Two classes of level 2 speaking and listening students recently returned to kindergarten. No, they were not demoted. Instead they were visiting a local school where they had the opportunity to read children’s books to kindergarteners.

Students in Jim Desler’s speaking and listening classes spent about eight weeks reading rhyming children’s literature including nursery rhymes and Dr. Seuss-type books. The purpose was to help them acquire the stress and intonation patterns of English. The students picked up one or two new books each week, practiced them aloud at home, practiced with a classmate in class on Fridays, and then videoed themselves reading the books as if to a child. After eight weeks, each student chose his favorite book and brought it to Wilkshire Early Childhood Center in Haslett.

After introducing themselves and even showing which countries they were from on a map, Mr. Desler’s students each sat down with two or three kindergarteners and read to them. Some of the children also read to Mr. Desler’s students. Then they rotated to different tables and read again. This process was repeated about four times.

Both the kindergarteners and Mr. Desler’s students enjoyed and benefited from the experience. Here are some comments from the speaking and listening students:

“I was scared of talking to the children because I thought they are going to speak fast and maybe they will not understand me, but when I talked to them I found it easy and fun to talk to them.”

“I think I did a good job because the children paid attention to listen while I’m reading the book. Also, it is fun to see their response.”

“…it was hard and fun in the same time. And when they are speaking I tried to concentrate because they are talking really fast. And they liked to talk a lot.”