The role of pleasure in reading a book is often the first motivation for sharing it with other readers. In their book, Teaching Literacy for Love and Wisdom: Being the Book and Being the Change, Wilhelm and Novak (2011) argue that the expectation of pleasure and play evokes the "pleasure of the possible, imagination, vividness of language, of metaphor, beauty, and personal truth" (p. 91). As teachers design reading experiences for their students that address learning standards, the notion of play, as described here, may not be their focus, yet I thought the experience of Batchelor and Bintz shows the connection of play, learning, and language.


Jumping Rope Across the Curriculum
Katherine E. Batchelor and William P. Bintz

Cinderella, dressed in yellow,
Went upstairs to kiss a fellow.
Made a mistake—
Kissed a snake.
How many doctors did it take?
1, 2, 3 . . .

As children, we jumped to this jump rope rhyme and many others like it. William jumped rope to rhymes as part of playing on a community-based youth basketball team. The coach believed that jumping rope developed quickness, stamina, and agility. Katherine still vividly recalls the day she reached 500 doctors and became the playground jump rope champion in fourth grade. She proudly held the title for a week until a fifth grader challenged her to a "jump-off" during recess. Unfortunately, she lost. Fortunately, today she still sees the enjoyment and potential of jump rope rhymes.

How can jump rope rhymes be used not only by students on the playground but also by teachers in the classroom to help students learn content area material across the curriculum? As teachers we both found this question intriguing, and it became the focus of the collaboration to develop an instructional lesson that included jump rope rhymes as part of content area learning. We implemented this lesson in an elective graduate course called Survey of Children's Literature that we co-taught over the course of one semester. Most of the students in the course were practicing elementary and middle grade teachers. We designed the course to include the writing of variations of jump rope rhymes to teach important content area material.

In this discussion we begin with a rationale for using rhymes in content area instruction. Then, we describe the instructional lesson we introduced in the course, share samples of jump rope rhymes that resulted from the instruction, and discuss lessons learned from the experience. Our hope is that
teachers across grade levels and content areas will adapt or modify this lesson to help their own students use jump rope rhymes across the curriculum.

Rationale for Jump Rope Rhymes in Content Area Literacy

Music, rhythm, and rhyme are important components of jumping rope. Music increases brain function, promotes complex thinking, and creates cognitive connections which help make it easier for individuals to remember information (Davies, 2000). Music "aids memory because the beat, the melody, and the harmonics serve as carriers for the semantic content" (Jensen, 2001, p. 41). Together, music and rhythm function as instructional tools to promote student learning, enhance creativity, and deepen understanding of content area material (Hoyt, 1992).

Rhyme supports student ability to hear similarities and differences in sounds of words. It helps learners understand that "sounds in words can be manipulated, creating new words and messages along the way" (Opitz, 2000, p. 125). Because jump rope rhymes are "extensions of children’s natural language and a part of their daily lives" (Olenoski, 1992, p. 173), they highlight the versatility and enjoyment of language. As such, these rhymes are not to be read or sung just once. Rather, repeated readings of rhymes promote reading fluency and build classroom community.

Rhymes also support writing growth and development. Students can use jump rope rhymes as models to write variations. Using a model to create a new version is commonly known as "copy change." It is an effective instructional strategy in which students use an author’s patterned text as a model for their own writing (Rasinski & Padak, 2000). When students borrow a structure or pattern, they “make connections—noticing structure, details, effects, links, and transitions” (Noden, 1999, p. 78). They are also more likely to engage in writing multiple revisions to ensure their rhymes match the rhythm of the original (Hoyt, 1999).

We chose jumping rope for several reasons. For many children as well as an increasing number of adolescents jumping rope is just plain fun. It takes advantage of the social and lively performance nature of jumping rope. For teachers, it is a way to actively engage children in a popular activity and teach content at the same time.

Developing the Instructional Lesson

Over the semester, the students in the course created four jump rope rhymes, one for each of the following content areas: math, science, social studies, and language arts. We developed an instructional lesson to help them write jump rope rhymes, encouraging them to select content area material they planned to teach in their own classrooms. We modeled the instructional lesson with the teachers taking the role of student. In this way, the teachers were able to understand the steps involved in writing a jump rope rhyme. To introduce this lesson, we used a text set featuring jump rope rhymes (See Table 1). Some of the books are collections of jump rope rhymes; others are stories in which children are involved in jumping rope.

Table 1. Jump Rope Text Set Used in the Course

| Anna Banana: 101 Jump-rope Rhymes | by Joanna Cole (1989); illus. by Alan Tiegreen |
| Hot Day on Abbott Avenue | by Karen English (2004); illus. by Javaka Steptoe |
| Over in the Pink House: New Jump Rope Rhymes | by Rebecca Kai Dotlich (2004); illus. by Melanie Hall |
| Red Hot Peppers: The Skookum Book of Jump Rope Games, Rhymes, and Fancy Footwork | by Bob Boardman (1993); illus. by Diane Boardman |
| Schoolyard Rhymes: Kids' Own Rhymes for Rope-skipping, Hand Clapping, Ball Bouncing, and Just Plain Fun | by Judy Sierra (2005); illus. by Melissa Sweet |
| Two Feet Up, Two Feet Down | by Pamela Love (2004); illus. by Lynne Chapman |
| Yoon and the Jade Bracelet | by Helen Recurvits (2008); illus. by Gabi Swiatkowska |

We used this text set to introduce jump rope rhymes and stories that centered on jumping rope. In small groups, participating teachers browsed
through the books in the text set, looking for entertaining and appealing jump rope rhymes. They kept a record of rhymes of particular interest. Here, the aim was for teachers to select potential rhymes that they could use as models to teach content area material. Then, each student wrote a jump rope rhyme, shared it with the whole class, and reported their reflections on the experience.

**Samples of Teachers’ Jump Rope Rhymes**

The following rhymes resulted from this instructional sequence. We selected these rhymes created by the graduate students for several reasons. They reflect the original pattern of the jump rope rhyme; they represent a specific content area; and they are written in a style in which the words flow easily when recited or sung.

An elementary, physical education teacher, who wanted to integrate literacy, mathematics, and physical education, wrote “All About Numbers” based on “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around.” (See Figure 1.)

**Figure 1. “All About Numbers” (Based on “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around”)**

Numbers, numbers, in a row,
How many evens can you go?
0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 . . .

Numbers, numbers, in a row,
How many odds can you go?
1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 . . .

Numbers, numbers, in a row,
Count by fives as you go.
5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 . . .

Numbers, numbers, in a row,
Count by tens as you go.
10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 . . .

He wanted to create a jump rope rhyme to teach counting and number sense and have students physically active. This jump rope rhyme highlights the mathematical concept of number sense, particularly even and odd numbers, and patterned counting. One important feature of this rhyme is that it allows students to count as high as they can jump and challenges students to jump again to increase their highest count.

“Jumping for Dinosaurs” was written by a former teacher. (See Figure 2.) She had volunteered in her daughter’s first grade classroom and wrote this rhyme for two reasons. She wanted to pass on her love of jumping rope to her daughter and to encourage her daughter’s interest in dinosaurs.

**Figure 2. “Jumping for Dinosaurs” (Based on “Coca-Cola Went to Town”)**

Don’t be late,
Come excavate;
Fossil digging will be great.
Bring your journals;
Document
Dino finds and our time spent.

Stegosaurus,
Armored plate
Carnivores can’t penetrate,
Baryonyx,
Fossil wish,
You’re a dino that ate fish.

Maiasaura,
Good mommy
Raising your young family.
Gallimimus,
Quite like birds,
Smart and quick are your two words.

Trikey, Trikey,
Herbivore,
When in war,
Your three horns fore.
T-Rex, T-Rex,
On the loose,
Wants to bite your big caboose.

Brachi, Brachi,
Neck that’s long,
Eighty tons,
You are so strong.
Eat those ferns that you adore;
You’re the greatest dinosaur.

This jump rope rhyme features seven different dinosaurs and provides information for each. It includes familiar dinosaurs that her daughter
already knew such as Triceratops, Tyrannosaurus, and Brachiosaurus, using their nicknames. It also names unfamiliar dinosaurs (Baryonyx, Gallimimus, and Malasaura) and supplies information about each. The rhyme “Coca-Cola Went to Town,” on which “Jumping for Dinosaurs” is based, provides a seven-syllable pattern to use as a guide. This pattern keeps the new rhyme consistent as specific information about each dinosaur is presented. For example, the final stanza includes the information that Brachiosaurus has a long neck, weighs 80 tons, and eats ferns.

An elementary teacher wrote “Brown Bear.” (See Figure 3.) She selected this text for a jump rope rhyme because the original rhyme was familiar to her young students. Additionally, she wanted the repetition of each line to provide a clear pattern for her students to follow as they learned about hibernation.

Like the original, “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around,” this variation includes a predictable text structure that allows students to infer what is occurring with Brown Bear. Each line reveals an important clue, such as “fast asleep,” “why not eat?” and “low heart rate.” Through this jump rope rhyme, students learn key concepts about hibernation. Moreover, this rhyme was intended to help all children (especially those who are inexperienced with jumping rope) learn to jump rope by noting that their feet will always land on the solid “B” sound each time.

**Figure 3. “Brown Bear” (Based on “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around”)**

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, where are you?  
You’ve been gone a week or two.  
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, must be brave,  
Cuddled in that deep, dark cave.  
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, fast asleep,  
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, why not eat?  
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, low heart rate,  
‘Cuz Brown Bear, Brown Bear, HIBERNATES!!!!

“I Had a Little Suffix,” based on the rhyme, “I Had a Little Monkey,” was written by a sixth-grade teacher. (See Figure 4.) She noticed that students entering her classroom needed a review on suffixes in a way that would engage them and be memorable. She found inspiration through believing that, as she said, her rhymes were “runway models,” and the content “garment pieces” that students could “try on.” They would need to create the right fit of words to the borrowed pattern’s syllables and rhyme scheme.

**Figure 4. “I Had a Little Suffix” (Based on “I Had a Little Monkey”)**

I had a little suffix;  
His name was “ly.”  
I added him to “happy”  
To make “happily.”  
He’s good at forming adverbs;  
It’s what he does best.  
Ask the question “how?” and  
Let him do the rest!

I had a little suffix;  
His name was “ing.”  
I added him to “happen”  
To make “happening.”  
He changes the verb tense;  
He likes “am” and “is.”  
Helping verbs like “will be”  
Are buddies of his.

I had a little suffix;  
His name was “ed.”  
I added him to root words  
To see what he said.  
“Paint” became “painted,”  
“Dream” became “dreamed,”  
“Laugh” became “laughed” and  
“Seem” became “seemed.”

I had a little suffix;  
His name was “(e)s.”  
Forming plurals  
Is what he does best,  
Like “jukes” or “faxes.”  
“Wishes” or “friends,”  
Or jump rope “verses.”  
And this one’s THE END!

This rhyme addresses grammatical conventions of applying suffixes to words. For example, the first verse introduces the suffix “ly” and gives the example of how the original word “happy” changes when “ly” is added to the end of the word to form “happily.”
verse also gives additional information regarding the part of speech and the rule.

**Lessons We Learned From Our Instruction**

We learned several lessons from this experience. First, some teachers selected rhymes that we considered crossover songs, meaning they could also be viewed as both hand-clapping songs and rhymes. "Miss Mary Mack" is a good example. If the rhythm was comfortable for students and they could jump to it, we agreed to using it as a jump rope rhyme. Second, we found that creating these jump rope rhymes helped the participating teachers to write with a musical quality and, in turn, to read their rhymes with a musical quality.

Third, we discovered that syllabication caused some confusion when they tried to match content area information to the rhythm of the original rhyme. However, we also saw how they made adjustments in their thinking. One teacher offered this advice, "It's best to get used to the rhythm or beat of the jump rope rhyme before trying to plug in words when creating your own song." Fourth, we found that teachers commented on how writing jump rope rhymes about content area concepts was much more challenging than they originally thought it would be. It required a great deal of thinking and reflecting. They stated that it was important to be thoughtful about the topic so as to enable the jumpers to learn the content area material.

Lastly, we found that the graduate students now believe, as we do, that jump rope rhymes are an entertaining and engaging way for students to learn new material across all content areas. Many of them were eager to try out their jump rope rhymes with their own students. As one teacher stated, "It's amazing how a simple jump rope rhyme can bring invaluable instruction to children. They're having fun but learning at the same time, without even realizing it." We hope other teachers will try jumping to these rhymes and use the samples we provided as models to create their own rhymes that will allow their students to learn content area material in an engaging way.

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**References**


**Children's Books Cited**


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Northern Ireland’s famous rope bridge is located in the town of Ballintoy along the coast of County Antrim. You can reach the bridge on foot by walking the Causeway Coast Way, but there is also a parking lot where you can park for free if you choose to drive. (The bridge is about 7 miles east of the Giant’s Causeway.) You’ll find Google Maps directions here. After parking and purchasing your ticket, you’ll need to walk about 15-20 minutes along the Carrick-a-Rede coastal walk to reach the bridge. It’s an easy path to follow with lovely views the entire way of the coast and fluffy sheep grazing. See more of Rope Skippers across the world on Facebook. Log In. Forgot account? or. Create New Account. Not Now. Rope Skippers across the world. Local Business. Community. See All. 949 people like this. 962 people follow this. About See All. www.asianropeskipping.org. Local Business. So why should you climb rope? First of all, if you’re not including rope climbing in your workout routines, you’re missing out on one of the best forearm and grip workouts around. Climbing rope is also a core component of building functional strength. Everyone should be able to physically save himself, and rope climbing trains many of the same muscles you’d need to pull or lift yourself to safety. Sourcing a Rope to Climb. If you’ve never attempted to climb a rope before, don’t worry; I’ll address that below. From there you single wrap the rope around one of your legs and across the top of your boot. The boot of the unwrapped leg clamps down on the other boot, trapping the rope. You can now support your weight without using the power of your arms and hands.