



Stories to Scaffold Learning and Creative Awareness

- Lauren Taub

Guiding Questions

- What counts as a story? What is the difference between a storyteller and a writer?
- Why is **story-telling** important? What can we learn from stories we don't enjoy?
- What is **scaffolding**? Do we shape our scaffolding or does it shape us?
- How do we identify **creative voice**? Do we each have one?
- How do we know when a story is complete? Does its effect on us carry the story forward?

Key Principles

- **Story-tellers deserve our complete attention even if we do not see ourselves in their story.**
- **Stories unfold in time and should not be forced open.**
- **Not all stories will satisfy all audiences.**
- **Learning and creative awareness can take place at any point in a story, even long after its conclusion.**
- **Stories may not take the form we would expect—allow for abstraction, improvisation, and unexpected outcomes.**
- **Language itself tells a story.**

Product and Purpose

The character Her Majesty, Thundercat of the Universe is intended to serve as an embodiment of low-interference guided instruction. Just as children experience different stages in independent problem solving, the characters of the *Her Majesty, Thundercat of the Universe* series will have varying degrees of dependence on HMT's advice or direction. Parents or teachers reading HMTU with their children would be providing initial support for their children's reading development, while the stories rhyme and meter act as language "scaffolding" for the children to absorb, predict, and ultimately climb on their own. This "episode" of the series will establish HMT's origin, her intentions, and her authority to serve the universe in the role she has created for herself. As readers, we should have a clearer sense of who she is, where she comes from, and why she cares about helping others through their problems. We should have a picture of the scaffolding that shapes her identity and facilitates her creative awareness.

Why This Product?

It surprised me how happy it made me to put the first Her Majesty, Thundercat story together for Theme 1. I realized that *Her Majesty, Thundercat of the Universe* might have merit as a curriculum kit for young learners. The series may stand alone as separate installments of interstellar and interspecies adventures, but it may also pair with a program of study encouraging critical and creative thinking in children. While many would argue that children are inherently creative, they are quickly expected to learn classroom behavior, standards, and expectations, which can put a damper on creative expression. These books would help channel creative energy into lifelong skills, such as empathy, collaboration, and self-acceptance—these books would attempt provide stories to scaffold learning and creative awareness.



Her Majesty, Thundercat of the Universe

A Formal Introduction

Resources

- Davis, G. A. (2004). *Creativity is forever*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Pub.
- Kaufman, J. C., & Sternberg, R. J. (2010) *The Cambridge handbook of creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Roberts, E. E. M. (1981) *The children's picture book: how to write it, how to sell it*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books
- Mason, J.M., & Sinha, S. (September, 1992) Emerging literacy in the early childhood years: applying a Vygotskian model of learning and development. (Technical Report No. 561), retrieved from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/17977/ctrstreadtechrepv01992i00561_opt.pdf, pp. 1-19
- Shulevitz, U. (1985) *Writing with pictures: how to write and illustrate children's books*. New York: Watson-Guption Publication
- Wilson, L. O., Ed. D. (2017). Types of Creative Thinking. Retrieved September 27, 2017, from <http://thesecondprinciple.com/creativity/creativity-essentials/types-of-creative-thinking/>