingly persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told” (p. 3).

Naming and describing the explorer’s universal story, and relating this story as a globally shared experience: departure, initiation, return, the keys (p. 49-254).

Research Questions



- First, is the use of fairy tales inspiring to teachers-in-training?
- Second, are there strategies for the use of the shared story (fairy tale) to promote plurilanguage acquisition among non-native speakers in the language skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing?
- Third, what content areas might include the utilization of shared stories, such as fairy tales, to foster inclusivity?

Findings from the Literature (selected sources):

- Bauer & Arazi (2011): Case study using *Jack and the Beanstalk*
- Saadatnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli (2017): Narrative & expository reading comprehension study
- Diakidoy, Stylianou, Karefillidou, & Papageorgiou (2005): Relationship between oral tradition & narrative text
- Snow (2010): academic language as a challenge for ELs in comprehension of expository text
- Gardner (2004): language vocabulary variation between children's narrative and expository texts
- Hawkins (2014): using familiar childhood texts to teach inclusionary language
- Alexander & Morton (2007): *Multicultural Cinderella: A Collaborative Project in an Elementary School*
- Khatib & Aghajanzadeh (2015): *Broadening Children's Reading Scholarship through Fairy Tales...*
- de Bruijn (2019): *From Representation to Participation: Rethinking the Intercultural Education Approach to Folktales*

Findings from the Literature (selected books)

- Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946 + subsequent editions)
- Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1973 + subsequent editions)
- Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976 + subsequent editions)
- Newton, *Savage Girls and Wild Boys: A History of Feral Children* (2002)
- Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales: A New History* (2009)

Pedagogy Terms:

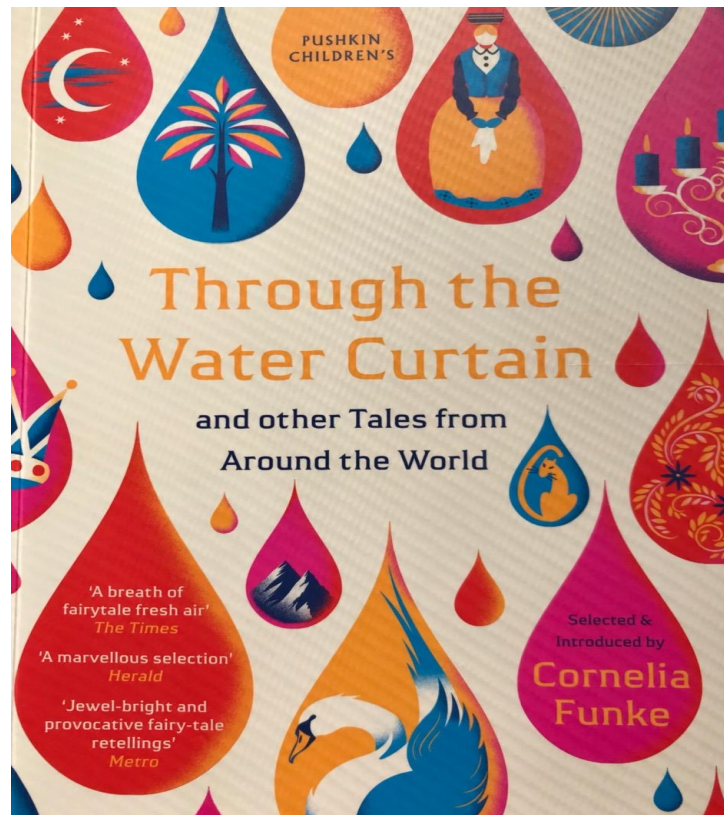
- **Lecture:** best conducted in small doses to prevent disengagement
- **Video:** captioned in the learner's home language
- **Think-Pair-Share:** collaborative learning strategy in which the student thinks individually and then shares their thoughts with a partner
- **Shoulder Partners:** a student first speaks/listens/verbally shares with the child on their right, and then in the next event, confers with the child on their left
- **Stand and Speak:** a designated learner stands and then speaks, to the whole class, the results and conclusions from their small group work
- **Jigsaw Read Aloud:** in small groups, each learner reads a paragraph aloud as the other group members read silently and listen
- **Venn Diagram:** two or more overlapping circles are utilized as a visual teaching tool to distinguish between similar and dissimilar elements in a comparison

Sample Plan Utilizing Two Fairy Tales to Promote Additional (L2) Language Acquisition for Plurilanguage Learners

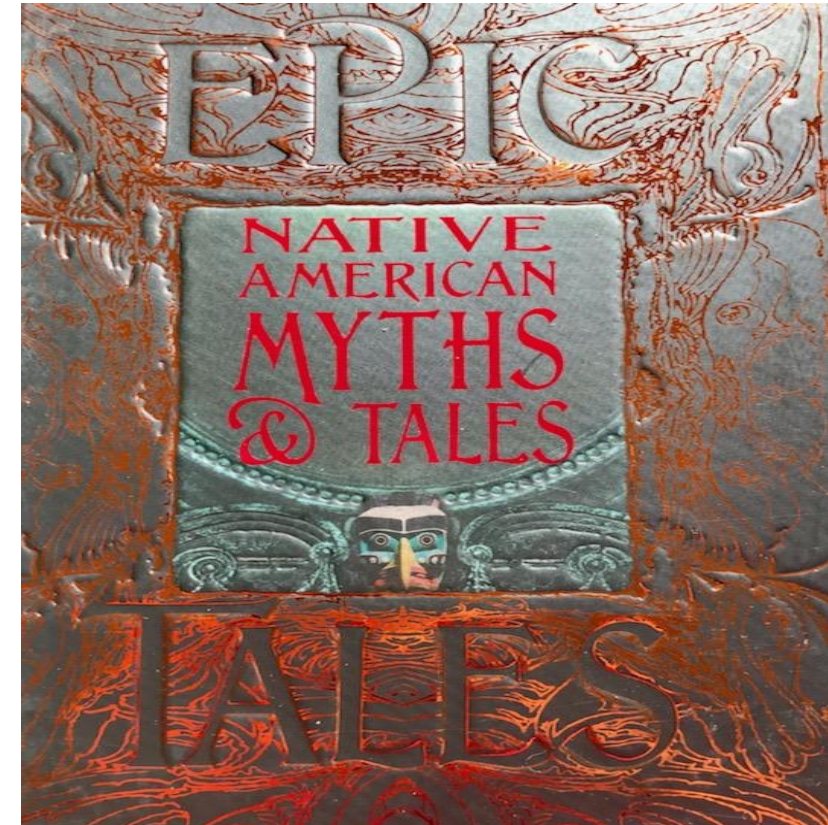
- **Lecture**, “bite-sized” (Eng, 2017, p. 18) lecture to discuss learners’ personal journeys and to elicit background knowledge. Introduce Campbell’s “hero/shero/heroine.”
- **Video**, for visual learners and non-native speakers, captioned videos can fill gaps in background knowledge. L2 language skills of *listening, reading*.
- **Think-Pair-Share or Shoulder Partners**, student-to-student interactions where students turn to the partner *on their right* and tell each other what they already know as background knowledge about journeys, heroes, sheroes/heroines (inclusivity via S-S interaction). L2 language skills of *speaking, listening*.
- **Stand and Speak**, verbally sharing the partner’s background knowledge with the whole class (inclusivity via S-WC interaction). L2 skills: *speaking, listening*.
- **Instructor introduces the two stories**, explaining the story origins and pre-teaching the vocabulary as students repeat and write the words. L2 skills: *listening, speaking, writing (copying), reading*.

The Two Stories:

“The Tale of the Firebird” (*Russia*)



“The Red Swan” (*North America, Indigenous*)



Lesson, continued:

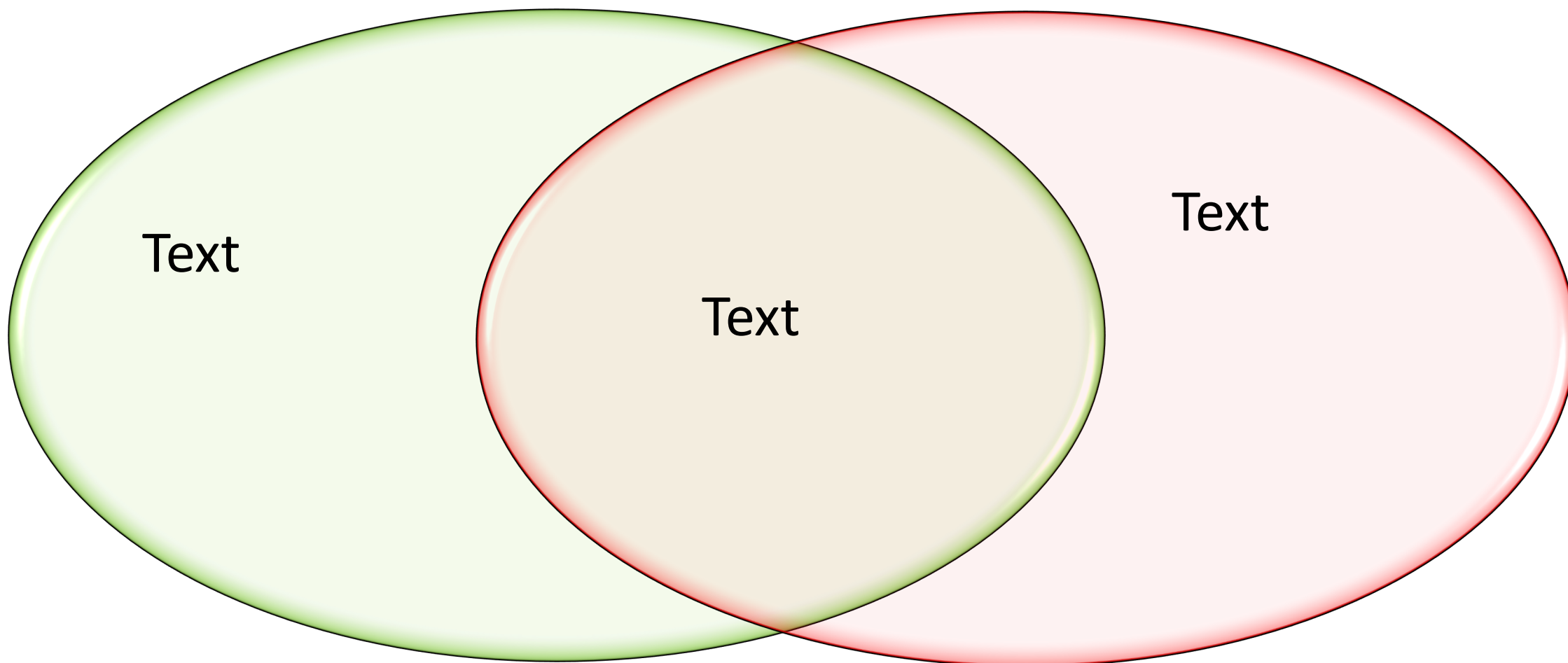
- **Shoulder Partners**, students turn to the partner *on their left* to state any background knowledge regarding these fairy tales (inclusivity via S-S interaction). L2 skills: *listening, speaking*.
- **Jigsaw Read Aloud in Small Groups**, in small groups, students read aloud each of the two stories (inclusivity via S-SG interaction). L2 skills: *listening, speaking, reading*.
- **Narrative Comparison Worksheets or Venn Diagrams in Small Groups**, after reading aloud, students work in small groups to complete either a narrative comparison worksheet or a Venn Diagram (inclusivity via S-SG interaction). L2 skills: *listening, speaking, reading, writing*.

Venn Diagram (sample)

Unique (story 1)

Similar/Same

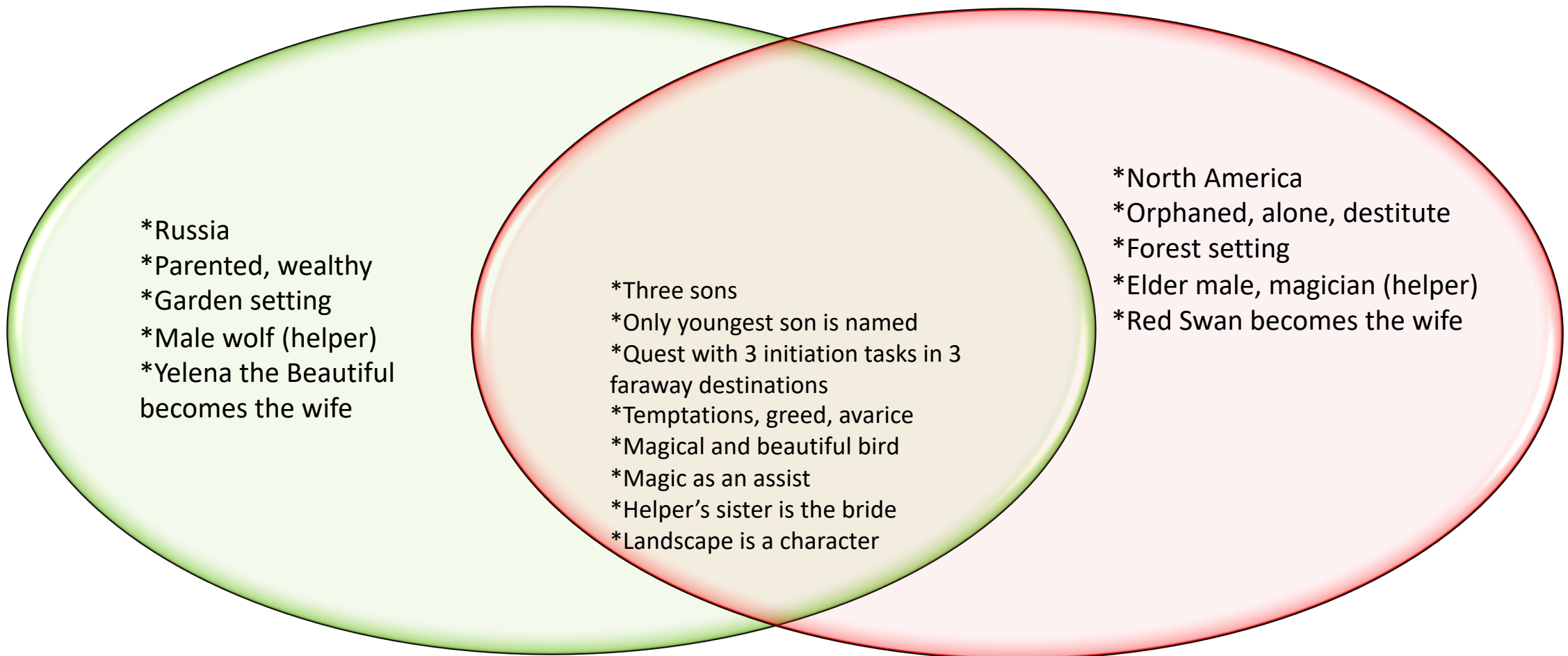
Unique (story 2)



Filled Venn Diagram for the Stories (sample)

"The Tale of the Firebird"

"The Red Swan"



Role Play: Formative Assessment

To promote inclusivity, plurilanguage learners can share their cultural version of the fairy tale.

Since this learner is the expert in their own story, then they can read the story aloud or speak it while classmates engage in Role Play to diminish concepts of marginalization associated with “otherness” or “foreignness.”

Utilizing fairy tales (or other shared stories) allows each student to share their culturally-acquired fairy tale and to do the meaningful work of discerning differences / similarities among the fairy tales, thereby promoting respect for differences.

Question One: Is the use of fairy tales inspiring to teachers-in-training?

- The literature supports the use of shared stories to lighten the language load of the plurilingual learner.
- Anecdotally, teachers-in-training have agreed, noting the following:
 - *Fairy tales are fun for children, familiar to them, and are important to children.*
 - *Teachers can use fairy tales to promote bilingual vocabulary learning.*
 - *Fairy tales promote group work and collaboration, encouraging ownership of learning.*
 - *The similar themes facilitate learning, motivating students to engage.*
 - *The teachers-in-training state that they enjoy the stories and feel motivated to share them with their students.*

Question Two: Are there strategies for the use of the shared story (fairy tale) to promote plurilanguage acquisition among non-native speakers in the language skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing?

- As has been demonstrated, the use of shared stories in an active learning context promotes all four language skills in L2 acquisition (listening, speaking, reading, writing). There are multiple active teaching strategies to support this conclusion.

Question Three: What content areas might include the utilization of shared stories, such as fairy tales, to foster inclusivity?

- By viewing the EL or additional language learner as the expert of their story, inclusivity is intentionally embedded in the active teaching process.
- Anecdotally, teachers-in-training noted the following kindergarten through secondary content areas could include use of shared stories:

history, social studies, culture studies, language arts, geography, social-emotional learning, zoology.

- Additionally, the following content areas can include shared stories:
climatology (weather varies globally), biology (plants and animals vary globally), philosophy, gender studies, comparative religion, history (changing gender roles, forms of government, concepts associated with slavery or servitude, “otherness” in history, such as witchcraft and magic), pragmatics, anthropology, animal studies (animal behaviors, regions where certain animals live), folklore, literature and comparative literature, citizenship, occupations, architecture (housing or outdoor human-made constructs such as bridges and pathways), hospitality, criminology, world languages

Where can I locate English-language versions online texts of fairy tales or folktales?

- Libraries, University of Missouri:
<https://libraryguides.missouri.edu/c.php?g=651166>
- D. L. Ashliman's "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts":
<https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>
- Aarne-Thompson-Uther Classification of Folk Tales:
https://sites.ualberta.ca/~urban/Projects/English/Content/ATU_Tales.htm

And the actual “inclusivity” part (non-language)?

To diminish concepts of “otherness” and exclusion attached to ELs in the classroom, noticing and celebrating similarities and differences, while utilizing familiar stories, can promote that idea of “same while different” among all learners. Inclusivity involves *noticing* and *appreciating* both sides of the coin. Remember, oral tradition stories provide all learners with a rich, diverse array of juvenilia to explore, although Bottigheimer (2009) might disagree.

You like fairy tales, but the brothers Grimm are just too... grim?

So many fairy tale writers, so little time...

H.C. Andersen

Comtesse de Ségur (Russian writer in exile in France)

Rudyard Kipling (English writer inspired by India)

Yei Theodora Ozaki (Japanese-English translator inspired by Japanese stories)

Charles Perrault (French writer inspired by oral tradition folk tales)

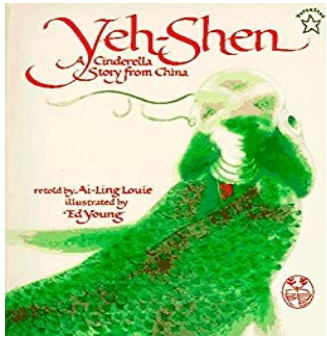
Helen Oyeyemi (Nigerian-English writer living in Prague)

Alexander Pushkin (Russian writer with African, Scandinavian, and German influences)

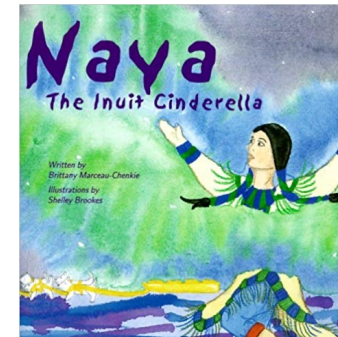
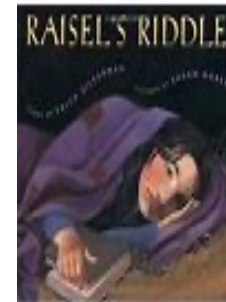
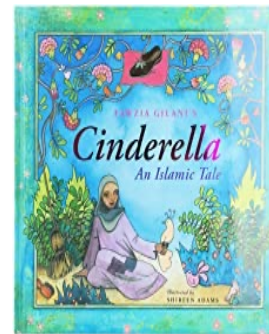
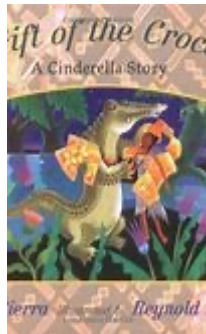
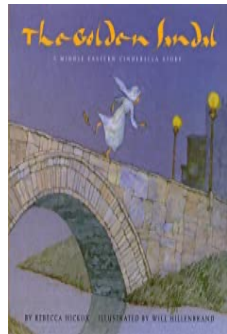
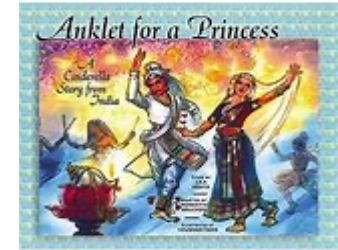
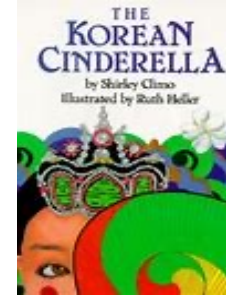
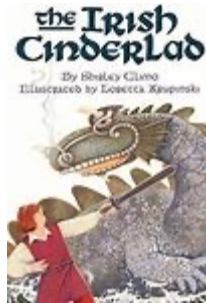
Yellow book I just purchased

Karna Sakya (Nepali teller of Nepalese folk and fairy tales)

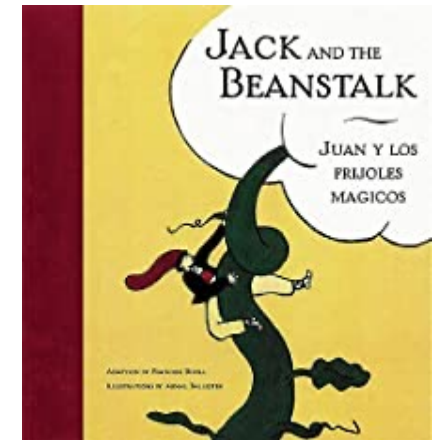
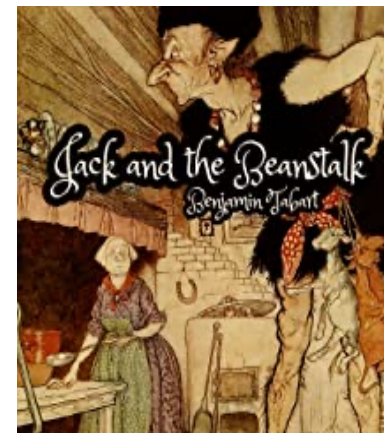
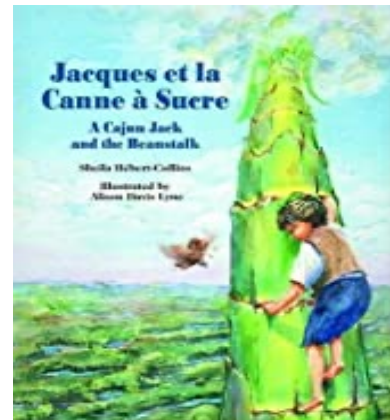
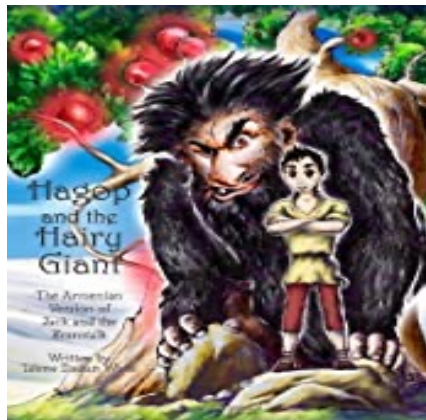
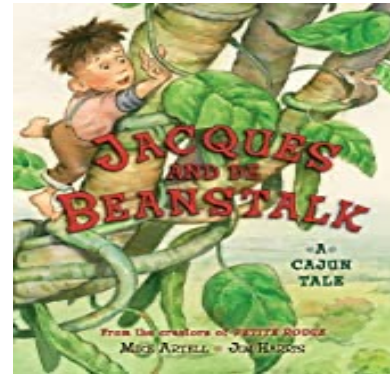
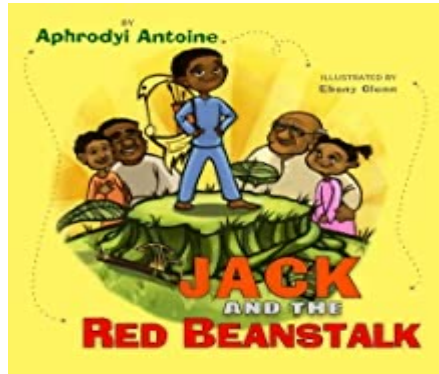




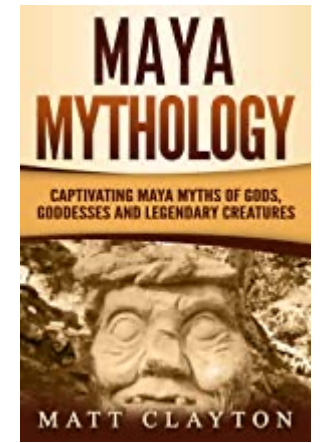
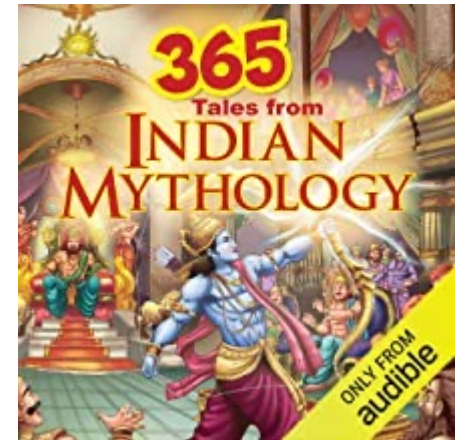
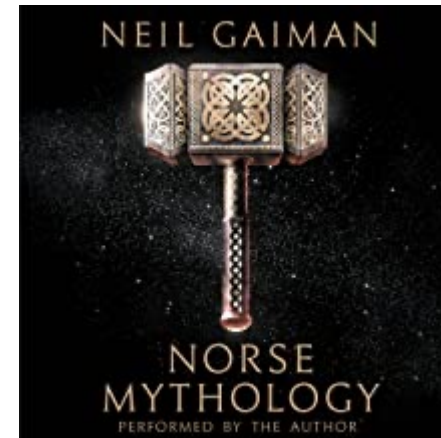
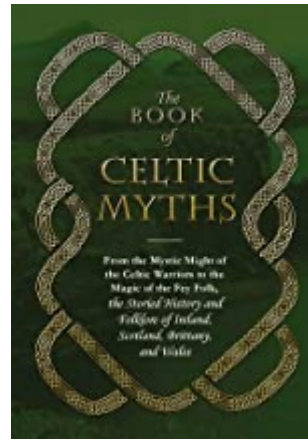
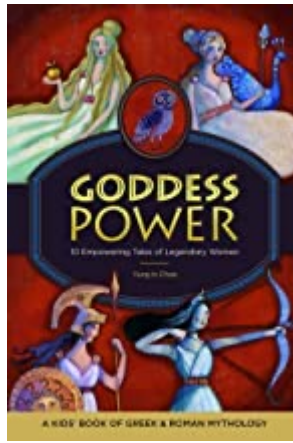
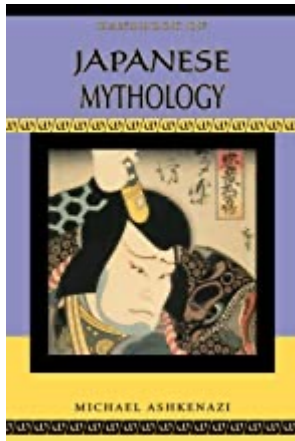
Examples of Cinderella Versions:



Not a fan of fairy tales?
Folk tales are universal.



Maybe a myth instead?



Perhaps a Saga?



Njal's Saga



Beowulf

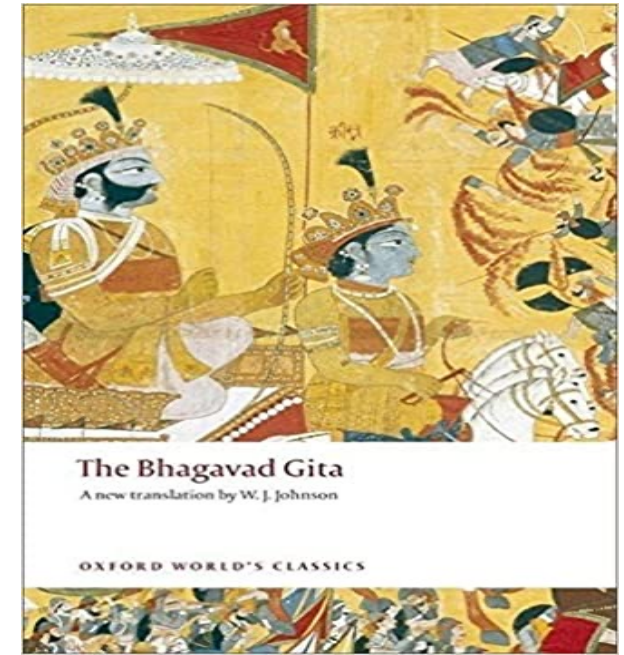
TRANSLATED BY BURTON RAFFEL
NEW AFTERWORD BY ROBERTA FRANK



The Poetic Edda

Translated by Carolyn Larrington

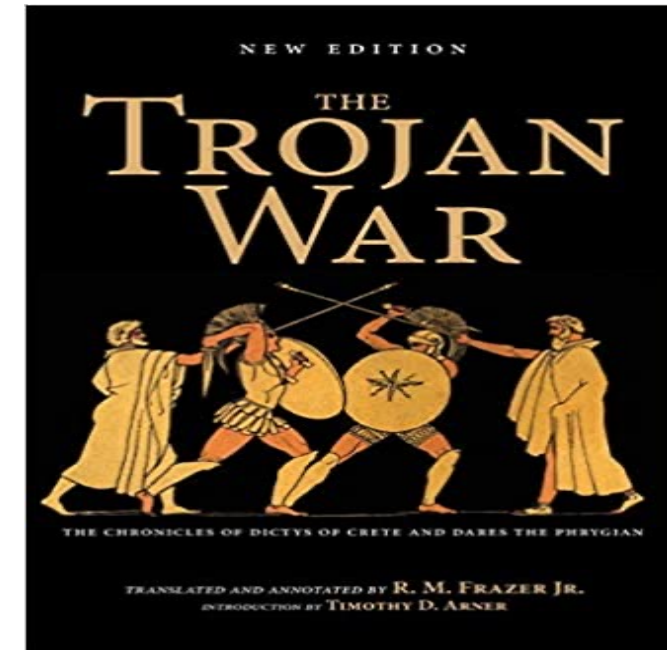
OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



The Bhagavad Gita

A new translation by W. J. Johnson

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



NEW EDITION
THE TROJAN WAR



THE CHRONICLES OF DICTYS OF CRETE AND DARES THE PHRYGIAN

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY R. M. FRAZER JR.
INTRODUCTION BY TIMOTHY D. ARNER

Additional inspiration:

- **Videos:**
 - Joseph Campbell's "Myth of the Hero's Journey," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4288NRq1vVc>
 - Joseph Campbell's "The Hero's Journey in Five Minutes," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siulX5JklwI>
- **Websites:**
 - Cinderella lesson plan: Plot and Setting, <https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/cinderella-folk-tales-variations-plot-and-setting>
 - Cinderella lesson plan: Characters, <https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/cinderella-folk-tales-variations-character>
 - Cinderella lesson plan: <https://asiasociety.org/twice-upon-time-multi-cultural-cinderella>
 - Background info: http://teachers.yale.edu/curriculum/viewer/initiative_09.01.04_u
 - Background info: <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/04/some-fairy-tales-may-be-6000-years-old>
 - Background info: <http://exclusive.multibriefs.com/content/rest-your-eyes-and-listen/education>
 - Joseph Campbell website: <https://www.jcf.org/>
- **Books:**
 - DK Eyewitness Books: Mythology, ISBN 978-0-7566-9694-8
 - Stories of the Constellations: Myths and Legends of the Night Skies, ISBN 978-0-545-65206-6
- **World Languages Lesson Plan:**
 - Cepurneac, E. (2021). *Un Projet: Les contes de fées*. American Association of Teachers of French National Bulletin, p. 18-19.
- **Climatology and Tourism/Hospitality Article:**
 - McKenzie, S. (September 2021). *Sleeping Beauty's forest is dying. It's not the only climate crisis facing Germany's next chancellor.* <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/24/europe/germany-climate-crisis-election-intl-cmd-grm/index.html>
- **History Article:**
 - Metcalfe, T. (October 2021). *In tree rings and radioactive carbon, signs of the Vikings in North America.* <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/tree-rings-radioactive-carbon-signs-vikings-north-america-rcna3383>

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Dr. Anna M. Burnley
Associate Professor of Education and
ESOL Specialist
Flagler College – Tallahassee, USA

burnleya@flagler.edu

Thank you for attending my presentation!